University of Redlands

***SCHOOL OF EDUCATION***

 ***Location Address Mailing Address***

 *University Hall North 1200 East Colton Avenue*

 *On Brockton Avenue P.O. Box 3080*

 *Between University Street & Grove Street Redlands, CA 92373*

 ***Phone Fax***

 *(909) 748-8798 (909) 335-5204*

***COURSE SYLLABUS***

**Course:** MALT 601

**Course Title:** Educational Foundations

**Term:** Spring 2015 / February 9th – March 12th

**Days:** Monday and Wednesday (ED \_\_\_): Multiple Subject or

 Tuesday and Thursday (ED \_\_\_): Single Subject

**Times:** 5:30 PM – 9:30 PM

**Class Location:** Monday and Wednesday: Larsen 125

 Tuesday and Thursday: Larsen 227

**Faculty: Philip S Mirci, Ph.D.**

**Office: 135**

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**Office Hours: Monday through Thursday 3:00 PM – 5:15 PM**

**CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Introduction to the field of education; its history, philosophies, socio-cultural context, diversity, pedagogy, educational psychology, legal issues, and educational reform. Integrates traditional educational thinking with culturally relevant perspectives, and current research practices.

**Prerequisites:** Permission to enroll in Teacher Credential courses from the School of Education.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Educational Foundations, MALT 601, is the introductory course for the Multiple and Single Subject Teacher Preparation Programs. Effective teachers create the necessary conditions of learning to meet the needs of students with an array of background experiences, cultures, languages, skills and funds of knowledge. A three dimensional theoretical framework comprises the design of the course. The first dimension is educational justice to create equitable classrooms in meeting the needs of all students. The second dimension is the learning theories of constructivism and cognitivism (which are consistent with the neuroscience research) that posits people create knowledge using their existing cognitive structures originating from previously interpreted experiences. It involves challenging unexamined assumptions through the critical process of reflection so that the work of educators is informed and intentional. The third dimension is the specific philosophy underlying the framework known as Progressivism/Pragmatism that is aligned to constructivist and cognitivist learning theories.

A philosophy is an interrelated set of beliefs comprising your view of the world or reality. The course is intended to help you recognize philosophies in practice. You can actually see these differing philosophies when you step into classrooms. The most important element of this course is your philosophy because it reflects your identity.

You need to discern if you are in the Preliminary Teacher Credential Program that is correct for you because the theme running through the program is social justice. The very title of our text, *Teaching to Change the World,* provides you with a clue as to this theme. There are multiple reasons for such a theme: (1) As a public school teacher, you make a commitment to teach all students – especially those most in need of your help; (2) You recognize that in the existing system of education, institutional forms of marginalization and oppression occur daily for some students in the forms of racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, classism, sizeism, ageism, and religious intolerance that impacts the victims negatively threatening their psychological and physical safety; and, (3) You model in thought, word, and deed the meaning of social justice.

Consistent with the description in the catalogue of the University of Redlands, this involves a commitment to challenge one’s own unexamined assumptions. Only through such deep questions and reflection regarding self does a person become an educator who is able to make informed and intentional decisions about teaching and learning.

**PROGRAM/COURSE POLICY: PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

A community of practice implies a social contract of professional responsibilities. Should the contract be violated, regardless of how well one is doing academically, the individual will be asked to leave the class. This consequence is based in ethics: teaching cannot be separated from who one is as a person. Should a person be allowed back into the course, he or she would need to demonstrate the professional ethical responsibilities consistently at an extraordinary level.

|  |
| --- |
| **Professional Ethical Responsibilities for Remaining in Class** |
| **Demonstrated** |  **Violated** |
| Being inclusive and fully attentive to all members of the learning community in listening and participating. Such listening reflects intellectual empathy, humility, and perseverance. Maintaining eye contact, listening for understanding, and keeping the focus on the speaker addressing the group. | Engaging in side-bars, making comments not addressed to the group, passing notes or participating in any other form of verbal or written communication, doing any outside work (e.g. grading papers / responding to emails) rather than consistently being an attentive member of the learning community. |
| Acting with integrity regarding technological tools. Notifying the professor of the need to respond to technological messages in the event of an emergency. | Engaging in text messaging, surfing the Internet, keeping cell phones in the silent or vibrate mode and stepping outside of class for the purpose of using technology.  |
| Monitoring one’s participation in course so that everyone is able to participate.Initiating meetings with the instructor if one is shy or reluctant to speak within a whole class setting so as to share one’s thinking with the professor. | Dominating class discussions or never contributing or speaking up in class.  |
| Choosing a proactive attitude to further the overall accomplishment of the course objectives collegially (i.e. using intentionality to create a positive and productive reality). Meeting with the instructor to ensure a relevant and excellent course is created. | Choosing an attitude of being bored or failing to create relevance. This results in creating a course that is less than excellent for self, others, and the instructor. |
| Challenging one’s own egocentric, sociocentric, and ethnocentric assumptions so that one is an advocate for all students. | Perpetuating racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ableism, sizeism, ageism, and using religion to promote intolerance. |
| Meeting with the instructor to discuss ways to better meet one’s needs (including requests to discuss the possibility of alternative assignments).  | Failing to meet with the instructor to share how the course can become an excellence learning opportunity and choosing to complain to class members or negatively evaluate the course without first attempting to meet with the instructor to get your needs met.  |
| Contacting the instructor if a situation prevents being in class. | Missing class and/or leaving early without talking with the instructor.  |
| Be prepared by having the required text(s) for the course on the first class meeting unless an extenuating circumstance arises. | Not having the text(s) and not reading them to derive the meaning inherent within the chapters. |

**TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

Technology tools have been integrated in this course, as in all Preliminary Teacher Credential (PTC) courses. Internet access using a web browser will be required for classes.

**MALT 601 COURSE OBJECTIVES [TPE = Teacher Performance Expectations, State of California]**

**Candidates will demonstrate their understanding of:**

1. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

**[TPE 1-12]**

1. The complex array of philosophical, language, cultural, social, and developmental forces that may affect teacher-student relationships and differential student access to the core curriculum. This includes meeting the needs of English learners based on stages of language acquisition, CELDT scores, and English learner typologies.

 [TPE 1-12]

1. Strategies to recognize and minimize bias in the classroom to create equity and promote the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development and empowerment of all students.

 **[TPE 6, 8]**

1. Philosophical approaches to classroom management appropriate for different students and classroom contexts, including the effective utilization of paraprofessionals in managing groups, centers, individualized instruction, small/large group instruction and other activities appropriate to the needs and abilities of linguistically and culturally diverse students.

 **[TPE 4, 6, 10, 11]**

1. How to draw upon theory and reflection to inform instructional practice and the selection and use of personnel, i.e. paraprofessionals and specialists and materials.

 **[TPE 10]**

1. Their ability to reflect upon their own stated and implied philosophical and cultural beliefs, attitudes and expectations about linguistically and culturally diverse students, families, support personnel, specialists, paraprofessionals, and parent and community volunteers. In addition, candidates will write a description of a public school’s immediate community and the role it plays in shaping their expectations for student learning.

 **[TPE 7, 9]**

1. Historic and contemporary philosophical and pedagogical perspectives as they apply to the linguistically and culturally diverse students.

 **[TPE 4, 5, 6]**

1. Knowledge of major laws and principles that address student rights and parent rights pertaining to student placements and the effects of family involvement on teaching, learning and academic achievement. Relevant state and federal laws pertaining to the education of English Learners and teachers' roles and responsibilities in the IEP process.

 **[TPE 7, 12]**

1. Copyright issues and privacy, security, safety issues and acceptable use policies.

 **[TPE 12]**

1. Self as an adult learner and developing professional.

 **[TPE 13]**

**REQUIRED READINGS FOR COURSE**

Calkins, L., Ehrenworth, M., & Lehman, C. (2012). *Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Achievement.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Oakes, J., Lipton, M., Anderson, L., & Stillman, J. (2013). *Teaching to change the world*. (4th ed.) Boston, MA: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Mirci, P. (2013). *Identifying the core philosophies of education.* Handout.

**READINGS FROM INTERNET RESOURCES**

Board Policy and Administrative Regulations. <http://www.gamutonline.org>

California Standards for the Teaching Profession [Especially page 23] <http://www.btsa.ca.gov/ba/pubs/pdf/cstpreport.pdf>

California Teaching Performance Assessment: Candidate Handbook [TPA] <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/TPA-files/CandidateHandbook.pdf>

Education Code 48900

 <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov>

**INTERNET RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPING TEACHERS**

California Standards for the Teaching Profession. <http://www.cde.ca.gov>

Child Study Process (Special Education) <http://www.vdps.net/special/study.html>

Common Core Curriculum. <http://www.corestandards.org>

Matching Instructional Strategies to Second Language Acquisition <http://www.everythingesl.net/inservices/language_stages.php> ]

Second Language Acquisition Terminology <http://www.earthrenewal.org/secondlang.htm>

Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED391357.pdf>

Special Education Interventions <http://pubs.cde.ca.gov/tcsii/ch2/responsetointerven.aspx>

 Special Education: Parents planning for a Meeting regarding their Child’s Behavioral needs

 <http://pubs.cde.ca.gov/tcsii/ch2/responsetointerven.aspx>

Special Education: School Accommodations and Modifications

 <http://pubs.cde.ca.gov/tcsii/ch2/responsetointerven.aspx>

Special Education: What is an Individual Education Plan? <http://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-c81.pdf>

Stages of Second Language Acquisition <http://fcit.usf.edu/esol/resources/stages.html>

Stephen Krashen’s Theory of Second Language Acquisition Theory <http://www.sk.com.br/sk-krash.html>

Student Study Team Forms <http://jeffcoweb.jeffco.k12.co.us/isu/sst/sst02af.pdf>

**CANDIDATE ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS**

Throughout the program there are signature assignments for every course. These evidence the learning for each course. You save these and put them in your program portfolio that is submitted during EDUC 552 (the seminar for teaching). You are encouraged to begin the process of compilation early so almost everything will be ready by the time you approach student teaching.

**SIGNATURE ASSIGMENT #1: Opposing Philosophies of Education** **(35 % Course Grade)**

**TPE 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13**

Assignment: Write a scholarly 7-10 page paper critiquing the entrenched philosophy from the Industrial Era known as Essentialism and the more learner-centered philosophy of Pragmatism/Progressivism that reflects constructivist and cognitivist learning theories (that are aligned to the neuroscience research). The theme of your paper should be social justice.

**DUE: Class Session #3**

You will use for this assignment Chapter 3 (pp. 60-91) from the course text *Teaching to change the world* andthe handout *Identifying the core philosophies of education* and the handout: Mirci, P. (2013). *Identifying the core philosophies of education.*

The student demonstrates that each philosophy has its “essential knowledge” or “basics” constituting the dimensions of the philosophy. These interrelated dimensions include:

1. Purpose of education for student and society (i.e. the type of citizenship expected: “perpetuate the status quo” or “improve society for democracy”)
2. Dominant definition and understanding of learning;
3. The role of the teacher and role of the student;
4. The role of culture (e.g., “monoculturalism” to “multiculturalism”) in the philosophy;
5. Approach to classroom management and learning environment;
6. Approach to curriculum and assessment; and
7. Approach to “special needs” students.

Grading Rubric for Signature Assignment #1:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mechanics | Content of the Philosophy Paper |
| A to A- | All material is thoroughly proofread. It is organized, coherent, and free of errors. Strong syntax. Strong evidence of APA formatting. | 1. Evidences exemplary development of the theme of social justice throughout the paper.
2. Evidences exemplary understanding of the opposing philosophies of education.
3. Evidences exemplary written composition at the topic sentence, paragraph, and textual levels.
4. Evidences exemplary understanding that every philosophy has its “basics” rather than limiting “basics” to Essentialism.
5. Recognizes that curriculum content within a dominant philosophy may reflect other philosophies. For example in Pragmatism/Progressivism the students would be exposed to the masterpieces of Western Civilization (Perennialism) as well as multicultural literature (Social Reconstruction).
6. Evidences nothing is more practical in teaching than the implementation of one’s philosophy daily.
7. Evidences original thought, investigative depth, and critical reflection.
8. Evidences **exceptional grasp of the material, frequently with evidence of intellectual insight and original thought. Above and beyond expectations.**
 |
| B+ to B | All material is organized and coherent. Some errors in syntax and/or spelling. Reflects APA formatting. | The work met expectations for excellence. Evidences development of the theme of social justice throughout the paper. Assignment was thoroughly and completely done, with careful attention to detail and clarity and with evidence of intellectual insight. |
| B- | Problems with syntax and/or spelling. Lacks coherence and organization in conveying meaning. Reflects some difficulty with APA formatting. | There is not strong evidence the student understands the interrelatedness of the components of a philosophy. The treatment of the philosophy paper reflects a superficial or inaccurate understanding of the opposing philosophies. Superficial understanding of social justice. |
| C | Errors interfere with meaning. Lacks understanding of APA formatting. | Inaccuracies exist regarding the components of a philosophy and their interrelatedness. The student may assert she/he is eclectic thereby not understanding the political base of differing philosophies. |

**SIGNATURE ASSIGMENT #2: Cultural Sharing (10% of grade)**

**TPE 8, 12, 13**

Assignment: Choose seven artifacts to place in a shopping bag that depicts your cultural identity. Prepare a 5-7 minute presentation the class.

**DUE: Sign up for a presentation date**

Scoring Rubric for Cultural Sharing:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Cultural Sharing |
| A to A- | Demonstrates strongly how one’s sense of self reflects a cultural heritage. Presentation reflects insights into self. Demonstrates an understanding of culture as expressed through shared language and art, historical heritage, ways of interacting, and social celebrations. Recognizes that these dimensions serve as perceptual filters in interpreting experiences to constructing meaning of self, others, and the world. Recognizes the historicity of White monoculturalism based on Eurocentrism. Monitors time while presenting to fit within a 5-7 minute presentation. |
| B+ to B | Presentation reflects most of the quality indicators cited for the grade of A or A-. May not monitor time in keeping to the time frame of a 5-7 minute presentation.  |
| B- | The cultural biography presented lacks an understanding of how culture constitutes the context in which learning occurs. If White, may claim that a White culture does not exist (i.e., blind to the influenced of the Northern Western Eurocentric values impacting this country). May not monitor time in keeping to the time frame of a 5-7 minute presentation. |
| C | The sharing is superficial lacking depth or insight regarding diversity culture. May not monitor time in keeping to the time frame of a 5-7 minute presentation. |

**SIGNATURE ASSIGMENT #3: Demographic Study (15% of grade)**

**TPE 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13**

Assignment: Choose either the district where you attended school or a district serving a diverse student population with a significant number of English language learners. Access the district’s website and the accountability report cards for an elementary, middle, and high school. Describe the community in which the school is located. Provide a description for each school of the student population by race/ethnicity/gender/ English Language Learners/ the percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch (if available). Provide a demographic profile of the teaching staff (e.g., race/ethnicity/ gender/ highest degree earned, years of teaching experience). Compare the White, African-American, and Hispanic API. Compare the school and Title I API. Compare the statetest results between Hispanic, African-American and White students. Create a power point of your findings (at least 11 slides). This includes meeting the needs of English learners based on stages of language acquisition, CELDT scores, and English learner typologies**.** People tend to generalize from their own experience of schooling. However, in conducting a demographic study and being open to challenging one’s assumptions about schooling, the need for educational justice may become glaringly apparent.

 **[TPE 1-12]**

**DUE: Class Session #6**

Scoring Rubric for Signature Assignment #3:

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mechanics | Content of Power Point Presentation |
| A to A- | All material is thoroughly proofread. It is organized, coherent, and free of errors. Strong syntax. | Thorough analysis of the schools and district is evident. Everything outlined in assignment description is addressed in a comprehensive and accurate manner. |
| B+ to B | All material is organized and coherent. Some errors in syntax and/or spelling.  | Thorough analysis of the schools and district is evident. Lack of mastery of 2 of the tasks in the assignment description is evident.  |
| B- | Problems with syntax and/or spelling. Lacks coherence and organization in conveying meaning | Analysis of the schools and district is evident in a superficial manner. Lack of mastery of 3 of the tasks in the assignment description is evident. |
| C | Errors interfere with meaning. | Analysis of the schools and district is evident in a superficial manner. Lack of mastery of 4 of the tasks in the assignment description is evident. |

**SIGNATURE ASSIGMENT #4: Research Paper: Teaching to Change the World (35% of grade)**

**TPE 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13**

Assignment: Write a 9-12 page paper on the topic: Teaching to Change the World. Your paper should cover the major concepts in the course text: *Teaching to change the world.* You should provide citations from the text following the sixth edition of APA formatting. To support you in the creation of knowledge comprising your paper are summaries of each chapter. These should not be used as a substitute for reading the chapters in the text but enable a quicker reading of them.

