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Contemporary philosophical influences on the home-schooling movement

Hood, Mary Krueger, Ph.D.

University of Alabama at Birmingham, 1990

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CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHICAL INFLUENCES ON THE
HOME-SCHOOLING MOVEMENT

by

MARY KRUEGER HOOD

†

A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of
Curriculum and Instruction in the Graduate School,
The University of Alabama at Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

1990

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Mary Krueger Hood

1990

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION
GRADUATE SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

Degree ___Ph.D___ Major Subject ___Early Childhood Education___

Name of Candidate ___Mary Krueger Hood___

Title ___Contemporary Philosophical Influences on the___

___Home-Schooling Movement___

The purpose of this historical-descriptive study was to determine the nature of the philosophical ideas influencing the home-schooling movement through a content analysis of a representative sample of books, magazines, workshop materials, and curriculum resources which have been targeted at the home-schooling population in recent years. The ideas contained in these materials were analyzed by comparing them with the tenets of four contemporary educational philosophies: essentialism, progressivism, perennialism, and existentialism.

The research hypothesis asserted that an examination of the philosophical influences found in these materials would provide a basis for understanding the diversity of beliefs, attitudes, materials, and methods found within the home-schooling population. The major conclusions of the study were as follows:

1. All four educational philosophies have exerted an impact on the home-schooling movement.

2. Home-schooling advocates and parents are a heterogeneous group of educators who possess a wide variety of educational beliefs and assumptions.

3. These disparate educational beliefs and assumptions do not necessarily coincide with the religious beliefs held by the participants.

4. These beliefs are translated into educational practice through the adoption of a wide variety of curriculum materials and methods of instruction, evaluation, and discipline.

5. Discrete categorization of home-schooling advocates or parents is difficult to achieve because many of them have been exposed to a variety of influences and have adopted a set of beliefs and techniques which are eclectic in nature.

6. Despite this difficulty, it was possible to analyze the educational beliefs of individuals and groups within the movement and to demonstrate the ways in which differing educational beliefs affected choices of curriculum materials, methods of working with children, and attitudes towards the development of cooperative relationships with the public educational system.

Abstract Approved by: Committee Chairman _____

Program Director _____

Date __12/7/90__   Dean of Graduate School _____

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Background: Historical Development of Home Education

Home education, (also referred to as home schooling), is defined as the education of a child that is primarily undertaken in the home setting by a parent, guardian, or tutor, in lieu of public or private school attendance. By that definition, home education is certainly not a new phenomenon. Throughout most of recorded history, the education of the masses was primarily accomplished in a home setting. Girls, for the most part, remained in the home and learned domestic skills from their mothers, while boys were frequently sent to other family homes under a variety of apprenticeship programs (Postman, 1982). The wealthy, elite classes had the majority of their education provided by tutors in their own homes. Such tutorial arrangements were advocated by many early educational writers, including Locke, Rousseau, and Herbart.

In colonial America, education was not generally considered to be a function of the state. The wealthy upper classes provided a variety of educational alternatives for their children, such as tutoring or attendance at elite private schools. The lower classes were taught a few basics by their parents, and the boys were sometimes apprenticed to master craftsmen. The literacy rate in the New England

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colonies, where education was emphasized as a means for attaining biblical literacy, was considerably higher than in the southern colonies (Lape, 1987/1988).

The first compulsory education law, which was passed in 1642 in Massachusetts, was primarily designed to require masters to provide basic literary training for their apprentices. This law made no provision for the actual establishment of schools. A few years later, in 1647, the "Old Deluder Satan Act" was passed. This time, the law addressed the establishment of schools. The fines for non-compliance, however, were directed at the towns, rather than at the parents. These early laws were therefore not compulsory attendance laws as we now know them (Lape, 1987/1988).

During the 18th century, parents continued to play a powerful role in determining the educational future of their children. Enrollment at academies and Latin grammar schools was still primarily limited to the upper classes. Such schools were increasing in number, but were still considered supplemental to the roles of the family and the apprenticeship system. Early attempts at making education compulsory had floundered, and at the time the Constitution was signed in 1789, "schooling was neither compulsory nor universal" (Lape, 1987/1988, p. 41).

During the early years of the new nation, the attention paid to education actually declined in many areas. As the pioneers began to move west, most were too caught up in the hardships of daily existence to make time for education.

Except in some sections of New England, or in the larger cities, "the home was the primary unit of education in all sections and among all classes" (Lape, 1987/1988, p. 45).

The early 1800s witnessed the beginnings of a movement towards schooling for everyone. However, in the early years of the 19th century, few children attended for more than half days, approximately 3 months out of the year. The common school movement, which was started in the 1830s, was an attempt to reform the system. However, despite the gradual spread of schools during these years, many children still remained at home (Lape, 1987/1988).

The first true compulsory attendance law was passed in 1852, in Massachusetts. This law applied to all children from the ages of 8 through 14, but only required attendance for 3 months out of the year. By 1895, 28 states had such laws, but the lengths of attendance required remained short, and provisions for actual enforcement were scanty. Although the basic features of the modern educational system had begun to appear around 1870, "it was not until the twentieth century that formalized schooling for the majority of children became a reality" (Lape, 1987/1988, p. 73).

In the early 20th century, the system of public education grew, and an organized educational ladder was created, which stretched from kindergarten through college. By 1920, 85% of those children who were legally required to be in school were present (Lape, 1987/1988). As the system developed, occasional skirmishes broke out between educators and

parents who felt that their right to direct their children's education was being denied. Court decisions in the 1920s established the right of parents to choose private education instead of public schools (Farrington v. Tokushige, 1927; Meyer v. Nebraska, 1923; Pierce v. Society of Sisters and Hill Miltary Academy, 1925). A number of home instruction cases were also heard, with mixed results. In some states, home instruction was an option, while in others, it could have resulted in a prison term (Beshoner, 1981; Klicka, 1988).

During these years, a small minority of families continued to teach their own children at home, either due to geographical isolation or religious and philosophical convictions (Holt, 1983b). Due to the increasing emphasis on universal, compulsory attendance, however, most parents who chose this option kept a low profile and tried to remain as inconspicuous as possible. They often kept their children hidden indoors during the day, or conducted elaborate ruses to throw the neighbors off guard (Divoky, 1983; Reed, 1984).

The situation began to change during the decades of the 1950s and 1960s. The populace became increasingly disenchanted with public education during these years. Concerns regarding racial integration, low pay for teachers, overcrowding, and insufficient funding fueled a renewed interest in finding alternative forms of education. In 1957, the appearance of Sputnik helped stir up dissatisfaction among the educators themselves, who became concerned that Soviet

students were ahead of American students in science and math instruction (Ornstein & Levine, 1984).

Efforts at reform took off in several directions at once. Some educators began to stress "back-to-basics," and accused the progressive education movement of failing to provide adequate learning experiences. Others began pushing for earlier schooling in efforts to speed up cognitive development. In striking contrast, Dr. Raymond Moore, who later became prominent in home education circles, began conducting and collecting studies which indicated that later entrance for children was actually better in terms of their overall development (Moore, Moore, Willey, Moore, & Kordenbrock, 1979; Ornstein & Levine, 1984).

During the 1960s, John Holt also began to write about the necessity for school reform in such books as How Children Fail (1964) and How Children Learn (1967). Along with such authors as George Dennison, Paul Goodman, James Herndon, Jonathan Kozol, and Charles Silberman, Holt criticized the atmosphere of learning found in the schools and called for massive changes.

By the time the 1970s rolled around, Holt had become somewhat disenchanted with the failure of schools to implement his ideas. He was influenced by the work of Ivan Ilich, who wrote Deschooling Society (1970). In his books Escape from Childhood (1974) and Instead of Education (1976), Holt began to speak of the need to develop true alternatives to the public school system in America.

During the 1960s, a number of alternative schools, loosely affiliated with the "New Left," had begun springing up all over the country (Shepherd, 1986). These schools were set up along the lines suggested by Holt and the other reformers. They experimented with loosely structured curricula and methodologies. A few such projects were even initiated within public school systems. One of the most famous of these was the Parkway Project in Philadelphia, which employed a "school without walls" approach to learning. Lessons were conducted in the community, using bankers, lawyers, and other professionals as resource people (Shepherd, 1986).

The alternative school movement, while still active to some degree, began to fade away as the 1970s continued. Funding problems and internal conflicts contributed to the demise of many innovative programs. However, the reformist ideas which were sparked by these projects directly influenced the rise of the home-schooling movement. Existing alternative schools, such as the Santa Fe Community School in New Mexico and the Clonlara School in Ann Arbor, Michigan, began to offer curriculum support and legal coverage for home-schooling students (Shepherd, 1986). In his books and articles, Holt began to suggest home schooling as a more logical alternative for many parents. In Teach Your Own (Holt, 1981), he wrote,

> Do you really want to run a school? Or do you just want a decent situation for your own kids? . . .

> Why not just take your kids out of school and teach
> them at home? (Holt, 1981, p. 10)

In 1977, Holt established Growing Without Schooling, a publication designed to provide a forum for home-schooling parents to share information and support. About the same time, Dr. Raymond Moore and his wife, Dorothy Moore, began to caution parents concerning the hazards of early instruction. In 1975, they wrote Better Late Than Early. This was followed by School Can Wait, which was a collaborative effort with several other researchers (Moore et al., 1979). In these books, the Moores explained their belief that children should wait to enter formal schooling until the age of 8 to 11 years old. They further developed this concept by coining the term "integrated maturity level," which was described as,

> the point at which the developmental variables
> (affective, psychomotor, perceptual, and cognitive)
> within the child reach an optimum peak of readiness
> in maturation and cooperative functioning for out-
> of-home group learning (typical school) experiences.
> (Moore & Moore, 1975, p. 34)

The Moores' ideas were given widespread publicity through the efforts of James Dobson, a popular Christian radio commentator. By the early 1980s, a growing number of parents could be found who kept their children at home during the primary years. An article in The Birmingham News, on September 2, 1984, was entitled "School Bells Ring at Home for a Few" (Johnson, 1984). It described the activities of a support group for parents who refused to send their children to kindergarten or first grade. The parents described in the article were characterized as "devout Christians." One was

quoted as stating that he had chosen to teach his child at home because, "We can teach him our values rather than those of his teachers" (Johnson, 1984, p. 2E).

In 1980, with the election of Ronald Reagan and the promotion of the "Washington for Jesus" rally, which drew almost 500,000 people to the nation's capitol, the religious right began to move to the forefront of national politics (Robertson, 1972, p. 155). Politically conservative Christians began to make their voices heard on many issues, which included that of education. Charges of "secular humanism" in the public schools, coupled with concerns over discipline problems and low academic standards, motivated many Christians to experiment with home education.

As the percentage of Christians in the movement began to grow, a number of people began to notice a split developing between two types of home-schooling families. The remnants of the "New Left" and the growing "religious right" were united in their desire to regain control over their children's education, but were approaching the issue from opposing philosophical perspectives. One researcher noted that, while one group of families "believe that they are providing greater freedom for students," another group of "overtly religious parents" are "more interested in indoctrinating their sons and daughters in truths already known" (Shepherd, 1986, p.59).

This philosophical split resulted in the creation of a rather uneasy alliance, as the two segments of the movement joined together to fight rapidly increasing legal challenges.

However, despite many confrontations and threats, the movement experienced phenomenal growth during the decade of the 1980s (Knowles, 1988b).

One indication of this growth is the rapid expansion of research in the area. The first dissertation on home schooling was written in 1981. In the years since then, at least 30 have been published in <u>Dissertation Abstracts International</u>. In addition, books, magazines, workshops, and curriculum resources have virtually exploded onto the scene, as the demand for these materials has increased. Home education can no longer be considered to be a mere passing fad. Its popularity is continuing to increase, and it is now firmly established as a legal educational alternative in most areas of the country. As such, it deserves serious consideration from other segments of the educational community.

<u>Background: Legal Issues</u>

<u>Federal involvement</u>. The Tenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States guarantees that "all powers not delegated to the United States by the Court, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." Because education was not discussed in the Constitution, jurisdictional rights over most educational questions passed to the states. For this reason, federal involvement in education has been minimal. There are no federal laws which directly pertain to home schooling. The few relevant decisions that have been rendered by the United States Supreme Court were based on the right to intervene on

behalf of individuals when their constitutional rights were being threatened, under either the First Amendment or the due process and equal-protection-of-the-laws clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment. Those constitutional issues which need to be considered when examining the laws and court cases of the individual states include the freedom of speech and belief, the freedom of religion, and the right to privacy, which are all guaranteed by the Bill of Rights.

In 1922, the State of Oregon passed a law requiring that all students of school age attend public schools. In Pierce v. Society of Sisters and Hill Military Academy (1925), the Supreme Court struck down this ruling, because it resulted in the standardization of children, and commented that,

> The child is not the mere creature of the State. Those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations. (p. 535)

The plaintiffs in this case included both a religious institution and a secular military academy, so the decision was not based on freedom of religion, and, therefore, the precedent was not limited to private religious education. Since that time, no other state has attempted to create a similar monopoly for public education.

In 1927, the Supreme Court considered the issue of regulation of private schools in the matter of Farrington v. Tokushige. This case dealt with a set of regulations covering teacher qualifications, curriculum content, fees, and

reports, which had been imposed by the State of Hawaii on private schools. In addition to these regulations, all teachers were required to take a pledge of loyalty. The court held that the amount and nature of the regulations imposed were prohibitive, and stated that the "parent has the right to direct the education of his own child without unreasonable restrictions" (Farrington v. Tokushige, 1927, p. 298).

Another case in the 1920s, Meyer v. Nebraska (1923), was decided in a similar way. In its decision in this case, the Supreme Court struck down a Nebraska law which stated that private schools could not teach students foreign languages until they had reached the eighth grade. The court once again cited parental liberty when making its decision.

These early rulings created a precedent that the state does not have a monopoly on the education of the young, and established that parents have certain rights concerning the procurement of the education they believe is right for their children. However, because none of the cases specifically addressed the issue of home schooling, its status remains in question.

The only home education case that the Supreme Court has directly considered is Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972). In this case, a group of Amish people challenged the compulsory education statutes in Wisconsin. They wished to have their children exempted from traditional schooling after the eighth grade in order to give them practical instruction on

the farm. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, holding that the Wisconsin laws were unconstitutional as applied to the Amish.

This ruling has not provided a clear precedent in the area of home education for several reasons. The Court was careful to limit its language, and the lower courts have made their interpretations strictly on a case-by-case basis. In finding for the Amish, the Court also distinguished between religious and philosophical reasons for home education. As a result, it did not set a precedent for home education based on purely secular considerations. In some instances, the lower courts have refused to extend <u>Wisconsin v. Yoder</u> (1972), even when religious objections were raised, based on the fact that the Court cited the long-standing traditions of the Amish in rendering its decision. However, some legal authorities believe that such refusal may be incorrect. In <u>Thomas v. the Review Board of the Indiana Employment Security Division</u> (1981), the Supreme Court determined that "the guarantee of free exercise is not limited to beliefs that are shared by all of the members of a religious sect," and further commented that the "courts are not arbiters of scriptural interpretation" (pp. 715-716).

Patricia Lines, the director of the Law and Education Center, Education Commission of the States, believes that it would "clearly be an unconstitutional establishment of religion for a legislature or the courts to restrict the excusal granted in Yoder to a single religion" (Lines, 1981, p. 5).

Elsewhere, Lines suggested that the ruling should apply to other religions if the "plaintiffs demonstrate a comparable sincerity of belief," and "the record shows that the states' interests are being met by adequate alternatives" (Lines, 1982, p. 121).

One important factor in the case was the statement of the Court that,

> This case involves a fundamental interest of parents, as contrasted with that of the State, to guide the religious future and education of their children. The history and culture of Western civilization reflect a strong tradition of parental concern for the nurture and upbringing of their children. This primary role of the parents in the upbringing of their children is now established beyond debate as an enduring American tradition. (Wisconsin v. Yoder, 1972, p. 232)

In the foregoing paragraph, the phrase "fundamental right or interest" of the parents is significant because it implies that the state has an obligation to prove a compelling interest in order to win its case. When the interests of the parents and the state collide, it should therefore be the state which carries the burden of proof.

State involvement. The attendance of all school-aged children in some educational program is now mandated by every state in the country. Exemptions have typically been granted only for reasons such as expulsion, quarantine, or marriage (Aikman & Kotin, 1976). Most states also exempt those determined to possess a mental, emotional, or physical disability. The minimum age when compulsory education begins currently varies from age 5 in Virginia to age 8 in

Arizona, Pennsylvania, and Washington. Most states begin compulsory education at age 7 (Moore & Moore, 1981). To comply with the compulsory education laws, children generally must participate in one of three learning arrangements: a private or public school, or, where it is permissible, a non-school learning arrangement, such as home instruction or tutoring (Aikman & Kotin, 1976).

Although the basic structure of compulsory education is the same throughout the states, the details vary so much from state to state that they present a "dense network of laws which are not easily susceptible to classification" (Aikman & Kotin, 1976, p. 5). Due to the ruling in Pierce v. Society of Sisters and Hill Military Academy (1925), every state is constitutionally required to permit a private school alternative. In addition to this alternative, the laws in all states now permit home instruction in one form or another (Klicka, 1989; Lines, 1987).

