Module 1 – Concepts of Education

We are studying Module 1 over a period of three weeks (weeks 2-4 of the semester – check the study schedule). The readings, the presentations and the study notes are your first priority – along with getting to know your tutor and the other members of your Collaborative Inquiry Group. By the second week (of this module – week 3 of the semester), within your Collaborative Group, you will be engaging in the activities related to the module and be starting to formulate a philosophical question ready for your group collaborative inquiry in the third and final week of the module.

While you are working on Module 1, you will also need to be discussing how the group is going to operate – and to complete a Collaborative Group Plan which is submitted with the first assignment (Collaborative Group Reflection Module 1). The template for the Collaborative Group Plan is on the Study Desk.

Module overview

This module will address certain concepts relating to education. Essentially we will be engaging in a conceptual analysis relating to various elements that are considered both as a part of education and as educative. We will address such topics as:

- What do we mean by Education?
- What is Knowledge and Belief?
- What do we mean by the School/Classroom, and where else does Education occur?
- What is Childhood, and what do we mean by Life-long Learning?
- What do we mean by Curriculum and Pedagogy?
- What do we mean by Learner and Learning?
- What is Alternative and Mainstream Education?
- What is Public and Private Education?
- What is Informal Education? What is Vocational Education and Training?

Objectives

On successful completion of this module you should be able to:

1. apply the intellectual tools to analyse, reflect and think critically and creatively about theories of education and the contemporary influences that inform education
2. discuss the ethical implications of education theory and its relation to practice
3. develop ethical responses to educational issues through inquiry
4. discuss the application of educational theories, ideas and influences in various education sectors
5. demonstrate ability to inquire collaboratively.

Learning resources

Module 1 Required Readings:


1. Martin and Barrow (this is a fairly challenging reading. I strongly recommend that you listen to Peter Albion's brief presentation on this chapter on the Study Desk before you read the chapter. It will help you to make sense of what is there and to identify the key points).
2. Plato and Socrates
3. Locke
4. Rousseau
5. Froebel
6. Skinner

There are two supplementary readings in Course Readings DiReCt (follow link on study desk – left hand column). These relate to A.S. Neill and Summerhill School. If you are interested in Summerhill, then the extract written by Neill may be interesting to you. The other reading is about 'open' education as conceptualised in the 1960s. Again – this is only intended for those who are interested in reading more of this approach.

NB: Some of you may be using the 2009 edition of Perspectives in Education. You need to be aware that some of the chapters have be renumbered and there is some additional material in the 2010 edition. You should have most of the material you need, however.

Recommended reading – useful but optional


This talks about what it means to be a critically reflective teacher – and highlights some assumptions than may be hidden if they are left unquestioned.

Recommended viewing

- The Truman Show (what does this say to you about the nature of reality and of freedom?)
- Mr Holland's Opus (what Mr Holland – the high school music teacher and composer - believed to be his greatest work - and the 'reality' that emerged)
- Dead Poets Society (a conflict of understandings about the meaning of education???)
Internet resources you may find useful

http://wilderdom.com/philosophy/SampleEducationPhilosophies.html  (some education philosophies)

http://www.webster.edu/~corbetre/philosophy/education/course.html  (some links to useful documents)

Key terms/concepts

Education, School, Classroom, Public, Political, Learning, Learner, Lifelong and Life-wide Learning, Childhood, Knowledge and Belief, Didactics, Social and Situated Learning, Constructivism, Reconstruction, Critical Pedagogies, Andragogy, Thinking Curriculum, Alternative or Mainstream Education, Public and Private Education, Informal and Vocational Education, Eastern and Western Pedagogies

Introduction

In this module we will be exploring various concepts of education, or simply put, what is education? What does it mean to be a child? Is education only for children? Is education restricted to the classroom? When we look at some of these concepts, we may think that we know what they mean, but we will be examining our previously held assumptions and exploring various perspectives about what education is.

We will be looking at:

**Education:** What do we mean by ‘education’? We ask the most obvious question!

**Knowledge and Belief:** In this section we will be examining what we mean by knowledge. Can we ever really know anything? We go back to Plato, through the cave, to uncover the truth behind the concept of knowing (or perhaps just believing?). We also discuss the idea of knowledge and fallibility.