**DUE: Class Session #8**

Scoring Rubric for Signature Assignment #4:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mechanics | Key Concepts | Insights | Analysis |
| A to A- | All material is thoroughly proofread. It is organized, coherent, and free of errors. Strong syntax.There are topic sentences and exceptionally well-developed paragraphs. | Thorough understanding of the critical concepts within the text. Writing is concise, specific, and systemic. Selections reflect educational justice issues revealing problems in the existing system. Strong understanding of themes within the text. Quotations from the text reflect the most important concepts on the topic of “teaching to change the world.” | Depth of understanding is evident in the responses to the critical concepts. Evidences systemic thinking. Reflects sensitivity to educational justice issues. | Original knowledge creation as the most rigorous form of cognitive activity is evident. Evidences critical thinking standards. Person clearly connects knowledge creation to both the art/discipline of teaching as well as to self.The student **displayed** **exceptional grasp** of the material, frequently with **evidence of intellectual insight** and **original thought**. **Above and beyond expectations**. |
| B+ to B | All material is organized and coherent. Some errors in syntax and/or spelling.  | Seems to understand and identify critical concepts within the text. Quotations from the text reflect the most important concepts on the topic of “teaching to change the world.” May be somewhat inconsistent to educational justice issues within the existing education system. Evidence of understanding of themes within the text. | Understanding is evident in the writing. Makes some systemic connections. Reflects some sensitivity to educational justice issues.  | **The work is excellent.** The work met expectations for excellence. Assignment was thoroughly and completely done, with careful attention to detail and clarity and with evidence of intellectual analysis. |
| B- | Problems with syntax and/or spelling. Lacks coherence and organization in conveying meaning | Does not evidence strong understanding of the themes within the text. Inconsistent in identify and citing educational justice issues.  | Applications address at the surface knowledge level. Lack of systemic connections limited attention given to educational justice.  | Tends to summarize. Sometimes opinions are stated as facts without backing them up. Does not consistently reflect critical thinking standards. Does not apply writing to teaching and self. Unsubstantiated opinions are offered but detract rather that contributed to the development of content / academic discourse. |
| C | Errors interfere with meaning. | Does not evidence strong understanding of the content of the text. Lacks depth and rigor. Lacks understanding of educational justice issues. | Lacks strong connections between text, comments, and reflection. | Writing lacks critical thinking standards. Writing appears superficial. |

**SIGNATURE ASSIGMENT #5: Me Now and Then (5% of grade)**

**TPE 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13**

Assignment: Prepare a thoughtful reflection to share with colleagues your understandings of the foundations of education before beginning the course and your understandings after formally studying foundations of education. Include the changes you see taking place within you as a result of your investment of time, energy, commitment to social justice practiced in education, and study in becoming a teacher. Reflect and comment on any of the following isms that you will need to be monitoring in your teaching such that equity is promoted: racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ableism, sizeism, and possible religious intolerance of others. Address your understanding of the needs of English language learners and your knowledge of the stages of language acquisition.

**DUE: Class Session #10**

Scoring Rubric for Signature Assignment #5:

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|  | Cultural Sharing |
| A to A- | Shares previously unexamined or uncritically held assumptions regarding education. Demonstrates adult learning in reflecting and evaluating assumptions resulting in transformative learning. Recognizes tendencies towards egocentrism (i.e. self as correct or better than others); ethnocentrism (i.e. one’s racial group is correct or better than other groups); and sociocentrism (i.e., one’s socio-economic status is correct or better than other groups). Expresses the meaning of teaching ALL students with respect and dignity regardless of race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, ableness, size, and age. Reflecting strong understanding of the dominant philosophical tradition to which one’s personal philosophy of education was aligned. Monitors time while presenting to fit within a 5-7 minute presentation. Original knowledge creation as the most rigorous form of cognitive activity is evident. Evidences critical thinking standards. The student displays exceptional grasp of the material, frequently with evidence of intellectual insight and original thought. Above and beyond expectations. |
| B+ to B | Excellent. **The work is excellent.** The work met expectations for excellence. Assignment was thoroughly and completely done, with careful attention to detail and clarity and with evidence of intellectual insight. Evidence of transformative learning. May not monitor time in keeping to the time frame of a 5-7 minute presentation.  |
| B- | The presentation reflects some of the quality indicators cited for the grade of A or A-. There may be a few inaccuracies related to concepts presented. Limited evidence of transformative learning. May not monitor time in keeping to the time frame of a 5-7 minute presentation. |
| C | The presentation is superficial lacking depth or insight regarding the quality indicators cited for the grade of A or A-. Scarce evidence of transformative learning. May not monitor time in keeping to the time frame of a 5-7 minute presentation. |

**GRADING SYSTEM/SCALE**

(See University Catalog)

3.7 - 4.0 **A Outstanding**

The student displayed exceptional grasp of the material, frequently with evidence of intellectual insight and original thought. **Above and beyond expectations**.

2.7 - 3.3 **B Excellent**

Work demonstrated a thorough grasp of the material with occasional errors and omissions. Assignments were thoroughly and completely done, with careful attention to detail and clarity and with evidence of intellectual insight.

1.7 - 2.3 **C Acceptable**

The quality of work was acceptable, meeting minimal course standards but was not exceptional. Performance on examinations and other assignments was satisfactory and demonstrated that the student was keeping up with the material and attending to detail.

0.7 - 1.3 **D Poor**

The quality of work was not always satisfactory but overall was passing. Assigned work was not always done or, when done, was inadequate or late. Performance on examinations and other work was generally weak with regard to understanding of subject, proper formulation of ideas, and thoroughness.

0.0 **F Failing**

A grade of "F" indicates that the student failed the course.

**ABOVE AND BEYOND EXPECTATIONS**

If you are pursuing an “A” for the course, the University Handbook states: The student **displayed exceptional grasp** of the material, frequently with **evidence of intellectual insight** and **original thought**. **Above and beyond expectations**.

Notice that the definition for a “B” is excellent work. The reason this statement is included in the syllabus is to avoid grade inflation that happens when the instructor and student assumes that any work submitted meets the rigorous criteria for an “A.” This means that students will need to justify earning an “A” by being able to demonstrate exceptional grasp of the material…evidence of intellectual insight … ORIGINAL THOUGHT… Above and beyond expectations for excellent work.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Academic honesty stands at the center of intellectual pursuits in the academic community. All people should clearly understand what constitutes plagiarism and avoid it. See the university catalog for full text of the academic honesty policy.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Class participation is a critical component and requirement in all courses, and students are expected to attend all class sessions. We realize that emergencies can arise and students need to make important and difficult choices. Students are always responsible for informing the instructor of an absence and making up all required class assignments. *Any student who misses more than two sessions of a course might be required to retake the course*.

**Course Calendar for MALT 601: Subject to Change**

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| --- |
| **Key Dates and Activities: Ten Class Sessions** |
| **1. First Class Session*** Introductions
* Review of Course Syllabus
* K-W-L Strategy: Philosophy of education. (Small Group Activity)
	+ Write down everything you think might constitute an educational philosophy. Of the KWL strategy, this constitutes the “K” or what you currently “know.”
	+ See if you can expand on what you know by studying the diagram on the handout titled: *Identifying the core philosophies of education* by Phil Mirci that begins on page 13 of this syllabus.
* You Tube Video: *RSA Animate – Changing Education Paradigms*
	+ As you watch the video, what is the role of the teacher, the role of the student, the type of curriculum, the type of assessment, the structure of schooling, etc? All these will give you insight into a philosophy of education.
	+ “Banking” or “Transmissive Model” versus “Experiential Learning” and “Problem-Posing Education.”
* What is learning? (Small Group Activity) – Discussion: Constructivism, Cognitivism (video of the brain constructing knowledge)
* Dyad work: Please answer the following questions:
1. What are inequalities that shape students’ lives?
2. What is the myth of meritocracy?
3. Study the handout titled “ISMS” on page 29 of this syllabus. Strive to define the complexity of identity and relate it to the term: *Intersectionality* that “…describes the connections among oppressive beliefs, habits, and social structures such as racism, sexism, homophobia, religious discrimination, [classism, sizeism, ableism, ageism]. Intersectionality emphasizes that these isms do not exist in isolation; rather they intersection and operate together. In doing so, the contribute to *systems* of privilege and oppression, *layers* of discrimination, and *patterns* of social inequality.” (Oakes, Lipton, Anderson, & Stillman, 2013, p. 11).
* What type of philosophy acknowledges the existence of these institutional forms of discrimination?
* What does the content of this handout mean to you as a perspective teacher who is responsible for the education of all youth?
* Homework –
	+ Read Chapter 1: “The U.S. Schooling Dilemma: *Diversity, Inequality, and Democratic Values”* in the course text: *Teaching to change the world*.
		- Take notes for Signature Assignment #4: Research Paper
	+ Read Chapter 2: “History and Culture: *How Expanding Expectations and Powerful Ideologies Shape Schooling in the United States”* in the course text: *Teaching to change the world*.
		- Take notes for Signature Assignment #4: Research Paper
	+ Work on Signature Assignment #1: ”Opposing Philosophies of Education”
 |
| **2. Second Class Session*** Discuss homework readings.
* Introduction to the Common Core State Standards. View the You Tube video at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5s0rRk9sER0>
* Critical Thinking. We assume that critical thinking is occurring in schools often without looking at defining it. Study the handout on page 31 of this syllabus titled, *Glossary of critical thinking terms.* In small groups: (1) work through the handout comparing and contrasting critical thinking with your experiences of schooling; (2) Which of the critical thinking standards will you most need to embrace in order to challenge unexamined assumptions that will be explored in this course?
* Socratic Seminar: Read “Why Become Political” and participate in a Socratic Seminar. This is found on page be prepared to compare and contrast students who understand the broader understanding in terms of advantaging their lives compared to those who do not understand the broader view of literacy. This is found on page 33 of syllabus.
* Grand Conversation: Whole class sharing from the small group activity.
* You Tube: Monoculturalism [Copy and past the address into the address bar to see the videos]

[ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZVS1wS8Ors&feature=fvsr> ]* You Tube: Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible pt.1

[ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAljja0vi2M> ] * Socratic Seminar: Making the “Invisible” Visible - The Whiteness and Ethnocentric Monoculturalism [This handout is found on page 34].
* Homework –
	+ Read Chapter 4: “Policy and Law: Rules that Schools Live by” from *Teaching to change the world*.
		- Take notes for Signature Assignment #4: Research Paper
	+ Read Chapter 5: “The Subject Matters: Constructing Knowledge Across the Content Areas” from *Teaching to change the world.*
		- Take notes for Signature Assignment #4: Research Paper
	+ Read Chapter 6: “Instruction: Teaching and Learning Across the Content Areas from *Teaching to change the world.*
		- Take notes for Signature Assignment #4: Research Paper
	+ Complete Signature Assignment #1.
 |
| **3. Third Class Session*** Submit Signature Assignment #1. Whole group sharing.
* Discuss homework readings.
* Presentation: The Eugenics Movement [Refer to chapter 7 in the text *Teaching to change the world*. Read “The Development of Scientific Testing” (p. 200, 202 –the section on Goddard and Terman, p. 203 – the section on Terman, and pages 203-223).
* Marzano’s Self-System Activity. The handout is found on page 31 of this syllabus.
* KWL: English as Second Language Learners. This includes meeting the needs of English learners based on stages of language acquisition, CELDT scores, and English learner typologies,the language of Ebonics; strategies for development of standardized English.
* Common Core Standards: English Language Arts and Literacy - You Tube. View the video at the following: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmLElb7yHDU>
* Homework –
	+ Read Chapter 7 titled “Assessment: Measuring what Matters”in our text *Teaching to change the world.*
		- Take notes for Signature Assignment #4: Research Paper
	+ Read Chapter 8 titled “Classrooms as Communities: Developing Caring and Democratic Relationships” in our text *Teaching to change the world.*
		- Take notes for Signature Assignment #4: Research Paper
	+ Read Second Language Acquisition Terminology <http://www.earthrenewal.org/secondlang.htm>
	+ Read Stages of Second Language Acquisition <http://fcit.usf.edu/esol/resources/stages.html>
	+ Stephen Krashen’s Theory of Second Language Acquisition Theory <http://www.sk.com.br/sk-krash.html>
	+ Read Chapter 9 titled “The School Culture: Where Good Teaching makes Sense” in our text *Teaching to change the world.*
		- Take notes for Signature Assignment #4: Research Paper
 |
| **4. Fourth Class Session*** Work in computer lab on the Demographic Study.
* Homework –
	+ Read Chapter 10 titled “School Structure: Sorting Students and Opportunities to Learn”in our text *Teaching to change the world.*
		- Take notes for Signature Assignment #4: Research Paper
	+ Read Chapter 11 titled “The Community: Engaging with Families and Neighborhoods” in our text *Teaching to change the world.*
		- Take notes for Signature Assignment #4: Research Paper
	+ Read Chapter 12 titled “Teaching to Change the World” in our text *Teaching to change the world.*
		- Take notes for Signature Assignment #4: Research Paper
	+ Work on Demographic Study (Signature Assignment #3)
 |
| **5. Fifth Class Session*** Discuss the homework readings.
* KWL on Common Core Standards.
* Presentation on Common Core Standards: Your Tube – “Common Core State Standards: a New Foundation for Students.”
* Demonstration of a 7-Step Lesson plan illustrating how assessments should be built directly into the lessons taught.
* Presentation: *Cultural Shopping Bag*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Presentation: *Cultural Shopping Bag*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Presentation: *Cultural Shopping Bag*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Presentation: *Cultural Shopping Bag*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Discussion of the Teacher Performance Assessments (TPAs).California Teaching Performance Assessment: Candidate Handbook

<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/TPA-files/CandidateHandbook.pdf> * Homework –
	+ Read Chapters 1-3 from the course text titled: *Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Student Achievement.* Feel free to use chapter summaries to facilitate the readings.
	+ Complete Demographic Study (Signature Assignment #3).
 |
| **6. Sixth Class Session*** Submit a hardcopy of the PowerPoint Slides for Signature Assignment #3: Demographic Study. Share insights from the assignment with colleagues.
* Discuss homework readings.
* Demonstration of the Into-Through-Beyond lesson plan format.
* KWL Classroom management (*Discipline with Dignity:* Curwin and Mendler – “proximity, eye contact, privacy”)
* Classroom Management: You Tube Video – Curwin and Mendler
* KWL activity: Special Education (What do I Know about special education? What do I **W**ant to learn about special education? What have I **L**earned about special education?)
	+ You Tube: Introduction to Special Education [take notes completing the KWL sheet]

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCdR2vA1g20>* You Tube: IEP Law – Special Education [take notes completing the KWL sheet]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jZbw4ti66c>* <http://www.specialeducationattorneyatlaw.com/iep_prep>
* <http://www.specialeducationattorneyatlaw.com/iep_tips>
* Presentation: *Cultural Shopping Bag*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Presentation: *Cultural Shopping Bag*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
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* Presentation: *Cultural Shopping Bag*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Homework:
	+ Read Chapters 4-6 from the course text titled: *Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Student Achievement.* Feel free to use chapter summaries to facilitate the readings.
	+ Work on Signature Assignment 4: Research Paper: Teaching to Change the World.
 |
| **7. Seventh Class Session** * Discussion of *Homework* Readings.
* Debate: Punitive versus Restorative Justice Responses in Schools (page 244 in text *Teaching to change the world)*
* Small group activity: Creating a classroom management plan based on “Discipline with Dignity.”
* Create a graphic representation of your paper for Signature Assignment 4 highlighting you as a Social Justice Leader in Teaching to Change the World.
* Presentation: *Cultural Shopping Bag*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Presentation: *Cultural Shopping Bag*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Presentation: *Cultural Shopping Bag*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Presentation: *Cultural Shopping Bag*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Homework:
	+ Read Chapters 7-9 from the course text titled: *Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Student Achievement.* Feel free to use chapter summaries to facilitate the readings.
	+ Complete Signature Assignment 4: Research Paper: Teaching to Change the World.
 |
| **8. Eighth Class Session*** Submit Signature Assignment 4: Research Paper: Teaching to Change the World.
* Quickwrite: “Me as a Social Justice Leader and Teacher” (based on Signature Assignment 4).
* Discussion of homework readings.
* Socratic Seminar: Opposition to English Language learners: I will read “Teacher Ramón Martínez Goes Public with His Social Justice Perspective” from pages 378-379 of our text Teaching to change the world.
* Special topic: Stages of Second Language Acquisition

 <http://fcit.usf.edu/esol/resources/stages.html> * Special topic: Matching Instructional Strategies to Second Language Acquisition

 <http://tr.wou.edu/eec/documents/Appendix%20D%20-%20Second%20Language%20Stages.pdf> * Special topic: Language Acquisition Theory
* Stephen Krashen’s Theory of Second Language Acquisition Theory

 <http://www.sk.com.br/sk-krash.html> * Special topic: Terminology for Second Language Acquisition –

 <http://www.earthrenewal.org/secondlang.htm> * Lesson Design: 7- Step Plan
* Presentation: *Cultural Shopping Bag*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Presentation: *Cultural Shopping Bag*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Presentation: *Cultural Shopping Bag*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Presentation: *Cultural Shopping Bag*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Homework:
	+ Read chapters 10-11 in our text, *Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Student Achievement,* and complete a Reader Response Journal Entry for each chapter.
	+ If you engaged in transformative learning throughout the course, you should be able to share with others the insights and changes that have taken place within you. This is Signature Assignment #5: “Me Now and Then.” Prepare a thoughtful reflection to share with colleagues your understandings of the foundations of education before beginning the course and your understandings after formally studying foundations of education. Include the changes you see taking place within you as a result of your investment of time, energy, commitment to social justice practiced in education, and study in becoming a teacher. Reflect and comment on any of the following isms that you will need to be monitoring in your teaching such that equity is promoted: racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ableism, sizeism, and possible religious intolerance of others.
 |
| **9. Ninth Class Session*** Discussion of chapters 10-11 in our text, *Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Student Achievement.*
* Into-Through-Beyond Lesson Plan
* Review of Second Language Acquisition
* Review of Special Education
* Presentation: *Me Now and Then*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Presentation: *Me Now and Then*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
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* Presentation: *Me Now and Then*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
 |
| **10. Tenth Class Session*** Presentation: Differentiation of Instruction – Change in Product and/or Change in Assignment
* Presentation: Addressing the inclusion of special needs students in the regular classroom
* Presentation: *Me Now and Then*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Presentation: *Me Now and Then*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Presentation: *Me Now and Then*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
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* Presentation: *Me Now and Then*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Evaluation of the Course
 |

**Philosophy of Education**

**Identifying the Core Philosophies of Education**

**By**

**Philip S. Mirci, Ph.D.**

[Written as a handout for MALT 601: Foundations of Education]

Societal Purpose of Education

Theory/Theories of Learning

Approach to Teaching Curriculum

Role of Teacher

Role of Student

Classroom Management

Conditions of Learning

Assessment

Accountability

Curriculum

**Disclaimer:** Students in this course wanted a deeper understanding of the major philosophies of education and requested that I write this paper. The paper is aligned with the equity, access, and advocacy (i.e. social justice) of the School of Education. Essentialist philosophy has governed education system for centuries and was designed to serve the needs of the Industrial Era. Alternative philosophies have been resisted given the power of the current system to resist change. Increasingly the theory of learning and instructional strategies of Pragmatism/Progressivism are being used within Essentialist Schooling. A philosophy may very well arise for our time as the beginning of the 21st Century begins. Ravitch (2010) called for questioning the current education system asserting that schools “remain at the margins of a system that has not been redesigned to support a 21st-century schooling enterprise” (p. 9).