Thirty-two states have adopted statutes or regulations specifically authorizing home schools. The most recent were North Dakota and Hawaii, which enacted new legislation in 1989. The complete list includes Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. In 12 other states,

home schools legally operate as private or church schools. These states are Alabama, Alaska, California, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas. The remaining 6 states, Connecticut, Idaho, Massachusetts, New Jersey, South Dakota, and Iowa, provide for a home-schooling option subject to the approval of the local school district or school board (Klicka, 1989).

The basic premise that states have the authority to require the provision of an education to all of their citizens is generally unchallenged. Educators and lawmakers have often pointed out that compulsory education laws would be unenforceable against truants if the courts were required to accept a parent's unsupported claim that the children were being educated elsewhere. However, when state laws and court decisions infringe on parental rights that have been granted by the Constitution, they are often challenged in the courts.

In all states, the responsibility for complying with the compulsory education laws rests with the parent. Failure to comply with state regulations is punishable by a public reprimand in Puerto Rico, a fine in 14 states, and either a fine or incarceration in the others. In many states, if the court rules against the parent, the sentence is typically followed by a custody hearing. In such a case, the rights of the parents could conceivably be terminated and the children made wards of the court (Aikman & Kotin, 1976).

Such custody hearings may be improper when based solely on issues surrounding home education. In a precedent setting case, the Nebraska Supreme Court held that compulsory school attendance laws and neglect statutes do not generally pertain to the same subject matter, and are not equivalent. The court therefore found that parents could not be said to be guilty of neglect simply because they violate the compulsory education laws (Nebraska v. Rice, 1979).

Many parents remain afraid of the possibility that their children will be taken away from them. In actual practice, however, it rarely goes that far. Most parents, when faced with a real possibility of custody hearings, simply put their children back in school while they make arrangements to move from the state or district. In so doing, they either find a set of regulations they can live with, or force the new system to begin the process all over again.

In recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of court cases concerning unconventional educational alternatives. These cases have dealt with both home education and participation in small, unaccredited private schools (Lines, 1982, 1987). One reason for this increase, despite the trend towards the legalization of home education, is the tremendous variety and confusion in the way state statutes are worded, interpreted, and applied. The wording of state statutes varies a great deal from one state to another. Some states say that home education must be

performed by a certified teacher, some by a competent teacher, and others by a parent or qualified person. Some states give power to grant exemptions to their local school boards, while others reserve the right to the state department of education. A number of states demand equivalency of instruction, but few really spell out what such equivalency means. Some states discuss specific curriculum requirements, or indicate a minimum number of hours or days when instruction must be given. Twenty-five states now have requirements for periodic standardized examination or evaluation of home-educated children (Aikman & Kotin, 1976; Henderson, 1988; Klicka, 1989).

The confused status of current home education laws has been complicated by the fact that no case has yet been tried on the Supreme Court level which deals concretely with such issues as equivalency, teacher certification, or private school status. Because of the lack of clear precedent on the federal level, the findings in the lower courts have been somewhat inconsistent, if not downright contradictory. Whereas state supreme court decisions only have direct bearing on the laws and rights of parties dwelling within their own boundaries, other courts typically look to former decisions for precedent when making their rulings. In the area of home education, such precedent can be confusing.

In some states, the interpretation of the home education laws actually varies substantially from one local district to another. This is particularly true in those states

where approval is given by the local school district. In Massachusetts, for example, parents are required to obtain advance permission from their local superintendent. Some of these districts have a reputation for being tough when dealing with such requests. Others are extremely permissive, and the public school administrators have been known to actually seek out home educators and attempt to form cooperative relationships (Divoky, 1983; Holt, 1983b).

The issue of certification is probably one of the most hotly debated topics surrounding home education. Some sources believe that teacher certification requirements for home schools are unconstitutional. An article in the Willamette Law Review declared,

> states that require "certification" of teachers or the meeting of other criteria that unreasonably restrict parental choice are without constitutional justification to do so. (Stocklin-Enright, 1982, p. 611)

Legal authorities have pointed out that teacher certification clauses may not be justified under the compelling state interest requirement that must be satisfied before a state can override individual rights under the First Amendment. The fact that the overwhelming majority of the states no longer require certification makes it difficult for the remainder to cite such compelling interest legally when rendering their own decisions (Whitehead & Bird, 1984). Requiring certification may amount to a prohibitive regulation of home education because it effectively prevents the majority of parents from educating their own children. At

the time of this writing, Michigan and Iowa were the only states which still had a total ban on home education by anyone other than a certified teacher. In both states, litigation was currently in process which challenged this requirement. A ruling in the Iowa case was expected shortly (Farris, 1989).

Justification and Statement of the Problem

Some people have consciously chosen, refined, and clarified the beliefs and values which guide their daily activities and constitute their personal philosophies of life. Some have rarely thought about such issues. Others have simply adopted the value systems which they inherited from their parents without serious examination. Such inattention, however, does not diminish the pervasive influence these underlying beliefs and assumptions exert on a person's developing perceptions of the world. In 1950, Brameld, a noted educator, wrote the following concerning the important role philosophy plays in shaping a person's daily life:

> Philosophy, then, is inseparable from living experience. However implicit, unexpressed in definite terms our philosophy may be, it is always in the background helping to shape, and being shaped by, the tangible means through which we carry on our day-to-day responsibilities. In every phase of life - material, spiritual, lay, professional - we believe certain things about the activities we perform. And these beliefs, usually to a far greater extent than we realize, not only reflect our day-to-day activities but in turn mold and direct these activities. (Brameld, 1950, p. 31)

Similarly, everyone who is intimately involved with the teaching profession, whether as administrator, classroom

teacher, home-schooling parent, or concerned citizen, adheres to certain beliefs and assumptions about the educational process. These underlying educational beliefs, whether clearly defined or not, guide every aspect of an educator's work, from the selection of broad goals and objectives to minute-by-minute decisions concerning issues such as curriculum selection and classroom control. Many of the problems that occur between administrators and teachers, teachers and parents, or teachers and students have their ultimate basis in such philosophical differences.

Unfortunately, it is a rare educator who has taken the time to clarify or refine his or her own educational philosophy fully. Most beginning education students consider the subject of educational philosophy far too theoretical and impractical for their serious concern. By the time they have arrived at the point in their maturity where they recognize the importance of clarifying their ideas about the teaching and learning process, they are usually out in the field, where they become too busy with daily tasks to take much time to stand back and reflect.

The majority of home-schooling parents are in a similar, yet slightly different position. These parents have done something that is generally considered radical. They have consciously turned their backs on conventional schooling alternatives in favor of home instruction. Consequently, most are aware that their beliefs and values are incompatible with those held by some educational professionals.

Yet because of their lack of training in the field of education, they may find it difficult to understand or to describe these differences accurately.

Although most of the research studies directed at the home-schooling movement have looked for similarities, a few researchers have noted a split between at least two segments of the home-schooling population (Kutter, 1986, 1987; Mayberry, 1988/1989; Sexson, 1988/1989; Van Galen, 1986). This split is also apparent to home-schooling parents. At first glance, the differences appear to divide the Christians in the movement from the non-Christians. Kutter (1986, 1987), for example, categorized home schoolers as either fundamentalist Christians or anti-establishment types. Mayberry (1988/1989) and Van Galen (1986) both indicated one segment of the movement chose home-schooling for ideological reasons, whereas the other had pedagogical reasons. Although this analysis may be partially correct, such pedagogical reasons are ultimately rooted in ideological or philosophical concerns as well.

Because of the nature of much of this research, the educational profession still has a very limited understanding of the variety of underlying philosophies embedded in the home education movement. Many educators still appear to believe that all home-schooling parents are either reactionary Christian fundamentalists or extremist left-wing radicals.

The lack of philosophical clarification also poses problems for the home educators themselves. Recently, there has been a rash of letters to the editor in Home Education Magazine which indicates that many Christians are getting tired of constantly being lumped together with other Christians whose educational ideas they cannot accept. At the same time, these parents are offended when others refer to them as "non-Christians" because of their educational ideas. One mother wrote:

> I am weary of the "Christian"/"non-Christian" designation of home schooling groups. . . . Does anyone have any better words to use? I am tired of being called "non-Christian" just because I won't sign a long list of beliefs and non-beliefs totally unrelated to homeschooling (and sometimes even unrelated to Christianity). (Spurgin, 1989, p. 8)

Other segments of the home-schooling population are now beginning to make themselves heard as well. Followers of Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, and the New Age Movement are beginning to write to these magazines expressing their concerns. A Buddhist home educator wrote the following:

> So far the upset seems to be mostly between families who are homeschooling for religious, Christian reasons and those who are homeschooling for other reasons yet who happen to be Christian. I would love to hear from more of the two other groups that must be "out there." That is, those who are homeschooling for religious/non-Christian reasons and those others who are homeschooling and just happen to be non-Christian. (Tanafon, 1989, p. 9)

In addition to the obvious spiritual differences between various segments of the movement, there are also differences in philosophical beliefs concerning the educational

process. The problem is that these philosophical differences do not always follow the same lines as theological splits. This can create difficulties, because members of the same religious community often cannot understand why their ideas on educational goals, curriculum choices, and methodologies do not always mesh with those of their associates. In addition, when the followers of one religion express educational ideas shared by outsiders, they are often viewed with suspicion by members of their own religious community.

To compound the problem, the growth of the movement has created a virtual explosion of books, magazines, workshops, and curriculum resources targeted at the home-schooling market. The people behind the proliferation of these materials come from a wide range of philosophical backgrounds themselves. Their educational ideas are not usually clarified or stated explicitly in these materials, although their spiritual beliefs often are explained. Such materials are then sorted into simplistic categories as "Christian" or "non-Christian" in origin. Yet many of the products coming from the "non-Christian" publishers appeal to some of the Christians in the movement, who often have a difficult time explaining their preferences.

This study was needed, therefore, for several reasons. To begin with, researchers need to have a clearer understanding of the philosophical differences within the movement. Contrary to previous findings, these differences do

not fall neatly into categories based simply on religious issues. One desirable outcome therefore, would be the provision of an improved base for further research concerning this diversity. Educators and lawmakers are in desperate need of accurate information concerning the complexity of the home-schooling movement. In the absence of such understanding, future decisions and policies are likely to be based on reactions to the ideas of whichever home-schooling groups or individuals are most vocal in a given area.

Home educators can also profit from this study. If the various philosophies feeding into the movement can be explained, it may help them to understand some of the conflicts that are developing within the movement. Armed with such knowledge, they can become informed consumers of home-schooling materials. This will enable them to choose curriculum materials and develop methodologies which are consistent with their own values and belief systems. They will also be better prepared to defend their educational decisions to the authorities, as well as their peers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose was to determine the nature of the philosophical ideas that are currently influencing the home-schooling movement through a content analysis of a representative sample cf books, magazines, workshop materials, and curriculum resources that have been targeted at the home-schooling market. The ideas contained in these materials were analyzed by comparing them with the tenets of four

contemporary educational philosophies: essentialism, progressivism, perennialism, and existentialism.

Limitations of the Study

Due to time constraints, attendance at workshops was limited to those major home-schooling workshops that were presented in the Southeastern United States during the 1989-1990 school year. Financial limitations prevented the purchase of all available curriculum materials. Access to some of them was limited, therefore, by the willingness of curriculum distributors and home-schooling families in the area to make such materials available for review.

Research Hypothesis

An examination of the philosophical influences found in essentialism, progressivism, perennialism, and existentialism can provide a basis for understanding the diversity of beliefs, attitudes, materials, and methods found within the home-schooling population.

Literature Review

Characteristics of Families Involved in Home Education

The largest body of research conducted on home education has used survey methods to look for similarities among families. There is a great deal of agreement among these studies, although disparate findings have occasionally been reported.

Demographic characteristics. In general, most researchers agree that the typical home-educating family tends to live in a small town, rural, or suburban locale, to have an income ranging from moderate to above-average, and to be well-educated. The majority of parents have attended at least some college, with many possessing undergraduate or graduate degrees. The mothers are usually the main educators and seldom work outside the home (Dibara, 1987/1988; Gustavsen, 1982; Rakestraw, 1987/1988; White, 1987; Wynn, 1985/1988). However, Linden (1983/1984) noted that the majority of the mothers in her study, which took place in Texas, had only completed high school and were on the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum.

The occupation of the fathers in most studies (e.g., Buhr, 1988/1989; Gustavsen, 1982; Rakestraw, 1987/1988; White, 1987) ranged from professionals to blue collar workers.

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Mayberry (1988/1989) found that a large percentage of fathers (28.8%) were self-employed. Many of the others in her study were employed in occupations with a high level of personal control and flexibility.

Buhr (1988/1989) and Wartes (1988) reported that the vast majority of the home educators in their studies were living in intact family structures with both natural parents in the household. There was some disagreement concerning the size of the families involved. Most researchers (e.g., Gustafson, 1988; Gustavsen, 1982; Rakestraw, 1987/1988) found that home educators tended to have small families. However, Taylor (1987) found that they tended to have more children than the national average, and more than one child who was being educated at home.

Rakestraw's study (1987/1988) in Alabama found that an equal number of males and females were being taught at home, with an age range from 4 to 17 years old. Most of these children had been taught at home for 1 - 3 years, and had never attended public schools. In Gustafson's study (1988), fewer than one-third of the children had ever attended public school. Those who did had spent an average of 1 year there. Often, the oldest child of the family had been the only one exposed to public education. Buhr (1988/1989) echoed this finding. Forty-five percent of the children in his study had never attended public school. Taylor (1987) noted that home-schooled students were generally concentrated in the lower

grades and that they typically started formal instruction later than the general population.

In Gustafson's study (1988), 49% of the parents did not know when they would stop teaching their children at home. Of those who did indicate a definite age, the average was 14, with answers ranging from 5 to 18 years of age. Maness (1989), who surveyed two separate communities, found that 36% in one and 48% in the other planned to teach their children at home through the end of high school.

Based on the demographic information he obtained in his research, Wynn (1985/1988) attempted to draw a portrait of the average American home school. He drew a picture of an intact family, living in a small town or rural area, which had an income of $25,000 to $29,999 per year. The average educational background of the parents was 3 years of college. The mother was the chief educator, and was teaching 1.95 children for 2.22 hours per day. Most of the parents intended to keep their children at home through high school. Those who did plan to send their children to conventional schools indicated that they would probably do so when they reached 11 or 12 years of age. Wynn's sample was drawn from the Growing Without Schooling directory ("Directory of Families," n.d.), which only lists people who subscribe to John Holt's newsletter. Some of the findings concerning the length of home education anticipated may be skewed, therefore, because the ideas expressed may be reflections of Holt's particular philosophy of education.

Psychographic characteristics. Most researchers have noted that the majority of home-schooling parents tend to be politically conservative and to be regular churchgoers. However, there is often a significant minority who do not conform to this image (Dibara, 1987/1988; Gustavsen, 1982; Linden, 1983/1984; Maness, 1989; Wynn, 1985/1988). When questionnaires included a checklist of mainstream religious groups, such as Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, and Catholics, the majority of respondents have checked the "other" category. These other religions have included such groups as Seventh-Day Adventists, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Unitarians, non-denominational Christians, and a variety of small, fundamentalist Christian denominations (Gustavsen, 1982; Maness, 1989; Wynn, 1985/1988).

In one of the earliest studies, Gustavsen (1982) drew a "psychographic profile" of home-schooling parents. He observed that they were primarily conservative and regular in church attendance. They were generally child-centered, and pleased with their own performance as teachers. In addition, he said that they were,

> individualistic, law-abiding, concerned about their parent role, dissatisfied with available options in contemporary education, and actively engaged in implementing their own solution. (Gustavsen, 1982, pp. 4-5)

Reasons for choosing a home-schooling option. Dibara (1987/1988) found that parents had reasons for teaching their children at home that could be divided into religious, social, and academic areas. Many parents believed that public schools

were physically or morally unsafe for their children. They wanted to emphasize religious training in the home, control the content of academic instruction, and protect their children from social pressures.

Gustavsen (1982) listed the reasons parents gave for educating their children at home in the following order of importance:

> concern about the moral health and character development of their children; the detrimental effect of rivalry and ridicule in conventional schools; parent-perceived poor quality of public school education; and the desire to extend parent/child contact. (Gustavsen, 1982, p. 3)

In Rakestraw's study in Alabama (1987/1988), the two main reasons given for educating children at home were that the parents "considered it their responsibility as parents to educate their children," and that "they wanted to help their children develop social skills without negative influences" (Rakestraw, 1987/1988, p. 111).

Similar reasons were noted in other studies. They were often divided into two groups. Some were reactions to negative factors in the public school environment, and others indicated positive parental aspirations for their home-schooling efforts. Religious beliefs were cited by the majority of families, although there was usually a minority of respondents who did not cite such religious beliefs. This minority often indicated academic or philosophical reasons instead (Greene, 1984; Hansen, 1988/1989; O'Neill, 1988/1989; Wartes, 1988).

Operational characteristics. A number of researchers have noted that home-schooling parents are divided into two groups on issues of structure and flexibility (Gustafson, 1988; Schemmer, 1985/1986; Williams, 1984). Regardless of their specific approach to instruction, however, most follow a rather typical curriculum, at least on paper. The majority of states have some specific curriculum requirements which the parents are expected to follow (Klicka, 1989).

