

Radical Educations

Introduction to the module

Module Aims

...to give students the opportunity to consider possibilities for radically different educational structures and meanings. It will make use of much of the work covered in the previous two years to develop critical perspectives on education and to explore alternative conceptualisations.

Learning Outcomes

- Offer a broad critique of traditional educational structures (including schooling, curriculum, assessment, pedagogy)
- Demonstrate an understanding of key radical and critical education theory
- Critically assess radical theories, conceptualisations and visions of education (in particular critical pedagogy)
- Develop imaginative and innovative approaches to schooling, curriculum, assessment, the classroom and other learning and teaching materials
- Consider and defend radically alternative educational futures

Radical

Adjective - (esp. of change or action)

Relating to or affecting the fundamental nature of

something; far-reaching or thorough

1. Arising from or going to a root or source; basic: *proposed a radical solution to the problem.*
2. Departing markedly from the usual or customary; extreme: *radical opinions on education.*
3. Favouring or effecting fundamental or revolutionary changes in current practices, conditions, or institutions: *radical political views*

A broader definition

of, relating to, or proceeding from a root: as

- a** (1) : of or growing from the root of a plant (2) : growing from the base of a stem, from a rootlike stem, or from a stem that does not rise above the ground
- b** : of, relating to, or constituting a linguistic root
- c** : of or relating to a mathematical root
- d** : designed to remove the root of a disease or all diseased and potentially diseased tissue

*of or relating to the origin : **FUNDAMENTAL***

- a** : very different from the usual or traditional : **EXTREME**
- b** : favouring extreme changes in existing views, habits, conditions, or institutions
- c** : associated with political views, practices, and policies of extreme change
- d** : advocating extreme measures to retain or restore a political state of affairs

My Timeline

On a sheet of paper draw a timeline outlining your personal learning journey up until this point in time

Childhood ←————→ Now

- Reflect and note down what you perceive as your key learning experiences
- Consider those learning experiences, who were the key people (if anyone) that helped you along the way? Where did this learning take place?
- Has your learning in formal settings different from any informal learning you have noted? Why do you think that is?
- Consider your formal learning experiences only, how effective were they? What could have been done to improve them?

Challenges to the norm

'Challenge is not just coming from outside the system; there is now an unprecedented chorus of criticism of modern-day schooling'

(Wood, 2011, p.114)



What's wrong with state schooling?

"When I think back on all the crap I learned in high school, it's a wonder I can think at all." Paul Simon
Kodachrome



- Are we producing adults who can think for themselves?
- Institutionalisation of individuals through school
- Roots in Enlightenment & US tradition which challenges UK system

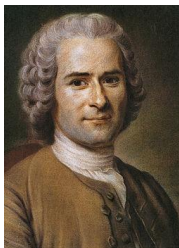
Some common criticisms

- Schools are outdated – established models are not fit for purpose (Postman & Weingartner 1971)
- The work of John Holt (1982) & John Taylor Gatto (1992)
- The 'cookie-cutter' curriculum (Curtis, 2014)
- Increasing emphasis on tests and results
- De-professionalised teachers

Alternative approaches to schooling

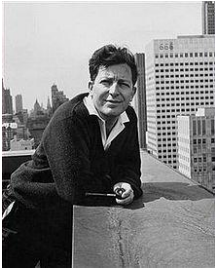
- Steiner schools
- Montessori
- Free schools
- Democratic schools
- Unschooling
- Home education

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-88)



- Social setup in France was unsupportable but the education system was supporting it
- *Emile* – needed to uproot schooling and build a new kind of society
- Required a complete revolution in political and social organisation but only through new education

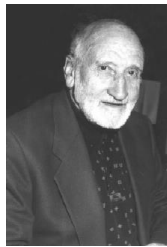
Paul Goodman (1911-73)



- Traditional school cages and distorts human nature
- Learning and compulsion are incompatible
- Break down the school walls
- Real world education
- Mini-schools

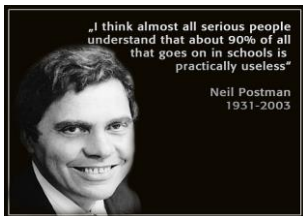


Ivan Illich 1922-2002



Everett Reimer 1910-1998

Neil Postman & Charles Weingartner



Change-constant, accelerating, ubiquitous – is the most striking characteristic of the world we live in.

(Postman & Weingartner 1971. p13)

Some shared views

- Value of individual happiness
- Learning without compulsion
- Critical autonomy
- Community or environment as a whole as being educative
- However only commenting on a snapshot of their lives

(Barrow, 1978)

In groups discuss the following:

- To what extent does the image of school depicted within the article match up with your experiences?
 - Examine the principles outlined within the article.
1. Do you agree with their views?
 2. How does education at the present time meet those principles? Give examples
 3. What modifications can we make to our system to try and meet these in future?

References/Further Reading

- Barrow, R. (1978) *Radical Education: A Critique of Freeschooling and Deschooling*. Gateshead: Northumberland Press
- Curtis et al (eds) (2014) *Education Studies: An Issues Based Approach: Third Edition*. Exeter: Learning Matters.
- Gatto, J (1992) *Dumbing us Down: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling*. Gabriola Island: New Society Publishers.
- Holt, J. (1982) *How Children Fail*. New York: Delhi/Seymour Lawrence.
- Postman, N. And Weingartner, C (1971) *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*. Hammondsworth: Penguin
- Wood, Kay. (2011) *Education: The Basics*. London: Routledge.