**Introduction**

Philosophy as Identity

When a person deeply understands her/his internalized philosophy, the person can teach within a system based on a different philosophy. Thus, a philosophy is not a subject to be studied, but discovery and development of one’s identity as an educator. By courageously studying one’s actions, a person can discern her/his “philosophy in action.” This gives insight into what a person actually believes about teaching, learning, role of the teacher and role of student (i.e., all the dimensions in the graphic at the top of the page). You should be able to walk into any classroom and be able to identify the philosophy the teacher embraces based on the dimensions cited in the previous sentence.

Philosophy is One’s Foundation of Education

The foundation of education is found in the philosophy a person embraces. A fully developed educational philosophy is characterized by a set of interlocking beliefs (see diagram at top of the page). There exist four such philosophies of education: Essentialism, Perennialism, Pragmatism/Progressivism, and Social Reconstructionism. Other philosophies may be cited in a book on the foundations of education but these are not comprehensive philosophies because they do not define the interrelated beliefs.

Avoiding the Temptation to Pick and Choose Among Philosophies

The challenge in articulating one’s own philosophy of education is first to understand the educational philosophies and determine which most closely aligns to one’s critically examined and informed beliefs. This can prove challenging because some texts on education encourage people to pick and choose among the philosophies instead of recognizing they are integrated and inseparable views of reality.

Critical Awareness of Language: All Philosophies Deal with “the Basics”

Another challenge is that people hear language that is familiar and assume it to be true and of value. Take for example: “Students need to learn the basics?” Whenever the Essentialist paradigm is threatened by another philosophy emerging, resistance often results in the call for “back to basics.” Because we know that a literate person must be proficient in the “basics” (without recognizing the “basics” are specific to each of the fully developed philosophies, people may naively embrace the philosophy of Essentialism as being the “true” or “correct” philosophy. This assumption must be questioned. For example, in Pragmatism/Progressivism, a very heavy emphasis is writing and students engage in the writing process to develop proficiency in writing. Students use the four cuing systems of phonics, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics that constitute reading. In the history of Essentialism, there has tended to be the view of students dealing with worksheets dealing with parts of speech without ever really writing. In Pragmatism/Progressivism, listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing are reciprocal processes to master the basics. The student is engaged in using all of the literacy skills to construct knowledge.

Education for the Elites (advantaged) and Education for the Poor (disadvantaged)

Upper middle-class and wealthy schools tend to reflect the philosophy of Pragmatism/Progressivism in teaching and learning within an Essentialist system. This means that students in these schools are engaged in learning opportunities that enable them to construct knowledge. They are the recipients of enrichment experiences that further promote their cognitive growth. These include fieldtrips and opportunities to engage in science experiments outside of the classroom walls of the schools themselves. Everything ranging from relevance in the curriculum to the quality of their school facilities and access to technology as a tool for thinking conveys the positive expectation that these students are going to succeed.

Essentialist approaches to teaching occur in the classroom of any teacher embracing this philosophy. Sometimes such practices are found especially in impoverished schools serving very diverse students. In these schools we may find information being transmitted almost exclusively through lecture and textbooks with an emphasis on teaching a limited curriculum that will be tested. The emphasis on improving high-stakes test scores has resulted in “discouraged students and overwhelmed schools [that] have produced higher dropout rates … leaving the society to contend with a greater number of young people placed into the growing school-to-prison pipeline” (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 67).

Much in our democratic rhetoric – including having public schools for everyone – seeks to diminish the power of social class to determine who gets schooling opportunities and who does not. However, the tradition of separate “mass” and “elites” education clearly has made it much easier for Americans with wealth, power, leadership, and higher education to succeed in transferring to their children these advantages. The political tensions between the rhetoric of equal opportunity and the reality of social power have intertwined with philosophical debates over the purpose and conduct of American schooling for most of its history. They continue today. (Oakes & Lipton, 2007, p. 80)

**Essentialism**

Essentialism has a long history and we examine it within a historical context. It is referred to as traditional education. If you look at the chart on the top of the first page, you can see a fully developed philosophy. Interestingly, Essentialism, as revealed in practices in the classroom, is the philosophy most advocated for impoverished, traditionally underserved students (i.e. African-American, Hispanic-American, Native American). This is not surprising given the emphasis in this philosophy is on conformity and obedience to authority. Most people accept it as “education” because this is how they may have experienced schooling. They don’t know that there are other educational philosophies. They don’t know that each philosophy is political.

It is characteristic of essentialist and perrenialist thinkers, in particular, not to see the political elements in their own views. After all, if you see the curriculum as “basic” or as enduring for all time, it is hard to imagine that others might view it differently, therefore, asserting your essential or perennial values and perspectives is not an exercise of power, but a simple expression truth. However, …proponents of all the philosophies try to instill their values and beliefs in the education system, and by extension, they exclude the values and beliefs of others. In that sense, they are all political. (Oakes & Lipton, 2007, p. 81)

Essentialism: Transmission of the Societal Social, Economic, and Cultural Status Quo

An educational philosophy is not, as Essentialism implies, “politically free” curriculum (given all philosophies are political). In other words, through socialization in schooling, much more is happening than becoming proficient only with curriculum content. Essentialism’s “educational perspective stresses the transmission to the young of a [static] …orderly view of reality … the Essentialist preference for order and structure is primarily [perpetuating the] social, economic, and cultural [status quo]” (Gutek, 1997, p. 273).

In terms of an ideological orientation, Essentialism parallels most closely the Conservative view that sees education’s primary function as that of transmitting the funded and approved knowledge and values of the [historically dominant] culture. (Gutek, 1997, p. 273)

Meeting the Needs of an Industrial Workforce

Historically there has been an emphasis on creating a workforce where the majority of workers were compliant in working for those possessing the power and wealth in society.

Essentialism has tended to teach subjects such as history as something that happened in the past. An example is the issue of racism. Students may study the civil rights movement as an historical event occurring at a moment in time. However, the continued problem of racism today may not be addressed as a contemporary problem.

Another way of thinking about Essentialism or traditional education is to think of it as the transmissive paradigm. Traditionally, the teacher transmits information to students via textbook or lecture and the degree of learning is based on a student’s capacity to “absorb” it. An example of this kind of thinking is when you hear a teacher state: “I taught it, they [i.e. students] didn’t get it.” Paulo Freire called this the “banking model” of education. He used this metaphor to illustrate the transmission nature of it: the teacher makes “deposits” of information into the heads of students. Because Essentialism developed before what is now known about learning, it viewed learning as the differing capacities of students to absorb information.

Underlying Monocultural Belief of Essentialism

According to Essentialist philosophy, the purpose of education is to perpetuate the status quo in society. This is based historically on the belief that there is a stable or static body of information that remains consistent from one generation to the next. This information is to be transmitted to students. Another name for this philosophy is “back to basics” (Gutek, 1997). Historically, this philosophy emphasized

…the basics (or essentials) [as defined by Essentialism] [and] included the prevailing moral and religious predilections that teachers were expected to transmit – typically, those of northern European Protestant denominations. (Oakes & Lipton, 2007, p. 81)

During the early part of the 19th century, the curriculum was infused with “political and moral content into teaching basic skills” (Oakes & Lipton, 2007, p. 81). The foundations laid at this time have tended to endure.

This philosophy has continued to value monoculturalism and devalue multiculturalism. This means that it infused the values and beliefs of the dominant White culture within the education system. Essentialist values included what the dominant cultural group deemed to be the “correct” and these included:

moral trusts, cultural [i.e. monocultural] certainty, Protestant Christianity, and the view of children as “empty vessels” … Between 1836 and 1920 *McGuffey’s Readers* taught rules for reading and proper speech; practical moral precepts; God’s active participation in death, nature, and distribution and withholding of wealth; the rules of capitalism … Elites could be comforted since the readers, though educating large numbers of previously uneducated classes, offered academic and social lessons that preserved important social class distinctions. (Oakes & Lipton, 2007, pp. 82-83)

Political Usage of the Cry: “Back to Basics”

The important point is that Essentialism has continued to constitute the dominant form of education into the twenty-first century. Thus, the cry “back to basics” may not accurately reflect the claim that reading, writing, and mathematics have been abandoned. Instead, the cry may be far more political, regarding “political and moral indoctrination with its male, Anglo, and Protestant orientation” (Oakes & Lipton, 2007, p. 84). The “cry” for deepening Essentialism or the “back to basics” arises periodically and reiterates the following claims that have been used since its inception whenever alternative perspectives emerge in the education system and vie for attention. Another reason the “cry” is sounded is that it seeks to silence social justice pursuits so as to maintain the status quo in society.

Gutek (1998) listed a number of common claims made against alternative educational systems. Interestingly, the claims against the alternative systems are problematic in the sense that alternative educational philosophical models rarely have been implemented fully and accurately to even evaluate them over time. These were asserted as true:

1. Permissive, open, and progressive educational methods have neglected basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic, and have contributed to a growing functional illiteracy [Where is the evidence to support this claim?]
2. Schools do not stress fundamental values of industriousness, punctuality, effort, morality, or patriotism [Where is the evidence to support this claim?]
3. Teachers are ill prepared and undereducated…[Where is the evidence to support this claim?]
4. Recent curricular innovations have neglected fundamental skills and subjects… [Where is the evidence to support this claim?]
5. Social-promotion policies rather than academic achievement have dumped ill-prepared and undereducated high school graduates on society and the economy [Where is the evidence to support this claim?]
6. Schools have been used for social engineering and experimentation rather than for basic education. Administrators and teachers perform so many non-educational functions that they neglect the basics [Where is the evidence to support this claim?]
7. Educational expenses could be contained by reducing nonacademic frills, eliminating electives, and concentrating on required basic skills and subjects [This is a claim of eliminating an enriched curriculum for the poor that is offered to students of more advantaged schools].
8. Permissive policies have contributed to violence and vandalism in the schools [Where is the evidence to support this claim?]
9. Minority groups such as African Americans and Hispanics have been short-changed by the schools with respect to instruction in the basic skills [Where is the evidence to support this claim?]
10. U. S. industrial and business productivity has been reduced by undereducated graduates who cannot perform fundamental skills, who cannot read or write effectively, and who lack productive work skills and habits.[Given the limited survival of other philosophies given the resistance of Essentialism, where is the evidence to support this claim?] (p. 270)

The criticisms just cited have tended to be accepted as unexamined assumptions further reinforcing Essentialism. In fact, Pragmatism/Progressivism was called un-American. The threat of the cold war in the 1950s, the launching of Sputnik, and the anti-communism fervor in the United States meant that “the vocabulary of progressives, including ‘reform,’ ‘social justice,’ ‘democratic,’ and ‘progressive,’ could be (and actually was) labeled as Un-American (Oakes & Lipton, 2007, p. 92).”

Historical Pattern for the Call: “Back to Basics”

Historically, we can see a pattern. Whenever a competing philosophy to Essentialism emerges to the point of threatening Essentialism, the system resists resulting in the call for “back to basics”. This cry usually argues that scholastic standards have fallen, academic rigor and sequence are absent in many schools, and that there needs to be a return to essential skills and subjects

…they attributed rising crime rates to lack of discipline and lack of standards in the schools…They, like contemporary critics, contended that the academic standards had eroded because of permissivism and progressivism … However, the Essentialism of the 1930s makes an interesting contrast with the contemporary movement. The early Essentialists largely came from within the ranks of professional educators… Contemporary Essentialism draws much of its support from outside of the educational profession, particularly from business leaders and from New-Conservative political forces. (Gutek, 1997, p. 266)

Philosophy for the 21st Century

Essentialism met the needs of the Industrial Era but does this mean it is the most effective philosophy in today’s world? “There are three basic principles of essentialism: a core of information, hard work and mental discipline, and teacher-centered instruction” (Johnson, Dupuis, Musial, Hall, & Gollnick, 1999, p. 390). The idea of transmitting a core of information (i.e., the body of information including Eurocentric curriculum and “correct attitudes” reflecting the monoculturalism of those possessing the dominant power in society) from one generation to another is increasingly problematic. “With the burgeoning of new knowledge in contemporary society, Essentialism may be contributing to the slowness of educational change. In this context, Essentialism has been criticized as obsolete in its authoritarian tendencies” (Johnson, Dupuis, Musial, Hall, & Gollnick, 1999, p. 391-392).

Peter Drucker, one of the foremost systemic organization management theorists of our time, coined the term “knowledge worker” to emphasize the need to teach students how to think, evaluate information, and generate new knowledge because they are now living within the knowledge era. His insight has challenged Essentialism and he predicted that 50 years from now people will look back to our time and conclude that what was occurring was an increasing gap between the way schools teach and the way students learn (Drucker, 2002). In spite of such insight, the Essentialist philosophy has increased its control on education, especially through the publication *A Nation At Risk* and the legislation *No Child Left Behind.* While a positive dimension of *No Child Left Behind* has been the acknowledgement of the “achievement gap” between Whites and traditionally underserved students (i.e. African-American, Hispanic Americans, and Native American), it did not challenge the philosophy of Essentialism but reinforced it. This can be seen in its mandate for “high stakes” testing to judge student performance and hold schools accountable. What is the rationale for making such decisions on the basis of a single standardized test administered once a year?

Essentialism: Purpose of Education

The purpose of education is to perpetuate the status quo by transmitting a body of information and ensure the perpetuation of monoculturalism. “Essentialism’s goals are to transmit the cultural heritage and develop good citizens” (Johnson, Dupuis, Musial, Hall, & Gollnick, 1999, p. 391). This philosophy emphasizes cultural heritage. The “back to basics” cry is a way of saying that the Essentialist’s cultural heritage is being threatened. Because of the emphasis on monoculturalism, there has tended to be resistance to multiculturalism. The traditional cultural heritage is ensured through the use of the term “assimilation.” This means that all other groups of people will be assimilated into the thinking and acting of the dominant group. This may be an unexamined assumption given that people expected to assimilate still value their historical culture. Historically, assimilation meant destroying one’s primary culture and conforming to the culture of the dominant society. People from the non-dominant culture were forced to “give up” their native culture under the guise of assimilation.

When someone does not understand the socio-political underpinnings of an educational philosophy, he or she is unable to engage in critical thinking about education and simply accepts Essentialism as the “correct” or “right” way of educating. Interestingly, the students most vulnerable to this philosophy of education are the ones for whom this philosophy is advocated: the poor, English Learners, and the traditionally underserved (i.e., African-American, Native-American, and Hispanic Americans American) (Oakes & Lipton, 2007).

Essentialism: Role of the Teacher

The role of the teacher is authoritarian, defined as teachers controlling “the meaning” of what is to be learned (Oakes & Lipton, 2007, p. 111). Often, the certainty is based on adhering to the textbook or lecture.

…Teachers transmit a core curriculum of basic skills, attitudes, and a body of knowledge through direct instruction and prescribed subject areas in defined programs of study…The rise of teacher testing for professional credentials is an international as well as national effort promoted by the essentialist movement worldwide. (Breitborde & Swiniarski, 2006, p. 81)

Essentialism: Role of the Student

The idea of the student’s mind being an “empty vessel” or a “blank slate” dates back to the ideas of the English philosopher, John Locke, who lived from 1632 to 1704. The use of the term “blank slate” or “tabula rasa” found its way into popular usage to mean that students know nothing and teachers are supposed to “write on the blank slate” and “fill the empty vessel” of the student’s mind. The role of the student is to be a receptive recipient of the information transmitted. Being a “good student” within this context often translates to being a learner who accepts unquestioningly information from authority as being correct and valid. This is to be done valid with passivity and decorum.