As already noted, the teacher in most home schools is the mother. The length of the school day is generally reported to be approximately 3 hours in duration (Gustafson, 1988; Gustavsen, 1982; Linden, 1983/1984; Rakestraw, 1987/1988; Wartes, 1988).

Rakestraw (1987/1988) drew the most detailed picture of the typical daily operation of a home school. She found that the majority of programs in Alabama were similar in structure. They often took place in the family kitchen or dining area, with approximately 3 - 4 1/2 hours spent daily on instruction. Of this, approximately 1 - 2 1/2 hours focused on teacher-directed activities, with the rest of the time devoted to independent learning activities.

The parents spent approximately 1 - 2 1/2 hours weekly planning instruction. The use of daily journals and lesson plans were common. Ninety percent of the home educators taught language arts, reading, mathematics, science, and social studies on a regular basis. Most of the parents also included Bible, writing, physical education, health education,

homemaking, music, and art. The materials typically cost the family about $250 per year, and were obtained from a variety of commercial sources. These materials included textbooks, reference books, learning games, workbooks and worksheets, art supplies, and chalkboards. Microcomputers, manipulatives, bulletin boards, and audio-visuals were not used extensively (Rakestraw, (1987/1988).

Rakestraw (1987/1988) also noted that common instructional techniques included direct instruction, field trips, oral reading, tutoring, informal discussions, household work, silent reading, crafts and hobbies, and independent projects. The most common method of evaluation was teacher observation. Letter grades were usually assigned, and standardized achievement tests and textbook-prepared mastery tests were used. Only one-third of the parents used teacher-made tests (Rakestraw, 1987/1988).

Rakestraw's population was overwhelmingly religious in character. Ninety-five percent of the parents who took part in the study indicated that they attended church regularly. While it may not be true of all religiously motivated home schoolers, this particular sample appeared to use a rather structured methodology (Rakestraw, 1987/1988).

Williams (1984) noted that there are some home schools that operate in a less structured manner. He characterized these home schools as experiential in nature, and stated that they tended to lay more stress on discovery learning, weaving their subject materials into real-life activities as much as

possible. A number of other researchers have also noted such a methodological split (e.g., Kutter, 1986, 1987; Van Galen, 1986). This issue will be explored more fully in the section on philosophical diversity within the movement.

Attitudes of home-schooling parents and public school personnel towards each other. Most researchers have found that superintendents and public school teachers perceive the vast majority of home educators to have religious motivations for teaching their children at home (Gorder, 1985; Hansen, 1988/1989; Reavis, 1988/1989; Rose, 1985/1986). Because all states now provide for a legal home-schooling option, most superintendents believe the parents have the right to choose such an option. However, on specific issues of accountability and control, the superintendents and parents often have ideas that are difficult to reconcile (Griffiths, 1989; O'Neill, 1988/1989; Reavis, 1988/1989; Rose, 1985/1986). For example, 70% of all superintendents in Reavis' (1988/1989) study strongly agreed that they should monitor home-schooling programs, whereas only 6.6% of the home-schooling parents in Wartes' (1988) study indicated that such an arrangement would be acceptable.

Rose (1985/1986) found that the superintendents in South Carolina believed that almost all home schooling was motivated by religious considerations. He commented that these superintendents seemed generally uninformed about the home-schooling movement except as it directly affected their districts.

Outcomes of Home Education

The second major group of studies attempted to measure the outcomes of home education through comparison of home-educated children with children in private or public schools. Only a few such studies have been completed. Most of them have dealt with academic achievement. Three (Maarse Dela-hooke, 1986; Montgomery, 1989; Taylor, 1987) have addressed social adjustment in a quantitative manner.

Academic achievement. Two studies (Rakestraw, 1987/1988; Wartes, 1988) have focused on the academic achievement of home-schooled students using scores on the Stanford Achieve-ment Test as their outcome measure. In Wartes' (1988) study, which used a sample of 873 students, the median scores of home-schooled children were in the 65th to 66th percentile range. The highest scores were found in science (75th percentile), listening (71st percentile), vocabulary (79th percentile), and word reading (76th percentile). The lowest was in math computation (42nd percentile), although math application scores were stronger (65th percentile). Wartes concluded that home-educated children did not appear to be at a disadvantage when compared to conventionally schooled children.

Rakestraw (1987/1988) found no statistical difference between home-schooled students and conventionally schooled students in Alabama in first grade reading, listening, and mathematics, second grade math, or fourth and fifth grade listening, reading, language, and math scores. The second

graders who had been taught at home scored significantly higher than their conventionally schooled counterparts on reading and listening tests.

When compared to national norms, the home-educated first graders were above average in reading and listening, but below average in math. The second and third graders were above average in all areas. The fourth graders were above average in reading, listening, and language, and below average in math. The fifth graders scored average in reading and listening, and above average in language and math. The sixth graders scored above average in all areas. Rakestraw concluded that home-schooled children at each grade level performed at levels comparable to those of public-schooled children (Rakestraw, 1987/1988).

Maarse Delahooke (1986) compared scores on the Wide Range Achievement Test between one group of home-educated children and a comparison group of children enrolled at a private school. As a part of this study, Maarse Delahooke also individually tested all of the subjects using a short form of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R) to obtain an intelligence score. She then analyzed the data, using a one-way analysis of covariance, to minimize the effects of intelligence. No statistically significant differences were found between the groups, either in academic achievement or measured intelligence.

Frost (1987/1988), who conducted a study of the academic achievement of home schoolers, used the Iowa Achievement

Tests. He tested the children in groups, using neutral proctors. Their scores were then compared with national norms. He found that the home schoolers scored above average in most areas tested, including vocabulary, reading comprehension, language skills, work study skills, and math application. However, in math computation, their scores were considerably lower. Frost hypothesized that this weakness in computation may have been due to a lack of sufficient drill in the home school setting, and recommended that further research be conducted.

The final study that addressed the academic experience of home-educated children took a different approach. The Pathway School, in Richardson, Texas, provides two periods of instruction in math and science per week for a group of home-educated children. The program uses a Piagetian model, which employs a learning cycle technique. A group of 19 home-educated children who were affiliated with this school were used as an experimental group, with 19 other home-schooled children, matched for age, sex, and intellectual development, used as a control. Both groups were pre-tested on a variety of Piagetian tasks, and no significant differences were found between the groups. Following a treatment period of 9 months, the two groups were tested again. Despite an intensive program designed to facilitate intellectual development in the experimental group, there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups after the 9 months were over. The researchers concluded that the parents of the

children who were not connected with the school appeared to be giving their children "the right kinds of experiences to foster intellectual development" (Quine & Marek, 1988, p. 5). Furthermore, the study found that the home-educated students in both groups generally made the transition to formal thought when they were between 11 and 12 years old. The researchers pointed out that, according to the literature, this surpassed the development of the average child (Quine & Marek, 1988).

Social adjustment. A limited amount of research has been conducted concerning the social adjustment of home-educated children. Wartes (1988) noted that home-schooled children in the state of Washington did not appear to be isolated. He found that the children spent a median of 20 - 29 hours per month in organized community activities outside of the family, which included substantial contact with age-peers.

Rakestraw (1987/1988) found that the majority of the students were involved in outside social activities. Half of the respondents in the state of Alabama indicated partici- pation in music or organized sports.

Only a few studies have been conducted that have specif- ically addressed socialization in a quantitative manner. Taylor (1987) found that the self-concepts of home-schooled children in the 4th through the 12th grades were significantly higher ($p<.001$) on the global scale and all six sub-scales of the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale than those of the conven- tionally schooled population. He also found that the best predictive model of self-concept for home-educated children

was related to lower grade equivalence, higher number of years of home schooling, higher socioeconomic status, higher number of home-schooling children in the family, and higher beginning school age. These variables, when considered together, accounted for over 12% of the variance in self-concept scores.

In Maarse Delahooke's study (1986), the Robert's Apperception Test for Children (RATC) was used to study the social development of home-educated children in comparison with their private school counterparts. She found few differences between the groups. The home-educated group did, however, appear to be less peer-oriented than the private school group (Maarse Delahooke, 1986).

The only other study which addressed the socialization of home-educated children dealt with the development of leadership ability (Montgomery, 1989). This study began by researching the conditions cited in the literature as key ingredients for leadership development. Through interviews with 50 adolescent home school students and their parents, Montgomery came to the conclusion that these conditions for leadership development were provided in the home school environment. She also used a comparison group from a private school to study the level of their participation in extracurricular activities. She concluded that there were no differences between the groups in their levels of participation in such activities as paid work experiences, music lessons or recitals, scouts, 4-H groups, or church-related programs. However, the private school students did participate more in

team sports, summer camp programs, and performing groups than the home school students did. Montgomery concluded,

> [Home schooling] . . . is not generally repressive of a student's potential leadership, and may in fact nurture leadership at least as well as does the conventional system. (Montgomery, 1989, p. 8)

Montgomery also pointed out that the home school teenagers in the study were not socially isolated. They participated in a variety of organized activities, such as scouts, church groups, and social clubs, as well as working outside the home, either as community volunteers or in paid part-time positions.

Case Studies of Families Involved in Home Education

The third major grouping of research studies is qualitative and ethnographic in nature. The focus of these particular studies is rather narrow, and it is not possible to make accurate generalizations. However, two of the researchers attempted to engage in a certain amount of theory building based on their findings (Knowles, 1988a, 1988b, 1989; Williams, 1984).

Benson (1981) wrote one of the earliest dissertations concerning home education, entitled, The Development of a Home School. This study detailed the experience of his own family in setting up a home instruction program. Benson is a Mormon, or member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. His nine children had previously been enrolled in a variety of public and private schools. He advocated the use of the "great books," and had a fairly structured curriculum, which

made use of lesson plans, assignment sheets, and grades. He discussed the advantages and disadvantages of home instruction as he and his wife saw them. The advantages included increased flexibility, personalized, one-to-one attention, and the ability to teach "the truth" as the parents perceived it (Benson, 1981, p. 112). The only disadvantages he cited were the missed opportunities for contact with a number of good teachers, and the fact that the laundry piled up.

As the first qualitative research project on home education, Benson's work helped to initiate further study. However, his own research was limited by the possibility of bias, because it mainly presented a description of his own home school. Three studies followed that also employed the case study approach (Griffiths, 1989; Reynolds, 1985/1986; Schemmer, 1985/1986). These studies were, presumably, less susceptible to such bias, because they were conducted by neutral parties. Their focuses were also somewhat broader, because each included between three and five families in their samples.

Griffiths (1989) and Reynolds (1985/1986) both stated that they entered the field with no other purpose than to increase the level of understanding concerning home education. Schemmer (1985/1986) indicated that her purpose was to describe the curricula and methodologies used by the families and to evaluate the effects of home education on the children involved.

All three of these researchers used limited samples. The three families that Reynolds (1985/1986) studied were all Mormons and were affiliated with his own church. Schemmer (1985/1986) chose a convenience sample, which consisted of four families who all lived in the same rural area. Griffiths (1989) attempted to use a slightly more purposive sampling technique. She selected five families who had been involved in home schooling for more than 1 year, who had children between the ages of 8 and 12, and who resided in five separate school districts in Pennsylvania. Still, the narrow focus of all of these studies precludes generalization to any broader population.

A major strength of Reynold's research was the length of time spent in the field, approximately 20 months. However, he limited his discussion to superficial characteristics of the programs he observed, such as time schedules, descriptions of individual people, and teaching methodologies. He did not attempt to deal with deeper questions of motivation or philosophical considerations (Reynolds, 1985/1986).

Schemmer (1985/1986) did not spend as much time in the field. She used more structured tools for data collection and analysis, such as observation guides, attitude scales, standardized tests, and structured interview schedules. Although she noted that a certain amount of diversity was obvious, her conclusions stressed similarities instead. All of the families in her study were rather large, and religious in orientation. Griffiths (1989) also noted that the five

families in her study were Christians and that they expressed strong religious values. Four of them used structured learning experiences, emphasizing independent seatwork. The fifth, which was also religiously motivated, believed in discovery learning, and approached home schooling in a relatively flexible, unstructured manner. Griffiths used the techniques of participant observation and ethnographic interviewing in her study, and also interviewed the super-intendents in each of the five districts. She concluded that the superintendents were generally rather grudgingly suppor-tive of home schooling, although they expressed concern that the socialization needs of the children might not be met.

Shirkey (1989) conducted a small study of the perspec-tives of children in home schools. She used ethnographic interviewing techniques to gather data. The sample consisted of 20 children who were between the ages of 6 and 13. She stated that these children either had been taught at home in the past, or were currently being home educated. The length of time they had been taught at home varied from 2 months to 4 years. As one conclusion of her study, she stated that, "Most of the home school students in this study eventually enroll or reenroll in traditional schools" (Shirkey, 1989, p. 112). The description of the sample was rather sketchy; thus, it is possible that the majority were no longer home schooling at the time of the study. If this were true, it may have distorted the results. Shirkey found that the students appeared to enjoy home schooling, and saw both advantages and

disadvantages connected with the experience. However, their satisfaction dwindled as they got older, and she cautioned parents to reconsider their decision as their children reached junior high school age, when the desire for peer contact begins to loom as a pressing issue.

Williams (1984) and Knowles (1988a, 1988b, 1989) also used participant observation and ethnographic interviewing techniques in their case studies. However, these researchers attempted to observe a broader segment of the home-schooling population and to use their findings to generate hypotheses and build theories.

Williams began by listing six categories of reasons parents chose to educate their children at home. These reasons were: (a) some believed that their particular child was unsuited for school and needed individualized attention; (b) some wanted to feel more in control of their situation and to structure their time themselves; (c) some wished to avoid the development of peer dependency, and to stress family-oriented socialization during the formative years; (d) some were concerned about the moral content of instruction in the schools; (e) some had a genuine interest in sharing more time together as a family; and (f) some had an educational philo-sophy regarding children and learning which did not mesh with their perceptions of mainstream American education. Based on his findings, Williams divided home-schooling parents into two categories. One consisted of parents who taught their children at home from the beginning, and the other of those

who started their children out in public or private schools and later withdrew them. He hypothesized that those who educated their children at home from the beginning would tend to be less structured and more flexible than those who switched later on. The latter type of parents often attempted to duplicate the exact curriculum and methods found in school. He further hypothesized that the parents who tried to pattern their activities after a regular classroom would typically end up frustrated. He believed that they would either return their children to the regular classroom, or learn to relax their structure until their learning environments more closely resembled the ones run by parents who had taught their children at home from the beginning. He described these learning environments as experiential. They stressed field trips, individual projects, and hands-on experiences. Learning tended to be regarded as a holistic process, and subject materials were woven into life experiences as much as possible. The parents were usually intensely interested in learning themselves, and provided good role models while interacting with their children and the resource materials. Williams believed that these home-schooling parents were more flexible because they were simply continuing the parenting techniques they had been providing when their children were preschoolers (Williams, 1984).

Knowles (1988a, 1988b, 1989) observed and interviewed in 12 home schools during each of two phases of his research. He compiled written or taped "life histories" of 22 parents,

and attempted to relate past events in their lives to current rationales for home schooling. Knowles hypothesized that, in the absence of educational preparation as teachers, home-schooling parents would tend to teach the way they were taught as children. He said that their teaching methods were influenced by childhood experiences, positive and negative teacher role models, and memories of school or significant people in their lives.

Knowles also developed the thesis that the home school movement is going through four chronological phases in its development, and that these same phases are paralleled in the experience of individual home schools. The first phase he labelled "contention." During this phase, dissatisfaction of some sort is felt with the regular schooling situation. The movement went through this phase in the 1950s and 1960s, when feelings of discontent directed the attention of parents towards possible educational alternatives. The second phase he labeled "confrontation." During this phase, which occurred in the 1970s, the number of legal suits escalated, peaked, and then began to level off and decline. The third phase is "cooperation," during which home-schooling parents and public school officials begin to develop some sort of a trusting relationship. Knowles pointed out that many areas of the country are still grappling with this issue. Finally, the phase of "consolidation" occurs, when home-schooling parents have reached the point where they no longer need to focus their attention on the possibility of legal confrontations.

They are then freed to concentrate on such issues as numerical growth, curriculum development, and network building for the purposes of information and support (Knowles, 1989, pp. 392-411).

There are three additional studies (Pitman, 1986, 1987; Sexson, 1988/1989; Van Galen, 1986) that employed an ethnographic, case study approach. However, because these researchers specifically focused on philosophical diversity within the movement, they will be discussed in the next section.

Diversity Within the Home-Schooling Movement

A number of researchers (Kutter, 1986, 1987; Mayberry, 1988/1989; Pitman, 1986, 1987; Sexson, 1988/1989; Van Galen, 1986) have studied the diversity that exists within the home-schooling movement. Much of the categorization these researchers have attempted has been based on easily observed theological differences between various segments of the movement. Kutter (1986, 1987), for example, who surveyed 32 families in Kentucky, divided them into two groups based on their agreement or disagreement with previously categorized statements. One group was designated as "conservative Christian fundamentalists," and the other as "anti-establishment types." The two groups differed in both their ideological and methodological orientations to home schooling. The Christian fundamentalists were teaching their children at home due to their concern that public school attendance could result in spiritual harm. Consequently, they had little

interest in establishing cooperative relationships with educational professionals. They tended to use structured methods, and to stress math, reading, and Bible study. Many were enrolled in highly structured correspondence courses, which they obtained from Christian publishers. The anti-establishment home schoolers were less opposed to public education, and expressed a desire to participate in certain cooperative ventures. Their curricula and methodologies were rather loosely structured, and their children were given more opportunities for social contact outside the home.

