

LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Joti Chahal & Kaitlin Cobleigh



“It’s the toxic learning environment.”

What are some words you think of when you hear the word schooling?



Respond at PollEv.com/jotichahal286



Text **JOTICHAHAL286** to **37607** once to join, then text your message



Answers to this poll are anonymous

(Try to add at least 5 terms)

CROSS-CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE DEVELOPMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF EDUCATION

Michael Cole

SUMMARY

Issues involved in schooling and education that impact human development

Looks at this from historical and cultural perspectives

Discusses the differences in schooling, educating and enculturation of youth across time and cultures

CULTURE

“Entire body of socially inherited past human accomplishments that serve as the resources for the current life of a social group ordinarily thought of as the inhabitants of a country or region” (D’Andrade)

2nd meaning: A positive value to ‘being cultured/civilized’

It is a promotion of growth

How?

Creating an artificial environment (**schools**) in which young organisms (**students**) can be provided with optimal conditions to develop

Peter:

The challenge I find is that working in Richmond many of my students are from different cultural backgrounds where their cultural beliefs and thoughts around education and schooling differ from the model that currently exists. Schools and education still have many features of contemporary industrialized society and as a result students are exposed to the western style of learning.

Amy:

“I think some parents who come from different cultures may have a difficult time adjusting to the new curriculum and the way it wants the classrooms to run. Many cultures are used to more of a rote learning style rather than a learner-centered style. Hopefully parents will be able to see the benefits of the curriculum and will adjust accordingly.”

EDUCATION

OED: “the process of nourishing or rearing a child, a young person, an animal”

- The systematic instruction, schooling or training given to the young in preparation for the work of life
- Like culture, refers to the process and the product
- An organized effort to bring out (educate) the full potential of the individual

Angela:

An interesting point made by Cole was “we noted that virtually all of our experimental tasks... bear a strong resemblance to the tasks children encounter in school but little or no relation to the structure of the intellectual demands they face outside of school” (p.206). This reminded me of the new BC curriculum and the effects it has had on some courses.

...Why do students need to be tested on dates and specifics when the concepts are what matter? I find the results of WW1 and WW2 more relevant to today than the date of a specific battle. A test does not illustrate this understanding, whereas a discussion or a debate referring to it's consequences will illustrate understanding and application. As a result, this year I will be focusing more on assessment that asks for application of the concepts than giving a multiple choice test.

CROSS-CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

19th century: historians assumed that cross-cultural comparisons were simultaneously cross-historical

“Primitive societies” were taken as examples of early stages of history for all human groups...assumption that Europeans had simply developed faster

This cultural-historical approach has been rejected in the last century and a half

Argument for **cultural pluralism** before making any value statements (Robert Levine and Merry White)

Iren:

The “Western-style” of education symbolizes progression, and it has become dominant worldwide. The dominant form of schooling found in today’s societies is: sequentially organized, an instrument to prepare for economic activity, and inclusive of traditionally excluded groups, such as women and the poor. Although this “Western-style” is the dominant form of schooling, it is important to also examine the cultural variations (within-classroom cultures and role of the society) as having significant effects on schooling.

Renuka:

“This new model encourages mixed educational environments, awareness of cultural diversity and cultural variations, inclusive practices rather than separate but not equal and inquiry learning that values a wider definition of knowledge. It remains to be seen how successful this new way of thinking will be and if school moves beyond being an instrument of public policy and preparation for specific economic activity or a means for the enculturation of children.”

ENCULTURATION

Induction into the cultural order of a society

Education-as-enculturation

- No explicit teaching, it is all implicit (Jerome Bruner)
- Education = Enculturation = Participation
- Social Sphere of the adult and child is unitary. They participate in the same culture

Davinder:

“If the social sphere is to become reintegrated, it will not be by returning to the past but by creating a new kind of future in which central values of the past combine with the amazing accomplishments of the present to enable us to live in a sustainable garden, for and with our children” (p.215). I agree that values from the past need to be brought into planning and creating a new future. So my father was able to acquire many skills without schooling, and so now the ADST curriculum is introduced. Hands-on learning and learning the skills and processes to creating amazing things in our new generation’s future.

However, it is not that easy and although my father was able to practice many of his skills in a village with the resources available, we are lacking resources in our schools, which may limit students’ success in achieving the skills we are hoping for.

CENTRALIZED STANDARDIZATION V. DE-CENTRALIZED ADAPTATION

SEPARATION V. EMBEDDEDNESS

Oli:

But yet, what is a good teacher? What is good teaching? We learned in this class that everyone comes in with their personal baggage and with different values. Standardization avoids these situations and allow the government to assure stability among the education everyone in the province receives (no point of view see - just stating a fact.) but yet how do we marry both philosophies? “Overstandardization” (Yes I invented a word!) leads to a full on disconnect from our youth but reassurance to many different cultures or point of views.

SCHOOLING

Deliberate Instruction for Specific Skills

Historically developed with:

- Increase in a society's population
- Development of technologies
- Accumulation of material goods
- Enculturation develops into schooling

“Modern” Schooling characteristics

(based on 19th century European model)

- Separated grades by age
- Schools as instruments for preparation of “manpower”
- Extension of schooling to previously excluded populations (women, the poor)

Belinda:

One aspect that struck me right away when reading this article was how little has changed. The following description of learning during early Sumerian society could be used in some classrooms today! “The classroom consisted of rows of desks, facing forward to a single location where a teacher stood, guiding them in organized rows where students practiced writing lists, repetitive practice of the means of writing and the operations that accompanied it”

Carrie:

“I am excited to see the changes taking place in the classroom environments in our district to encourage flexible learning. Teachers are using varied heights for their tables or desks for students to stand, kneel or sit at. They are using stationary bikes, exercise/physio balls for increased stimulation to improve focus and concentration. Students are given a choice as to where they will sit in their classrooms. The image of the child and image of the teacher have been influencing the changes taking place.”


Robyn:

One example is a grade 2 classroom that has moved away from student desks, to shared table spaces. There are a number of different sized tables, at varying heights. Students have the ability to not only choose their working space, but they can choose whether they sit or stand to work. As well, there are benches rather than individual chairs, and some wooden blocks that students can sit on, or use as tables (when they choose to sit on the floor). Of course there is some teaching that must go into what this looks like on a day to day basis, but students are thriving with the flexibility of their classroom learning space.

The way students learn has changed, and our learning spaces must reflect these changes as well.

WHAT SHOULD A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT LOOK LIKE?

LEARNING IS ANY CHANGE IN A SYSTEM THAT PRODUCES A MORE OR LESS PERMANENT CHANGE IN ITS CAPACITY FOR ADAPTING TO ITS ENVIRONMENT ~HERBERT SIMON



WOODS WAS HERE

GROUP ACTIVITY

Using the materials provided, describe & draw your ideal learning environment

What does it **look** like?

What does it **feel** like?

What does it **sound** like?

Working in groups of 3 and 4

Group 1: Iren, Angela, Sharissa, Cherie

Group 2: Sheela, Amy, Davinder, Oli

Group 3: Todd, Peter, Jenn, Renuka

Group 4: Robyn, Carrie, Simon