Essentialism: Theory of Learning

The approach to learning is to break down whatever is to be learned into its simplest part and build from there. Thus, reading is taught based primarily on phonics even though there are other cueing systems used in the process of reading. Writing is broken down into teaching elements of writing such as parts of speech in isolation rather than having students involved in actually writing and learning to master writing by revising drafts of their work to attain mastery (i.e. through the writing process).

 In contrast to Essentialism in the United States, the countries that have outperformed the United States on tests such as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study are those that immerse students in learning five to seven concepts in-depth rather than the numerous content standards that students were expected to learn in the Essentialist system of the United States.

Essentialism: Who Determines the Curriculum?

An interesting question for reflection is: Who determines curriculum? For example, E. D. Hirsch (1988) wrote a book titled, *Cultural literacy: What every American needs to know.* He stated that eighty percent of the knowledge he identified has existed for at least 100 years and emphasized the importance of “cultural conservatism” (i.e. monoculturalism) (p. xii).

To be sure, Hirsch’s “core knowledge” curriculum includes “contributions” from African Americans and Native Americans. However, it does not see multiple perspectives on knowledge as legitimate or permit debate about the dominant perspective. Rather the curriculum should enable “others” to adopt the traditional largely Anglo-American culture (including both [this monocultural definition of] facts and interpretations) as their own. So, for example, Hirsch would have all children accept – without deliberation or debate about alternatives [i.e. the authoritarian control of curriculum advocated by Essentialism] – the idea that the land Columbus came to was a “new” world, that manifest destiny was a progressive national expansion, and that civil rights law (though not the civil rights “movement” that brought the laws about) has solved the racial problems in America. (Oakes & Lipton, 2007, p. 112)

Today’s teachers stand at the center of a curriculum battle … the traditional curriculum does not match the way students learn, and it favors Americans of wealth and power. But it could be otherwise. Each day American teachers confront and win the curriculum battle, as they engage students with rich and powerful ideas that touch their lives. That is one reason they return to school each day. (Oakes & Lipton, 2007, p. 114)

Essentialism: Assessment

Standardization of curriculum, the role of the teacher, the role of the student, accountability, and assessment illustrates Essentialism.

Traditional assessments typically include forced-choice measures, such as multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blanks, true-false, and matching test item – all of which have a predetermined “correct” answer. Students’ knowledge is assessed by demonstrating their recall of information by selecting or producing the correct answer… The assumption underlying traditional assessment is that learning consists of acquiring knowledge and skills that have been taught as part of the curriculum. (Oakes & Lipton, 2007, p. 210)

Standardized assessments mean that tests have to be constructed in certain ways so that students can be ranked or sorted on the basis of the results. As early as 1886, Emerson E. White, wrote about how standardized assessments determine curriculum: “the use of examination results as a means of comparing the standing of schools and pupils has narrowed and made mechanical the instruction of many a corps of teachers capable of better work” (p. 148). We can see that what he wrote more that a100 years ago was prophetic given the increased use of “high stakes” assessments.

Essentialist multiple choice testing replaced exams where students actually wrote about their understandings. Such multiple choice tests led to the demise, for the most part, of written exams where writing was used as a tool for thinking. One of the fallacies as standardized tests came to dominate assessment was that they were “objective” and their creators did not think that the test construction was based on the dominant culture. Peter Sacks (1999) wrote a book based on his research titled, *Standardized minds: The high price of America’s testing culture and what we can do to change it.* He wrote

The speeded, multiple-choice structure of most standardized tests is historically rooted in a particular paradigm [i.e. transmissive based on Essentialism] of education that largely has defined learning and teaching as [primarily] rote memorization of facts and formulas; the hegemony of abstract knowledge over real-world application and performance; and rigid, militaristic hierarchies placing students in the role of passive observers. In such a paradigm, learning is artificially constructed for schoolchildren rather than something children construct for themselves by their own initiative and desire. Speeded, multiple-choice tests well serve the entrenched system of passive learning.

 Indeed, when learning becomes passive, it is easily standardized…

 When thinking becomes standardized, people are easily objectified, their skills and talents translated into the language and mechanisms of commercial enterprise. (p. 219)

Diane Ravitch, an initial supporter of the current standards movement, wrote a book – *The death and life of the great American school system: How testing and choice are undermining education –* outlining what has happened with the increased use of standardized testing and the use of these tests to create “high stakes” consequences based on the results

The problem with using tests to make important decisions about people’s lives is that standardized tests are not precise instruments. Unfortunately, most elected officials do not realize this, nor does the general public. The public thinks the tests have scientific validity, like that of a thermometer or a barometer, and that they are objective, not tinted by fallible human judgment. (2010, p. 152).

Because they are cheaper to administer than authentic assessment, standardized testing has evolved into the multibillion-dollar industry. There is a political investment in the continuation of their use for reasons other than altruism. As long as this continues, people will avoid the deepest questions: What will our students need to know? How will they learn and apply thinking? What skills and attitudes will they need to develop to thrive in a world that is increasingly governed by a global economy driven by the knowledge industries? The following challenge faces us:

Most of the national assessment we have done thus far is based on lower-order learning and thinking [in spite of claims by testing companies to the contrary]. It has focused on what might be called surface knowledge. It has rewarded the kind of thinking that lends itself to multiple-choice machine-graded assessment. We now recognize that the assessment of the future must focus on higher – not lower – order thinking, that it must assess more reasoning than recall, that it must assess authentic performances engaged in bona fide intellectual work. Our problem is in designing and implementing such assessment (Paul, 1992, p. 13)

Essentialism: Accountability

Educators such as Emerson E. White cautioned as early as 1886 that the use of standardized tests for multiple purposes – such as “the comparing of schools and pupils” (p. 148) – was inappropriate. In spite of warnings, this practice has continued.

Essentialism: Curriculum

The curriculum is standardized, which we will also see in Perennialism. Multiculturalism is resisted even though one’s culture is the context in which learning first occurs and represents the way a person makes sense of the world:

Once we have internalized the external culture and made it our “second nature” it becomes a basis for our own interpretation of our experiences and for our giving them meaning. In other words, this is the psychological consciousness. This consciousness is both learned and validated within the culture and points us to the way that our own interpretation of our experiences is socially constructed. Thus we can begin to see the significance in understanding the culture into which the learners are born and within which they live is we are to understand their learning processes… (Jarvis, 2006, p. 61)

Example of the Need to Question the Assumption of Assimilation

I remember once when I worked at a county office of education and was supposed to prepare a presentation for the County Board Of Education on Indian Education. A person in authority suggested that I talk to someone working in her division who was full-blooded Indian to get help with the presentation. The person in authority asserted that the Native American was “totally assimilated” into the dominant culture. Given much of my research was in the area of human learning and the role of language and culture as the context of learning, I was puzzled. When I met the Native American woman and we were at lunch, I brought up the issue of assimilation into the dominant culture and shared that my understanding is that one’s primary language and culture play a life-long role in learning. She began to cry. I apologized and said that my intention was not to offend or hurt. She said: “You understand and respect my history and heritage. I have had to walk in two worlds for so long, I wish that those who think assimilation is so easy would be open to hearing from those of us who are simply expected to give up our past and automatically become what those in the dominant culture of society assert we become through assimilation.” This wonderful and caring person also shared that she returned to her reservation in order to renew and reenergize herself. I then knew that the person in authority was acting on an assumption – an assumption based on her philosophy of Essentialism. I share this because it illustrates that education is political but rarely recognized as such because the dominant philosophy is taken-for-granted as being accurate, correct, and the “way things are.” Thus “schooling can be an arena for indoctrination, acculturation, and standardization, an institution designed to reproduce the social and economic status quo” (Shannon, 1992, pp. 1-2). By understanding the major philosophies of education, a person can begin to understand that education is, at its core, political.

**Perennialism**

The presentation of Perennialism will be much shorter. Around 1893, when the National Educational Association (NEA) convened a group known as the Committee of Ten “to formulate a reasonable secondary school curriculum”, the result was a “transition from perennialism to essentialism as the dominant form of secondary curriculum” (Ellis, 2004, p. 110). Thus, the “great books” constituting Western civilization constitute much of the Essentialist curriculum.

Given that both Essentialism and Perennialism share the belief of an unchanging set of cultural values that must be preserved and that these reflect White Western Eurocentric understanding (Oakes & Lipton, 2007).

“The term *Perennialism* comes from the assertion that the important principles of education are changeless and recurrent” (Gutek, 1997, p. 279). Consistent with Essentialism, Perennialism views reality as static, reinforcing certainty instead of allowing for the consideration of subjectivity:

Because human nature is constant, Perennialists assert, so are the basic patterns of education … Basically, the universal aim of education is truth [i.e. as created and lived by those in this worldview]. And because that which is true is universal and unchanging, a genuine education should also be universal and constant. (Gutek, 1997, p. 279)

To this assertion of universal and constant truth, other educational philosophies would ask: Whose truth? Whose view of reality is being reflected in the claims being made?

Because philosophies represent different conceptions of ways people interpret reality, anyone writing their philosophy of education needs to pay serious attention to this. Both Perennialism and Essentialism arose long before the present Knowledge Era.

Both Essentialist and Perrenialist philosophies occurred long before the emergence of neuroscience research and what it yields regarding how to promote the cognitive development of students to promote thinking. Thus, beware of terminology because a term like “train the intellect” is historically conditioned. Also, beware of the use of “critical thinking” because it means different things within different philosophies. In Perennialist philosophy, “critical thinking” would mean arriving at the enduring truths found in the past rather than the questioning of one’s own assumptions that often are formed unconsciously. This latter idea is something that those who advocated both Essentialism and Perennialism did not think to question.

Perennialism: Purpose of Education

The purpose of education is to perpetuate the cultural heritage. To ensure this, students are exposed to the great historical works from Western civilization in a variety of academic subjects. According to this philosophy, “approved” truth is found in science, philosophy, literature, history and art. These “truths” are, like Essentialist philosophy, transmitted from one generation to another. The purpose also is “to develop the mind” (Gutek, 1997, p. 281). However, the development of the mind means a disciplined assent of the intellect to these “truths.”

Perennialism: Role of the Teacher

This is considered an authoritarian philosophy because the teacher controls the curriculum and ensures the “correct” and “approved” understandings of the subject matter are covered. In the early grades, the teacher teaches the standardized curriculum similar to teachers following an Essentialist philosophy. In the later grades, the teacher may rely on Socratic Seminars (as a means of developing the student’s intellect). However, this is problematic because the emphasis is not on critical thinking but the guidance of the teacher to ask the kinds of questions that lead students to predetermined “correct” answers considered to be timeless “truth.”

Although the teacher may use a different strategy than that of the Essentialist teacher, the role of the teacher is authoritarian. Teachers were to ensure students were lead “to the discovery of the great truths found in the classic words of Western civilization” (Gutek, 1997, p. 282).

Perennialism: Role of the Student

Students “receive the information” without seriously challenging “intellectual authority” (Oakes & Lipton, 2007, p. 78).

Perennialism: Theory of Learning

The theory of learning tends to be based on the absorption of ideas. This dates back to the theory of learning that innate intelligence determined capacity to learn. The teacher taught. The students “absorbed” information based on differing abilities.

Perennialism: Curriculum

The curriculum is exclusionary and does not reflect the cultures of the diverse students attending our schools. In the early grades, students are supposed to learn the “basics” through transmission of information (i.e. Essentialism). Both Perennialism and Essentialism uphold the traditional monocultural heritage while devaluing the cultures of African-Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans. The curriculum

should be composed on permanent studies that reflect the common elements of human nature and connect each generation to the best thoughts of humankind…

The great books of the Western world embraced all areas of knowledge… four years spent reading and discussing the great books would cultivate standards of judgment and criticism and prepare students to think critically and act intelligently. (Gutek, 1997, p. 283)

Perennialism: Assessment

Tests take the form of essay tests as well as standardized tests or other forms of testing that do not involve writing (e.g., multiple-choice, etc.). Authentic assessment and project-based learning would neither be used in Perrenialist or Essentialist philosophies.

Perennialism: Approach to Teaching Curriculum

The approach to curriculum, like that of Essentialism (i.e., the transmissive paradigm or “banking model”) of education: “…this is a curriculum of considerable academic challenge with no elective courses… [the curriculum] is comprised of integrated units of study in which teachers and students explore ideas through direct instruction, expert coaching, and seminars” (Ellis, 2004, p. 133).

Summary of Essentialism and Perennialism

These two philosophies do not consider education to be political. One reason is the taken-for-granted assumption that their way is the correct way of educating students. Both Perennialism and Essentialism defined the teacher as authoritarian.

There is an emphasis on Essentialist interpretations of patriotism and nationalism (i.e. acceptance of the status quo) such that serious social injustices (e.g. contemporary racism) are kept out of the curriculum. Because in these models students are to be receptive to the information delivered to them by the teacher and textbook, the claims that these philosophies promote critical thinking should be questioned. Such examination might reveal that “conformity to the thinking of the dominant social group is still heavily rewarded: autonomous thought, especially when it questions dominant beliefs and practices, is still routinely penalized” (Paul, 1992, p. xvi).

Given Essentialist schooling, educators will need to teach in ways that reflect the neuroscience research. Paul (1992) wrote:

The fundamental characteristic of the world students now enter is ever-accelerating change, a world in which information is multiplying even as it is swiftly becoming obsolete and out of date, a world in which ideas are continually restructured, retested, and rethought, where one cannot survive with simply one way of thinking, where one must continually adapt one’s thinking to the thinking of others, where one must respect the need for accuracy and precision and meticulousness, a world in which job skills must continually be upgraded and perfected – even transformed. We have never had to face such a world before. Education has never before had to prepare students for such dynamic flux, unpredictability, and complexity, for such ferment, tumult, and disarray. We as educators are now on the firing line. Are we willing to fundamentally rethink our methods of teaching? Are we ready for the 21st Century? Are we willing to learn new concepts and ideas? Are we willing to bring new rigor to our own thinking in order to help our students bring the same rigor to theirs? Are we willing, in short, to become critical thinkers so that we might be an example of what our students must internalize and become?

These are profound challenges to the profession. They call upon us to do what no previous generation of teachers was ever called upon to do. Those of us willing to pay the price will yet have to teach side by side with teachers unwilling to pay the price. This will make our job even more difficult, but not less exciting, not less important, not less rewarding. Critical thinking is the heart of well-conceived educational reform and restructuring because it is at the heart of the changes of the 21st Century. Let us hope that enough of us will have the fortitude and vision to grasp this reality and transform our lives and our schools accordingly. (p. 13)

**Pragmatism/Progressivism**

Learning as the Making Sense of Experience and Attaining Mastery

John Dewey’s view of reality differed from those of the Essentialists and Perrenialists. His did not see learning as static. He saw that learning involved students making sense of their experiences. He recognized that different students might draw interpretations and that job of the teacher was to scaffold learning in such ways that proficiency was attained. Thus, he “opposed a static conception of learning and schooling … He cautioned educators against a simplistic categorization of educational theories and practices into “either-or” polar opposites” (Gutek, 1999, p. 84). He did this in an effort to challenge Progressivism in doing more than simply opposing the traditionalists and wanted to create dialogue. Pragmatism was a competing philosophy to that of Essentialism in the mid-nineteenth century.

As you read about this philosophy you will be able to see that while the dominate form of education tends to reflect Essentialism, we will see elements of Pragmatism/Progressivism being used by teachers who want to be learner-centered. This has tended to occur perhaps because Dewey’s approach promotes cognitive development and this is consistent with the learning theories of constructivism and cognitivism. Because Dewey, unlike the Essentialists and Perennialists, viewed learning as life rather than a preparation for life, Pragmatism/Progressivism would find value in multicultural education.

Dewey emphasized a changing and evolutionary universe where the human situation was not to transcend experience but rather to use it to solve human problems … He argued that philosophy should recognize, reconstruct, and use experience to improve the human condition (Gutek, 1997, pp. 85-86)

Dewey valued experiential learning and advocated the use of the scientific method in the teaching of science. He believed education was transactive. This means that learning involved relationships: teacher to student, student to teacher, and student to student. A teacher who cared about students and earned student trust and respect, often has used the conditions of learning to create a learning environment that maximized learning and utilized time wisely was the intent. Students were to be involved in research with a heavy emphasis on writing to develop the mind.