Pitman (1986, 1987) also noted the existence of two major groups within the home-schooling movement. One group of parents taught their children at home primarily for academic reasons, and the other group did so as an expression of fundamentalist Christian beliefs. Pitman conducted ethnographic research that focused on a smaller, less visible group of parents. This group, which was labeled "New Age" parents, also taught their children at home as an expression of their religious or philosophical beliefs. Like the Christians in the movement, they wanted their children to avoid the influences of the public educational system. They viewed the curricula and methodologies found in the public schools as incompatible with their own beliefs and value systems. However, rather than centering on the God of Christianity, their religious beliefs were rooted in a holistic philosophy, which stressed the interrelationship of man and nature. They wished to teach their children a respect for the earth, and

to instill in them a love of learning as an on-going process. Pitman noted that their main aim in education was "to encourage the development of unique individuals described as creative and self-reliant" (Pitman, 1987, p. 283).

Researchers outside of the United States have also noted an obvious split within the ranks of home-schooling parents in other countries. According to Common and MacMullen (1986), the growing home-schooling movement in Canada appears to be the product of two opposing extremist forces: religious fundamentalists and secular radicals. However, the authors noted that, as the movement has grown, it has begun to receive more support from moderate sectors of the Canadian population as well.

In England, where the Christian religion is still a dominant force in the school system, it might be supposed that fewer Christian fundamentalists would decide to educate their children at home. Although most educational professionals in the United States appear to view home schoolers as a monolithic, religiously oriented group, educators in England have typically held an opposite stereotype. Home-based educators there are usually considered "a group of radical de-schoolers and anti-establishment activists vaguely labelled as 'left-wing'" (Meighan, 1984b, p. 166). An analysis of the actual composition of "Education Otherwise," the main home-schooling support group in England, shows this stereotype to be grossly inaccurate. In general, the educational ideas of the majority of English home schoolers are quite conservative, and their

methodologies are authoritarian. A minority of home schoolers, however, does adhere to an alternative view of education, termed "autonomous," or "self-directed." According to one English educator, these parents have issued a challenge to the established legal and educational system, which has propagated a myth that there is only one "right" approach to education. This educator explains that these parents,

> have abandoned the authoritarian approach with its timetables, syllabuses, textbooks, formal lessons and teacher-instructions. Instead they developed an alternative self-directed or autonomous approach where structure is emergent or organic rather than artificially imposed and instruction is personal and situational, not induced by either artificial rewards or punishments. (Meighan, 1984a, p. 275)

Three United States researchers (Mayberry, 1988/1989; Sexson, 1988/1989; Van Galen, 1986) have attempted to situate the American home-schooling movement in the context of broader sociological trends. While emphasizing the diversity they found between various sub-groups within the movement, these researchers have also examined commonalities and searched for explanations for the sudden emergence of this broad-based reaction to institutionalized education.

Mayberry (1988/1989) combined qualitative and quantitative methodologies in her study of home schooling in Oregon. She began by surveying a large sample of home-schooling parents in that state. Based on their motives for choosing home education, she then divided these families into four categories: religious families and New Age families, who both taught their children at home primarily for ideological

reasons, and academic families and socio-relational families, who both taught their children at home for pedagogical reasons. Following her analysis of the survey data, Mayberry used dimensional sampling to choose 12 participants for in-depth interviewing. Three were chosen from each of the four categories. They were selected on the basis of their perceived ability to represent both common and diverse properties within each dimension. She found that, despite certain obvious differences in motivation, there were common threads that united all four groups. Home schooling, for these families, was a reflection of an entire lifestyle, rather than a mere reaction to public education. As a group, the home schoolers appeared disillusioned with many aspects of modern society. Although the majority considered themselves to be politically conservative, they did not support typical conservative government programs, such as increased military spending. Their lack of confidence in public officials and institutions appeared to be linked to their general perception that society was becoming increasingly immoral. Feeling somewhat powerless in the larger realm, these home schoolers chose to focus their attention on their families instead. They desired to maintain control in this area, and were virtually unanimous in their belief that governmental intervention in family affairs was an unwarranted intrusion.

Sexson (1988/1989) and Van Galen (1986) both conducted fairly limited ethnographic studies, but attempted to extend their findings by placing them in a broader sociological

context. Both researchers agreed with Mayberry that common threads ran through all segments of the movement. The basic home-schooling ideology, which transcended specific religious and political views, was related to a belief in the family unit. Sexson (1988/1989), who categorized home-schooling parents as either "conservative and religious" or "progressive and secular," found that, although there was a split in their professed ideologies, there was a remarkable similarity in lifestyles. She discussed her belief that home-schooling families were examples of a "new individualism," which stressed self-sufficiency and family autonomy without necessarily shunning involvement with the broader community.

Van Galen (1986) echoed the findings of Mayberry and Sexson. She determined that a decision to teach children at home was grounded in a broader belief system that stressed family autonomy and parental control. She divided home-schooling families into two groups. One she called the "ideologues." These were parents who taught their own children primarily for ideological reasons of a political nature. The other group were called the "pedagogues." These parents taught their children at home for academic or pedagogical reasons. Although these divisions sound like they are ideologically based, Van Galen stated that the real criteria she used was methodological in nature. The ideologues were placed in that category because of their structured approach to education, whereas the pedagogues were viewed as more flexible and unstructured. The ideologues were also more

opposed to public education and concerned with such issues as secular humanism and the teaching of evolution in the public schools. However, she noted that her categories were not absolutely "discrete," because fundamentalist Christians could be found in both groups.

Methodology

Procedures for Selection, Data Collection, and Analysis

This historical-descriptive study consisted of a content analysis of a representative sample of books, magazines, workshop materials, and curriculum resources that have been disseminated to home-schooling parents in recent years. The ideas contained in these materials were compared and contrasted with those advocated by proponents of four contemporary educational philosophies: essentialism, progressivism, perennialism, and existentialism.

During the selection procedure, a number of home-schooling leaders and book distributors were asked for suggestions to help ensure that a representative sample of materials was chosen. Information was also obtained from several national magazines, such as <u>Growing Without Schooling</u>, <u>The Teaching Home</u>, and <u>Home Education Magazine</u>. These magazines contained book lists and advertisements for curriculum resources, as well as announcements of upcoming workshops.

At the beginning, four broad areas of influence, which appeared to line up with the four philosophies in question, were tentatively identified for purposes of analysis. They were:

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1. the influence of a loose-knit coalition of traditional Christian educators, including Gregg Harris, Christian Life Workshops, the editors of The Teaching Home, and the publishers of structured curriculum packages, such as Bob Jones University and Abeka Books, who appeared to adhere primarily to essentialist beliefs and practices;

2. the influence of Dr. Raymond Moore and his wife, Dorothy Moore, who appeared to adhere primarily to progressive beliefs and practices;

3. the influence of Charlotte Mason, Susan Schaeffer Macaulay, and the founders and directors of Child Light, who appeared to adhere primarily to perennialist beliefs and practices; and

4. the influence of John Holt, Holt Associates, and the editorial staff of Growing Without Schooling, who appeared to adhere primarily to existentialist beliefs and practices.

Within these four areas, all home education materials written by each major author, in addition to a representative selection of minor works, were read and analyzed. A list of the materials analyzed in this manner included:

1. a. major books, workshop notes, and materials connected with the Home Schooling Workshop put on by Gregg Harris and Christian Life Workshops;

b. three years of past issues of The Teaching Home;

c. selected curriculum resources from such publishers as Bob Jones University and Abeka Books;

2.   a. major books by Dr. Raymond Moore and Dorothy Moore;

b. all past issues of <u>The Moore Report</u>;

c. selected curriculum resources distributed through the Moore Foundation and/or the Hewitt Research Association;

d. workshop notes and materials taken from Moores' Family and School Seminar;

3.   a. major books by Charlotte Mason;

b. major books published by the Child Light organization;

4.   a. major books by John Holt which have influenced the home-schooling movement;

b. three years of past issues of <u>Growing Without Schooling</u>;

c. selected books and other curriculum resources distributed through John Holt's Book and Music Store.

Prior to beginning the analysis of these materials, a study was made of educational philosophy and theory. A sentence outline was constructed of the main tenets of essentialism, progressivism, perennialism, and existentialism. These outlines were used to guide the analysis of the above materials. The outlines addressed the beliefs connected with each educational philosophy on such topics as assumptions concerning education and the learning process, goals for society and the individual, and ideas about the relationship between teachers and learners. The outlines also addressed the types of curricula and methodologies advocated. Before

proceeding to the analysis itself, these outlines were submitted to the committee chairman and several faculty members, who were familiar with these educational philoso- phies, for their input.

The analysis itself was conducted by using the headings from the outlines to organize the ideas contained in the materials. For example, one heading was "Perennialism: Goals of Education for the Individual." Under this heading was an outline of the ideas of perennialist educators concerning such goals. This information was noted on the outside of a file folder, and as the home-schooling materials were analyzed, any notes that suggested agreement with these goals on the part of an author or a group were appropriately classified. As the analysis proceeded, an emphasis was placed on developing a complete, accurate picture of the underlying philosophical ideas of the various authors and groups, rather than on creating simplistic categories and trying to make the authors fit into them.

The findings of the study are presented in four chapters, entitled, "The Influence of Essentialism," "The Influence of Progressivism," "The Influence of Perennialism," and "The Influence of Existentialism." In the final chapter, the findings are summarized and several conclusions are drawn. The implications of the study are then discussed and sugges- tions made for further research in the area.

Introduction

Essentialism is a relatively new name for an educational philosophy that has actually existed for a long time. The main tenets of essentialism are very similar to those described by John Dewey under the heading of "traditional education" in the first chapter of <u>Experience and Education</u> (1938). In that chapter, Dewey asserted that traditional education had generally focused on the organized transmission of subject material from one generation to the next. The purpose of such an education had been preparation for adult life, and the means of such preparation had been teacher-directed learning experiences that utilized textbooks and lectures as the primary means for passing on whatever knowledge and skills were deemed necessary for successful adult living. In such an educational scheme, externally imposed order and discipline had been considered prerequisites for establishing an effective learning environment (Dewey, 1938).

Dewey's challenge to such "traditionalism" will be discussed in the next chapter, entitled "The Influence of Progressivism." Essentialism, which advocated a return to the traditional education spurned by Dewey and his disciples, originally developed as a reaction to the strides made by the

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progressive education movement in the 1920s. In the 1930s, an article by William Bagley set forth "An Essentialist's Platform for the Advancement of American Education" (Bagley, 1938). This article was first presented to a small group of educators who called themselves "The Essentialist Committee for the Advancement of Education." Led by Bagley, this group began an organized assault on the ideas being promoted by progressive educators, and stressed the need for the return to a curriculum built around the "basic" subjects (Bagley, 1938).

As a group, modern-day essentialists do not necessarily agree on a particular underlying general philosophical or religious belief system. They are united by their philosophical assumptions about the teaching and learning process, and by the kinds of curriculum materials and methods which they advocate. Essentialists believe in the existence of a basic, central body of knowledge or truth which must be transmitted to the younger generation. Because they believe that they know which knowledge is most essential, they are rarely tentative about their ideas (Wingo, 1974). The teachers, as the possessors of this body of knowledge, are expected to be well-educated and prepared for each lesson. Because the teachers are viewed as authority figures, children are expected to be respectful towards them, and to obey them without question. The initiative in education, therefore, lies with the teacher, rather than with the student. However, the students are expected to apply themselves diligently to

their work at all times, even when they are not interested or find such efforts distasteful. In the words of Bagley,

> To stick to one line of effort in spite of tedium is the characteristic that differentiates work from play; education is essentially work and the school must never blind itself to the necessity of requiring the conditions of work in the environment that it affords. (Bagley, 1907, p. 149)

Education is considered to be a process of preparation for future citizenship. One of the primary functions of the educational institution is to preserve and promote traditional values and the principles of democracy. A large stress is placed on the development of those habits which educators believe will be helpful in later life, such as attention, respect for authority, and orderly behavior.

The curriculum advocated by essentialists is subject-centered. The subjects included may vary slightly from one community to another, because there may be local disagreements concerning the specific subjects and skills that are most "essential." However, the core curriculum is fairly standard. Arthur Bestor, one of the best-known of the modern-day essentialists, has noted that,

> Certain intellectual disciplines are fundamental in the public-school curriculum because they are fundamental in modern life. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are indispensable studies in the elementary school because no intellectual life worthy of the name is possible or conceivable without these particular skills. Science, mathematics, history, English, and foreign languages are essentials of the secondary-school curriculum because contemporary intellectual life has been built upon a foundation of these particular disciplines. (Bestor, 1955, p. 40)

Once these basic subjects have been completed, students may be encouraged to take a variety of electives. Vocationally oriented pupils may be given slightly different opportunities than those who are college-bound. However, essentialists are firm in their belief that all students must master the core curriculum before they are allowed to pursue individual interests.

Essentialists tend to be somewhat eclectic in their teaching methods, although they generally prefer a traditional lecture format. They stress the maintenance of order in their classrooms. Students are expected to listen attentively while the teacher is talking, to respond only when called upon by the teacher, and to remain quiet during study periods. The traditional emphasis on punishment as a means of control, while still fairly prominent, has been partially replaced by the use of motivational techniques based on the desire for praise and encouragement. Incentives used include grades, awards, prizes, or the granting of special privileges. Evaluation of progress is accomplished primarily through the use of a variety of testing procedures, which generally emphasize the students' retention of factual materials.

The Influence of Essentialism on the Home-Schooling Movement

Although, perhaps, not familiar with the actual term "essentialism," many home educators appear to adhere to this philosophy of education. Most prominent authors and workshop leaders who advocate the use of essentialist materials and

methods are also outspoken Christians. However, not all Christians in the movement share these educational beliefs.

One of the most influential Christian leaders who advocates essentialist ideas within the movement is Gregg Harris, author of <u>The Christian Home School</u> (1988a) and leader of "The Home-Schooling Workshop," which is conducted through Christian Life Workshops of Gresham, Oregon. Others who often display essentialist tendencies include Theodore Wade, author of <u>The Home School Manual</u> (1984), and the majority of the contributors to <u>The Teaching Home</u>. Such contributors range from nationally known Christian authors, such as Richard Fugate, to ordinary home-schooling parents, who frequently send in letters or short articles for publication.

While it is true that modern-day essentialists do not necessarily adhere to a unifying set of religious beliefs, their perception that a body of organized knowledge exists, which must be transmitted intact to the younger generation, indicates a general acceptance of a belief in the presence of objective truth. (This distinguishes them from pragmatic thinkers, who believe that truth is relative and changeable.) For many of the Christians in the movement, the primary source of this objective truth is the Bible. In <u>The Home Schooling Workshop</u>, for example, Gregg Harris stated that "The Scriptures are the only divinely inspired and completely inerrant source of truth available to mankind" (Harris, 1984, p. 5). In an article in <u>The Teaching Home</u>, Richard Fugate wrote that,

in his opinion, one of the main things that determines the success or failure of home-schooling parents is,

> conviction and the right philosophical reasons for home-schooling (i.e. the fact that God holds parents alone accountable for their children's training and that most schools are humanistic and/or force relationships with ungodly peers). (Fugate, 1989c, p. 53)

This belief in the existence of an inerrant source of objective truth, and a single group of right philosophical reasons for teaching children at home demonstrates the rigidity of the belief structure of this particular group of home educators. They may, therefore, be compared with those essentialists in the general field of education who have been described as "rarely tentative" in their arguments, and who are seldom found "entertaining the notion that there are possible alternatives to important questions" (Wingo, 1974, p. 8).

There are several areas where this group of home educators further demonstrates essentialist ideas. These areas fall under the headings, "Educational goals," "Curriculum," "Teachers and students," "Methods of teaching," and "Disciplinary beliefs and techniques."

Educational goals. Essentialists are primarily interested in preserving and passing on the knowledge and traditions of the culture in which they live. In America, the societal goals that are to be furthered through the education of the young include the preservation of democratic ideals and traditional values. Individual students are expected to learn

about their culture and to become prepared for intelligent citizenship. This includes the internalization of societal ideals and values, and the development of habits that will be needed in adult life, such as orderly behavior, punctuality, cleanliness, and attentiveness.

In Theodore Wade's book The Home School Manual (1984), he has attempted to present a balanced perspective on home education. A number of philosophical viewpoints are discussed in a fairly objective manner. However, when he does take a personal stand on the issues, his ideas often lean towards essentialism. In one chapter, entitled, "Developing An Educational Framework," he included what he termed "one of the best lists of goals for American schools" (p. 85). This list was originally prepared by the 1955 White House Conference on Education. Among other goals, it includes the following, which are typical of the essentialist approach: the development of "fundamental skills of communication," "ethical behavior based on a sense of moral and spiritual values," "effective work habits and self-discipline," and an "appreciation for our democratic heritage" (Wade, 1984, pp. 85-86).