**Where Education Occurs:** Where does education occur? What do we mean by a classroom? Is a classroom simply situated in a school? In this section we will look at the idea of public pedagogies and the concepts of informal and vocational education. Perhaps education is not restricted simply to the school or the classroom. We can argue that we are constantly surrounded by things that educate us – including popular culture.

**Concepts of Childhood, Adult and Life-long Learning:** What defines childhood and do notions of childhood inform our definition of education? Is the child simply a sponge to be filled? Is the child simply a blank slate awaiting education to mould their minds and to instil virtue and social responsibility? What is lifelong learning, and what are the characteristics of lifelong learners? Do adults and adolescents learn differently from children?

**Teacher, Student, Learner and Learning:** According to Skinner, Pavlov was right! Read below to find out more about learning as conditioning and control.
Learning material

Concept 1: Education

Our first concept to address is ‘education’. While we might all think we know what we mean by the term, it may be harder to define than we think. You have all chosen to undertake some sort of study in the field of education but do you really understand what this entails? Education itself can be understood in many ways that you will soon discover.

We may encounter education in various places, some of them more obvious than others. We often hear the phrase “getting an education” but what exactly does this mean? Education itself may not be as easy to ‘get’ as some might think! Start reflecting on experiences that you have had that you would consider examples of education. Your reflections might not all pertain to the times that you were seated at a desk in a school room. Think of some of the people who were central to your education. Your memories may not consist only of teachers. Try to imagine all of the places that education might be found. Are your visions only of school grounds? What about television? Music? Film? Newspapers? The workplace? The sports field?

Education itself has been depicted in many ways in popular culture. We can shape our understandings of education from our own student experiences as well as the stereotypes that are perpetuated in film and television. Education is sometimes represented:

- as oppressive (think of Pink Floyd’s lyrics to Another Brick in the Wall);
- as inspiring (think of “Captain, My Captain” Mr Keating played by Robin Williams in Dead Poets Society);
- as nurturing (Roald Dahl’s depiction of Miss Honey as the mother-like teacher).
- As boring and to be avoided (think of Ferris Bueller's Day Off – the students stultified by boring teachers)

Your understanding of what education means may involve something about the development of knowledge. As we shall see in the next topic, ‘knowledge’ as a concept is not clear-cut either. However, it is undeniable that one relates to the other. For an introduction to the concepts of education and knowledge, refer to your first reading by Martin (Chapter 1) and Barrow (Chapter 1) and listen to the recorded presentation (1). If you are a WEB student, you can extend on these ideas by completing the learning activities provided and share your thoughts and perspectives with your Collaborative Learning Group (CLG). If you are an on-campus student, you will be completing these activities in your tutorials.

By engaging with the activities and readings for this module you should be able to come up with your own definition of education. This definition might not be the same for everyone in this course. Each person will have their own perspective about education. The reasons that you were inspired to undertake this study might have something to do with your own perspectives of education and you will have the chance to develop some of these ideas throughout this course. You will also be informed by the historical and philosophical perspectives of various theorists.
Essential Reading and viewing

Chapter 1: Perspectives in Education : Martin and Barrow  Recorded presentation: Martin and Barrow  (Some advice: listen to the recording before you attempt the reading. It is not an easy chapter and the recorded presentation by Peter Albion will help to to identify the important points).

Concept 2: Knowledge and Belief

In this section we will be examining what we mean by knowledge. Can we ever really know anything? We have already discovered that education is bound up in concepts of knowledge, so let us look a little further at this concept.

There are a number of different perspectives about knowledge that philosophers have mused about for many hundreds of years. We have already seen what Martin and Barrow had to say about knowledge and education. Some theorists argue that knowledge is impossible; some argue that it is constantly changing; others say that it is embedded in our own experiences. Your reading (Plato: Chapter 2) and recorded presentation (2) for this module looks at Plato’s view of knowledge. If we are to look at historical and philosophical perspectives then it is appropriate to start with Plato. According to Alfred North Whitehead, modern philosophy is simply a footnote to Plato so it seems only right that we start here. By engaging with the course material you will understand the significance of the cave and uncover the truth behind the concept of knowing (or perhaps just believing?).