While he was also called “the Father of Progressive Education,” this can be misleading. The Progressivism related to Dewey was child-centered and community-centered rather than focusing on efficiency (Oakes & Lipton, 2007, p. 85). Those Progressivists reflecting Dewey emphasized the following when they met in Washington, D. C. in 1919:

(1) Progressive education should … [build on knowledge of the student and making instruction interesting and relevant] …initiative, creativity, and self-expression [notice how this need for relevance to the lives of students and real-life learning are emphasized today but not usually included by teachers embracing a Perrenialist/Essentialist philosophy]; (2) all instruction…[should include student interests and involvement] with the real world [applications as much as possible]; (3) [the teacher’s job is scaffolding] research activities; (4) student achievement was to be measured in terms of mental, physical, moral, and social development; (5) there should be greater cooperation among the teacher, the school, and the home and family in meeting the child’s needs for growth and development; (6) the truly Progressive school should be a laboratory in innovative practices. (Gutek, 1997, p. 295)

Pragmatism/Progressivism: Purpose of Education

Within Pragmatism/Progressivism, the purpose of education is not to perpetuate the status quo of society but to try to improve it. Sadly, during the McCarthy era of the communist scare, terminology used in the philosophy of Pragmatism/Progressivism, such as the word “democracy,” resulted in the philosophy of Pragmatism/Progressivism being declared un-American. You can see the clashing purposes of the two dominant philosophies. The Perrenialist/Essentialist defined a “good citizen” as someone who accepts and perpetuates the status quo in society without questioning authority. In contrast, the Pragmatist/Progressivist definition of a good citizen was someone who works to change and improve society. This, for a Pragmatist/Progressivist involved the development of thinking and its applicability across intellectual and social domains.

The purpose of education in this critical constructivist process is not to transmit a body of validated trusts to students for memorization. Instead, critical constructivists argue that a central role of schooling involves engaging students in the knowledge production process. A central dimension of teaching in this context involves engaging students in analyzing, interpreting and constructing a wide variety of knowledges emerging from diverse locations (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 3).

If we looked at the recently revised cognitive domain of Bloom’s taxonomy, we would see the most rigorous form of cognitive development is the construction of knowledge.

Pragmatism/Progressivism: Role of the Teacher

The role of the teacher was to ensure relevance. By including the interests of the students, students wanted to be involved in learning. Interestingly, literature on teaching today strongly emphasizes the need for the teacher to strive to create learning experiences that will capture the interests of students. The teacher was not the sole source of information making Pragmatism/Progressivism a non-authoritarian form of education. Whereas teachers in Essentialism could follow “scripted” lessons to transmit information into the minds of students, teachers in Pragmatism/Progressivism had to be far more effective in working with students because their responsibility was helping students learn how to problem-solve beyond predetermined answers.

One of the reasons that Pragmatism has had difficulty-gaining acceptance is that teachers have tended to be poorly trained in teaching students how to learn within experiential contexts. Poor or inadequately trained teachers can bastardize this philosophy based on an attitude of “anything goes” without development of readers, writers, quantitative problem-solvers and problem-solvers, and critical viewers and listeners. However, when intelligent and highly trained teachers reflect this “philosophy in action,” the result has often been competent and confident learners.

Pragmatism/Progressivism: Role of the Student

The role of the students was to actively use the mind. Dewey believed “that the native and unspoiled attitude of childhood, marked by ardent curiosity, fertile imagination, and love of experimental inquiry, is near, very near, to the attitude of the scientific mind” (Dewey, 1910, p. iii). The relationship of this philosophy to learning theory can be seen in the following description of constructivism:

Learning does not occur when the learner passively receives information. This is interpreted in the most general sense as encouraging learners to use active techniques, such as experiments and real-world problems to solve to create more knowledge and then to reflect on and to talk about what they are doing, thinking, and understanding.

In the constructivist classroom, the learners are the makers of meaning and knowledge. Learners are not empty vessels into which knowledge and wisdom … is poured. Learners are not blank slates… (Pritchard & Wollard, 2010, pp. 47-48)

Although written in 1910, Dewey’s words reflect a contemporary understanding of what constitutes thinking. He emphasized the need for training in thought. He differed from traditional education because of his emphasis on thinking. The purpose of education was

to cultivate deep-seated and effective habits of discriminating tested beliefs from mere assertions, guesses, and options; to develop a lively and sincere, and open-minded preference for conclusions that are properly grounded and to ingrain into the individual’s working habits methods of inquiry and reasoning appropriate to the various problems that present themselves. No matter how much an individual knows as a matter of hearsay and information, if he has not attitudes and habits of this sort, he is not intellectually educated… since, moreover the casual circumstances of the natural and social environment are not enough to compel their acquisition, the main office of education is to supply conditions that make for their cultivation. The formation of these habits is the Training of Mind. (Dewey, 1910, pp. 27-28)

Pragmatism/Progressivism: Theory of Learning

Dewey was a person very much ahead of his time in that his theory of learning very much reflects constructivism and cognitivism

For Dewey, intelligence is socially built [as opposed to what Essentialisms and Perrenialists viewed as a “static view of the mind”] as people share their experiences in dealing with common concerns. Intelligence, the ability to define and solve problems, is acquired through the experience of persisting and working through problem-solving situations. Within the problem-solving context, intelligence results from shared activity in making and using instructs, in fashioning plans of actions, and in acting on hypotheses. (Gutek, 1997, p. 89)

Learning: Constructivism and Cognitivism

Learning is the making sense of experience. In this process the work of a teacher is to help students to correct inaccurate assumptions. Pragmatism/Progressivism reflected the learning theory of Constructivism. This learning theory

is based on the belief that learning occurs when the learner constructs their personal knowledge and understanding and that it has to be an active process on behalf of the learner. The social constructivist believes that the learning takes place through language and dialogue between two or more learners. All constructivists support a pedagogy that promotes teaching techniques which build upon the knowledge and concepts which learners already [correctly] know or understand; this prior knowledge is called “schema” or “mental structure” that represents some aspect of the world … This theory of learning views organized knowledge as an elaborate network of abstract entail structures which represent understanding of the world…

Further, constructivist teaching seeks to provide an environmentally rich, problem-solving context that encourages the learner’s investigation, invention, insight, and inference. (Pritchard & Wollard, 2010, p. 47)

Complexity of Learning

Remember that philosophies arose during different historical periods and made assumptions about learning. In reflecting on this part of the paper, the question is: How might schooling look if everything was based on what we now know about the complexity of learning?

The following captures the complexity of learning:

… human learning … the combination of processes whereby the whole body – body (genetic, physical, and biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and senses); experiences a social situation, the perceived content of which is then transformed cognitively, emotively or partially (or through any combination) and integrated into people's individual biography result in a changed (or more experienced) person. (Jarvis, 2006, p. 13)

Learning as Problem Solving

Dewey advocated five steps to the use of a scientific method in his approach to an education where students engaged in problem solving:

1. The *problematic situation,* in which the person was confused because he or she was involved in an incomplete situation of indeterminate character. In the problematic situation, the individual’s ongoing activity was blocked by some unique situational element that deviated from past experience.
2. In *defining the problem,* the individual examined the problematic situation, and identified that aspect of the situation, the deviant particular, that impeded continuing activity.
3. *Clarification of the problem* involved a careful survey, examination, inspection, exploration, and analysis of the elements involved in the problematic situation. At this third stage of inquiry, the individual systematically and reflectively researched the problem to locate the ideas, materials, and instruments that could resolve the difficulty.
4. By *constructing tentative hypotheses,* the individual established a number of generalizations, if-then statements that were possible means to solving the problem. This process involved mentally projecting oneself into the future and seeing the possible consequences of actions. As a result of hypothesizing the conjecturing, the individual framed tentative solutions that could resolve the difficulty and that had the greatest possibilities for securing the desired consequences.
5. The crucial step involved *testing the preferred hypothesis by acting on it.* If the hypothesis resolved the problem and brought about the desired consequences, then the individual resumed activity until encountering another problem. If the problem remained, then another hypothesis was needed.

Dewey’s experimental epistemology was used as … the method of problem solving in which the learner, as an individual or in association with others, used the scientific method to solve both personal and social problems. Each problem-solving episode became an experimental situation in which the learner applied the method of intelligence to real problems arising in his or her own experience. For Dewey and his followers, the problem-solving method was transferable to a variety of problematic situations.

Dewey’s fifth step, the testing of the hypothesis, represented the greatest departure from the learning patterns of the traditional subject-oriented school. While teachers and students in the more conventional [traditional Essentialist and Perrenialist] schools might explore problems and frame tentative solutions, rarely did they attempt to solve these problems by acting on them directly. Although they might act on problems encountered in their chemistry and mathematics lessons, the solutions to these problems had already been determined. It was most unlikely that students would be encouraged to act on the pressing social, economic, and political problems of the day. Although such problems as war, poverty, and pollution might be discussed in the conventional classroom, the student’s active attempt to resolve these problems was likely to be deferred to times and situations outside the school. It might, in fact, be deferred until the student reached adulthood and became a voter. (Gutek, 1997, pp. 90-91) [Original source for the five stages was: Dewey, J. (1910). *Democracy and education.*  New York, NY: D. C. Heath, pp. 163-168).

Pragmatism/Progressivism: Curriculum

The curriculum lacks the certainty of the “approved” and “funded” and “standardized” curriculum of Essentialism. The curriculum would be a means for student development of thinking and effective communication in all areas.

Pragmatism/Progressivism: Assessment

Rather than relying on simple tests and a single grade on a paper, assessment takes the form of authentic assessment. Students are immersed in research and writing according to clear guidelines (today we might call this information literacy development).

Pragmatism/Progressivism: Accountability

Accountability involves depth of learning as evidenced by student presentations through authentic learning. The teacher would write narratives of student progress identifying areas of mastery and areas needing further development according to clearly defined goals.

Pragmatism/Progressivism: Approach to Teaching Curriculum

The approach to teaching was that the teacher was expected to be an adult role model. As with any social institution, there needed to be a safe and orderly environment. Based on the age of the students, however, Dewey believed that students needed to experience participating in a democratic classroom where students were expected to make choices within boundaries. This was necessary if students were to become citizens capable of individual and critical thought within a democratic society. Thus the absolutes that defined the curriculum of Essentialism and Perennialism, requiring that students “receive” with passivity the information transmitted to them, Dewey saw as obstacles to developing student commitment to inquiry and the development of thinking (Gutek, 1997).

Criticisms continually have surfaced whenever traditional education or the transmissive paradigm (i.e. that which is based on Essentialist philosophy) has felt threatened. Accusations of “social engineering” were directed at Dewey’s efforts to help students recognize the social problems within a society and the need within a democracy for its citizens to strive to address societal problems.

Pragmatism/Progressivism: Conditions of Learning

Dewey grasped that the teacher creates conditions that either facilitate or hinder learning:

Everything the teacher does, as well as the manner in which he [or she] does it, incites the child to respond in some way or other, and each response tends to set the child’s attitude in some way or other …

The extent and power of this influence upon morals and manners, upon character, upon habits of speech and social bearing, are almost universally recognized [as belonging to the teacher by influencing students] … Any or every trait of this kind is an inevitable part of the teacher’s method of teaching. Merely to accept without notice [i.e., for the teacher to behave in an unconscious and unintentional manner his or her] slipshod habits of speech, slovenly inferences, unimaginative and literal response, is to indorse these tendencies [within students], and to ratify them into habits [within students] … (pp. 48-50)

The statements shared by Dewey illustrate the rigor of Pragmatism/Progressivism on the part of the teacher. The teacher must create conditions for learning while monitoring his or her own behavior in working with students so as to maximize student development of thought. Interestingly, 78 years were to pass before Brian Cambourne (1988) would outline eight interrelated dimensions that, when positively used by the teacher, promote student engagement in learning.

Example of Cambourne’s Conditions of Learning Reflecting Pragmatism/Progressivism

Teachers possess the **expectation** that students will succeed. According to Cambourne, expectation is a “gut belief” within the teacher that the student can succeed. In order to have this belief, the teacher must possess enough self-efficacy that she/he knows she/he can make a positive difference in the student’s life. There is something about such a teacher because she/he won’t “give up” on a student. The expectation is conveyed primarily through attitude, facial expression, behavior, and the amount of positive interaction with the student. Anything said to encourage students is aligned with action. The **feedback or responses** of such a teacher conveys dignity and respect. Instead of simply praising a student with such words as “excellent” or “great,” the teacher responds in a way that outlines strengths and builds on strengths while, simultaneously, creating learning experiences based on opportunities for improvement. Such a teacher understands she/he is a role model and **models** everything from social behavior to how to be a learner. When teaching, the teacher models and uses “think aloud.” This means that the teacher slows down her/his thinking as someone who knows something to the point of automaticity in order to share with the student what is taking place in her/his mind as she/he goes about completing a learning task. The teacher understands that she/he is dealing with a developing human being. In order for the student to develop self-discipline, the student needs opportunities to make choices within boundaries. These must be appropriate to the age, etc. of the student. Cambourne (1988) called this **responsibility.** The teacher empowers students by providing choices within boundaries. Hence, when Cambourne’s conditions are used within the philosophy of Pragmatism/Progressivism, there exists an emphasis on being learner-centered. This differs markedly from the authoritarianism that is associated with Essentialism/Perennialism. In such authoritarian-oriented philosophies, responsibility is seems to have an opposite definition: responsibility is doing what a student is told to do. Because the teacher possesses the expectation each student can succeed, she/he immerses students in learning experiences. The teacher understands such **immersion** is necessary so that the student can construct knowledge in the brain. Thus, through immersion the teacher empowers students to learn in ways that result in physiological changes in the brain. Learning is constructing knowledge rather than simply remembering information to regurgitate on a test. Because learning is constructing knowledge based on one’s interpretations of previous experiences that were processed in the brain, a student needs help in correcting errors in thinking. Cambourne recognized that in learning, people make successive **approximations** until mastery is reached. This means that a teacher views errors as effort in that the student is applying her/his current understanding. The teacher strives to understand the logic within the error to help the student move to mastery. One of the most powerful ways that expectations are conveyed is in the way the teacher addresses a student’s approximations. The teacher uses all of these conditions in an interconnected way to create within the student the belief that she/he can succeed. This last condition is called **engagement.** Teacher possesses the expectation or self-fulfilling prophecy the student will succeed and interacts with the student so she/he attains competence and confidence strengthening engagement.

By comparing the way these conditions are reflected in Pragmatism/Progressivism to the way they are interpreted in Essentialism/Perennialism, a person can ascertain the magnitude of difference in classroom realities.

Example of Public Schools Based in Pragmatism/Progressivism rather than Essentialism

Envision a high school where each student has a personalized education, based on a different understanding of the social construction of reality regarding schooling than the one underlying Essentialist schooling. The Big Picture Learning Company - founded in 1995 by Dennis Littky and Elliot Washer - opened a school called the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center (The Met) in 1996. The students attending were “at-risk.” The diversity of the student population was “41% White, 38% Latino, 18% African-American, and 3% Asian-American” and 50% were from low income families (Levine, 2002, p. xix). Every student graduated, was accepted into college, and some graduated with two-year college associate degrees from college courses they passed while in high school. Compared to other secondary schools, The Met in Providence had one-third of the dropout rate and absentee rate, and “one-eighteenth the rate of disciplinary suspensions” (Levin, 2002, p. xix). This example illustrates the need for professors of educational administration to not only prepare aspiring administrators for the existing reality of traditional schooling but also help them be adaptable to different conceptions of schooling. This might promote innovative alternative thinking about the future of schooling (Mirci, Loomis, Hensley, 2011, pp. 12-13).

Other MET schools were created and have had similar success (i.e. outperforming similar schools in graduation rates, college acceptance rates, and low dropout and disciplinary referrals. There are 67 Big Learning Schools in the United States, 23 in Australia, 1 in Canada, 27 in Israel, and 13 in the Netherlands (Big Picture Learning Brochure) [No date given; retrieved from: <http://www.bigpicture.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/big-picture-brochure.pdf> . ]

At these schools the emphasis has not been on a body of content to cover/standards. The emphasis has been placed on the student (Littky & Allen, 1999). Students are not taught a subject like history but are taught to learn how to think as an historian. This extends to thinking scientifically, mathematically, and artistically, etc. Such development occurs through project-based learning based on one’s interests and the learning goals of The Met. The philosophy reflects the Progressivism dating to Dewey that “students do best by confronting problems that arise while doing things they find interesting” (Levine & Peters, 2002, p. xix). Thus, learning begins as “a human encounter” (DeLissovoy, 2010, p. 3).

Interacting with an advisor, personalized education is created around five learning goals that are assessed according to the student’s area of work in the form of two-page evaluative narratives. The following describes how goals constitute the approach to learning:

At The Met, we do this by focusing on five broad learning goals, through which we encourage and measure our students’ learning. The goals are interconnected and applicable to virtually any “subject” students want to study. We give each goal a name and use framing questions to help students understand what it means to pursue that goal. Here are the five learning goals as we currently defined them, each with one framing question as an illustration:

* Empirical Reasoning – *How do I prove it?*
* Quantitative Reasoning – *How do I measure or represent it?*
* Communication – *How do I take in and express information?*
* Social Reasoning – *What do other people have to say about this?*
* Personal Qualities – *What do I bring to this process?* (Littkey & Grabelle, 2004, p. 103)

Two-page evaluative narratives replaced the practice of five-tiered ranking (i.e. A, B, C, D, and F); students groups are not based on chronological age or perceived ability; authentic assessments are used; and students participate in real life internships based on their interests (Levine & Peters, 2002; Littky & Grabelle, 2004). The differences at the Big Picture Learning schools might threaten many who cannot conceive of alternatives to essentialist schooling. “The prevailing mental model for schools and schooling seems to be almost hard-wired into our entire society” (Washer & Mojkowski, 2006, p. 736). The model of Big Picture Learning schools was chosen to illustrate that many of the components of the enduring 19th and 20th century ideology governing the structure and function of current traditional schools do not exist at these schools. Students are free from being labeled, sorted, ranked, and judged on the social constructs of perceived ability.