The essentialists' ideas concerning democracy are based, at least partially, on their perception of the United States as a capitalist nation. Although John Dewey (whose work will be discussed in the next chapter) also wrote about "democracy and education" (Dewey, 1916), many essentialist home educators view him as a socialist who was largely responsible for the decline of traditional values and democratic ideals in the

nation's schools. Asserting that America was originally a
Christian nation, they believe that men like Dewey and the
other signers of the Humanist Manifestos I and II (1933, 1973)
have plotted to remove democracy and traditional values from
the public educational system, and to replace them with the
ideals of socialism and secular humanism. Gregg Harris wrote,

> It's no accident that today's classrooms reflect
> this inaccurate, anti-patriotic perspective. John
> Dewey, the father of modern education, was himself
> a socialist, and he and his disciples, who have
> controlled American education since World War II,
> have subtly and actively promoted socialism's values
> at all grade levels. (Harris, 1988a, p. 27)

Citing a 1983 article in The Humanist magazine, Harris
told his readers that the "enemy" has declared "religious war"
(Harris, 1988a, p.7). He quoted the author of that article,
who wrote,

> Teachers . . . will be ministers of another sort,
> utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey
> humanist values in whatever subject they teach.
> . . . The classroom must, and will become an arena
> of conflict between the old and the new – the
> rotting corpse of Christianity, together with all
> its adjacent evils and misery, and the new faith of
> humanism. (Dunphy, 1983, p. 26)

To combat such perceived tactics by public school teach-
ers, Harris advised parents to remove their children from the
public schools and teach them about their heritage at home.
Family storytelling was suggested as one method by which
parents "may impress upon their own children . . . the les-
sons of history and the values and purposes they hold most
dear" (Harris, 1984, p. 44). The values essentialist parents
intend to instill in their children are generally seen as

absolutes. Theodore Wade warned parents about values clarification courses that are sometimes included in the curriculum of public schools. He stated that these courses,

> focus more on choosing values logically and applying them. . . . From a Christian viewpoint, I see this as a wrong emphasis. Clear, perceptive choice is important, but basic principles of right and wrong must be presented as absolutes. (Wade, 1984, p. 176)

The "letters to the editor" column in The Teaching Home often focuses on a discussion of the importance of teaching such values. One mother, typical of many others, wrote that, when she divided "essential" learning from "spare-time activities," her first and most important category was "eternal values." In this category, she included "character development, attitudes, behaviors, and personal spiritual growth" (Brown, 1990, p. 3).

Despite their efforts to instill Christian values in their children, not all Christian essentialists believe in using methods which stress total indoctrination. Richard Fugate has commented that,

> Our objective should be to teach our children God's truth and then to help them make applications of it to the world around them. When they do, their convictions about what is currently wrong in the world will be their own instead of merely a parroting of our positions. Personal wisdom . . . is a skill to be practiced, not simply a thing to be learned or believed. (Fugate, 1990, p. 23)

To be fully prepared for adult life and citizenship, students are therefore expected to have internalized the ideals and values of their forefathers by the time they have finished their education. In addition, the students are also

expected to have developed good work habits along the way. A perceived lack of such training in responsible work habits is sometimes cited as a reason for keeping children at home as opposed to having them attend Christian private schools. Harris explained,

> Many Christian schools mimicking the state's academic formula lack deliberate habituation - the instilling of proper habits and the development of Christian character. (Harris, 1988a, p. 40)

In Wade's book, he also urged home-schooling parents to,

> make a conscious effort to expect work to be done completely, done well, and done on time. Work habits can suffer in a home school situation. . . . You can help your child build habits of regularity, efficiency, punctuality, dependability, and thoroughness by your own planning and directing of school at home. (Wade, 1984, p. 122)

Later, Wade suggested using work/study experiences as tools for building such character traits as "perseverance, responsibility, respect for authority, cooperation, and integrity" (Wade, 1984, p. 274). In this instance, he was focusing on the development of responsibility in teenagers, but contributors to The Teaching Home often discuss ways in which to develop such habits in children as young as preschool. In a short article entitled, "The Master's Workshop," Nancy McElroy (1989) reminded parents that young children can learn attentiveness by repeating parental instructions, can learn orderliness by putting away their own clothes, and can develop responsibility through cleaning up after themselves when they spill things.

Curriculum. The main feature of the essentialist curriculum is its emphasis on the importance of the "basic" subjects. The curriculum is planned carefully by the teacher before instruction begins. Once necessary subjects have been covered in a thorough manner, supplemental subjects or electives may be offered.

The segment of the home-schooling population which has essentialist tendencies is most inclined to advocate the purchase of prepared curricula. Some of the more popular materials are available from the Calvert School, Abeka Publishers, Bob Jones University Press, and Alpha Omega Publications. The Teaching Home frequently carries advertisements promoting the work of such publishers. Some of these publishers, such as Calvert and Abeka, offer actual correspondence school support services, such as grading papers and maintaining records. The vast majority utilize a subject-centered approach to instruction. Bob Jones University Press, for example, offers graded textbooks and workbooks in each major subject area, such as math, writing and grammar, spelling, heritage studies, and science, for each level from first grade through the end of high school.

This subject-centered approach is also advocated by the editors and publishers of The Teaching Home. Many of the issues of the magazine are devoted to a particular subject. For example, the June/July, 1988 issue dealt with the topic of teaching literature, and the August/September, 1988 issue focused on geography.

The published notes from Gregg Harris' workshop includes one entire section that is devoted to the teaching of the "3 R's": reading, writing, and arithmetic. In the elementary grades, mastery of these subjects is stressed by essentialist educators. Many home educators prefer to purchase materials which use a phonetic approach to reading instruction, such as "The Professor Phonics Kit," "The Victory Reading Program," "Letterhead Phonics," and "Sing, Spell, Read, and Write," all of which are advertised prominently in The Teaching Home.

In keeping with this subject-centered approach to education, Wade's (1984) book also contains specific chapters devoted to teaching reading, literature, writing, math, science, social studies, and art. Wade devoted a small section of the book to an explanation of alternative approaches to curriculum development (which will be discussed in the chapters on the influence of progressivism and existentialism), but he cautioned parents that,

> Parents have a responsiblity to pass on what they consider valuable information and right principles. The danger is that learning essential to life might be neglected. . . . A course of study could differ from what is normally taught in the public schools and still prepare the student for a successful life, but, in my opinion, it could not be satisfactory while ignoring the essentials of the major subjects most schools try to teach. (Wade, 1984, pp. 47-48)

Teachers and students. Essentialists believe that the best form of organization is a line-staff system, where the teachers are clearly subordinate to the principal, who in turn is under the authority of the community-controlled school board. The group of home-schooling parents which is under

discussion believes in a similar form of accountability. However, these Christian essentialists grant ultimate authority to God, rather than to their communities or school boards.

The "principal" role is generally taken by the father, who is considered to be the head of the school as well as the household, no matter how limited his actual role may be. In an article in The Teaching Home, entitled "Family Relationships," Tim LaHaye, a noted Christian author and speaker, outlined the role of the father as family leader. Criticizing the idea that "we are living in an age when men are relinquishing to their wives their responsibility to be leaders," (LaHaye, 1988/1989, p. 28), he urged fathers to assert themselves and take back the reins of the household. In a similar vein, an article entitled, "The Father's Role as Principal," presented several further suggestions. Stating that, "a husband and wife in a home school are analogous to a principal/teacher relationship," the author urged husbands to take over some of the planning and teaching responsibilities as well as providing encouragement and supervision for their wives as teachers ("The Father's Role," 1989, p. 20).

In the essentialist classroom, the teachers are considered to be authority figures. In the home-schooling situation, this authority is vested in the parents. Essentialist home educators stress that "parents have been given complete authority over their children" (Williams, 1990, p. 9). Gregg Harris frequently cited Ephesians 6:1, which tells

children to obey their parents because God has placed them in authority over them. Similarly, Richard Fugate, stressing the accountability of parents to God, stated,

> Because of God-granted parental authority, parents have the right to set their will above that of their children and to command them to follow their rulership. They also have the power to administer justice and to punish for disobedience or to reward for conformance to their commands. (Fugate, 1988/1989, p. 33)

Teachers, while possessing great authority, limited only by their recognition of the sovereignty of God, also are assigned a heavy load of responsibility. They are expected to be well prepared for each lesson, to plan the home-school environment carefully, to take the initiative in teaching, to impart knowledge and instill values, and to understand, motivate, and evaluate their own children. The importance of an attitude of "giving" on the part of the home-schooling parent is often stressed. One mother stated,

> I have lived a great deal longer and have worked out a great many more problems than they. I can give them everything I know, and that can be their starting point. . . . Now is the time for me to teach them. Now is the time for giving, and what I can give them is patterns, methods, confidence, and lots of right answers (Cynova, 1989, p. 7).

The essentialists' heavy emphasis on preparing, planning, and organizing each lesson places harsh demands on many parents. Dr. Raymond Moore, whose work will be discussed in the next chapter, feels that this emphasis on structure results in a high rate of "burn-out" for this segment of the home-schooling population (Moore & Moore, 1988). Whether individual parents can handle such a heavy load or not is, of

course, dependent on many factors unique to their personal situations. However, it is clear that the essentialists' approach to education involves a huge commitment of time and effort, especially on the part of the teaching parent. Wade has cautioned such parents to consider carefully before they decide to teach their children, because "teaching is full time work," "requires knowledge," "good discipline," and much "commitment and organization" (Wade, 1984, pp. 42-45). He went even further when he told them,

> If you are not ready to provide your child the essential array of skills and knowledge in sufficient depth to function efficiently and effectively as an adult, you should let a more traditional school do the job. (Wade, 1984, p. 48)

In typical essentialist fashion, however, not all the work and effort is assigned to the teacher. Students are expected to obey their parents and to be respectful towards them at all times. They are also expected to work hard at their studies in anticipation of future rewards. One home-schooling mother suggested that the maxim, "It doesn't have to be fun, it does have to be done," should be memorized and meditated on by students daily (S., B., 1989/1990, p. 42). Another parent explained that,

> If we want our children to serve and obey the Lord, they need to learn that a temporary lack of desire does not change or negate the requirement of the moment. (Whetstone, 1989/1990, p. 9)

Methods of teaching. More than any other educators, essentialists place a high priority on the importance of advance organization and planning. Home educators who possess

essentialist tendencies are equally concerned with the value of such preparation. In the words of Theodore Wade,

> The primary elements of school structure are: goals, a definite program with suitable materials, a specific time and place to study, and evaluation as appropriate. Can unstructured learning succeed? For young children with caring parents, yes; and for anyone through brief incidental experiences, yes. But for long-range life skills, not so well . . . why settle for bits and pieces when you can help your children build a solid foundation? Will they grow up like weeds or as well-developed plants? (Wade, 1984, p. 132)

At his workshop, Gregg Harris sells a product which he and his wife have developed called The Christian Family's Complete Household Organizer (Harris & Harris, n.d.). This contains reproducible planning pages covering such diverse topics as weekly and monthly lesson plans, schedules for household tasks, financial records, hospitality records, library records, prayer lists, attendance sheets, grade reports, and records of discipline. The emphasis placed on this organizer demonstrates the importance he attaches to advance planning and the maintenance of administrative order.

Instructional planning begins with setting up the educational environment. Many essentialist home educators attempt to duplicate the environment of the traditional classroom as closely as possible. An article by Sue Welch, the editor of The Teaching Home, which is included in Wade's book, The Home School Manual (1984), suggested setting up an actual schoolroom in the home, using bookshelves, globes, flags, and desks to create a school-like atmosphere. Other ideas she suggested for making the home school special include

giving the school a name, planning opening day and holiday activities, taking school pictures, and selecting a school mascot. Further, she recommended using such techniques as calling the kitchen "the math room," and referring to the father as "the science teacher," to help the children recognize the importance of maintaining a scholarly environment (Welch, 1984, pp. 336-339).

After the physical set-up of the schoolroom has been taken care of, the next step recommended is usually determining a yearly, monthly, and daily schedule. Wade explained,

> Your yearly teaching plans can be quite simple. They might be only dates and notes written on your textbook table of contents pages. Or, much better but still simple, a chart divided into thirty-four to thirty-six weeks with columns for various subjects. The margin designating the weeks would show specific dates and would take into account vacations and holidays planned in your calendar. In the blocks you could write topics (and objectives), textbook page numbers, and notes about non-textbook learning experiences. (Wade, 1984, p. 109)

The daily schedule is usually broken up into various periods for "instruction or independent study," with each individual student assigned a separate "scheduling chart" (Harris, 1984, p. 58). In an article in The Teaching Home, entitled "Principles of Time Management," author Marilyn Rocket suggested beginning with a "basic schedule setting aside blocks of time for chores, quiet time, school, play, and work." Once this basic schedule has been set up, she advised parents to work from a "To Do Today" list to "give visual reality to your plans" (Rocket, 1989, p. 31).

Although many home educators complain that they do not have the time or the energy to carry out such elaborate organizational schemes, these authors maintain that such planning actually saves time in the long run. Wade commented that, while "setting up a school calendar and a weekly schedule may seem like a formality important only for the efficient operation of schools," it is actually just as important for the individual family that is teaching a single child at home (Wade, 1984, pp. 101-102). He later added,

> Even if you choose a relatively unstructured approach, you should still plan carefully to meet certain general objectives and add structure to your program as needed. A definite schedule, even if you don't follow it closely, provides a point of reference. . . . You may succeed without following a close schedule, but don't forget your purposes. An aimless study plan achieves worthwhile goals more or less by chance and teaches your child to drift through life in the same way. (Wade, 1984, p. 104)

After a yearly calendar and weekly schedules have been completed, specific lesson plans are generally drawn up. The Teaching Home frequently gives tips on creating such lesson plans. One such article by Gregory Cizek (1989) was entitled "Planning and Presenting a Lesson." It covered such topics as motivating students, setting learning objectives, presenting and demonstrating new materials, and providing for student practice and immediate feedback. This author urged parents to adopt a principle of "telling people what you are going to tell them," giving them the actual information, and then telling them "what you told them " (Cizek, 1989, pp. 27-28). Another author extolled the benefits of using a "card file

system," developed by a workshop leader named Ann Morris. This author, a home-schooling mother named Connie Nichols, explained the system as follows:

> She taught us to write each day's lesson assignment for each subject on a separate index card, with the subject and child's name at the top of each card. On the lined area of the card is written the instructions and assignment for that lesson. If the lesson for the day requires that the teacher explain the lesson first, this is indicated before the assignment instructions. . . . After I have prepared enough of these cards for, say, two weeks, they are placed in a box (like a recipe file box) that has been divided into subjects with subject index tabs. There should be a tabbed divider at the back of the box marked "Finished Work." (Nichols, 1989, p. 37)

In this case, the teacher's main task was to prepare, plan, and implement the lessons. The responsibility for record-keeping was then transferred to the children, who were required to return the completed cards to the box. In most cases, however, such record-keeping is the teacher's responsibility.

Another task assigned almost exclusively to the teacher is the selection of appropriate learning materials. In most cases, essentialists rely on the use of prepared textbooks and workbooks. Esssentialist home educators often purchase the teacher's manuals to save time on lesson preparation. Harris has referred to textbooks as "the foundation of any school curriculum" (Harris, 1988a, p. 19), and Wade has called them the "backbone" of the curriculum (Wade, 1984, p. 109).

Although textbooks are generally viewed as the most important curriculum resource, they are often supplemented by

the use of projects and trips to the library. These projects, however, are definitely viewed as supplementary learning experiences. Theodore Wade cautioned parents,

> Don't let the tail wag the dog. An experienced teacher might be able to build a whole year's social studies program around Eskimos . . . and keep it balanced, but you may find it easier to arrive at your goals by following a good textbook for the major part of your time, keeping your projects as sidelines. (Wade, 1984, p. 140)

Similarly, library resources are often suggested as good sources for extra reading. However, essentialist home educators generally do not believe in allowing their children to select their own books without following strict guidelines. Even in the library, the teacher is expected to plan learning experiences scrupulously. Wade commented,

> When it is time to learn, follow an organized program. You don't build a house by browsing through the lumber store. And occasional visits to the library won't likely be enough to develop good readers with a breadth of language skills. . . . What children read is even more important than how. (Wade, 1984, p. 205)

Wade, like most essentialist home educators, is not timid about maintaining control over the reading materials which are used by the children. He stated,

> We have always heard that Shakespeare and Poe and Emerson and a long list of others were the "greats" of literature. . . . But if our values are set in the framework of eternity, we recognize that some people whom the world considers great have, in reality, worked against the glory of God and would teach us, directly or by inference to do the same. Literature which the world considers great generally has certain enduring qualities. But when laced with distorted values, we teach or study it at great risk. (Wade, 1984, pp. 207-208)

In a similar vein, a home-schooling mother wrote a letter to <u>The Teaching Home</u> to protest the inclusion of an article that suggested using Newbery Award and Caldecott Medal books in the curriculum. She commented,

> Generally the Newbery books do not promote Christian values. We must always be on the alert when awards are given by secular authorities, and realize that their values are not ours. (Thams, 1988, p. 9)

Evaluation of progress in the essentialist home school is generally accomplished through tests and grades, both of which are also considered motivational devices. Wade suggested that tests actually promote additional learning by "stimulating study," and "requiring the student to pull ideas together for the solution of problems or the formation of conclusions." In addition, tests are seen as "vehicles for reward" (Wade, 1984, p. 120), In addition to such tangible rewards, teachers are urged to use positive motivational techniques, such as "appropriate praise," which is applauded as the "most successful motivator" (Wade, 1984, p. 34). Due to the essentialist belief in the value of occasional punitive measures, such techniques are also used in an attempt to motivate students. One mother explains,

> Depending on the day's schedule, we set up three checkpoints (usually at 10 a.m., noon, and 2 p.m.) and determine how much schoolwork must be done by each checkpoint. For each missed checkpoint, he loses a certain privilege. On the other hand, if the designated amount of work is done before the checkpoint, he gets "free time" until the checkpoint arrives. (Soyke, 1990, p. 7)

Disciplinary beliefs and techniques. Essentialists believe the key to maintaining order in the classroom is the establishment of proper relationships between teachers and their students. As described in the section "Teachers and Students," this relationship clearly establishes the teacher as the authority figure. The establishment of this line of authority has been termed "the first condition of effective discipline" by William Bagley (1907, p. 93).