But, Plato was not the only philosopher to provide commentary on the concept of knowledge. Descartes famously posits “I think therefore I am” (cogito ergo sum) pertaining to a theory of knowledge called skepticism. According to Descartes we must examine every belief and be sceptical of calling this ‘knowledge’. Everything is open to examination according to Descartes.

Thomas Kuhn, another philosopher, famously discussed the idea of paradigm shifts in knowledge. He argued that knowledge itself is not static and that it is constantly changing. In this sense, we must always consider that knowledge is informed by the context that it is operating in. This idea was taken up by Charles Sanders Peirce (we will discuss Peirce in relation to John Dewey later on in Module 2). Peirce claimed that knowledge could only be found through inquiring with others. His view is that knowledge itself is constructed through collaboration. It must be tested and defended by a community. In sum, according to these theorists, knowledge is ever-changing and is not fixed.

We cannot escape the fact that knowledge and truth are also intrinsically linked. While we won’t explore the concept of truth and its metaphysical and epistemological roots further (however, feel free to explore this further in your own time), there are many different views of truth. Some philosophers believed that truth is relative (everyone can have their own version of truth that is relative to another); subjective (truth is a personal entity); absolute (there is only one truth); objective (this truth is the same for everyone).

There are many philosophical questions regarding knowledge but also ethical questions. Think about how certain views of knowledge may be adopted in society that may affect certain people. Which knowledge and skills are valued in society and how is this reflected in our education system and in the contexts in which you are going to be working?
Essential Readings and viewing:

Chapter 2: *Perspectives in Education* (Plato)

Recorded presentation: Plato

Suggested follow up:

http://au.youtube.com/watch?v=c6KVHMU3gb8 (Plato’s Cave You Tube clip)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69F7GhASOdM&feature=related (another version)

Concept 3: Where Education Occurs

Education occurs in various ways and in many contexts

We have already explored the idea that education and the development of knowledge and skills occurs in many contexts and in many various ways. In this section we are asking: what do we mean by a classroom; is a classroom simply situated in a school; where can and does education take place?

Education 'surrounds us'

Perhaps education is not restricted simply to the school or the classroom. It may be, as Raymond Williams (in Giroux, 2004) suggests ‘permanent’, in that the culture that surrounds us is educational. Does this view have political dimensions? What do you think Williams was talking about when he said that we can have permanent pedagogies? Where might some of these influences originate? Is the media an education tool? The idea of ‘public pedagogies’ is not new; Giroux (2004) has addressed the idea that everything that surrounds us educates us in some way – be that through the media or other forms of popular culture. We will look at Giroux later, in Module 3.

Education: Life-wide and Life-long

Education can be described as being formal or informal. According to Eduard Lindeman (1926) “education is life…[and]…the whole of life is learning”. (p. 4). Lindeman understood education as being part of life, rather than as preparation for life, and focused on the learning opportunities presented when individuals come together in everyday, informal community settings for specific purposes, contrasting this with formal education, the purpose of which is the cultivation of pre-specified knowledge and skills.

Exploration of the concepts of formal and informal education necessarily leads us to the concepts of “lifelong and life-wide” learning. The term “lifelong learning” refers to learning that occurs across the lifespan, and is discussed in the following section (Concept 4). The term “life-wide learning” is used to describe the spectrum of formal and informal learning opportunities that are afforded to individuals through their engagement in everyday life activities. Examples of life-wide learning include informal learning such as a child learning to tie its shoelaces, an adolescent learning social and life skills through participation in organized sports or part-time employment, or an adult who decides to take up playing a musical instrument or joining a choir, as well as formal education (such as when the child
starts school, the young person transitions from school to TAFE, or the adult becoming a ‘mature-aged’ student at university).

Education as formal and informal

Understanding what kind of knowledge is valued is particularly important when we think about ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ education. Are skills valued as much as dispositions? When we talk about the way valued knowledge and skills are passed on through education, we speak of the “curriculum” (that which is taught or learned in an organized or structured fashion; the process by which this occurs). When we think of formal education, we think of schools and other educational institutions such as technical and vocational education colleges and universities. In these settings, there is generally a set curriculum that follows those views of knowledge and skills adopted by society at the time. Informal education on the other hand can occur in various settings and with a “curriculum” that is work or life-based, emerging from the specific needs and circumstances of individual learners at a particular point in time. What is your view of informal education? Is the learning that occurs in informal settings such as workplaces, community centres, church halls and on sports fields as important as the learning that occurs in formal education institutions?