 Because Dennis Littkey and Elliott Washer have created successful learner-centered schools, they understand the necessity of adults influencing students in positive ways:

Those of us involved in kid’s lives need to remember how fragile they are, especially teenagers. Even the toughest ones need us more than they would ever admit. As adults, we have the power to break their spirits with even the smallest word or gestures, and with some kids, we may never get a chance to help build them back up again. (Littky & Grabelle, 2004, p. 103)

Pragmatism/Progressivism Instructional Strategies and Essentialism

Interesting phenomena are occurring in education. The curriculum, even the Common Core State Standards, arise from the philosophy of Essentialism. Until a paradigm shift occurs with the education system, educators will need to utilize Pragmatism/Progressivism’s theory of learning: (1) to make learning relevant for students; (2) to demonstrate the applicability of learning to a “real life” application; (3) to use research-based instructional strategies that involve students in actively using their minds; (4) to know that each subject area is comprised of its own literacy (e.g., scientific literacy, mathematical literacy, literary literacy, historical literacy, artistic literacy, etc.); and, (5) involve students in writing across the curriculum.

**SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTIONISM**

Social Reconstructionism: Purpose of Education

Whereas Essentialism and Perennialism exist at the end of the continuum where the purpose of education is to perpetuate the status quo of society, Social Reconstructionism exists radically at the opposite end. Social Reconstructionism grew out of progressivism.

George Counts, a disciple of Dewey, broadened Dewey’s notions of education as a political endeavor necessary for a democracy. Counts and his followers, such as Theodore Brameld of Boston University, sought systemic changes of social conditions that would reconstruct society and fashion a new social order necessary for a democracy.

…He was skeptical about the motivations of schools where values and information were imposed upon the learner by the prevailing culture… Writing in the 1930s, when the American capitalist system was collapsing in an economic depression, Counts sought to build a “new social order” and to avoid the pitfall of an educational system that was one of indoctrination. (Breitborde & Swiniarski, 2006, p. 93)

Challenging the “Banking Model” (i.e. Essentialism)

The “Banking Model” was a term created by Paulo Freire to describe the way the education system in Brazil was perpetuating the status quo in society. Freire challenged the educational institution that socialized peasants to accept their social status in society. The term, “Banking Model, spread around the world. In contrast to this term, he developed the term “Problem-Posing” as an educational model. Within this latter model is an approach to teaching called “Critical Pedagogy.” Within critical pedagogy, students learn to question social inequalities that exist. The questions posed challenge students to seek ways to create a more socially just democratic society.

Paulo Freire was hired by a more progressive government to help the peasants learn to read and write. He was enormously successful in this endeavor. He began with the question in the minds of the peasants: Why are we peasants? Given the relevance of the question to the lives of the peasants, they became deeply engaged in learning to read and write. They developed critical consciousness that they were not fated to be peasants. Unfortunately, the government changed to a conservative one. This government saw the threat of a literate populace. Paulo Freire was imprisoned briefly and then went to France. He also spent time in the United States.

The Problem-posing model reflects Pragmatism/Progressivism but goes beyond it in emphasizing the need for students to develop critical consciousness and work towards ending human suffering. Of Paulo Freire, bell hooks wrote,

When I discovered the work of the Brazilian thinker Paulo Freire, my first introduction to critical pedagogy, I found a mentor and a guide, someone who understood that learning could be liberatory. With his teachings and my growing understanding of the ways in which the education I had received in all-black Southern schools had been empowering, I began to develop a blueprint for my own pedagogical practice … where students could raise critical questions about pedagogical process. (hooks, 1994, p. 6)

Social Reconstructionism: Role of the Teacher

The role of the teacher is to interact with students in empowering ways over societal issues and student interests. The teacher interacts with students in ways that promote a classroom environment of mutual civility and respect. This includes the use of problem posing and responding.

Social Reconstructionism: Role of the Student

The role of the student is to be a co-creator of knowledge. The students, as a dimension of their learning, are not only exposed to social problems but engage is seeking solutions to them. The role of the student is to question and reason and think (rather than the essentialist role of accepting what is transmitted with passivity and decorum). Thus, students learn critical analysis. According to this philosophy,

Criticism, defined as an exploration of the relationship between social organization and individual consciousness, reveals that economic hardships are caused by social and political decisions made at levels beyond their immediate control. We say “immediate” because involving political change is possible regardless of one’s social class. [Paulo] Freire believed that students could transform inequitable social and political structures if they critically confront problems and understand their source. In order to identify structural problems, students must learn about the world by researching it within their context. This approach engages students with a new reality-one that is contextual and fluid, no historically static. This new political understanding invokes progressive social change and humanization. Freire was convinced that humans must understand the structural source of individual problems before their society can be repaired. (Dale & Hyslop-Margison, 2010, p. 96)

Social Reconstructionism: Theory of Learning

The theory of learning is constructivism and cognitivism.

Social Reconstructionism: Curriculum

A problem-posing education becomes a useful means of confronting social issues and moving toward humanization. However, students must have the necessary knowledge and understanding of social and political reality to critique their situations … humans must critically reflect on their historical situations to determine the cause of oppression and to eliminate that cause …Through reflective and critical engagement with their historical contexts, then, people can identify social injustices that generate personal hardships and dehumanization … [Paulo Freire was concerned that some students may fear change], disengage from criticism and accept historical situations as concrete or beyond their political influence. Indeed, overcoming the fear of change is a major hurdle … since many students, and citizens more generally, reject change. (Dale & Hyslop-Margison, 2010, p. 96)

The curriculum addresses social problems that create social injustice. The goal is “solving worldwide problems, discovering equitable solutions, and enacting productive changes” (Breitborde & Swiniarski, 2006, p. 93).

The curriculum would address the issue of equity. The following list of questions provide insights regarding equity:

1. How fair is it for some students to attend school in dilapidated, foul-smelling, crowded buildings while others attend class in beautiful buildings with future-oriented technology and well-groomed grounds?
2. How fair is it for wealthier students to have the most experienced and best-qualified teachers, who also earn the highest of all teaching salaries?
3. How fair is it that wealthier students are exposed to an intellectually challenging curriculum and experiences while many low-income students do not even have advanced placement classes offered in their school?
4. How fair is it that students of color, especially males, and students with disabilities or limited English proficiency are pulled out of regular classes and isolated in segregated classes during much of the school day?
5. How accurate are curricular and pedagogy that do not reflect the rich plurality of the people, histories, experiences, and perspectives of the groups that make up the United States and the world? (Johnson, Dupuis, Musial, Hall, & Gollnick, 1999, p. 149).

Social Reconstructionism: Assessment

Authentic assessment is valued. Students demonstrate understanding through project-based and problem-based learning. Reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing critically are the tools for thinking.

Social Reconstructionism: Accountability

Accountability involves students coming to understand self, others, and the world.

Social Reconstructionism: Approach to Teaching Curriculum

At the center of the curriculum is multiculturalism and helping students to be able to understand the dominant culture (Oakes & Lipton, 2007). Understanding involves analysis of both strengths and opportunities for improvement within society. This is necessary in order to ensure human rights for all people. The “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” by the United Nations is a good resource for those interested in a definition of “human rights”. (you can copy and paste the following URL: http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/ )

Social Reconstructionism: Conditions of Learning

Please see the earlier discussion of Cambourne’s (1988) conditions of learning for Pragmatism/Progressivism, as they are reflected in Social Reconstructionism.

Summary

What philosophy most resonates with you in terms of teaching or leading? Once you know the philosophy that grounds you as an educator, you can see how conditions of learning differ dramatically in classrooms based on the philosophical beliefs of teachers. The hope for the future rests with you. Although the exact source of the following statement by Margaret Mead “has never been located in any of Mead’s published work,” it has stood the test of time regarding the possibility of a better world: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has” (Lutkehaus, 2008, p. 254).

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**The Self-System Decides in the Brain Whether or Not to Engage in Learning**



# The

**Meta-Cognitive**

**System**

# The

**Cognitive**

**System**

# The Self-System

 **“Symbols serve as the vehicle**

 **of thought.**

By symbolizing their experience, people give structure, meaning, and continuity to their lives.”

 *Albert Bandura*

**“People’s level of motivation, affective states, and actions**

**are based more on what they *believe* than on what is objectively the case.”**

 ***Albert Bandura***

Self-

Actualization

(Sense of Meaning and Purpose in Life)

Universal Love

Ego Needs

Social Needs

Survival Needs

(Body)

#### Hierarchy

**Of Needs**

### Abraham

***Maslow***

**Self-System: Internal Self-Regulation/Self Symbolization**

**The Self-System is that part of the brain that makes the decision about whether or not to engage in learning. The job of the teacher is to transform negative and self-defeating self-system beliefs so all people can succeed.**

**Self-Attributes: the combined effects of one’s personal attribute beliefs existing in such categories as physical appearance, intellectual ability, athletic ability, and social ability constitute one’s overall self-concept of self. For example, one may feel his/her athletic ability is superior to others but intellectual ability is inferior.**

**Self and Others: beliefs about one’s acceptance and status within groups. The extent to which one perceives a sense of high status within groups he/she values determines the individual’s overall sense of acceptance and effects one’s motivation. One’s beliefs about the characteristics of formal/informal groups and his/her relationship to these groups impact perceptions of inclusion/exclusion.**

**Nature of the World: categories of causal beliefs of why events occur. Included are beliefs about physical, emotional, sociological, and supernatural forces and how they affect specific events/situations/life patterns. These beliefs determine one’s disposition to the world as hostile, neutral, and/or a friendly environment. The more friendly the perception, the more flexibility in one’s thinking.**

**Efficacy: beliefs addressing the extent to which one believes he/she has the resources/power to change/influence a situation. One might have a strong sense of efficacy in one situation but have a powerless or weak sense of efficacy in another situation. “Learned helplessness”: a pattern of behavior emerging from low self-efficacy.**

**Purpose: beliefs that may exert control over all other elements of the self-system because the purpose/purposes one identifies with his/her life dictates what that person considers important and impacts every self-attribute of one’s relationship to every person, place, thing, and event/situation within that individual’s constellation of beliefs.**

**Handout: “ISMS” – Forms of Institutional Oppression and Marginalization People Face. This is to be used in Class Session #1/**

**Social Justice Center at Washington University**

http://sjc.wustl.edu/aboutsj.shtml

Social Justice is…

|  |
| --- |
| ...the pursuit of equity for populations, who are, currently and historically, marginalized, exploited, disempowered, or violated based on their social group membership. These manifestations of oppression are the pervasive existence of social inequality woven through social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Rooted in civil rights movements of the past century this includes the rights of the following: people of color; people with diverse religions; women, people with disabilities; homosexuals and bisexuals; the poor and working class; and younger and older adults.The pursuit of social justice inevitably involves working to dissolve the many "isms" of injustice and oppression. The following list is an introductory survey of the isms upon which the Center places its primary focus. |
|  |
| **Ableism**is a pervasive system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses people who have mental, emotional, and physical disabilities. Like other forms of oppression, ableism operates on individual, institutional and cultural levels. Deeply rooted beliefs about health, productivity, beauty, and the value of human life, perpetuated by the public and private media, combine to create an environment that is often hostile to those whose physical, emotional, cognitive, or sensory abilities fall outside the scope of what is currently defined as socially acceptable. No word perfectly describes what the range of people with disabilities experience. We use the terms ableism or disability oppression because they reflect the viewpoint that people with disabilities or with physical or mental limitations, are considered to be inadequate in meeting expected social and economic roles.  |
|  |
| **Ageism**is the pervasive oppression of people based on their age. Discrimination comes from the societal myth that older and younger people cannot perform certain cognitive or affective standards in the same way simply because they are younger or older. Therefore, based on people's ages, they have unfairly prescribed roles. |
|  |
| **Classism**is the institutional, cultural, and individual set of practices and beliefs that assign differential value to people according to their socio-economic class; and an economic system which creates excessive inequality and causes basic human needs to go unmet. The class continuum is the ranking of individuals or families in a society by income, wealth, status or power; the range of experiences out of which particular class identities are defined. Lines may be drawn at different points along this continuum, and labeled differently. Class is a relative thing, given that we can look both up and down the continuum. However, is clear that everyone at the top end is mostly dominant/agent while everyone at the bottom end is mostly subordinate/target. **Questions to consider**: Who accumulates wealth and how does that differ from income? As we consider programming opportunities and social outings, have you considered the cost and if those around you can afford more or less than yourself? Are there organizations that you are involved in simply because of your class status? |
|   |
| **Ethnocentrism**describes the tendency to evaluate other cultures against the standards of one's own. it occurs when negative value judgments are made about others based on the differences between one's own culture and a foreign culture. This type of oppression can lead to excessive nationalism, which can be used to justify racism, prejudice, and the persecution of minorities. **Questions to consider:** Why do we assume that the way we do things in our country or part of the country is the right way, or the only way? Why do we fear what we don’t know? What is the difference between patriotism and ethnocentrism? |
|   |
| **Genderism**is the systematic oppression of individuals whose actions, and other mannerisms, do not fulfill a society’s prescribed gender roles. Embedded in individual, cultural/societal, and institutional beliefs that there are, and should be, only two genders, genderism targets any individual who does not conform to “acting like a boy” or “acting like a girl.”**Questions to consider:** What is the difference between sex and gender? Why is this distinction important? Are you treated differently because of your gender or your sex? Have you ever been discriminated or threatened because of the way you express your gender? |
|   |
| **Heterosexism**is the individual, institutional, and societal/cultural beliefs and practices based on the belief that heterosexuality is the only normal and acceptable sexual orientation. Heterosexism is rooted in homophobia and biphobia, and transphobia. Homophobia is the fear, hatred, or intolerance of lesbians and gay men. Homophobic acts can range from name-calling to violence targeting lesbian or gay people. Biphobia is the fear, hatred, or intolerance of bisexual people. Transphobia is the fear, hatred, or intolerance of anyone who is transgendered, crosses the boundaries of traditional gender roles, or who is transsexual. **Questions to consider:** Do you automatically assume that someone is or would be interested in dating someone of the opposite sex? Why are homosexuals not allowed to be married? Why are people killed because of their sexual orientation? |
|   |
| **Racism**is any profound and/or global judgment of an individual's character, capacity, or overall worth, on the basis of their race, ethnicity, or skin color, and often demonstrated by discriminatory language and behavior. Racism is often manifest as the systematic subordination of members of targeted racial groups who have relatively little social power in the United States (Blacks, Latino/as, Native Americans, and Asians), by the members of the agent racial group who have relatively more social power (Whites). The subordination is supported by the actions of individuals, cultural norms, and values and the institutional structures and practices of society. |
|   |
| **Religious Oppression**is the subordination, marginalization and persecution of an individual or group based on their religious or non-religious belief and/or practices. Occurring on the individual, cultural/societal, and institutional levels, religious oppression stems from opposing dualistic beliefs around religion, as well as certain teachings and traditions. Much like ethnocentrism, the dominant religious group of the society becomes engrained in its customs and traditions – including those that are secular/non-religious. **Handout: Critical Thinking to Challenge One’s Unexamined Assumptions. This is to be used in Class Session #2**Glossary of Critical Thinking Terms**An Educator's Guide to Critical Thinking Terms and Concepts**Selected terms and their definitions of critical thinking as the beginning of critical inquiry. Taken from: http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/glossary-of-critical-thinking-terms/496**assumption**: A statement accepted or supposed as true without proof or demonstration; an unstated premise or belief. All human thought and experience is based on assumptions. … We are typically unaware of what we assume and therefore rarely question our assumptions. Much of what is wrong with human thought can be found in the uncritical or unexamined assumptions that underlie it. …. One of the key dispositions of critical thinking is the on-going sense that as humans we always think within a perspective, that we virtually never experience things totally and absolutely. There is a connection, therefore, between thinking so as to be aware of our assumptions and being intellectually humble.**critical listening**: A mode of monitoring how we are listening so as to maximize our accurate understanding of what another person is saying. By understanding the logic of human communication — that everything spoken expresses point of view, uses some ideas and not others, has implications, etc. — critical thinkers can listen so as to enter sympathetically and analytically into the perspective of others. See critical speaking, critical reading, critical writing, elements of thought, intellectual empathy.**egocentricity**: A tendency to view everything in relationship to oneself; to confuse immediate perception (how things seem) with reality. One's desires, values, and beliefs (seeming to be self-evidently correct or superior to those of others) are often uncritically used as the norm of all judgment and experience. Egocentricity is one of the fundamental impediments to critical thinking. As one learns to think critically in a strong sense, one learns to become more rational, and less egocentric. See human nature, strong sense critical thinker, ethnocentrism, sociocentrism, personal contradiction.**ethnocentricity**: A tendency to view one's own race or culture as central, based on the deep-seated belief that one's own group is superior to all others. Ethnocentrism is a form of egocentrism extended from the self to the group. Much uncritical or selfish critical thinking is either egocentric or ethnocentric in nature. (Ethnocentrism and sociocentrism are often used synonymously, though sociocentricity is broader, relating to any group, including, for example, sociocentricity regarding one's profession.) The "cure" for ethnocentrism or sociocentrism is empathic thought within the perspective of opposing groups and cultures. Such empathic thought is rarely cultivated in the societies and schools of today. Instead, many people develop an empty rhetoric of tolerance, saying that others have different beliefs and ways, but without seriously considering those beliefs and ways, what they mean to those others, and their reasons for maintaining them.**intellectual courage**: The willingness to face and fairly assess ideas, beliefs, or viewpoints to which we have not given a serious hearing, regardless of our strong negative reactions to them. This courage arises from the recognition that ideas considered dangerous or absurd are sometimes rationally justified (in whole or in part), and that conclusions or beliefs espoused by those around us or inculcated in us are sometimes false or misleading. To determine for ourselves [a critical understanding], we must not passively and uncritically "accept" what we have "learned." Intellectual courage comes into play here, because inevitably we will come to see some truth in some ideas considered dangerous and absurd and some distortion or falsity in some ideas strongly held in our social group. It takes courage to be true to our own thinking in such circumstances. Examining cherished beliefs is difficult, and the penalties for non-conformity are often severe.**intellectual empathy**: Understanding the need to imaginatively put oneself in the place of others to genuinely understand them. We must recognize our egocentric tendency to identify truth with our immediate perceptions or longstanding beliefs. Intellectual empathy correlates with the ability to accurately reconstruct the viewpoints and reasoning of others and to reason from premises, assumptions, and ideas other than our own. This trait also requires that we remember occasions when we were wrong, despite an intense conviction that we were right, and consider that we might be similarly deceived in a case at hand.**intellectual humility**: Awareness of the limits of one's knowledge, including sensitivity to circumstances in which one’s native egocentrism is likely to function self-deceptively; sensitivity to bias and prejudice in, and limitations of one's viewpoint. Intellectual humility is based on the recognition that no one should claim more than he or she actually knows. It does not imply spinelessness or submissiveness. It implies the lack of intellectual pretentiousness, boastfulness, or conceit, combined with insight into the strengths or weaknesses of the logical foundations of one's beliefs.**intellectual perseverance**: Willingness and consciousness of the need to pursue intellectual insights and truths despite difficulties, obstacles, and frustrations; firm adherence to rational principles despite irrational opposition of others; a sense of the need to struggle with confusion and unsettled questions over an extended period of time in order to achieve deeper understanding or insight. This trait is undermined when teachers and others continually provide the answers, do students' thinking for them or substitute easy tricks, algorithms, and short cuts for careful, independent thought.**intellectual sense of justice**: Willingness and consciousness of the need to entertain all viewpoints sympathetically and to assess them with the same intellectual standards, without reference to one’s own feelings or vested interests, or the feelings or vested interests of one's friends, community, or nation; implies adherence to intellectual standards without reference to one’s own advantage or the advantage of one's group.**self-deception**: Deceiving one's self about one's true motivations, character, identity, etc. One possible definition of the human species is "The Self-Deceiving Animal". Self-deception is a fundamental problem in human life and the cause of much human suffering. Overcoming self-deception through self-critical thinking is a fundamental goal of strong sense critical thinking. See egocentric, rational self, personal contradiction, social contradiction, intellectual virtues.**sociocentricity**: The assumption that one's own social group is inherently and self-evidently superior to all others. When a group or society sees itself as superior, and so considers its views as correct or as the only reasonable or justifiable views, and all its actions as justified, there is a tendency to presuppose this superiority in all of its thinking and thus, to think closedmindedly. All dissent and doubt are considered disloyal and rejected without consideration. Few people recognize the sociocentric nature of much of their thought.**weak sense critical thinkers:** Those who do not hold themselves, or those with whom they ego-identify, to the same intellectual standards to which they hold "opponents." Those who have not learned how to reason empathically within points of view or frames of reference with which they disagree. Those who tend to think monologically. Those who do not genuinely accept, though they may verbally espouse, the values of critical thinking. Those who use the intellectual skills of critical thinking selectively and self-deceptively to foster and serve their vested interests (at the expense of truth); able to identify flaws in the reasoning of others and refute them; able to shore up their own beliefs with reasons.  **world view:** All human action takes place within a way of looking at and interpreting the world. As schooling now stands, very little is done to help students to grasp how they are viewing the world and how those views determine the character of their experience, their interpretations, their conclusions about events and persons, etc. In teaching for critical thinking in a strong sense, we make the discovery of one's own worldview and the experience of other people's world-views a fundamental priority. |