Similarly, essentialist home educators believe effective discipline is crucial to the success of the home-schooling enterprise. Harris warned parents:

> Without clearly defined boundaries, and a degree of respect for these boundaries, proper instruction is impossible. Until the child is willing and able to honor and obey his instructors the child is virtually unteachable. (Harris, 1984, p. 82)

Wade went one step further. He told parents that, unless their homes possess good discipline, the children,

> will probably be better off in a classroom school where a more significant part of their direction and development can come from people outside the home. . . . Until the situation is under control, a home school is probably not your best option. (Wade, 1984, p. 43)

The Bible is frequently cited as the ultimate authority on the role of discipline within the home. The first through the fourth chapters of the book of Ephesians outline the proper roles for the parents and children, as discussed in a previous section. The child is viewed as a sinful, fallen creation of God, who is not, of his own accord, "desirous of learning anything which requires effort unless it pleases

himself" (Fugate, 1989b, p. 43). This view of the child, reminiscent of those Calvinist beliefs concerning the sinful nature of the child that were dominant in many early American schools, contrasts sharply with the views of most progressive and existentialist educators, who believe that the child is basically good and eager to learn.

Believing children must be molded early to combat their sinful natures and to guide their development, this group of home educators stresses the importance of establishing effective discipline early in the home-schooling endeavor. Harris wrote,

> As soon as you really get rolling in your new home school venture, you'll likely run into the toughest problem of all: exercising and maintaining proper discipline. Discipline in the home schooling situation is a major concern of many parents. And rightly so. . . . Success depends on whether your child respects you as his parents, whether you've previously been successful in building discipline into the relationship and into your child's life. . . . The sinfulness of children is the reason that discipline must include not only training in, and rewarding of, right behavior, but also the instilling of a hatred of wrong behavior and a healthy fear of its consequences. (Harris, 1988a, pp. 109-110)

Once again emphasizing the importance of good organization, Harris created coloring books for children which are based upon a series of rules for his household. Harris recommended that these rules be posted in a prominent place and memorized. One example of these rules is "when we make a mess, we clean it up" (Harris, 1988b, p. 53). One of the reproducible sheets from The Christian Family's Complete Household Organizer (Harris & Harris, n.d.) is called a

"record of discipline." On these pages, parents are urged to keep descriptive notes of each incident, including the date and time an infraction took place, a brief description of the actual offense, and a record of any disciplinary action taken.

Disciplinary techniques are not necessarily limited to the more blatant forms of punishment. Richard Fugate believes it is important to identify the source of the misbehavior, whether it be laziness, pride, or rebellion. Corporal punishment is recommended only in cases of obvious rebellion. In other situations, he has encouraged various forms of positive and negative reinforcement (Fugate, 1989a).

Harris reminded parents that discipline is supposed to represent an act of love, and that children should always be given an explanation for their parents' behavior. The children need to be taught the rules first, and enforcement must be consistent in order to be effective. He stated,

> Your child needs to learn that the consequences of his disobedience are predictable. You must enforce the rules consistently or they will lose their effectiveness as a guide for his actions. (Harris, 1988b, p. 53)

Not only is the need for effective discipline in the home school stressed as a means for establishing an effective learning environment, but it is frequently mentioned as a necessity for maintaining good public relations with the rest of the community. Home-schooling parents are often judged by the behavior of their children, and the image displayed by these families may prove to be either an asset or a detriment

to the continued success of the movement. An "interested grandmother" once wrote to <u>The Teaching Home</u> to say,

> How can parents teach their children the ABC's if the children haven't been taught obedience in all areas of their lives . . . the parent who is not in authority in the home will never succeed in capturing the authority required between teacher and student. That authority has to extend to behavior outside the home, where, indeed, the world is judging the entire home-school movement. ("A Response To . . . ," p. 9)

Summary

Essentialism has influenced the home-schooling movement primarily through the work of a loose-knit coalition of Christian educators who adhere to essentialist educational beliefs. Among the most outspoken members of this group are Gregg Harris, Theodore Wade, and most contributors to <u>The Teaching Home</u>, a magazine directed at Christian home educators. Although most essentialist home educators apparently adhere to Christian religious beliefs, not all essentialist home educators are Christians, and not all Christians in the movement share these essentialist educational beliefs.

The essentialists in the movement are characterized by their belief that a particular body of knowledge exists which must be transmitted to the younger generation. Their educational goals stress the need to preserve and pass on the traditions and democratic heritage of America, while inculcating a variety of desired habits and values in their students. The curriculum of essentialist home educators tends to be highly-structured, textbook-oriented, and subject-centered. The teachers are clearly in charge of the choice of the

materials, as well as the preparation and presentation of lessons. Evaluation takes place primarily through the use of objective testing procedures. The need for an orderly environment is stressed, and strict discipline is maintained.

The Influence of Progressivism

Introduction

The educational ideas associated with progressivism are rooted in the philosophy of pragmatism, which originated in America during the 1870s. An informal organization known as "The Metaphysical Club" was formed during those years in Cambridge, Massachusetts. One of its main purposes was to provide a forum for discussing Darwin's new theory of evolution and its potential applications to other fields of study. This group was dominated by Charles Sanders Peirce and William James, who have generally been credited with founding pragmatism (Wiener, 1972).

Heavily influenced by evolutionary theory, these philosophers focused their attention on the importance of change, adaptation, and growth, and on the interrelationship of individuals and their social and physical environments. In sharp contrast to earlier philosophies, pragmatism denied the existence of absolute truths and eternal values. Truth was viewed in a flexible manner and was defined in terms of its consequences. Morality was no longer based solely on the authority of family, custom, or religion. Rather, individuals were encouraged to question and challenge established norms and to grapple with moral questions in the context of specific

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situations. In this way, it was hoped that they would learn to predict the potential consequences of their actions and to develop a feeling of social responsibility for their behavior (Thayer, 1970).

Such pragmatic ideas were further developed and applied to the field of education through the efforts of John Dewey, an American educator, author, and philosopher. Although he was obviously heavily influenced by pragmatic thought, Dewey preferred to call his own philosophy "experimentalism" or "instrumentalism." He liked these terms because he believed strongly in using scientific methods to analyze and improve educational techniques. He felt that curricula and methodologies should be subject to continuous reappraisal, and should never be allowed to stagnate. Similarly, he believed that knowledge should be regarded as "instrumental," and considered as a means, rather than as an end in itself (Dewey, 1930).

As stated in the preceding chapter, Dewey shunned many practices that had been associated with traditional education. Believing that all subjects were interrelated, he did not feel that knowledge should be broken up into arbitrary segments and parceled out to children in a predetermined sequence. Therefore, he believed that rather than being subject-centered, the curriculum should flow from the childrens' own lives, gradually expanding on their normal social activities. In one of his first works, he stated,

> I believe that . . . the school life should grow
> gradually out of the home life . . . it should take
> up and continue the activities with which the child
> is already familiar in the home. (Dewey, 1897/1959,
> p. 23)

Dewey frequently stressed the importance of taking the developmental level of each child into account when planning instruction. The childrens' abilities were referred to as their "powers." Their specific interests were viewed as indicators of their current developmental abilities and needs and were considered an important clue for educators to use when planning worthwhile educational experiences. Although some progressive educators later pushed the issue of freedom so strongly that they encouraged the specific interests of the children to dictate the curriculum completely, this was not Dewey's intent. In My Pedagogic Creed (1897/1959), he explained,

> I believe that interests are the signs and symptoms
> of growing power. I believe that they represent
> dawning capacities. Accordingly the constant and
> careful observation of interests is of the utmost
> importance to the educator. . . . I believe that
> these interests are neither to be humored nor
> repressed. To repress interest is to . . . weaken
> intellectual curiosity. . . . To humor the inter-
> ests is to substitute the transient for the per-
> manent. The interest is always the sign of some
> power below; the important thing is to discover
> this power. To humor the interest is to fail to
> penetrate below the surface and its sure result is
> to substitute caprice and whim for genuine inter-
> est. (p. 29)

Despite his focus on the child, Dewey did not downplay the instructional role of the teacher, as many of his disciples did later on. He believed that the teacher should become a guide, rather than a dictator. However, his concept

of guiding children did not mean standing back and letting them do anything they wanted. In later years, Dewey criticized many progressive educators for giving the children uncontrolled freedom to select their own activities. In Experience and Education (1938), he pointed out that "the belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative" (p. 28).

There were two criteria Dewey believed must be met in order to ensure that activities constituted valid learning experiences. First, he felt that the experiences had to demonstrate "continuity," which he defined as follows:

> The principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after. (Dewey, 1938, p. 35)

The second criterion for evaluating meaningful educational experiences was referred to as the "interaction" principle. In Dewey's own words, interaction "assigns equal rights to both factors in experience - objective and internal conditions" (Dewey, 1938, p. 42). The term "objective" conditions refers to the external influences in the social and physical environments that affect the students. Up to that time, traditional education had focused almost exclusively on these objective conditions, by setting up learning situations without considering the developmental levels or needs of the individual students. Dewey was sharply opposed to this one-sided approach, but he also criticized those progressive

educators who had gone too far in the other direction. He believed that individual and group activities, which formed the backbone of the curriculum he suggested, should be planned and implemented jointly by teachers and students acting as a team. In this way, the teachers would be free to provide needed guidance, while avoiding the temptation to revert back to their former dictatorial techniques. He explained,

> The way is, first, for the teacher to be intel-
> ligently aware of the capacities, needs, and past
> experiences of those under instruction, and,
> secondly, to allow the suggestions made to develop
> into a plan and project by means of the further
> suggestions contributed and organized into a whole
> by the members of the group. The plan, in other
> words, is a cooperative enterprise. . . . The
> development occurs through reciprocal give-and-
> take, the teacher taking but not being afraid to
> give also. (Dewey, 1938, pp. 71-72)

Dewey's emphasis on involving the students in all phases of the planning process stemmed from his belief that all true thinking is stimulated by the demands of real-life situations or problems. He believed that people generally drift along through life without engaging in any serious thought processes until they are suddenly faced with a particular problem that requires some kind of a solution. In Democracy and Education (1916), Dewey stated that "the starting point of any process of thinking is something going on, something which just as it stands is incomplete or unfulfilled" (Dewey, 1916, p. 146).

When faced with such a difficulty, Dewey explained that the individual begins the "reflective experience." This process begins when the individual recognizes a problem. He or she then proceeds to interpret the problem, formulate a

tentative hypothesis, and consider alternative courses of action. Following a "careful survey" of the situation, the person elaborates or modifies the original hypothesis. Finally, a plan is put into operation, thereby testing the hypothesis and either arriving at a resolution or beginning the process all over again (Dewey, 1916, p. 150).

Because he believed that this type of thought was a crucial part of the educative process, Dewey stressed that learning experiences could not be valid unless they were based on real-life situations or problems that were being encountered by the students. In My Pedagogic Creed (1897/1959), he stated that, "the only true education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situation in which he finds himself" (p. 20). This belief led to his recommendation that such problem-solving activities should be used as the primary method of instruction in order to ensure true participation and interest on the part of the students.

Originally conceived by Dewey, this so-called "project method" was further elaborated by William Heard Kilpatrick, a colleague and disciple of Dewey at Columbia University. In 1918, Kilpatrick wrote a popular booklet entitled, The Project Method, in which he defined an educational project as a "wholehearted purposeful activity in a social situation" (p. 18).

Like Dewey, Kilpatrick emphasized the importance of the role of the students in initiating, planning, and implementing

such projects. The main criterion he used to judge the validity of a project as a meaningful learning experience was the presence of a "purposeful act" on the part of the students themselves (Kilpatrick, 1918, p. 4). He felt that such a purposeful act utilized the "laws of learning," and provided the inner motivation needed to carry the original idea through to a successful conclusion (Kilpatrick, 1918, pp. 8-9).

While Kilpatrick did not totally eliminate the role of the teacher in the planning and implementing of projects, he made it clear that he believed students must be willingly and actively engaged in a project in order for effective learning to take place. He wrote,

> If we conceive activities as ranging on a scale from those performed under dire compulsion up to those into which one puts his "whole heart," the argument herein made restricts the term "project" or purposeful act to the upper portions of the scale. (Kilpatrick, 1918, p. 5)

In his writings, Kilpatrick made increasing use of the word "unit" when discussing these student-initiated activities or "projects." In 1918, for example, he wrote,

> As the purposeful act is thus the typical unit of the worthy life in a democratic society, so also should it be made the typical unit of school procedure. (Kilpatrick, 1918, p. 6)

Later, in his 1928 book, <u>Education for a Changing Civilization</u>, he again stressed the need for an activity-based curriculum that integrates subjects, using "pupil enterprises" as the "typical unit of learning procedure" (p. 112). In the 1930s, he wrote,

How shall we conceive the unit element out of which
the curriculum is built? The older way was to think
of the curriculum as made up of subjects, and each
subject was divided into lessons. The unit element
of curriculum making was thus a more or less unified
piece of subject matter set before a class for
acquisition. School was, in this way, a preparation
for life. . . . The newer education finds its unit
in terms of the newer psychology which starts with
life as the pursuit of ends or purposes. A desir-
able educative experience is present then wherever
a person faces a challenging situation and under-
takes responsibly to deal with it. (Kilpatrick,
1936, pp. 32-33)

The concept of "unit instruction" became increasingly popular with progressive educators during the 1920s and 1930s. A fair amount of disagreement arose, however, over the exact definition of unit instruction. In 1926, Henry C. Morrison, an educator at the University of Chicago, expanded the concept of unit instruction and applied it to the curriculum of the secondary school. While retaining Dewey's emphasis on the integration of subjects and continuing to focus on a particular topic as the basis for the construction of a unit, Morrison began to de-emphasize the role of students in the planning process. As Morrison outlined the idea of unit instruction, the teacher retained the primary responsibility for organizing and presenting the unit to the students, who were no longer considered vital participants in the planning stage (Mickelson, 1966; Morrison, 1926).

The gradual departure of many progressive educators from the original ideas promulgated by Dewey was typical of the fragmentation experienced by the progressive education movement during the first half of the 20th century. The

movement itself was only one small part of a massive push for societal reform, which began late in the 19th century. As one author explained,

> Progressive education began as part and parcel of that broader program of social and political reform called the Progressive Movement. Contrary to the widespread misconception that it dates from the advent of the Progressive Education Association in 1919, the idea had its origin during the quarter century before World War I in an effort to cast the school as a fundamental lever of social and political reform. (Cremin, 1961, p. 88)

In 1892, in response to increasing dissatisfaction with public education in the face of rapid societal changes, a magazine called "The Forum" commissioned Joseph Mayer Rice, a former pediatrician, to do a thorough study of the nation's schools. In a series of muckraking articles, he claimed that the American educational system was fraught with political corruption, and depicted the typical school as a place of intellectual inertia and boredom, where harsh disciplinary techniques were frequently used in a futile attempt to sustain interest and maintain order (Cremin, 1961).

Fueled by a public outcry against such deplorable conditions, the progressive education movement grew during the decade preceding World War I. Early reformers, such as Colonel Francis Parker, the director of the Cook County, Illinois Normal School, and Marietta Johnson, of the "Organic School" in Fairhope, Alabama, demonstrated a new form of education that appeared to be better adapted to a changing society. While always diverse in nature and hard to categorize, such schools had several characteristics in common.

In 1938, reviewing the progress made by progressive educators in the previous two decades, Dewey summarized the similarities that drew these various progressive programs together and made them stand out from more traditional schools. He wrote,

> If one attempts to formulate the philosophy of education implicit in the practices of the new education, we may, I think, discover certain common principles amid the variety of progressive schools now existing. To imposition from above is opposed expression and cultivation of individuality; to external discipline is opposed free activity; to learning from texts and teachers, learning through experience; to acquisition of isolated skills and techniques by drill is opposed acquisition of them as means of attaining ends which will make a direct, vital appeal; to preparation for a more or less remote future is opposed making the most of the opportunities of present life; to static aims and methods is opposed acquaintance with a changing world. (Dewey, 1938, pp. 19-20)

At the beginning of the progressive education movement, as educational professionals struggled to come up with new ideas for revitalizing the flagging American educational system, they had been guided by Dewey's early writings. As an outgrowth of his pioneering work at the University of Chicago laboratory school, he gave a series of lectures, which were eventually published and disseminated to a wide audience. These works included <u>My Pedagogic Creed</u> (1897/1959), <u>The School and Society</u> (1899/1959), <u>The Child and the Curriculum</u> (1902/1959), and <u>Democracy and Education</u> (1916).