Education: Vocational or Liberal

Education has also been described as being primarily liberal or vocational in focus, and much has been written about this apparent tension between the need for a liberal – or general – education (where knowledge and learning are valued for their own sake as a foundation for participation in civic and cultural life), and vocational education (which has as its specific purpose the preparation of the student for a particular vocation or occupation). John Dewey, one of the best-known educational thinkers of the 20th Century, articulated a philosophy of education that reconciles these perspectives, maintaining that the purposes of education are – and should be – infinitely varied, and founded in the experience and motivations of the individual learner. We will explore this question further in Module 2 when we look at the purposes of education. In the meantime, it is important to note that our understanding of the nature and purpose of education – our own perspective of education – is something that will be the subject of critical inquiry in this course.

Education: Many forms of schooling

The school can also take on many forms. In Australia there are public and private schools, mainstream and alternate approaches to curriculum. The dichotomy between what is considered mainstream and alternate education leads to many questions. What constitutes ‘mainstream education’ and what is ‘alternate education’? If an educator has an alternative approach to education, should he or she be able to set up a school that adopts their own principles? Should there be regulations in place to protect against indoctrination? Should alternative perspectives of education be nurtured in a democratic society?

Suggested follow up – optional but useful:

http://www.csun.edu/~vcspc00g/604/giroux-respofintells.pdf  (Giroux)
http://www.infed.org/i-intro.htm  (Introducing informal education)
http://www.infed.org/biblio/inf-lrn.htm  (Informal education)
http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-hist.htm  (A brief history of thinking about informal education)

http://www.infed.org/lifelonglearning/b-life.htm  (Lifelong Learning)


Concept 4: Childhood Learners, Adult Learners and Life-Long Learners

Conceptions of Childhood and Life-long Learning

Even as wisdom often comes from the mouths of babes, so does it often come from the mouths of old people. The golden rule is to test everything in the light of reason and experience, no matter from where it comes. Mahatma Gandhi

To understand education in all contexts we also need to address who is being educated as well as how they are educated. Pedagogy refers to the teaching of children and andragogy to the teaching of adults. In this section, we will address learning across the spectrum.

So, let us start at the beginning of the spectrum with childhood. You may have encountered psychological views of childhood and how children develop from their early years in other education courses. We cannot address childhood without making mention of Freud as his theories are cited throughout literature on child development. We will not explore his theories here but it is sufficient to say that his commentary on the psychological development of the child has implications for education. In this section we are looking philosophically at childhood and what different theorists say about childhood.

You may be surprised to know that until relatively recent times, childhood was given little consideration. Children seem to have been viewed as miniature adults and little attention was paid to the way they developed. Child mortality was high and many children worked from an early age. The concept of childhood (as we know it) did not exist. To further complicate understandings of childhood, in the Middle Ages it was believed that children were born 'bad'. This view was based on the church doctrine of original sin. Children had to be brought to salvation – often through harsh treatment.

It was John Locke who challenged this idea. Locke was a very influential philosopher – but it is one particular belief of his that was important to changing understandings of childhood. Locke rejected the idea that children were born evil or that they were innately bad. He argued instead that they were born neither good nor bad. He argued that children were born with a blank mind – what he described as a *tabula rasa* (a blank slate – that would be written on through experience). Locke claimed that children await education to mould their minds and to instil virtue and social responsibility. (Locke: Chapter 3) and your recorded presentation (3). Locke tracks the development of ideas from childhood to adulthood, or what he terms from ‘simple to complex’ ideas.