**Introduction: Why Become Political?**

By Patrick Shannon

[Shannon, P. (Ed.). *Becoming Political: Readings and Writings in the Politics of Literacy Education.*  Portsmouth, NH: Heninemann

Literacy is both liberating [for some people] and dominating [for other people]. Through it, we can learn read and write the world to meet our needs and interests, taking from and making of the world what we will [if those identified as “we” are people advantaged by society and its institutions].

Text is but one way in which we express our literacy. We not only read and write (make sense of and from) the alphabet in connected passages [which the majority believe constitutes literacy so students read and write the words others prepare for us, taking from it correct thoughts, correct behaviors, and correct lives. [Thus, we do not learn to read other types of symbols embedded in social practice and institutions and write other types of symbols through…social action to define ourselves and affirm our cultural histories]. [When we are prevented from understanding the broader understanding of literacy, all there is to literacy is skill involving decoding, encoding, and translating text. Nothing is critically discussed nor analyzed regarding the needs and rights of all people – that, after all, wouldn’t be the basics as there intended form of indoctrination].

Teaching is also liberating and dominating. By teaching, we can learn the connections between our lives and those of other and the relationships between our lives and those of others and the relationships between those lives and the world we live stunts a blurring of teacher and aught as we explore and help others to explore what we wish to make of this world. But by teaching, we may also control the lives of others by concentrating on the management of time, students, information, and materials. In the end, we may not realize that by doing this we too are controlled by the maze of organization without real choices about what, how, and why we teach. In this way, teaching continues a set of hierarchies between teacher and students, among students, and within the curriculum, all of which ensure that most participants will find the teaching exchange unsatisfying.

Schooling is also liberating and dominating. It is a process that can help students and teachers develop the liberating sides of literacy and support teachers who develop liberating relationships while they teaching, leading all to greater control over their lives and even to self-transformation. Schooling can focus our attention on discussion of how we to live together in and other of the classroom.

But schooling can be an arena of indoctrination, acculturation. It is a process that can help students and teachers develop the liberating slide of literacy and support teachers who develop liberating relationships while they teach, leading all to greater control over their lives and even to self- transformation. Schooling can focus our attention on discussions of how we wish to live together in and out of the classroom. But schooling can be an arena for indoctrination, acculturation, and standardization, an institution designed to reproduce the social and economic status quo . . .

Contrary to popular rhetoric, the dominating sides of schooling, teaching, and literacy are most prevalent in North American education … To date, the politics of this education has marginalized many members of racial and ethnic minorities from even the dominating side of literacy, restricted most females access to certain types of scientific literacy, limited the poor to vocational literacy, alienated teachers from their literacy teach, and denied both students and teachers sophistications and liberating literacies. These facts are documented in the statistics of continued enrollments in academic programs; of test scores; of racial, gender, and economic class background of labeled learners at school…

Despite these alarming consequences, few practicing teachers recognize the political facts about school life and school literacy. Rather than consider themselves apolitical in the work – lamenting the politics they do recognize in “the system,” defining their role as delivering already determined content in traditional ways, and abdicating their rightful place in the decision making that influences their students’ and their lives in and out of school (pp. 1-2).

Whiteness and Ethnocentric Monoculturalism: Making the "Invisible" Visible.

[Sue, Derald Wing](http://0-search.proquest.com.books.redlands.edu/indexinglinkhandler/sng/au/Sue%2C%2BDerald%2BWing/%24N?accountid=14729). [**American Psychologist**](http://0-search.proquest.com.books.redlands.edu/pubidlinkhandler/sng/pubtitle/American%2BPsychologist/%24N/60929/DocView/614397503/fulltext/%24B/1?accountid=14729)[59. 8](http://0-search.proquest.com.books.redlands.edu/indexingvolumeissuelinkhandler/60929/American%2BPsychologist/02004Y11Y01%2423Nov%2B2004%243b%2B%2BVol.%2B59%2B%24288%2429/59/8?accountid=14729) (Nov 2004): 761-769.

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**Abstract (summary)**

Whiteness and ethnocentric monoculturalism are powerful and entrenched determinants of worldview. Because they are invisible and operate outside the level of conscious awareness, they can be detrimental to people of color, women, and other marginalized groups in society. Both define a reality that gives advantages to White Euro American males while disadvantaging others. Although most Americans believe in equality and fairness, the inability to deconstruct these 2 concepts allows society to continue unjust actions and arrangements toward minority groups. Making the "invisible" visible is the major challenge to liberating individuals and society from the continued oppression of others. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2012 APA, all rights reserved)(journal abstract)

**Full Text**

American Psychologist 0003-066X 1935-990X American Psychological Association November 2004 59 8 amp\_59\_8\_761 10.1037/0003-066X.59.8.761 2004-20395-020 article award address 761 769 2004 American Psychological Association Making the “Invisible” Visible Derald Wing Sue Department of Counseling and Clinical Psychology, Teachers College, Columbia University

Whiteness and ethnocentric monoculturalism are powerful and entrenched determinants of worldview. Because they are invisible and operate outside the level of conscious awareness, they can be detrimental to people of color, women, and other marginalized groups in society. Both define a reality that gives advantages to White Euro American males while disadvantaging others. Although most Americans believe in equality and fairness, the inability to deconstruct these 2 concepts allows society to continue unjust actions and arrangements toward minority groups. Making the “invisible” visible is the major challenge to liberating individuals and society from the continued oppression of others.

*Editor’s Note*

Given that there is increasing recognition of the potentially biased nature of the science of human behavior and that there are calls to attend to important sociodemographic variables, I have often wondered why psychologists as a group continue to ignore these important dimensions of the human condition in practice, research, education, and training (Sue, 2001; Sue, Bingham, Porché-Burke, & Vasquez, 1999). What makes some psychologists so reluctant or resistant to implementing multiculturalism in their research and practice? Why have APA accreditation criteria not been used more firmly to enforce multicultural standards? I realize that these are strong allegations that may not be shared by the majority of psychologists—and therein lies the problem.

The racial/cultural reality or worldview of many persons of color differs from that of their White colleagues and perhaps from that of the profession at large (Guthrie, 1997). Although White colleagues perceive positive change and movement by the profession in becoming more multicultural (Fowers & Richardson, 1996), people of color continue to see “cultural malpractice” and the growing obsolescence of psychology (Hall, 1997; Sue et al., 1999).

What accounts for this major difference in worldview? Are the majority of psychologists resistant to change because they are simply bigots, racists, sexists, and homophobes? Do they intentionally mean to ignore the concerns of people of color? Isn’t the profession of psychology supposed to be dedicated to improving the lives and life conditions of the people whom psychologists hope to serve? If so, why has it been so hard to get colleagues to understand and change the field and psychological practice?

Strangely enough, it has been through my study of racism and “Whiteness” that I have gained clues to the problem (Sue, 2003; Sue et al., 1999). I have come to realize that most of my colleagues are well-intentioned and truly believe in equal access and opportunity for all but have great difficulty freeing themselves from their cultural conditioning (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Hodson, Dovidio, & Gaertner, 2002; Sue, 1999). They are, in essence, trapped in a Euro American worldview that only allows them to see the world from one perspective. To challenge that worldview as being only partially accurate, to entertain the notion that it may represent a false illusion, and to realize that it may have resulted in injustice to others make seeing an alternative reality frightening and difficult. Although using the terms *Whiteness* and *Whites* may perpetuate the inaccurate notion that these terms describe a racial group (Jones, 1997), little doubt exists that skin color in this society exposes people to different experiences. Being a White person means something quite different from being a person of color (Sue, 2003). I use one particular example here to illustrate how Whiteness and its invisibility serve as a default standard that makes it difficult to see how it may unfairly intrude into the lives of racial/ethnic minority groups (Fine, Weiss, Powell, & Wong, 1997).

Commonly known as the “Race Information Ban,” Proposition 54 on the 2003 ballot in California attempted to forbid the government from collecting demographic information on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, or national origin in public education, employment, and contracting. The polls taken at that time showed that the initiative, under the guise of moving the United States to a color-blind society that facilitates antidiscrimination, was supported by a majority of California voters. From my perspective, I saw this proposition as potentially dangerous, with devastating consequences for people of color. Rather than preventing disparities, it would prove to have precisely the opposite effect—lessening the ability to monitor inequities and encouraging greater discrimination. As others have warned, banning racial and ethnic statistics would blind people to real, meaningful differences that exist between groups in educational opportunities, civil rights protections, race-specific medical conditions, and so forth. Agencies, for example, would be unable to determine and rectify health care disparities and racial/ethnic disease patterns important for medical treatments (“Health Disparities Report at Center of Controversy,” 2004; Jones, 1997; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001, 2003). Worse yet, it would undermine accountability for civil rights violations such as hate crimes, discrimination in the workplace, and biased racial profiling. I was concerned that despite the defeat of Proposition 54, so many misguided voters supported the legislation.

After some 35 years of work on diversity and multiculturalism, I continue to be baffled by how difficult it is for many White Americans to see the false promises of the “color-blind society.” When I testified before President Clinton’s Race Advisory Board in 1997 and participated in a congressional briefing on the myth of a color-blind society, for example, I tried to point out how it had a detrimental impact on racial minorities and White Americans (President’s Initiative on Race, 1998). Some White Americans who watched and listened to my testimony on C-SPAN reacted with considerable anger and defensiveness. One person accused me of being a racist of a different color and of supporting “preferential treatment” for minorities, whereas others made actual threats on my life. The reactions of White viewers made me realize that I had pushed powerful buttons in their psyche that aroused strong and negative emotions to my message. Since that testimony, I have often asked myself why some viewers reacted so strongly. Why were they so upset that they needed to threaten me in such a vehement fashion? What was the source of their anger? What raw nerve had I touched? Could it be that I challenged their view of the United States as a fair and just society? More important, could it be that they saw my testimony as potentially truthful about their own biases and prejudices?

Martin Luther King once advocated judging people not by the color of their skin but by their internal character. On the surface, such a statement from a renowned civil rights advocate seems to reinforce the concept of a color-blind society as an answer to discrimination and prejudice. Unfortunately, many proponents of this concept have failed to understand the context of King’s statement and/or have co-opted it for their own ends. For all groups to have equal access and opportunity assumes that a level playing field exists and that everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity or national origin, has an equal chance of success. Although many White Americans may believe that discrimination has been minimized or even eliminated, research clearly indicates that equity currently does not exist in U.S. society (Crosby, Iyer, Clayton, & Downing, 2003; Jones, 1997).

Let me use some statistics to illustrate my point. If one compares the distribution of White Euro American men in certain high-level positions with that of other groups, some very puzzling disparities appear. For example, White men occupy approximately 80% of tenured positions in higher education and 92% of the Forbes 400 executive/CEO-level positions; they constitute 80% of the House of Representatives, 84% of the U.S. Senate, 99% of athletic team owners, and 100% of U.S. Presidents (Sue, 2003). These statistics are even more disturbing when one sees that White men comprise only 33% of the U.S. population! Where, I ask, are the persons of color, and where are the women? If one assumes that people of color and women are equally capable and qualified, the disparity can only be caused by an uneven playing field favoring White men. Ironically, these statistics would not even exist to gauge civil rights progress if society were, indeed, color blind.

In my research on the causes and effects of bias and discrimination, I have come to realize that color blindness uses “Whiteness” to mimic the norms of fairness, justice, and equality by “whiting” out differences. It is a default key that perpetuates the belief in sameness and equality. In essence, color blindness is really a denial of differences. A denial of differences is really a denial of the unfair power imbalance that exists in society. A denial of power imbalance allows Whites to deny their unearned privilege and advantage in society. And by couching racial discrimination in the rhetoric of equal treatment and opportunity, White Americans perpetuate the false illusion that equality exists and that they serve no role in the oppression of others (Dyer, 2002).

In my work on racism awareness training, I have come to realize that many of my White students pretend not to see color because, whether consciously or unconsciously, they are motivated by the need to appear unbiased and by fears that what they say or do may appear racist (Rothenberg, 2002). Whether knowingly or not, color blindness allows Whites to deny the experiential reality of minorities by minimizing the effects of racism and discrimination in their day-to-day lives. It further allows many Whites to deny how they benefit from their own Whiteness and how their Whiteness intrudes upon persons of color.

I have often heard, for example, White teachers express resentment toward African American students who engage in Black cultural expressions in the classroom. Black students are frequently admonished to “leave your cultural baggage at home and don’t bring it into the classroom.” Many educators possess little awareness that they also bring their own Whiteness into the classroom and operate from a predominantly White ethnocentric perspective. I wonder how they would respond if they were to be asked, “Why don’t you leave your White cultural baggage at home when teaching?”

Several years ago, during my sabbatical, I field tested a study on “The Invisibility of Whiteness” (Sue, 2003). I would approach White strangers in the middle of downtown San Francisco and ask them the following question: “What does it mean to be White?” Their responses were interesting, to say the least. Many respondents did not seem to understand my question, seemed to become annoyed, or said they had never thought about it. When asked “why,” the most prevalent response was, “It’s not important to me or it doesn’t affect my life.” Others, however, became quite irritated, angry, and defensive. They seemed to believe that I was accusing them of being racist or bigoted, and they found the question offensive. A significant number of respondents denied being White by saying “I’m not White; I’m [Irish], [Italian], [Jewish], [German]....” It was obviously easier for them to acknowledge their ethnicity than their skin color.

