

tionize the whole subject of method. The problem is complex and difficult. Learning involves, as just said, at least three factors: knowledge, skill, and character. Each of these must be studied. It requires judgment and art to select from the total circumstances of a case just what elements are the casual\* conditions of learning, which are influential, and which secondary or irrelevant. It requires candor and sincerity to keep track of failures as well as successes and to estimate the relative degree of success obtained. It requires trained and acute observation to note the indications of progress in learning, and even more to detect their causes—a much more highly skilled kind of observation than is needed to note the results of mechanically applied tests. Yet the progress of a science of education depends upon the systematic accumulation of just this sort of material. Solution of the problem of discovering the cause of learning is an endless process. But no advance will be made in the solution till a start is made, and the freer and more experimental character of progressive schools places the responsibility for making the start squarely upon them.

I hardly need remind you that I have definitely limited the field of discussion to one point: the relation of progressive education to the development of a science of education. As I began with questions, I end with one: Is not the time here when the progressive movement is sufficiently established so that it may now consider the intellectual contribution which it may make to the art of education, to the art which is the most difficult and the most important of all human arts?

\* Causal? *M.S.D.*

## Introduction

BY JOHN DEWEY

### *to The Use of Resources in Education\**

BY ELSIE RIPLEY CLAPP

*Dewey's last published work on education was this introduction to a book by a former student and Assistant in his courses in philosophy of education at Teachers College, Columbia University. The book, published for The John Dewey Society, is "an account of the use and development in education of the resources children and their families use daily as they live. . . ." focusing on two public rural schools in Kentucky and West Virginia respectively. Dewey used the introduction as an opportunity to review his association of over half a century with the progressive education movement. Here, at the very close of his career, remembering his hopes for the progressive idea, he reveals a profound disappointment over what the movement had become, and a sad concern over what it might yet be.*

The invitation of the John Dewey Society to write something by way of introduction to Miss Clapp's account of two important educational experiments is an honor and also something of an embarrassment. It is an honor to become associated, however indirectly, with the groundbreaking educational undertakings which are here re-

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ported by the one who was largely responsible for initiating them. The invitation is an embarrassment because Miss Clapp has not only given a full, vivid and convincing description of the practical phases of the work, what was done and how; she has also given a clear and illuminating interpretation of its theoretical content and meaning; the purposes that inspired it, the leading principles that guided it, the educational philosophy of which it is an expression and embodiment. It would be to engage in a wholly superfluous performance if I were to detain the reader with any restatement of the basic ideas Miss Clapp has so effectively stated in the context of describing the educational work actually done, where the ideas take on life and their consequences become manifest.

But it may not be altogether superfluous for me to say something about the whole educational movement of which the work here described and interpreted is a part. This seems to me all the more appropriate to do because the work which is the occasion for my remarks concretely exemplifies, in my judgment, what is most valuable in the movement.

In the course of more than half a century of participation in the theory and practice of education, I have witnessed many successes and many failures in what is most popularly known as "progressive education," but is also known as "the new education," "modern education," and so on. These designations are singular but they cover a plurality of different movements which have in common the general objective of improving the educational system but which differ from one another in many specific respects—ideas, principles, policies and programs. The confusion in public discussion of educational problems does not arise from using the term "progressive education" instead of "new education" or vice versa. It arises from using these designations as if they were proper names, denoting a singular entity. This is hardly the place to enter into terminological problems; however, it is in place to point out that I shall use the designations "progressive education" and "the progressive education

movement" as common names, that is, as convenient linguistic means of referring to the whole complex of diversified movements and efforts to improve the practice and theory of education.

During the past few years, organized attacks on the achievements of progressive education have become more extensive and virulent than ever before. The current effort to turn the clock back in education is a real cause for alarm but not for surprise. The educational system is part of the common life and cannot escape suffering the consequences that flow from the conditions prevailing outside the school building. When repressive and reactionary forces are increasing in strength in all our other institutions—economic, social and political—it would be folly to expect the school to get off free.

For the same reason, it is folly to think that the progressive education movement was something thought up and put over by the teachers all by themselves. On the intellectual side, it was part of the wider movement of thought, the inquiries into the nature and problems of growth which constitute the great contribution of the second half of the nineteenth century to the advancement of human knowledge in the biological, psychological and sociological sciences. On the social side, it was part of the widespread effort to liberate individuals and institutions from bondage to repressive modes of life. Without the support of the progressive and enlightening forces in the community, intellectual and social, the teachers of new vision would have been at best like Arnold's Shelley, ineffectual angels, born out of their time, and all their best plans and ideas would have had little or no effect on the educational system.

The most widespread and marked success of the progressive education movement has been in bringing about a significant change in the life-conditions in the classroom. There is a greater awareness of the needs of the growing human being, and the personal relations between teachers and students have been to a noticeable extent humanized and democratized. But the success in these respects is as yet limited; it is largely atmospheric;

it hasn't yet really penetrated and permeated the foundations of the educational institution. The older gross manifestations of the method of education by fear and repression—physical, social and intellectual—which was the established norm for the educational system before the progressive education movement began have, generally speaking, been eliminated. But the basic attitudes underlying the gross manifestations have in many areas still to be rooted out. The fundamental authoritarianism of the old education persists in various modified forms. There is a great deal of talk about education being a cooperative enterprise in which teachers and students participate democratically, but there is far more talk about it than the doing of it. To be sure, many teachers, particularly in the kindergarten and elementary schools, take the children into sharing with them to an extent impossible and inconceivable under the old system whose supreme achievement of educational wisdom is enshrined in its maxim: spare the rod and spoil the child.

