

JOHN DEWEY

Introduction:- John Dewey, greatest on the pragmatists and generally recognized as the most outstanding philosopher his country has yet produced, made significant contributions to virtually every field of philosophy as well as to such other areas of inquiry as education and psychology. Active for 70 years as a scholar, he was a prolific writer publishing approximately fifty books and more than eight hundred articles. Many of these have been translated into various foreign languages.

Principles of Philosophy of Education:-

1. Analysis of Reflective Inquiry:- Perhaps the most important single emphasis of John Dewey in his insistence upon applying reflective or critical inquiry to problems or indeterminate situations what is involved in problem solving or thinking through a problem? what is critical inquiry? He does one apply intelligence to human affairs? Dewey's answer to these questions

is set forth in its simplest terms in *How we think*, and a more sophisticated version is given in *Logic*. The *Theory of Inquiry*. In a sense the phases or steps in a complete act of reflective thinking afford an outline for each of his major works and the had a lifelong concern with what is involved in reflective thinking.

(i) First step:- In first step a complete act of reflective thinking is the appearance of the problem. This may be marked by a more or less vague sense of something having gone wrong a breakdown in habitual responses or modes of action. One of our beliefs is questioned, or acting upon it leads to a conflict or perplexity.

(ii) Second step:- In this step clarification of the problem. Through analysis and observation we gather sufficient data to formulate the difficulty or define the problem.

(iii) Third step :- with the problem clearly stated we pass to the stage of appearance of suggested solutions or hypotheses as to how to solve the problem.

(iv) Fourth step :- Deductive elaboration is done it means the reason out the implications of the various hypothesis. If we take the first hypothesis, we may expect such and such consequences, or we need to make additional observations or gather more informations to see what may be expected.

(v) Fifth step :- Fifth step is that of Verification. Through observation or experiment we check out the hypothesis which looked most promising to us.

These steps or stages do not necessarily come one right after another but through this pattern is somewhat oversimplified or fundamental it is basically accurate. This is what is involved in problem solving activity whether it is

personal problem, an important social conflict, or a weighty scientific problem when we solve a problem in this way moreover, we have not merely a solution to our difficulty but also some descriptive or explanatory statements about how it was solved.

2) View of Experience: - Experience is one of the central concepts in Dewey's thought, occurring and recurring throughout his writing. For him experience constitutes the entire range of men's relations to, or transactions with the Universe. We experience nature and things interacting in certain ways made up of experience. According to Dewey's View on Perhaps best be summarized in terms of contrast with what he calls the Orthodox View of experience, that is accepted by both the traditional empiricists and their opponents. Where as the Orthodox View treats experience primarily as a knowledge affair. The traditional regards it as a subjective inner affair, separate

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and distinct from objective reality, but Dewey has always thought of experience as being of a piece with the objective world, which enters into the actions and sufferings of man and which in turn may be modified through human response. For Dewey the salient trait of experience is its connection with a future. If change is what we are interested in, we look primarily towards the future and not recollection but anticipation is central for the experimental form of experience.

3) View of Knowledge :- Dewey rejects the traditional epistemology which sets up a knower outside the world and then asks about the possibility, extent and validity of knowledge in general. He laughingly suggests that we might equally well have a problem of digestion in general its possibilities, extent, and genuineness - by assuming that the stomach and the food materials were inhabitants of different worlds. The significant

problem is not how such a knower is somehow to mirror the antecedently real but rather one how one set of experienced events is to be used as signs of what we shall experience under another set of conditions.

Dewey's View Knowledge needs to be placed in the context of the problematic or indeterminate situation and reflective inquiry. Knowledge is more than immediate awareness or the presence of a set of sense data. It involves operations of controlled observation, testing and experimentation. It is a product of inquiry - the steps in a complete act of reflective thinking.

4) Conception of Philosophy :- In "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy" Dewey declares that Philosophy must cease to be "a device for dealing with the problems of Philosophy" and become "a method, cultivated by Philosophy philosopher for dealing with the problems of men." But the problems of men as he seen them cover a range broad enough to

include in one way or another most of the traditional problems as well as many others. The method involves treating philosophy as vision, imagination and reflection and though the clarifying process may show that certain epistemological problems are pseudo-problems the fact that they are raised may point to genuine cultural crises. If action of all levels needs to be informed with vision imagination and reflection to bring clearly to mind future possibilities with reference to attaining the better and averting the worse, there is more than enough for philosophy to do.

5) Role of Teacher :- The teacher can very easily choose between values which are instruments for an educational objective, but some times he has to choose between two educational objectives. The value of an educational objective is judged by some other objective which follows one value depends on another value

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which depends on some other value, and so on. There is no end to this relativity. The progressive teacher thus goes on and on.

Principles of Curriculum Formation

1. **Utility** :- The curriculum imposed on the child must have some utility, meaning thereby that the curriculum should be based on the child's interests and inclinations during various stages of his development. The curriculum should be conditioned by these four elements and designed to include the teaching of reading and writing, counting, manual skills, science, music and other arts. It is not desirable to introduce the child to all these subjects at once, but to teach a subject only when it is desired at a particular stage of mental development.

2. **Flexibility** :- It is better for the curriculum to be

flexible and not predetermined and rigid. It must be capable of accommodating the changes in the child's interests and inclinations.

2. Experiential :- The curriculum should be related to the child's contemporary experiences and these can be multiplied and reinforced by presenting different kinds of activities in the guise of problems which inspire the child to attempt a solution. In this way the variety of his experiences can be increased. As far as possible the teaching of each subject should be related to the content of the child's experiences.

3. Close of life :- As far as possible the curriculum should include only those subjects which can be related to the child's pattern of life at that particular stage. This proximity to life can help in creating a distinctive unity in the knowledge imparted to them.

and thereby some harmony can be created in the teaching of history, Geography, mathematics and language, etc. Dewey was very critical of the contemporary method of dividing knowledge into separate compartments, because he felt that such fragmentation of knowledge was unnatural. As far as possible the various subjects in the curriculum should be harmonized.

Educational Method according to Dewey:-

1. Learning by Doing:- The most well known principle enunciated by him is the theory of learning by doing in which child learns best when he himself performs actions related to particular subjects.
2. Integration of life and Subjects:- Dewey is of the opinion that there should be integration between the child's life his activities and the subjects he studies. All subjects to be

taught to the child should be arranged around his activities in such a manner that he acquires knowledge in the process of doing activities to which he is accustomed.

3. Catering to child Interest:- Dewey considers interest and effort to be of supreme importance in the process of education. The educator must understand the child's interest before organising the activities which are useful for the child.

4. Participation in collective Activities:-

In ~~to~~ a democratic educational pattern the child should be made to participate in collective activities which can help in evolving a co-operative and social spirit.

Curriculum

1. Psychological :- The Curriculum and the method of education should be determined by the child's instincts and abilities. The child should be educated according to his interest and inclination. Education should be attempted only after discovering the interests of the child, and these should be used as the basis for determining the curricula for the various stages of education.
2. Social :- All education has its beginnings in the individual's participation in the social consciousness of the race. Hence it is necessary to create an atmosphere in the school which will allow the child to take an active part in the social awakening of his group. This improves his conduct and develops his personality and abilities.

Criticism

1. Difficulties of not accepting Truth to be Permanent
2. Materialistic bias.
3. Absence of any aim of education.
4. Excessive Emphasis upon Individual Differences.
5. Limitations of Learning through doing.