Conservative vs. Progressive
View of Education

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EDTC807 - Spring 2018
Assessment 2

1. **Idea:** The Problem of Idea Quality, Not "Teacher Quality"

   Hirsch's Argument: Student outcomes are affected by the quality of the educational system and not teacher quality alone. Student learning is based on the curriculum set by the educational system and standards. Good teaching will result in an overall cooperation and coherent educational system. Hirsch explains that "teacher effectiveness is contextual…in a coherent school most teachers can become highly effective" (Hirsch, 2017, para. 1).

   Jane Pollock's Argument: Individual teachers play a critical role in improving students' success in learning. Educators can alter the way that they teach in the classroom, on their own, by reviewing and revising their teaching practices. Teachers can improve teaching practices by focusing on "(1) precise terminology to describe what students will learn; (2) purposeful instructional planning and delivery; (3) purposeful assessment; and (4) the application of deliberate assessment and feedback strategies to improve learning for all students in the classroom" (Pollock, 2007, p. 3).

2. **Idea:** Educational Reform

   Hirsch's Argument:

   Charter schools are inconsistent with proving effectiveness and positive student outcomes. The "No Child Left Behind" law and instituted state standards have not produced improved student results or an increase in passing grades. Hirsch (2016) states that they "left high-school students just about as far behind as they were" (Hirsch, 2016, para. 2). He also states that "Charter schools, despite their laudable triumphs, are highly

uneven in quality, and their overall results are not much better than those of regular schools" (Hirsch, 2016, para. 2).

Kathleen Knight's Argument:

Multiple views and inputs from different government and interest groups can provide a cumulative and diverse educational environment for students. Kathleen Knight advocates a "'multiple publics' conception of the democratic public as opposed to a 'uniform' conception, we should think of 'the democratic public' as inherently a composite of multiple and diverse and even conflicting publics, rather than as an imaginary synthetic unity, 'the general public'" (Waks, 2010, p 666). Incorporating multiple publics, educational systems can provide students with direct and concise measures to address the needs of a diverse public.

3. **Idea:** Teaching Content is Teaching Reading

Hirsch's Argument:

Educators need to concentrate on the content and topics of reading rather than just the process of reading. Learners need to be provided a broadened lesson on what the purpose of reading is. Hirsch explains that this broadened focus should involve "definite topics in literature, the arts, history, and science—at least two weeks spent on each topic to induce the necessary topic familiarity" (Hirsch, 2010, p. 14). Focusing on topics of reading material will inherently provide learners with a purpose of the reading assignment and provide a systematic process of reading.

Dewey's Argument:

Dewey believed that the topics or detailed information involved in reading was not important or relevant to a reading lesson. Dewey believed that "There was no need to burden children with a mass of facts that they could not perceive as related to their own experience and, more particularly, were not interested in" (McNee, M. & Coleman, A., 2007, p. 32). Without an emphasis on understanding the topics, students are able to work on the process of reading at their own pace and comfort.

4. **Idea:** Achievement Gaps

Hirsch's Argument:

Hirsch created the *Core Knowledge Foundation* in an effort to create a coherent program with common content to broadly approach all learners. He believed that this structure would narrow the fairness gap in education. Hirsch (2007) explains that "The achievements of the Core Knowledge schools have been outstanding illustrations of the virtues of specificity of grade-by-grade core content in narrowing the two gaps" (p. 10). Having a focus on content and levels (i.e., grades) will help schools to raise standards of achievement.

Rousseau's Argument:

Jean-Jacques Rousseau argues that students are innately at their own levels and should be free to advance at a pace based on their own abilities. Rousseau would argue that "If societal demands and conventions restricted children's growth, would not the best educational system be one that freed students from constraints and allowed them to grow naturally" (Palumbo, A. & Levitt, R., 2011, p.214). A gap in achievement is an effect of allowing students to follow their natural accumulation of knowledge.