The Progressive Education Association itself was formed in 1919. At first, despite his prominent role in developing the educational philosophy of progressivism, Dewey refused to join. It was not until 1926 that he finally acknowledged his

connection with the organization and accepted the position of honorary president (Cremin, 1961).

From the start, the fledgling organization had difficulty establishing unity. The diversity of style and purpose among the members of the group was so marked that they were never even able to agree on a single definition of "progressivism" (Graham, 1967, 1971). One author commented that the movement itself,

> was marked from the very beginning by a pluralistic, frequently contradictory character . . . throughout its history progressive education meant different things to different people, and these differences were only compounded by the remarkable diversity of American education. (Cremin, 1961, p. x)

During the period of its greatest influence, the progressive education movement was characterized by the presence of at least three different groups, which each maintained distinctly separate agendas. One group of educators emphasized the importance of the individual child and focused their main attention on developing a child-centered curriculum that paid attention to all aspects of development. The second group was primarily interested in the need for changing society, and hoped to use the school as a vehicle for social progress. The third group emphasized the need for research, and attempted to revise the curriculum of the schools by proving the adequacy of the innovative strategies being used by the progressive schools (Graham, 1967, 1971).

Shortly after Dewey's death in 1952, the Progressive Education Association was disbanded, and the movement lost

most of its impetus as it faced increasing challenges. Internal difficulties were exacerbated by new attacks from essentialist and perennialist educators, who were concerned by a perceived lack of basic literacy and scientific knowledge among American children.

Despite the demise of the so-called progressive education movement itself, however, many of the innovations begun during those years have remained intact. Progressive slogans, such as the emphasis on the "whole child," "teaching children, not subjects," "active learning," "creative self-expression," "unit instruction," and "bridging the gap between home and school" have permeated the educational system. Many of these ideas, which seemed so revolutionary when they were first proposed at the turn of the century, have since become commonplace and widespread (Cremin, 1961). Of even greater importance, many universities have retained their emphasis on progressive methods in their undergraduate teacher-training programs. This has resulted in a continuing influx of new teachers into the public schools who have been influenced by progressive ideas that can often be traced back to Dewey and his followers.

Many home educators believe, correctly or incorrectly, that the influence of Dewey is still a dominant force today in the American public school system. Pointing to the fact that he signed the first Humanist Manifesto (1933), they view him as an atheist, and cite his continuing influence when explaining their rationale for removing their children from

the public schools (Harris, 1988a). This particular rationale has been expressed most frequently by those Christians in the movement who demonstrate essentialist educational beliefs. However, not all Christian home educators equate progressive ideas and methods with atheism. There is another segment of home educators that embraces certain progressive methods despite their rejection of many of the underlying beliefs associated with Dewey and other pragmatic philosophers. The most influential among this group is Dr. Raymond Moore, an educational psychologist and researcher who has written numerous books on home education and conducts popular work-shops on the subject.

The Influence of Progressivism on the Home-Schooling Movement

Over the past 20 years, Dr. Raymond Moore has gradually become one of the most prominent figures on the national home-schooling scene. He was trained as an educational psycho-logist and has spent the majority of his career engaged in a variety of research activities. In 1972, the Hewitt Research Foundation, an organization with which he was then affiliated, conducted a massive investigation of the results of over 7,000 studies in child development and related areas. Through this effort, Moore and his colleagues pulled together a large volume of research data that supported his basic contention that children lacked readiness for formal schooling before the approximate age of 8 or 9 years old (Moore & Moore, 1975, 1981, 1988; Moore et al., 1979).

In one of their first books, <u>Better Late Than Early</u> (1975), Moore and his wife urged parents to keep their children at home rather than sending them to day care, kindergarten, or primary school. He explained the results of the research studies he had collected, and expressed his concern that children were being exposed to formal classroom-type instruction at an age when they had not yet reached their "integrated maturity level." He defined this as,

> the point at which the developmental variables (affective, psychomotor, perceptual, and cognitive) within the child reach an optimum peak of readiness in maturation and cooperative functioning for out-of-home group learning (typical school) experiences. (Moore & Moore, 1975, p. 34)

A detailed synopsis of the research Moore collected in support of his position is contained in <u>School Can Wait</u> (1979). In this book, he asserted the following:

1. Research in the area of neurophysiology and neuro-psychology indicates that the optimum age to learn academic skills does not occur until age 7 or later. Reason is dominated by emotion until balance occurs between the right and left hemispheres of the brain. This balance is usually achieved between the ages of 7 and 9.

2. Although researchers agree that early stimulation aids brain development, there is a good deal of question regarding the efficacy of formal structured learning at an early age. According to research performed using rats, the more natural and free the environment, the better the quality of brain development that takes place.

3. Research in the area of ophthalmology indicates that the eye is not prepared for close academic work before the age of 7 or 8. Doctors have found that the effects of close work have increased the incidence of myopia in young children dramatically since the early 1900s.

4. Many children cannot readily distinguish and remember certain sounds until the approximate age of 8. This reduces their ability to perform auditory discrimination tasks that are often considered a prerequisite for the development of reading skills.

5. Many children cannot integrate visual learning and hearing with the sense of touch until the approximate age of 8.

6. Research concerning the optimum age for school entrance has generally favored later entrance, rather than earlier entrance. (Moore et al., 1979)

Through his early writings, Moore exerted an enormous impact on the developing home-schooling movement. Over and over, he repeated his advice to parents who were facing decisions concerning the placement of their young children in instructional programs. Urging such parents to keep their children at home with them during the early years, he stated,

> During the first crucial eight years, home should be the child's only nest and parents the teachers for their children. These are the years when the child requires affection and emotional security more than learning skills, when he should be able to get ready for life unfettered by school rules. (Moore & Moore, 1975, p. 3)

At first, Moore did not address the issue of continuing home schooling past the primary years. Rather, he felt that children who had reached their integrated maturity levels would be ready to enroll in school at the level of their age peers. In fact, he stressed that such children would be so ready that they would quickly catch up with or surpass the others who had spent their early years in school.

As the home-schooling movement entered its period of rapid expansion in the 1980s, many of the parents who had made their original commitment based on Moore's findings decided that they wanted to continue teaching their children at home after they had passed the primary grades. Moore began to offer assistance and advice to such parents, and eventually altered his own position until he, too, became an advocate of home education all the way through high school (Moore & Moore, 1988).

Although he has gradually embraced this concept of long-term home schooling, Moore has never demonstrated the virulent anti-public school attitudes associated with some of the Christian essentialists in the movement. Rather, he and many of his followers have attempted to cooperate with the public sector whenever possible, and appear open to the idea of developing cooperative programs with the public schools.

At his workshops, Moore shares the podium with his wife, Dorothy Moore, who has also co-authored several books and articles. They were both trained in professional schools of education. Dorothy Moore, a former reading specialist, has

worked in both public and private schools before becoming involved with the home-schooling movement. Raymond Moore has also been affiliated with a number of public and private schools and universities during the course of his career. This professional training and experience, coupled with the insistence which the Moores place on the need for research-based curriculum decisions, has probably been instrumental in their acceptance of many ideas commonly associated with "progressivism" in education.

As outspoken Christians, the Moores have repeatedly stressed the need for exposing children to concrete value systems that are rooted in eternal realities. Obviously, with such beliefs, they do not agree with some of the pragmatic concepts that are typically associated with Dewey. However, many of Moore's educational ideas parallel those found in Dewey's writings. Moore's belief in the importance of readiness, for example, corresponds to Dewey's emphasis on the importance of recognizing the developmental level of the individual child when planning instruction. Moore's belief that young children are not ready for formal instruction has also led him to embrace the concept of active, experience-based learning. When he began advocating home instruction for older children and teenagers, he extended this idea to include the upper grades as well. His advocacy of an integrated, activity-based curriculum, therefore, incorporates many of the same curriculum recommendations originally suggested by Dewey and his disciples.

In his workshops, Moore includes a section in which he explains how to develop units of instruction that are planned jointly by the parents and children acting as a team. In a written outline that is handed out to the parents, he indicates that a typical planning session should include choosing a topic, brainstorming, integrating subjects, deciding which books and resources will be used, and dividing up responsibilities based on the developmental levels of the children. He further suggests planning some sort of culminating activity, such as giving a program, taking a trip, or providing a community service.

For those parents who prefer to purchase curriculum materials, Moore recommends the use of either the Konos or the Weaver curriculum series. Both of these series use integrated units of instruction. The Weaver series actually refers to its methodology as the "project/unit method," and cites a study by Dr. Ellsworth Collings (1927) as proof of the efficacy of their method. (In their literature they incorrectly refer to him as Dr. Earnest Collings). In addition to this error, the publishers do not appear to recognize that Collings, working in the 1920s, was specifically testing the efficacy of Kilpatrick's project method, which differs substantially from their own version of unit instruction and the project method (Collings, 1927).

In the Weaver series, the choices of activities are fairly limited, and the parent/teachers are viewed as the decision-makers. This corresponds more to Morrison's concept

of unit instruction than it does to Kilpatrick's project method. The method used by the Weaver curriculum is similar to that created by Dewey and Kilpatrick only in its emphasis on active learning and the integration of subject material. Although the Weaver curriculum states that it desires to teach children how to think, it does this in a very directive manner, which is completely opposed to the original intentions of Dewey and Kilpatrick. Rather than allowing the projects to develop out of the real social needs of the children, or to represent purposeful acts, as outlined by Kilpatrick, the units are primarily chosen and planned by the parents. The parents are also told exactly how to demonstrate and explain materials to their students. Question and answer sessions are handled in a very structured manner. The units themselves are based on themes taken from a chronological study of the Bible, and the publishers make it clear that they believe the parents must teach their children to obey and must maintain fairly tight discipline within the family to ensure that their teaching will be effective. Furthermore, the parents are urged to supplement the project units with a balanced amount of seatwork to ensure the development of discipline on the part of the students.

The Konos curriculum has several elements in common with the Weaver curriculum, although there are also certain important differences. Rather than being based on the Bible, the Konos curriculum derives its units from themes based on character development. Like the Weaver curriculum, the

subjects are integrated, and the projects or units stress the need for active learning on the part of the students. In supplemental materials, such as cassette tapes that are available for purchase by the parents, the Konos authors suggest more involvement by the children in planning activities than does the Weaver series. Also, there are more choices of activities, and the types of investigations suggested are often less structured than those found in the Weaver curriculum. For example, in a geology unit in the Konos curriculum, the children are asked to think of as many ways to classify rocks as they can on their own. In a similar unit in the Weaver curriculum, the teacher classifies the rocks with the children, sorts them into igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary categories, and supplies the children with the corresponding definitions.

The authors and publishers of both of these series have made it clear their basic intent is to guide children in the development of solid values rooted in the religious belief systems held by their families. Therefore, they would probably not be concerned that their methods and intentions do not line up with the original ideas of Dewey or Kilpatrick. However, the fact that some progressive techniques do show up in their work, and that they are unwittingly citing progressive educators to substantiate their work, seem to be good indicators of the widespread infiltration of progressive ideas into the American educational consciousness. Even men like Theodore Wade and Gregg Harris, who adhere primarily to

essentialist ideas, occasionally demonstrate certain progressive tendencies in their writings.

Wade's work has already been discussed in some detail in the chapter on essentialism. Although he talked a great deal about the value of incorporating active learning into the curriculum, the projects he advocated are definitely viewed as extras, intended to supplement the basic textbook-based curriculum. However, he demonstrated true progressive tendencies through his recognition of the importance of including children in the planning stages of such projects. In The Home School Manual (1984), he wrote,

> Most of the problem of seeing that a particular learning task is matched to your child's abilities will take care of itself if you let him or her plan the project as well as do it. This assures a good deal of motivation, too. You can discuss with your student in general what is to be gained from the experience; then make only necessary suggestions as your young adventurer plans a course of action. (Wade, 1984, p. 141)

Although Wade emphasized the role of the parent/teacher throughout his work, he has often indicated that the parents can act as guides, rather than as dictators, without necessarily abdicating their ultimate responsibility for their children. In this connection, he stated,

> A good teacher knows best how to communicate ideas by focusing on the learner - by being constantly perceptive to his or her needs and achievements. Teaching is like guiding travelers across an unfamiliar wilderness. The instructor must know not only the destination and how to get to it, but must also watch and direct the travelers. (Wade, 1984, p. 37)

Sounding a great deal like John Dewey in Experience and Education (1938), Wade stressed that a balance must be maintained between focusing on the needs of the children and the external demands of the environment. He cautioned parents that:

> You probably have guessed by now my concern that home-teaching is sometimes too loosely structured - that decisions and planning should be based on more than what feels good and seems like fun at the moment. Please note also that the opposite extreme - insensitivity to your students' interests, and lack of concern for making learning enjoyable - could be just as bad. The challenge is to help your child achieve full, balanced development in a pleasurable atmosphere. (Wade, 1984, p. 126)

Thus, although Wade's basic essentialist beliefs have been discussed in the previous chapter, it is clear that he has also been influenced, to a degree, by certain progressive ideas. Like many home-school advocates who demonstrate such tendencies, he was exposed to university training in education, and has earned a doctorate in secondary education at the University of Nebraska.

It is interesting to note that even Gregg Harris, who is certainly one of the most outspoken critics of Dewey and progressive educational ideas in general, has expressed occasional agreement with ideas that can be traced directly back to Dewey. On one of the chapter dividers in his book, The Christian Home School (1988a), he quoted Elbert Hubbard as stating that "A school should not be preparation for life. A school should be life." While Hubbard may have made this

comment, it is also one of the best-known maxims attributed to Dewey (Dewey, 1897/1959, p. 22).

Although Harris' basic curriculum uses a structured, textbook-centered approach, he also urged parents to include what he called "delight-directed studies" as supplemental learning experiences. These are basically individual or group projects that use the children's own interests and motivations as a source for planning unit instruction. He also discussed the incorporation of "family study projects" into the curriculum. These projects make use of such progressive techniques as integration of subject material and learning through experience. However, Harris made it clear that such activities are not intended as a replacement for seatwork or drill, which are emphasized throughout his suggested curriculum (Harris, 1989, pp. 49-56).

Summary

The progressive influence on the home-schooling movement is one of the least pronounced philosophical influences to be found. It is true that various home-schooling advocates have expressed agreement with certain progressive ideas and methods. Examples of this include the Moores' promotion of the concept of readiness, the increasing advocacy of active learning and unit instruction, and the growing belief that students should be included with their parents during the planning process. Much of this influence appears to have entered the movement through the efforts of those participants who have been trained in professional schools of education.

However, it remains true that very few home-schooling authors or parents agree with the underlying pragmatic philosophical beliefs of Dewey or many of his followers. Therefore, this area of influence is one of the most difficult to detect and interpret. Perhaps one of the reasons such a limited number of progressive educators can be found within the home-schooling movement lies in the emphasis progressives typically place on the importance of the social group. Certain forms of school education may possess greater appeal than family based instruction for the majority of parents who adhere to this educational philosophy.

The Influence of Perennialism

<u>Introduction</u>

Like essentialism, perennialism is a 20th century revival of an educational philosophy that has existed for a long time. In fact, some educators have charged that perennialism actually follows a "regressive road," by advocating a return to beliefs and methods which were "foundational to a much earlier age" (Brameld, 1955, p. 287).

The word "perennial" refers to something that returns, year after year, in essentially the same condition. The perennialists believe that certain things are timeless. Basic human nature, for example, is the same in every epoch and in every culture. Eternal truths exist, despite the presence of cultural variations.

As a group, perennialists believe in the existence of absolute values. Many of them base their belief on a recognition of God as the ultimate authority and lawgiver of the universe. One group of perennialists, led by Jacques Maritain, a French educator, author, and philosopher, have been called the "ecclesiastic perennialists" because of their connection to the Roman Catholic church (Brameld, 1955). "Lay" perennialists, who constitute the other branch, have been represented in print most frequently by Robert Hutchins,

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former president of the University of Chicago, and Mortimer Adler, educator and author of The Paideia Proposal (1982) and The Paideia Program (1984). These two men, while retaining a belief in the presence of universal truths and timeless knowledge, have separated their theological and philosophical beliefs, and generally concentrate on the latter.

Concerning the nature of man, both branches of perennialists believe that any differences men possess are outweighed by their similarities. Adler has pointed out that "individual differences are always and only differences in degree, never differences in kind" (Adler, 1982, p. 3). Jacques Maritain, speaking for the ecclesiastics, has characterized man as an "animal endowed with reason, whose supreme dignity is in the intellect," and as a "free individual in personal relation with God, whose supreme righteousness consists in voluntarily obeying the law of God" (Maritain, 1943, p. 7).

Because they believe that men are basically the same everywhere and at all times, and that certain basic truths exist that are timeless and eternal, perennialists assert that education should also be the same at all times and in all civilizations where such education is possible. The education offered should be "liberal" education, which avoids premature specialization, but prepares students in a broad manner for their future lives as adults. According to Robert Hutchins:

> The object of liberal education is not to teach the young all they will ever need to know. It is to give them the habits, ideas, and techniques that

> they need to continue to educate themselves. Thus
> the object of formal institutional liberal educa-
> tion in youth is to prepare the young to educate
> themselves throughout their lives. (Hutchins, 1953,
> p. 74)

Education is therefore regarded as a lifelong process, which begins at birth and continues throughout a person's lifetime. Basic schooling for youth is considered as a preparatory phase. Believing that wisdom can only come with maturity, perennialists stress that only adults can ever claim to be truly well-educated.