From my interviews, I concluded that White respondents would rather not think about their Whiteness, are uncomfortable or react negatively to being labeled White, deny its importance in affecting their lives, and seem to believe that they are unjustifiably accused of being bigoted by virtue of being White. Those who were most uncomfortable with the question generally ended the conversation with statements like “people are people,” “we are all Americans,” or “we are all the same under the skin.” It was clear that their discomfort led them to desire eliminating racial differences from the conversation or diluting them. To persons of color, “Whiteness” is most visible when it is denied, evokes puzzlement or negative reactions, or is equated with normalcy. Few people of color react negatively when asked what it means to be Black, Asian American, Latino, or a member of their race. Most could readily inform the questioner about what it means to be a person of color.

It appears that the denial or mystification of White Euro Americans regarding the issue of Whiteness has a significant underlying reason. Whiteness is transparent precisely because of its everyday occurrence. It represents institutional normality, and White people are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, average, and ideal. As a person of color, however, I do not find Whiteness to be invisible because I do not fit many of the normative qualities that make Whiteness invisible.

The deception of Whiteness as a universal identity has a monumental hidden meaning—that is, being a human being is being White! Elsewhere, I have stated that the invisible veil of Whiteness inundates the definitions of such expressions as “human being,” being “just a person,” and being an “American.” The speaker is usually saying something like this: “Differences are divisive, so let’s avoid acknowledging them and seek out our commonalities. I’m uncomfortable with racial differences, so let’s pretend they don’t exist.”

It suddenly dawned on me that the invisibility of Whiteness is motivated by the denial of the advantages associated with being White or what some now call “White privilege.” White privilege can be defined as the unearned advantages and benefits that accrue to White people by virtue of a system normed on the experiences, values, and perceptions of their group (McIntosh, 2002; Sue, 2003). Because of its invisibility, White privilege is seen as a source of strength, and it provides Euro Americans with permission to deny its existence and use it to treat persons of color unfairly. I realized the insidious and seductive nature of White privilege on White Euro Americans. The benefits that accrue to them by virtue of their Whiteness serve to keep them satisfied and enlist their unwitting complicity in maintaining unjust social arrangements.

It was the recognition of the invisibility of Whiteness that provided the clue to another form of invisibility that may be much more damaging and problematic: *ethnocentric monoculturalism* . This is a term used to describe the invisible veil of a worldview that keeps White Euro Americans from recognizing the ethnocentric basis of their beliefs, values, and assumptions (Sue et al., 1999; Sue & Sue, 2003). Because of its lack of visibility, it is a worldview that is imposed on all culturally diverse groups in this society. Although Whiteness is not identical to ethnocentric monoculturalism, the psychological dynamics related to the denial of differences—that is, equating it with normalcy and not understanding how it intrudes on the life experiences of those who do not share its worldview—are similar. Ethnocentric monoculturalism shares features of what Wrenn (1962, 1985) called “cultural encapsulation” and Jones (1972, 1997) called “cultural racism.” It is characterized by five major attributes that potentially result in cultural oppression (Sue et al., 1998; Sue & Sue, 2003).

Ethnocentric monoculturalism creates a strong belief in the superiority of one group’s cultural heritage, history, values, language, beliefs, religion, traditions, and arts and crafts. The collective sense of superiority leads to a sense of “choseness” and entitlement that has been described as a dangerous belief that may lead to conflict with out groups (Eidelson & Eidelson, 2003). In the United States, this component of ethnocentric monoculturalism is manifested in the value of individualism, the Protestant work ethic, capitalism, the desirability of certain physical features (blond hair, blue eyes, and fair skin), monotheism (Christianity), monolingualism (English), and a written tradition (Katz, 1985). People who possess or adhere to these characteristics are often allowed easier access to the rewards of the society; their validation in society makes them feel special, chosen, and entitled. Their “superior” status in society also makes them prone to believing that their definitions of problems and solutions are the right ones. In many respects, the belief in individual or group superiority often results in an inability to empathize or understand the viewpoints or experiences of other individuals who are different from them (Eidelson & Eidelson, 2003; Hanna, Talley, & Guindon, 2000; Keltner & Robinson, 1996).

In the field of psychology, the belief in superiority is often translated into an inflexible assumption of possessing the absolute truth that defines the profession. Some psychologists of color, for example, point out that the original definition of *psychology* arose from African-Egyptian civilization and was considered the study of the “soul or spirit” rather than the mind or behavior (Parham, 2002). Yet it is a strong Western belief that the latter definition is more valid and scientific (Parham, White, & Ajamu, 1999). Likewise, in the West, scientific empiricism is considered a superior means of asking and answering questions about the human condition (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2001). Western science remains skeptical of non-Western and indigenous methods that relate to spirituality in ascribing causation.

Definitions of appropriate and therapeutic behavior on the part of clinicians are also manifested in the profession’s code of ethics and standards of practice. These form the basis of accreditation and licensure criteria. It is interesting that framing some of these guidelines into therapeutic taboos (truths) is very revealing about the reality of Western mental health. In the field of clinical practice, for example, therapists are admonished generally not to (a) self-disclose their thoughts and feelings, (b) give advice and suggestions, (c) engage in dual role relationships, (d) accept gifts from clients, and (e) barter services (APA, 2002; Sue & Sue, 2003). These taboos are grounded in beliefs that the therapeutic relationship should not foster dependency, should be free of potential conflicts of interest, and should maintain the objectivity of the helping professional. Although I have obviously simplified the complexity of these guidelines, the question I ask is this: What if other culturally diverse groups consider these behaviors or alternative roles to be qualities of the helping relationship? Indeed, work on indigenous healing and explorations on culture-specific therapeutic approaches indicate precisely this fact (Parham, 2002; Sue & Sue, 2003).

History is replete with examples of Western attempts to civilize the “heathens,” have them adopt a single-god concept, and bring a Western way of life to “less developed” and “primitive” cultures (Hanna et al., 2000). Behind these actions and descriptors are intrinsic beliefs of not only the superiority of one group but the inferiority of the customs, norms, traditions, religions, and lifestyles of other groups (Jones, 1997). Such a determination of inferiority or even pathology is strongly linked to differences from the mainstream culture. Elsewhere, we (Sue & Sue, 2003), concluded the following about the inferiority component of ethnocentric monoculturalism:

Other societies or groups may be perceived as less developed, uncivilized, primitive, or even pathological. The group’s lifestyles or ways of doing things are considered inferior. Physical characteristics such as dark complexion, black hair, and brown eyes; cultural characteristics such as belief in non-Christian religions (Islam, Confucianism, polytheism, etc.), collectivism, present time orientation, and the importance of shared wealth; and linguistic characteristics such as bilingualism, non-standard English, speaking with an accent, use of nonverbal and contextual communications, and reliance on the oral tradition are usually seen as less desirable by the society. (p. 70)

This perception means that people of color, for example, are prone to being seen as less qualified, less capable, unintelligent, inarticulate, unmotivated, lazy, and as coming from broken homes. Little doubt exists that the perception of inferiority can be translated into unequal access and opportunities in education, career options, employment, hiring practices, housing, and so on. In mental health practice, it may mean pathologizing the lifestyles or cultural values of clients who do not share characteristics of the mainstream.

In truth, all major groups and societies are ethnocentric. They believe strongly in the superiority of their own group and the inferiority of other groups. Anyone who has spent significant time in China and Japan, for example, has been exposed to the Asian cultural belief that the Chinese or Japanese come from a superior culture and history (Chu, 1991; Gao, 1991). The distinguishing characteristic between ethnocentrism and ethnocentric monoculturalism, however, is power—one group’s ability to impose its reality and beliefs upon another group (Sue, 2001). Although power is often associated with economic and military might, I submit that true power resides in a group’s ability to define and impose that reality upon others.

Several years ago, a Native American colleague asked an audience, “Who owns history?” The answer to that question is precisely answered by the title of Robert Guthrie’s book, *Even the Rat Was White* (Guthrie, 1976, 1997). The extreme bias in knowledge construction from a Euro American perspective means that the history taught to children is at best incomplete, and at worst, inaccurate and distorted (Banks, 2004). When children are told, for example, that “Columbus discovered America,” teachers are not only perpetuating an ethnocentric illusion of superiority for the mainstream group but are engaging in cultural oppression of Native Americans. Native American children who are told this falsehood know a different reality (Columbus was lost and thought he had discovered the continent of India). This reality, however, is tested further when teachers give a “true/false” test with the statement, “Columbus discovered America.” To answer “true” means the youngster actually believes the statement or “sells out.” To answer “false” is to get the answer wrong. The Native American student is caught in a catch-22.

In conclusion, it appears that the group who “owns” history also controls the gateway to knowledge construction, truth and falsity, problem definition, what constitutes normality and abnormality, and ultimately, the nature of reality. When those in the social sciences use terms and concepts for racial/ethnic minorities like “genetically inferior,” “culturally deficient,” or “culturally deprived” (Hernstein & Murray, 1994; Riessman, 1962), they set in motion a whole set of interlocking systems grounded in a false reality that is detrimental to persons of color; it privileges one group and oppresses another (Samuda, 1998).

Although institutional structures, programs, policies, and practices are developed to regularize procedures, increase efficiency of operation, and allow for fairness in application, they often contribute to inequities and oppression. Laws, public policy, rules, and regulations endorsed by American society have a long history of bias and discrimination. They are often overt, intentional, and obvious—for example, (a) the Constitutional provision defining Blacks as three fifths of a man; (b) the “separate but equal doctrine” in *Plessy v. Ferguson;* (c) laws forbidding Native Americans to practice their religions; and (d) laws forbidding Asians to own land. Institutional racism continues to this day in the form of criteria (high membership fees and select attributes) to exclude certain “undesirable” groups in private clubs and organizations, real estate associations, and bank lending practices (Jones, 1997; Sue, 2003).

More damaging, however, are the insidious and invisible programs and policies that represent ethnocentric values and beliefs. Because most institutional systems are monocultural in nature, they represent a potential source of cultural oppression for racial/ethnic minorities and women. Standard operating procedures demand compliance and a way of operation that may deny equal access and opportunity (Sue, 1995). Performance appraisal systems, for example, often use criteria for hiring, retention, and promotion that are culture-bound. Some time back, a major multinational corporation contacted me about doing leadership training for Asian American employees whom they believed lacked managerial skills. Apparently, in a survey conducted by the company, Asian Pacific Americans expressed unhappiness with their status in the company, felt they were not being promoted when they were otherwise qualified, and many indicated that they intended to leave the company and seek employment elsewhere. Because the company valued the technical competence of the Asian American workforce and knew that replacement costs in rehiring and training would be great, the solution they proposed was assertiveness training. Because of my work with Asian Americans, I immediately suspected that the company might be operating from stereotypes—that is, that Asian Americans are good in math and sciences but poor in “people skills,” make poor leaders, and are relatively passive and nonverbal (Sue, 1999). I was able to get the company to acknowledge several observations: (a) The definition of a good leader among traditional Asian societies is an individual who is subtle and able to work behind the scenes to obtain group consensus, (b) the criteria used by the company for managerial positions were primarily Western and masculine in orientation (competitive, dominating, and aggressive), and (c) the criteria were not predictive of leadership effectiveness for many Asian Americans (Levinson, 1994). In Asian societies, effectiveness of a leader is judged by team productivity instead of individual achievement. Thus, Asian American employees were being denied promotions on the basis of criteria that were unrelated to their productivity. I am sad to say that although the company has acknowledged these conclusions, it has not changed its performance appraisal criteria.

Institutional bias is often reflected in management systems, communication systems, chain-of-command systems, and performance appraisal systems (promotion and tenure in academia). In academia, for example, a university often mirrors the nature of race and gender relations in the wider society. The university culture may create culture conflicts for students, staff, and faculty of color, leading to alienation, loss of productivity, and problems with retention, graduation, and promotion.

The fourth-century Chinese sage Chang-Tsu often asserted that “how we view the world is not only about what we see, but about what we do not see.” What Americans consciously see and what they are explicitly taught are grounded in basic democratic ideals of equality, justice, fairness, respect, and dignity for the worth of all citizens. These are taught to Americans through the Bill of Rights, the U.S. Constitution, and the Declaration of Independence. What one does not see is the invisible veil of personal and institutional injustice that operates outside the level of conscious awareness (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Sue, 2001). The invisible veil is a product of cultural conditioning; individuals are taught not only the prejudices and biases of society but also the many myths that serve to guide the interpretation of events. Three of these are (a) the myth of meritocracy (the cream of the crop will rise to the top), (b) the myth of equal opportunity (everyone has a chance to succeed in this society), and (c) the myth of fair treatment (equal treatment is fair treatment).

The myth of meritocracy operates from the dictum that there is a strong relationship between ability, effort, and success. Those who are successful in life are more competent, capable, intelligent, and motivated. Those who fail to achieve in society are less capable, intelligent, and motivated. The myth of equal opportunity assumes that everyone encounters the same obstacles in life and that the playing field is a level one. Thus, everyone has an equal chance to succeed or enjoy the fruits of their labor. The myth of fair treatment equates equal treatment with fairness, whereas differential treatment is considered discriminatory or preferential. All three often act in unison to mask disparities and inequities and to allow actions that oppress groups that are not in the mainstream. I use several examples to illustrate this invisible dynamic.

During President George W. Bush’s first run for presidency, syndicated columnist Molly Ivins noted something along the lines of “George Bush was born on third base and believes he hit a triple.” The ultimate illusion of meritocracy allows people to believe that their favored position in life is the result of superior aptitude and hard work rather than privilege and favoritism. Using the baseball analogy, one can say that many people of color and women work equally hard or harder and are equally qualified or more so but seldom make it even to the batter’s box. The illusion that the field is level and wide open—that merit alone is all that is needed—denies the reality of persons of color and women. It dismisses or dilutes the importance of individual, institutional, and cultural racism that places barriers in the way of achievement for these groups. Furthermore, the belief that “you are the master of your own fate” unfairly blames people of color for their inability to achieve more in this society.

Likewise, the backlash against affirmative action is in part due to the public’s perception that equal access and opportunity already exist and that any treatment that uses “race” as one criterion is discrimination because it gives advantages to people of color (Crosby et al., 2003). It is harder for White Americans to see, however, that affirmative action already exists for White males (à la George W. Bush). The affirmative action example also challenges another myth or illusion—that equal treatment is fair treatment, whereas differential treatment is preferential treatment. There is a common belief that if everyone is treated the same, racial or gender discrimination is not possible. Many organizations’ standard operating procedures are developed to apply equally to everyone, thereby avoiding charges of discrimination. What is less visible, however, is that equal treatment can be discriminatory treatment, and differential treatment is not necessarily preferential. Earlier, I used the example of performance appraisal systems to indicate how such a system discriminated against Asian Americans by keeping them from being promoted. Institutions often claim that they do not discriminate because they use the same standards to hire, retain, or promote their employees. Institutions of higher education make a similar claim: If students obtain above a certain grade point average or Scholastic Aptitude Test standard, they can gain admission. The problem is that such “equal” treatment has unfavorable outcomes highly correlated with the racial and gender identity of employees and students.

It is difficult for the majority culture to understand that marginalized groups are not necessarily asking for equal treatment. Rather, they desire equal access and opportunity. Ironically, achieving that end often dictates differential treatment. The blind application of a single policy or standard by institutions may not only be unfair but oppressive as well.

Whiteness and ethnocentric monoculturalism, culturally conditioned in all individuals from the moment of birth, maintain their power through their invisiblity. On a personal level, people are conditioned and rewarded for remaining unaware and oblivious of how their beliefs and actions may unfairly oppress people of color, women, and other groups in society. On an institutional level, people fail to recognize how standard operating procedures serve to deny equal access and opportunities for some while providing advantages and benefits for others. If the profession of psychology and society in general truly value diversity and multiculturalism, and if this is to be a nation that achieves the democratic ideals it professes, then the very difficult process of deconstructing Whiteness and ethnocentric monoculturalism must begin. To do so, however, requires us to realize that our reality is only one of many others. The monocultural curriculum of psychology that reflects only one perspective must be deconstructed and reconstructed to include a multicultural perspective (Banks, 2004). Formal education is one of the primary mechanisms by which misinformation and biases are transmitted to children. Multicultural educators have made clear the revolutionary steps that need to be undertaken in kindergarten through Grade 12 and in higher education to achieve this end (Banks, 2004; Gay, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2004).

For the profession of psychology, this means realizing that explanations of human behavior may be culture-bound and potentially limited in inapplicability to an increasingly diverse population. It means realizing that the knowledge base comes from only one perspective and that there is a great need to develop a truly multicultural psychology that recognizes important dimensions of the human condition such as race, culture, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and other sociodemographic variables. A psychology that does not recognize and practice diversity is a psychology that is truly bankrupt in understanding the totality of the human condition. It will forever perpetuate a false reality that provides advantages for certain groups while disadvantaging and oppressing others. As long as the invisible is not visible, the profession of psychology may continue to operate from monocultural theories and practices that deny the rights and privileges due to all individuals and groups.

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