5. **Idea:** Reading Reflection

   Hirsch's Argument:

   Hirsch believes that reflecting on a reading assignment involves discussing the facts of the content. Learning the information will assist students as they delve deeper into different disciplines. Hirsch (2003), explains that general fluency will also be enhanced as the child becomes more familiar with the domain. In short, the principle of content immersion can make language-arts classes become not just more interesting experiences for students but also much more effective vehicles for enhancing their reading and writing skills" (p. 23). Reflection should include pertinent material and should not include information that strays from the topic.

   Dewey's Argument:

   Dewey believed that learners should be involved in "playfulness" so that they exercise "open-mindedness." Allowing students to challenge the content will enable them to understand topics in a more inclusive manner. Practicing this "playfulness" provides students "a willingness to take risks in the safe space of the classroom, and not to 'feel that the whole self has been violated when its opinions, values, rules, or definitions' come under consideration by the group" (Medine, 2016, p.369). Unrestricted students will be able to thrive while practicing reflection.

6. **Idea:** The Tests We Need and Why We Don't Quite Have Them

   Hirsch's Argument:

   Hirsch believes that tests provide outcomes data which include correlations between classroom instruction, test scores and competencies. They also determine how well

curriculum standards are suited for the student population. Hirsch believes that "that a well-devised curriculum, monitored by good curriculum-based tests should, over time, extend the breadth of a student's knowledge, and thus raise scores on broad-gauged competency-based tests" (Hirsch, 2000, para. 5). Tests are helpful when determining appropriate content for specific grade levels.

Dewey's Argument:

Dewey believed that assessments should be based on problems, projects and questions to encourage learners to dig deeper into concepts. Focusing on facts alone will keeps students from thinking deeply about the subject matter (Kucey & Parsons, 2012, p.110). Hirsch (2012) encourages teachers to "invite [students] to think deeply about issues that matter and help them understand ideas from the inside out" (p.110). Open-ended type assessments provide educators with a true understanding of student comprehension (Kucey & Parsons, 2012, p.111).

7. **Idea:** Why Core Knowledge Promotes Social Justice

Hirsch's Argument:

Affirmative action in schools would not be needed if education was standardized in order to address the needs of all students. Each grade level and each age group must have the same curriculum. This will provide all students, from all socio-economic backgrounds, a chance to succeed at higher levels. Hirsch explains that "if school integration had actually achieved its promise, there would be ever less need for affirmative action in the colleges, because student achievement would be much more broadly distributed among social groups" (Hirsch, 1999, para.3).

Dewey's Argument:

Structural inequalities exist in the educational system. Educators must have the tools and resources to address individual students' needs which are incumbent on their own socio-economic background. Dewey explains that "every student [and teacher] brings human capital based on experiences gained from life. It is the responsibility of the teacher to utilize those lived experiences as examples which can make practical the theories being introduced. By valuing the practical experiences of students, [there is] no justification for separating classroom experiences and learning from practical experiences and learning" (Bogotch, 2000, p.3). Addressing individual needs in the classroom will indirectly promote social reform.

8. **Idea:** Technology Transforming Education

   Hirsch's Argument:

   Technology may misrepresent student success or provide a false sense of student comprehension of subject matter. Hirsch (2016) explains that technology "may be fostering yet another delusion about teachers' and students' skills…there are inherent limitations to computer-assisted teaching. Given these limitations, it's unlikely that technology can transform primary education" (Hirsch, 2016, para. 10). Students require the physical presence and attention of a teacher in the classroom since technology is not able to provide emotional and psychological support.

   Dewey's Argument:

   Technology provides students with content in a way that individualizes instruction. Simulation, for example, enable students to virtually experiment with various scenarios. (Waddington, 2015, p.11). Technology allows student to fail in certain areas which

results in an altered path so students realize that a different action is needed. As

Waddington (2015) explains, "One has to address the concepts and phenomena that

comprise this system… and if one does not come to understand them, the simulation

simply either fails to progress or degrades significantly" (Waddington, 2015, p.13). This

is relatable to Dewey's program on education through occupation.

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