

Leonard Sheehy

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Origins and curricular applications of technology  
to progressive educational philosophy

Progressivism provides students the opportunity to become involved in real world issues in a cross disciplinary manner allowing them to apply subject matter to what is familiar to them. John Dewey, often credited as being the driving force of progressive education in the United States pronounced an educational image of “education through experience”. He stated that students learn best by relating with subject matter and conducting genuine tasks. Ruth Catlin highlighted her theory of progressive education as an alternative method of providing instruction tailored to each student by describing the “child as the unit of consideration”. Mel Levine concentrated on “learning profiles” which he described as exclusive cerebral assets and weaknesses that each student owns. Progressive education as described by James Spira PHD, is instruction that is student-centered, activity-based, and authentic (Spira, 1998). One individual credited with the advancement of progressive education in United States is Helen Parkhurst. Her impression was based on models developed by Maria Montessori and John Dewey. She shaped the Dalton Plan with the goal of generating equilibrium between a student’s skill and the basic needs of society. Her framework also allowed students independence and openness to advance creativity and self-reliance (Littledalton 2014).

Curriculum characteristics that reflect a progressive model will stimulate a student's inherent motivation to learn. This type of curriculum is based on the belief that, given the chance, a student willingly participates in their education. Allowing a student to choose areas in which to study promotes this process (Pierce, 1931-58). Additionally, progressive curriculum includes contextual learning. In this setting learning is treated like life, in that there exists little meaning in isolation. A wealth of experience in an open environment is required for understanding to occur at its most beneficial level (Addams, 1939). Progressive curriculum also emphasizes immediate and continual feedback. The theory here is that when the student collects instantaneous feedback from contact with their environment learning occurs more rapidly and with greater overall understanding. The instructor or the task itself can provide feedback either by sensory or information response in this type of environment (Dewey, 1910). Students remain motivated because of higher confidence knowing they have been given proper guidance. Another keystone to progressive curriculum is the definition of knowledge as adaptability. A student is said to have "knowledge" when he or she has the ability to utilize imagination applying basic skills to develop original solutions to real world problems. The philosophical theory of pragmatism is blended with progressivism to emphasize knowing through doing (Dewey, 1938).

Computer-based technologies are suited for application to all types of educational philosophies. High stakes standardized testing benefits by the productivity gained from scoring multiple choice tests instantaneously (Spira, 1998). Fundamental information is quickly and easily supplied to students in an organized and efficient manner. These uses easily develop student's abilities in the areas reflecting characteristics of essential, perennial and re-construction educational philosophies. Progressivism is served best by computer-based technologies. The internet has opened the doors to learning twenty-four hours a day allowing students to work at

their own speed and on a schedule that best suits their personality. Children that did not have access to real time material due to lack of means now have a chance to be informed and the opportunity to be heard. The World Wide Web gives them a chance to see events from around the globe as they happen and the ability to participate by conducting further research and voicing their opinion with topics that interest them. Computers provide a variety of tools that are useful in solving real world problems. Social media has become a powerful instrument and is ideally applied to progressive education curriculum. Internet-based services such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Goole +, Tumblr, and Instagram are creating new ways for individuals to interact with each other and enable individual participation in group projects. Cloud based computing offered by Microsoft 365, Google + and Amazon allows users to contribute simultaneously thus allowing immediate feedback. Applications such as multimedia presentations, website generators and robotic education platforms provide students with creative avenues to express their individual strengths. The uses of these technologies facilitate the progressive educational practices of group work, public performance, and learning through experience that were defined by Dewey (Dewey, 1938). Massive open online courses, self-paced open courses, and distributed online collaborative courses are other forms of computer supported technology implemented in progressive curriculum. Here instruction is provided to students at various locations via live or recorded video. This layout permits discussion between students in which questions are immediately responded to by the teacher or other students. Education is enhanced relative to usual lecture-style courses when progressive principles are followed using these applications (Spira, 1998).

The methods in which technology will be used to facilitate progressive education will continue to grow as teachers continue to explore the variety of available applications.

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