Is the child simply a sponge to be filled? Is the child simply a ‘blank slate’? No so, according to Jean Jacques Rousseau, Rousseau rejected the arguments that the child was born 'bad' or with a 'blank' mind. Instead he argued that children were born with an inherent ability for goodness and that it is society that corrupts them. He believed that education should be
founded on a principle of freedom in order to nurture the growth into adulthood unhindered by society. Rousseau was a great influence on progressive education. (Rousseau: Chapter 4) and your recorded presentation (4). A modern-day educationalist, A.S. Neill has put into practice Rousseau’s theories. While Neill denies having taken his lead from Rousseau it is undeniable that their approaches to education are intrinsically linked. (A.S Neill and Summerhill School: Reading in Course Readings Direct on Study desk – left hand column and recorded presentation 5)

A very important theorist to look at in regards to the concept of childhood is Friedrich Froebel. Froebel has been referred to as the ‘father of kindergarten’ and he is often cited for his approach to pedagogy and research in early childhood. Refer to your reading for this module (Froebel: Chapter 5) and your recorded presentation (6) to understand his perspective of education in the early years.

So let us look further at what defines childhood. Do notions of childhood inform our definition of education? There are a number of views about childhood that can manifest in how we view the child as a learner. Some theorists argue that the child is simply a ‘sponge to be filled’. Paolo Freire (1970), who we will look at in the coming module, refers to something called the ‘banking model’. This pertains to the assumption that children are sponges and informs how they should be educated; as empty vessels awaiting a transferral of facts. Freire warns against such a view, whereby the teacher-student relationship is one of depositing and collecting; where students are receptacles for receiving, filing and storing knowledge given to them by the teacher. Similarly, the assumption that children have nothing of worth to say or that they do not have the capacity for sophisticated thought could result in missed opportunities to develop their capacity to reason.

These views of childhood bring into question notions of nature vs nurture, freedom vs discipline, construction vs reconstruction. We will expand on this further in the next module when we look at the purpose of education. There are some interesting moral perspectives in relation to the nature of the learner. How we view a child may have implications for how we view their moral development. Kohlberg is a significant theorist who tracked the moral development of children. We will not address his psychological perspective here but have a think about the perspectives of the moral development of the child. Do we see the child as a ‘savage’ and to be disciplined for ‘goodness’ or is the child inherently good and needing to be disciplined to remain moral?

We have addressed childhood in the context of education. You will no doubt encompass psychological views of educational development during your education journey so we will not explore this any further in this section. Education, however, is not only concerned with children but encompasses learners or all ages. You may hear the term ‘pedagogy’ along the way. This term refers to the philosophy of education and pertains traditionally to children. Andragogy on the other hand is a term adopted by Malcolm Knowles (1984) (following Lindeman and Dewey) that pertains to the education of adults (that is, “the art and science of helping adults learn”). Knowles maintained that adults approach learning quite differently from children, and proposed a set of adult learning principles that have since been widely adopted by adult and vocational educators and trainers. Contemporary understandings of the role of the educator as ‘facilitator of learning’ can also be traced back to Dewey’s conceptualisation of the role of the teacher as facilitator of quality learning experiences that have as their point of reference the experience that learners already have. Take some time to reflect on how andragogy might differ from pedagogy. As an adult, do you (or should you) approach your learning differently from how you did as a child? Should educators adopt different approaches to the teaching of adults? Are our philosophies of education the same depending on the context in which we teach?
Through our exploration of learning in childhood and adulthood we necessarily return to the concept of lifelong learning, introduced earlier in Concept 1. What is lifelong learning and how does it relate to our understanding of the role of education in society? According to John Dewey, “Education means the enterprise of supplying the conditions which ensure growth, or adequacy of life, irrespective of age” (1916, p. 51). Long before the concept of lifelong learning emerged during the latter part of the 20th century, Dewey wrote “the inclination to learn from life itself and to make the conditions of life such that all will learn in the process of living is the finest product of schooling” (cited in Bowen & Hobson, 1987, p. 180). If we accept Dewey’s propositions, that education is about (a) supplying the optimum conditions for human growth and development and (b) nurturing the inclination to learn throughout life, what does this mean for our education system? What are the optimum conditions for human growth and development and how can society best supply these conditions? How do we, as educators, nurture in each individual the “inclination to learn throughout life”? What implications does this have for how schooling and schools are organized? For the curriculum? For pedagogy?