In the secondary schools and colleges, however, there isn't much sharing on the part of teachers in the needs and concerns of those whom they teach. Of course, the conditions still too largely prevailing in the school—the size of the classes, the load of work, and so on—make it difficult to carry on the educative process in any genuinely cooperative, democratic way. These conditions, however, are not the sole causes for the failures in educational democracy, as is evident from the fact that in "progressive" schools where these deplorable conditions do not exist education as thoroughgoing sharing is often rather more a theme of discourse in various courses in the curriculum than a practice observable in the conduct of the school. What it really means to make the educative process a genuine sharing, a truly cooperative transaction in which both teachers and students engage as equals and learners is demonstrated in the cases Miss Clapp describes. Nothing I can say in amplification of this point would add to what the reader will find abundantly illustrated in this work.

It should be a commonplace, but unfortunately it is not, that no education—or anything else for that matter—is progressive unless it is making progress. Nothing is more reactionary in its consequences than the effort to live according to the ideas, principles, customs, habits or institutions which at some time in the past represented a change for the better but which in the present constitute factors in the problems confronting us. The fact that a given change was made in order to realize a desirable end in view signifies that the life-conditions before and after are different. In the process of attaining that good, a new situation was created. A new complex of life-conditions was brought into existence presenting its own distinctive characteristics and problems. Blind attachment to what was good for a state of affairs that no longer exists prevents recognition of the needs of the present and blots out of view the desirable ends that those needs should generate. As Emerson puts it, the attained good tends to become the enemy of the better.

New problems cannot be met intelligently by routine application of ideas and principles which were developed in solving different problems. New problems demand for their intelligent solution the projection of new purposes, new ends in view; and new ends necessitate the development of new means and methods. Of course, the "new" is, in all cases, relatively, not absolutely, new. Even though something absolutely new may be desirable, and some may delude themselves into thinking they have something absolutely new, the continuities in culture and experience exclude the possibility of anything having in fact this absolute character. The danger of cutting through all relations and connections inherited from the past is purely chimerical. The real danger is in perpetuating the past under forms that claim to be new but are only disguises of the old.

What has just been said is illustrated in the history of the progressive education movement—as in every other area of human effort and advance. It accounts for the failure in the movement which can no more be attributed to the teachers alone than can its successes. To

change long-established habits in the individual is a slow, difficult and complicated process. To change long-established institutions—which are social habits organized in the structure of the common life—is a much slower, more difficult and far more complicated process. The drive of established institutions is to assimilate and distort the new into conformity with themselves. This drive or tendency in the educational institution is perhaps most glaringly evident in the way the ideas and principles of the educational philosophy I have had a share in developing are still for the most part taught, more than half a century after they began to find their way in various parts of the school. In teachers colleges and elsewhere the ideas and principles have been converted into a fixed subject matter of ready-made rules, to be taught and memorized according to certain standardized procedures and, when occasion arises, to be applied to educational problems externally, the way mustard plasters, for example, are applied.

In other words, habits of "learning" institutionalized and perpetuated for centuries seek to transform into their own image ideas and principles which explicitly emphasize that learning is a method of growth and that the educative process does not consist in acquiring a kit of tools but is a process of learning means and methods of human growth which can never be fixed but must be constantly developed for the intelligent solution of new problems or more adequate solution of old problems partially solved. Considered from the most general philosophical point of view, this conversion—or perversion—of means and methods into a fixed, self-sufficient subject matter is due to the persistence and power of the traditional notion that the qualities of ideas are inherent, eternal and immutable essences. On this theory, the principles of progressive education (of whatever sort they may be) are "inherently progressive" and anyone who can recite them is *ipso facto* a "progressive" teacher.

It may perhaps be said that to train teachers in the right principles the wrong way is an improvement over

teacher-training that is wrong in both respects. But it is not much of an improvement. For the *method* of training—inside or outside the school—forms character. The *method* of teacher-training in teachers colleges is not of course the sole determinant of the characters of the future teachers; but in so far as the method of training is successful it forms their character *as teachers*, and hence is a significant determinant of their moral development. Training in the right principles the wrong way means in effect to create a split between the moral and intellectual training of teachers. The principles they learn to recite acquire the function of a verbal veneer. To the extent that their training is effective and until it is modified (for better or worse) by post-training experiences, they will teach as they were taught in fact, not as they were taught *about* teaching as a subject of educational theory.

Speaking again from the most general philosophical standpoint, this authoritarian principle in education and the consequences that flow from it in the conduct of the school will never be effectively eradicated as long as the traditional notion prevails that the qualities of ideas are inherent essences. For it follows from this notion or doctrine that the education of teachers consists in transmitting to them certain collections of fixed, immutable subject matter which they in turn are to transmit to the students under them. The educational regimen thus consists of authorities at the upper end handing down to the receivers at the lower end what they must accept. This is not education but indoctrination, propaganda. It is a type of "education" fit for the foundations of a totalitarian society and, for the same reason, fit to subvert, pervert and destroy the foundations of a democratic society.

For the creation of a democratic society we need an educational system where the process of moral-intellectual development is in practice as well as in theory a cooperative transaction of inquiry engaged in by free, independent human beings who treat ideas and the heritage of the past as means and methods for the further enrichment of life, quantitatively and qualitatively, who use the good attained for the discovery and establishment of something better.

But I fear I have already detained the reader too long from making first-hand acquaintance with Miss Clapp's stimulating and illuminating account of practical demonstrations of the good that has been attained by the progressive education movement and of the better that is to come.