Essential Reading and Viewing:

Chapter 3: Perspectives in Education (Locke) and recorded presentation: Locke

Chapter 4: Perspectives in Education (Rousseau) and recorded presentation: Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Course Reading DiReCt: Summerhill School (A.S Neill) and recorded presentation: A.S. Neill and Summerhill

Chapter 5: Perspectives in Education (Froebel) and recorded presentation: Friedrich Froebel – the father of the kindergarten

Concept 5: Teacher, Student, Learner and Learning

Recall that we have addressed that education has many representations in popular culture. Recall also that education is not just concerned with the teaching of children. Let us now look at how the view of ‘student’, ‘teacher’, ‘learner’ and ‘learning’ have been represented across time. In this section we will look at some of the stereotypes of the ‘learner’ as well as look at some theoretical views of ‘learning’.

Teacher and Student

We have looked at some theoretical perspectives of how philosophers and educationalists have viewed the role of the teacher. But how does this look in the classroom? It is sometimes hard to imagine how these theories translate to practice and so let us turn to some figures that represent the teacher and the student. How many of you have read Roald Dahl’s story Matilda? This may have been a childhood favourite of yours, or you may have read this story to your own children. Whatever your experiences, the figure of Miss Honey, juxtaposed against the terrible Miss Trunchball is an interesting case study for us. Although these figures seem unrealistic in current classrooms, they represent the dual views of the teacher. Miss Honey is framed as a parent-like figure to the studious Matilda which brings into question the role of the teacher as ‘carer’ not just having a duty of care. We will be looking at education as ‘ethic of care’ in the third module so we won’t elaborate on what this means at the moment. However, the idea of the ‘caring’ teacher is significant to how teachers are viewed. It is Miss Honey’s role as the teacher to nurture the student and develop her abilities...
(which in this case, are extra-ordinary). She is gentle and kind and gives her students encouragement to learn and develop. At the end of the story Matilda, Miss Honey adopts the young student. On the other hand, Miss Trunchball is the symbol of the teacher as disciplinary, scaring her students into submission. There are a number of theories pertaining to such teaching methods (some doctrines have the view that the child is significantly immoral and should be disciplined in such a way as to develop goodness). While these are not the only teachers represented in texts, they are significant in highlighting the relationship between the (adult) teacher and (child) student.

In the contexts of informal and formal adult and vocational education, the role of teacher or educator is necessarily perceived in different terms, such as “learning facilitator”, “instructor”, “mentor”, “trainer” and “coach”. Contemporary andragogical concepts of the role of the educator as mentor and facilitator of learning can be traced back to Dewey, Lindeman, Knowles and counselling psychologist, Carl Rogers, who wrote in Freedom to Learn (1961) about the importance of the helping relationship, where the student is the focus of the learning rather than learning being teacher-centred. This can be compared with the roles of instructor, trainer and mentor that characterize the traditional relationship between “master” and “apprentice” in apprenticeship models of vocational education: the trainer/instructor-trainee model used in the military, and the coaching model adopted in both sports and workplace training settings.

**Learner and Learning**

While there are many perspectives on how a teacher should be, there are also many different perspectives surrounding how people learn from such teachers. What type of teacher or educator you might be is most likely to be informed by your beliefs about learners and how they learn. In contemporary education contexts, Constructivism as outlined by theorists such as Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky is considered by some to be the best practice for effective classrooms. For Vygotsky in particular, the idea of a Social Constructivist theory is most pertinent. There are many theorists that argue for a model of learning that has collaboration at its heart. George Herbert Mead famously argues "The child does not become social by learning. He must be social in order to learn”. John Dewey saw education as an essentially social process, and Lindeman, Knowles and Rogers all focused on the importance of the learning that occurs when people come together to work and learn in groups.

An image of the social learner resonates through most of the theoretical perspectives that we have addressed so far. But we often look at these perspectives without questioning them and to the detriment of didactic approaches to pedagogy. But what of ROTE learning?! According to one theorist, reinforcing behaviour or conditioning is at the heart of learning. You may have heard of Pavlov’s experiment with a dog. We will not be looking at Pavlov’s theory in isolation but how this fits in to theorist B.F. Skinner’s ideas of Behaviourism. According to Skinner, Pavlov was right! See your reading (Skinner: Chapter 6) and your recorded presentation (7) to find out what this is all about.

This brings us to the end of Module 1 and Concepts of Education. Engage in some of these ideas presented here with your peers through CLG inquiries and through the Learning Activities provided.

**Essential Readings and Viewing:**

Chapter 6: *Perspectives in Education* (Skinner) and recorded presentation: BF Skinner
Suggested Readings:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ppqb0t_B0KY  (Dead Poet’s Society YouTube clip)
http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-rogers.htm  (Carl Rogers)

Learning Activities
Learning activity 1.1

Look at the case studies below. Discuss in your Collaborative Learning Groups (CLGs) whether you think that each case is an example of education. For each case study, explain why or why not.

Case study 1: A waitress comes to take an order from a table of friends in the campus Cafe EduCAKEtion. One student asks the waitress what brulee means. The waitress explains in detail the process of caramelisation on the top of the cake.

Case study 2: A family sits together watching a documentary on the feeding habits of squirrels.

Case study 3: Three children watch a cartoon movie.

Case study 4: A group of university students attend a lecture on Financial Accounting but “zone out” when the lights are dimmed as the speaker begins.

Case study 5: A small business operator uses the internet to find out what her obligations are regarding workplace health and safety.

Case study 6: A group of farmers organize a field day where they can take a guided tour of a property that is farmed using organic farming methods.

As a result of your discussions, come up with a definition of education in your group.
Learning activity 1.2

Look at these lyrics from popular songs. We spoke about public pedagogies – is music an educational tool? What do these lyrics represent about concepts of education?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Another Brick in the Wall (Part 2)</th>
<th>School's Out</th>
<th>What did you Learn in School Today?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pink Floyd</td>
<td>Alice Cooper</td>
<td>Tom Paxton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We don't need no education</td>
<td>Well we got no choice</td>
<td>Chorus:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We don't need no thought control</td>
<td>All the girls and boys</td>
<td>Oh, what did you learn in school today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No dark sarcasm in the classroom</td>
<td>'Cause they found new toys</td>
<td>Dear little child of mine?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers leave them kids alone</td>
<td>Well we can't salute ya</td>
<td>What did you learn in school today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hey! Teachers! Leave them kids alone!</td>
<td>Can't find a flag</td>
<td>Dear little child of mine?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All in all it's just another brick in the wall.</td>
<td>If that don't suit ya</td>
<td>Verse One:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All in all you're just another brick in the wall.</td>
<td>That's a drag</td>
<td>I learned that Washington never told a lie -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We don't need no education</td>
<td>School's out for summer</td>
<td>I learned our soldiers seldom die -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We don't need no thought control</td>
<td>School's out forever</td>
<td>I learned that ev'ry body is free -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No dark sarcasm in the classroom</td>
<td>School's been blown to pieces</td>
<td>That's what the teacher said to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers leave them kids alone</td>
<td>No more pencils</td>
<td>And that's what I learned in school today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hey! Teachers! Leave them kids alone!</td>
<td>No more books</td>
<td>That's what I learned in school . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All in all it's just another brick in the wall.</td>
<td>No more teacher's dirty looks</td>
<td>Repeat Chorus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All in all you're just another brick in the wall.</td>
<td>Well we got no class</td>
<td>Verse Two:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And we got no principles</td>
<td>I learned our government must be strong</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And we got no innocence</td>
<td>It's always right and never wrong</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We can't even think of a word that rhymes</td>
<td>Our leaders are the finest men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School's out for summer</td>
<td>That's why we elect them again and again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School's out forever</td>
<td>And that's what I learned in school today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School's been blown to pieces</td>
<td>That's what I learned in school . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No more pencils</td>
<td>Repeat Chorus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No more books</td>
<td>Verse Three: (Slower, with drama and feeling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No more teacher's dirty looks</td>
<td>I learned that wars are not so bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Out for summer</td>
<td>I learned about the great ones we have had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Out till fall</td>
<td>We fought in Germany and in France</td>
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<td></td>
<td>We might not go back at all</td>
<td>Someday soon I might get my chance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School's out forever</td>
<td>And that's what I learned in school today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School's out for summer</td>
<td>That's what I learned in school . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School's out with fever</td>
<td>Repeat Chorus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School's out completely</td>
<td>We fought in Germany and in France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Someday soon I might get my chance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What other songs do you know that are about school. What are they saying about education?
Learning activity 1.3

Look at some of the concepts discussed in this module that are represented in film:

For example:

- The Truman Show (Knowledge/Belief)
- Mr Holland's Opus/Dead Poet's Society (Vision of the Educator)
- Matilda (Roald Dahl)

Discuss:

Suggest other examples from popular culture that explore some of the concepts raised in this module. How do they represent some of the thinking explored here?

Learning activity 1.4

Look at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cP5ICleK-PM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cP5ICleK-PM) to understand Skinner’s view of classical conditioning. This was developed by Pavlov and Skinner – Skinner who took it to new levels for education. Think about your own experiences where you might have encountered a form of conditioning. How might this apply in classrooms? In other education settings? Think about forms of rote learning – does this apply?

Learning activity 1.5

Look at the theoretical perspectives regarding the place of education in childhood. There are three main perspectives – the child as the blank slate, the child as inherently good and needing to be nurtured, or the child as requiring discipline in education in order to become “good”. Can you think of examples from your own experiences that confirm any of these theoretical perspectives (either from your own education experiences or popular culture)?

Now think of these perspectives in the context of adolescent and adult education. Do these perspectives still apply? Why and how?
Learning activity 1.6

Read Education and the Bunghole of Life by Micheal Lunig (2008), a modern-day philosopher. He uses Mark Twain’s “terrible suggestion that the best way to raise a boy is to put him in a barrel and feed him through the bunghole until he is 16 – after which time the bunghole must be sealed up”. What theoretical perspectives might we make parallels to his experience? What about this particular passage below? How does this relate to Dewey’s philosophy of education and lifelong learning, for example?


I remained somewhat bewildered and never really took to school, being more interested in staring out through the bunghole and dreaming of home and mother, or my backyard and my dog. For 13 years I struggled with education and have only just realised that I was actually struggling to protect myself from it. I was trying to protect my soul.

Learning activity 1.7

We have been discussing concepts of knowledge. Think about the kinds of knowledge and skills that are valued in society today. Are these reflected in education today? Can you see an issue with this paradigm? How might this have changed over time? Are some kinds of knowledge values over others?

How do different perspectives of knowledge manifest in school curriculums?

Learning activity 1.8

If you have time, look at this blog http://www.danielpipes.org/comments/5192.

The blog began in 2002 on the role of the tertiary educator in inculcating certain values in students. What implications does this view have for your education context? Have a look at some of the views of the other bloggers.

(Out of interest, what value does blogging have for education?)
Learning activity 1.9

In the publication *The Last Lecture*, tertiary educator Randy Pausch describes himself as a showman and the classroom as a stage. You don’t need to read his story (although you may try to locate the book if you wish), but his idea of the classroom as a stage is one perspective of education. How does the classroom as a ‘creative entity’ resonate with you? Why?

What about Kieran Egan’s perspective of “Teaching as Storytelling” (in Reed and Johnson, 2008, p. 235)?

Learning activity 1.10

Read *Curriculum, Pedagogy and Teacherly Ethos* (Gregory, 2001). Reflect on Gregory’s arguments regarding not just what we teach but how we teach. What are his thoughts on ‘friendship’ in education? What questions does this spark for you?

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/pedagogy/v001/1.1gregory.html

Learning activity 1.11

What theoretical perspective does the quote below resonate with? Discuss this quote, deciding if you agree or disagree with Mead and why?

"The child does not become social by learning. He must be social in order to learn"
George Herbert Mead
Learning activity 1.12

The concepts of mainstream and alternative education are interesting. Should there be regulations about what kind of education is being offered? If an education perspective is an alternative one, should there be regulations determining what kind of schools or institutions are allowed to operate? Who should determine what is an appropriate model of education? Look again at A.S. Neill’s “Summerhill” school.

Can you think of an example of an ‘alternative’ form of education? Why has it been established – what is its purpose? It may be an alternative school that operates under a particular philosophy or one designed to engage students who may not be able to engage in mainstream education.

What principles would your education system rest on if you were to start an alternate school? What would be really important?

Learning activity 1.13

You will no doubt be starting to form your own perspectives. Use the inventory to begin thinking about your personal perspective of education (follow the link below): (Teaching Perspectives Inventory. Try this and see what is important to you as a teacher).

http://www.teachingperspectives.com/