In many people's eyes, perennialism has become synonymous with the "great books" concept of education, because of the stress which perennialists lay on the use of great classical literature in the curriculum. Through the use of the great works of western literature, the perennialists hope to preserve and pass on the great ideas of western civilization, and, in so doing, to forge a common thread among members of all classes, thereby promoting increased communication and understanding (Hutchins, 1953).

The great books are also used as one means of cultivating reason and rationality on the part of the pupils. This is one of the highest goals of perennialist education. Maritain has said that the primary aim of education for the individual is,

> to guide man in the evolving dynamism through which
> he shapes himself as a human person - armed with
> knowledge, strength of judgment, and moral virtue -
> while at the same time conveying to him the spiri-
> tual heritage of the nation and the civilization in
> which he is involved, and preserving in this way
> the century-old achievements of generations.
> (Maritain, 1943, p. 10)

Perennialists oppose what they consider to be "vocationalism" in the schools. They advocate a return to a broad liberal education for all students. The goal of education, for the perennialist, must always be the development of the mind.

Perennialists also consider educators to be true professionals. As such, they must possess a well-rounded, liberal education themselves in order to be properly prepared for their jobs. These trained educators, under the guidance of the headmaster in a particular school, should be responsible for determining the nature of the curriculum and methods used. The input of the community in determining educational goals or methods is considered neither desirable nor necessary. Schooling should be controlled by trained professionals, and not subject to the whims of society.

Although the teachers are expected to exert "moral authority" over their students, there should always be mutual respect between the two. From the beginning, learners must play conscious roles in their own development. Their minds must be actively engaged in the instructional process in order for true learning to take place. Maritain stated,

> the mind's natural activity on the part of the
> learner and the intellectual guidance on the part
> of the teachers are both dynamic factors in educa-
> tion, but . . . the principal agent . . . is the
> internal vital principle in the one to be educated;
> the educator or teacher is only . . . secondary.
> (Maritain, 1943, p. 31)

To maintain an orderly environment for learning, the authority of the teacher must be recognized, but students are

not expected to engage in unquestioning, mindless obedience. They must be made cooperative partners from the start. The eventual goal of the perennialist educator is the development of self-discipline in the pupils. To achieve this cooperative spirit, moral principles must be taught from the beginning, which are "grounded on truth rather than . . . suitable for social convenience" (Maritain, 1943, p. 93).

Perennialists believe that the presence of sufficient intellectual stimulation will encourage the students to behave themselves and challenge them to apply their energies whole-heartedly to the common task (Adler, 1982). The development of rationality, combined with the teaching of absolute moral principles and the development of good habits, will result in the elimination of most serious disciplinary problems. Hutchins commented,

> Children should be brought up in good habits; but those habits cannot endure the stress and strain of circumstances unless they have some foundation in the convictions of the person who has them. Durable conviction about the affairs of this world is a matter of reason. (Hutchins, 1953, pp. 10-11)

While perennialists thus stress the importance of recognizing and respecting the minds and spirits of the individual learners, they never lose sight of the importance of the subject material to be covered. All students are expected to follow the same basic curriculum, with its emphasis on classical learning. The only flexibility allowed concerns the speed with which students pass through the required materials (Adler, 1982).

According to Maritain, there are three levels of basic schooling, which correspond to the age of the learner. During the phase of elementary schooling, the imagination of the child must be appealed to, and "the knowledge which has to be given to the child is knowledge in a state of story, an imaginative grasp of the things and values of the world" (Maritain, 1943, p. 60). During the period of adolescence, the youth is in a transitional phase during which his reasoning power is being developed, and instruction should therefore appeal to his rationality. Vocational specialization is to be avoided until after the completion of a full, liberal college education.

Perennialists believe that the books used in the curriculum should not be textbooks or contemporary books with little literary merit. The teacher's main role in exposing the students to classical works of literature is to place them in direct, unmediated contact with the great minds of western civilization. In this way, the students are exposed to the ideas present in these works, and they are encouraged to use their intellectual skills and develop their ability to think critically about the content. Maritain stated,

> In asking a youth to read a book, let us get him to
> undertake a real spiritual adventure and meet and
> struggle with the internal world of a given man,
> instead of glancing over a collection of bits of
> thought and dead opinions, looked upon from without
> and with sheer indifference. (Maritain, 1943, p.
> 44)

In keeping with this emphasis on placing students in direct contact with the great works of western civilization,

the perennialist educator also generally includes classical music, art, and drama activities in the curriculum. The purpose of such experiences is to increase the students' understanding of these works, rather than to encourage creative self-expression (Adler, 1982).

As long as the perennialist goals of education are promoted, teachers are encouraged to use a variety of teaching methods and to play a number of different roles with their pupils. In Adler's book, The Paideia Proposal (1982), which was written in an effort to reform American education, he discussed three types of learning and their corresponding methodologies. The first kind was the acquisition of organized knowledge, which was to be accomplished through didactic instructional techniques such as lecturing or presiding over question-and-answer sessions. The second kind of learning involved the development of intellectual skills such as reading, writing, calculating, and problem-solving. The role of the teacher in this type of learning was similar to that of a coach, who sets up and supervises the practice of needed skills. The third type was the development of understanding in the realm of ideas and values. This type of learning called for the teacher to engage the pupils in a Socratic-style discussion of literary, musical, or artistic works (Adler, 1982).

When pupils are tested and evaluated in the perennialist classroom, they are usually expected to perform orally or to write essays on a particular subject. The perennialists

generally do not believe in the use of objective examination techniques, such as the use of multiple-choice questions or matching exercises. The emphasis, even in the evaluation process, remains on the engagement of the mental processes of the learner. This is accomplished through first putting the learner into direct contact with one of the great minds of western civilization, and then helping him or her to criticize and evaluate the ideas presented and discuss them intelligently. Hutchins pinpointed the main thrust of the perennialist educational philosophy when he wrote,

> An education which consisted of the liberal arts understood through great books, and of great books understood through the liberal arts, would be the only one which would enable us to comprehend the tradition in which we live. (Hutchins, 1953, p. 14)

The Influence of Perennialism on the Home-Schooling Movement

In 1984, Susan Schaeffer Macaulay, a daughter of the well-known Christian evangelist, Francis Schaeffer, wrote a book entitled, _For the Children's Sake: Foundations of Education for the Home and School_. As the title suggests, Macaulay directed the book at concerned parents and teachers in both home and school settings. Macaulay is a staunch Christian and a home educator herself. However, like many of the other Christian perennialists in the movement, she takes a very non-judgemental stance towards those who choose to educate their children in school. She cautioned parents that,

> It is important to apply Jesus' teaching that we must not judge other people's choices. Just because I decide to send my little Tom to the local public school or a private Christian school, or because I

decide to give him a home education, does not mean that everyone else has to do the same. (Macaulay, 1984, p. 8)

Perhaps because of the dual audience to which the book was addressed, it did not catch on at first with the home-schooling population. However, little by little, its popularity grew. Following the publication of the book, Macaulay and her associates formed an organization called "Child Life," dedicated to furthering the ideas presented in the book. Later, the name was changed to "Child Light," due to unanticipated problems with the copyright.

In her book, Macaulay presented a synopsis of the educational philosophy of Charlotte Mason, an English educator who lived from 1842 to 1923. Mason demonstrated strong perennialist tendencies in her writings, although she was a bit unusual for a perennialist because of her strong emphasis on the importance of the early years of development. Her child-centered approach in this area occasionally led her to make suggestions that sound somewhat progressive. However, her overall goals for education, as well as her ideas concerning curriculum development and teaching methods, place her squarely within the perennialist camp.

In the last 6 years, the perennialist influence on the home-schooling population has grown steadily, although it is still not as pervasive as either the essentialist or the existentialist points of view. The resurgence of interest in perennialism has occurred partly because of the continuing efforts of the founders of Child Light, who have published a

newsletter and two new companion books to <u>For the Children's Sake</u> (Macaulay, 1984). The first of these, written by Elizabeth Wilson, is entitled, <u>Books Children Love</u> (1987), and is an annotated bibliography of quality children's literature. The second, written by Diane Lopez, is called, <u>Teaching Children: A Curriculum Guide to What Children Need to Know at Each Level Through Sixth Grade</u> (1988). At first, parents were fairly stymied in their efforts to read Mason's books for themselves, because only a few titles were available, on a limited basis, through antique bookstores or interlibrary loans. However, in 1989, another organization was created, unrelated to Child Light, called the Charlotte Mason Research and Supply Company. This organization has re-published the entire "Home-Schooling Series," a six-volume set originally published between the years of 1886 and 1925. The resurgence of interest in Mason's work was further encouraged by the publication of <u>Schoolproof</u> (1988), a work by a popular home-schooling writer named Mary Pride, which included numerous ideas taken from Mason's books.

To understand the powerful impact Mason has had on the home-schooling movement, it is necessary to digress to give a little background information concerning her life and work. Born in Bangor, England, in 1842, Mason was an only child. She was rather lonely growing up, and had few toys and no playmates. However, her mother filled in the hours by reading to her incessantly from good books.

Quite early, Mason decided to become a teacher. She made this decision after visiting a school and noticing how dull and paltry their reading materials were compared to the fare she had been given at home (Cholmondeley, 1960).

At the age of 16, Mason was orphaned, and she soon set out to prepare for her chosen profession. She entered the Home and Colonial Training School, one of the first of its kind in Britain. At the age of 19, due to frail health and lack of funds, she arranged to leave school and complete her certificate through correspondence study. As a part of this agreement, she went to work at the Davidson School, where she remained from 1861 to 1872 as a teacher and administrator. During those years, she formulated her philosophy of education. She also established a school for older middle-class girls, which was considered a pioneering effort at the time.

In 1872, she resigned her post there, again, due to ill health. She spent the next couple of years recuperating and taking long walks in the English countryside. Her love of nature and interest in local geography were intensified during these walks, and played a large role in the development of her curriculum.

In 1874, she joined the faculty of a training college for elementary teachers at the Bishop Otter College in Chichester. She held a post there as a "lecturer in education, hygiene, and physiology," and "Mistress of Methods" in the practicing school (Cholmondeley, 1960, p. 12). She was later appointed

vice-principal of the school, but, again, was forced to resign her position due to poor health in 1878.

In 1880, she moved to Bradford, in the north of England, to visit a college friend who had established a middle school there. While at Bradford, she did some teaching and writing. It was in Bradford that she first began to be interested in sharing her educational ideas with parents. She gave a series of lectures there, which were later written down and bound together as her book, Home Education (Mason, 1886/1989). Following these lectures, a group of parents approached her with the idea of forming an association of parents and educators. This led to the formation, in 1887, of the Parent's Education Union.

> The object of the society was the study of the laws of education as they bear on the bodily development, the moral training, the intellectual life, and the religious upbringing of children. . . . Fathers and mothers of whatever class would be eligible as members. Besides parents, other persons interested in education should prove to be useful allies. (Cholmondeley, 1960, pp. 16-17)

The society met approximately four times a year. At each meeting, a topic pertaining to education was presented in a lecture format, and was then opened up for group discussion. Field trips were also offered from time to time for parents to learn about nature from a naturalist, in order to be able to share the information later with their children.

The organization began to grow, and eventually became the Parent's National Education Union, with branches all over England and even overseas. Today, one branch is known as the

Home School Service. This branch helps parents who are attempting to teach their children at home. This service is endorsed by the Department of Education and Science.

In the early days, as the fledgling organization began to spread throughout Great Britain, Mason always stressed the need for continued local control. She warned that flexibility was crucial in all educational undertakings, and that the organization would quickly become useless if it allowed itself to become entangled in rules and bureaucratic red tape.

The Parent's Review magazine was started in 1890. Mason became its first editor, and continued contributing articles and editing the paper throughout her lifetime. The aim of the magazine, as set forth in its first issue, was,

> to raise common thought on the subject of education to the level of scientific research, and to give parents grip of some half-dozen principles which should act as enormously powerful levers in the elevation of character. (Parent's Review, cited in Cholmondeley, 1960, p. 28)

In 1891, Mason moved to Ambleside, in the English lake district, and established her House of Education. There she planned to train "aunts," or governesses for children in a home-like atmosphere. This school eventually grew into a teacher training school, and is still operating today under the name "The Charlotte Mason College."

In association with the school, Mason began a "Parent's Review School" in the local village, which she used as a laboratory school for her students. She required all of the parents who enrolled their children in the school to subscribe

to the _Parent's Review_ magazine, and to take part in occasional workshops, to show their seriousness concerning their children's education.

In 1891, the "Mother's Education Council" was established through the magazine. This was a correspondence course for mothers on subjects related to child development. It continued in operation until 1915, when the work was interrupted by the war.

The curriculum of the House of Education at Ambleside consisted of music, languages, (French, German, Italian, and Latin were required for everyone), nature study, handicrafts, mathematics, English, literature, and child development. The strength of the program, however, seemed to flow from the atmosphere of the country air, the presence of the young children in the village school, and the personality of Mason herself (Cholmondeley, 1960).

Besides being a gifted philosopher, teacher, lecturer, and author, Mason was a very capable administrator. She knew how to handle finances, delegate responsibility, and bring out the best in her co-workers. This ability to delegate and supervise programs took on special importance after the year 1897. Mason's ill-health finally caught up with her, and she became a virtual invalid, confined to her bedroom for the rest of her life. However, she continued to carry on voluminous correspondence, edit the _Parent's Review_, administer the program of the House of Education, correct examination papers,

and write dozens of scholarly articles and books. She remained active until her death in 1923.

Mason's educational philosophy was firmly rooted in her strong Christian religious beliefs. Although she was not a Roman Catholic, many of her ideas paralleled those of the ecclesiastical perennialists. She believed in the existence of eternal values and absolute truth, both of which were rooted in the ultimate authority of God. Not only did she believe in God herself, but she stated,

> I am assuming that everyone entrusted with the bringing up of children recognises [sic] the supreme Authority to Whom we are subject; without this recognition I do not see how it is possible to establish the nice relation which should exist between teacher and taught. (Mason, 1925, p. 73)

Believing that human nature was the same in all civilizations and at all times, Mason also felt that her ideas concerning the nature of childhood and education had the potential for universal application. At the beginning of her last book, Towards a Philosophy of Education, which was published posthumously in 1925, she prepared a short synopsis of her educational philosophy. Her number one proposition was that "children are born persons" (Mason, 1925, p. ixxx). Believing that children and adults were spiritual equals, she stressed that members of the younger generation should not be viewed as the possessions of their parents. She felt that adults generally undervalued children, and too often tried to push, prod, or mold them to fit their own preconceived ideas.

Although Mason adhered to traditional religious beliefs, and considered the Bible to be the Word of God, she did not buy the Calvinist version of the nature of original sin. Her second proposition was that "children are born neither good nor bad, but with possibilities for good and for evil" (Mason, 1925, p. ixxx). Therefore, the teachers had the responsibility to provide guidance, but were expected to do so without trampling on the rights of the children as individuals.

Educational goals. Like the other perennialists, Mason desired to introduce her students to the great ideas of western civilization in order to forge a common bond among the members of the various classes. She once stated,

> What we want is a common basis of thought, such a groundwork as we get from having read the same books, grown familiar with the same compositions, the same interests; when we have such a fundamental basis, we shall be able to speak to each whether in public speaking or in common talk. (Mason, 1925, pp. 264-265)

Mason believed that the betterment of society would best be accomplished through the improvement of its individual citizens. She commented,

> Everyone is much occupied with problems concerning amelioration of life for our "poorer classes," but do we sufficiently consider that, given a better education, the problems of decent living will for the most part be solved by the people themselves? (Mason, 1925, p. 245)

Believing in the value of a liberal education for all classes, Mason desired to remove premature specialization and vocationalism from the curriculum. Rather, she stressed that

people needed to become well-rounded and knowledgeable in many

areas in order to succeed in later pursuits. She stated,

> The people themselves begin to understand and to
> clamor for an education which shall qualify their
> children for life rather than for earning a living.
> As a matter of fact, it is the man who has read and
> thought on many subjects, who is, with the necessary
> training, the most capable whether in handling
> tools, drawing plans, or keeping books. The more
> of a person we succeed in making a child, the better
> will he both fulfill his own life and serve society.
> (Mason, 1925, p. 3)

Besides guiding the spiritual progress of children,

providing them with a broad knowledge base, and thereby laying

the foundations for the future development of wisdom, Mason

desired to help her students develop self-discipline and

cultivate their ability to reason (Mason, 1925). She was

particularly concerned that her students develop the ability

to detect fallacious reasoning, and commented,

> We must be able to answer the arguments in the air,
> not so much by counter reasons as by exposing the
> fallacies in such arguments and proving on our own
> part the opposite position. (Mason, 1925, p. 144)

Curriculum. The curriculum Mason proposed for her

students attempted to set before them as much knowledge in as

many fields as was humanly possible. She explained in some

detail as follows:

> The days have gone by when the education befitting
> either a gentleman or an artisan was our aim. Now
> we must deal with a child of man, who has a natural
> desire to know the history of his race and of his
> nation, what men thought in the past and are think-
> ing now; the best thoughts of the best minds taking
> form as literature, and at its highest as poetry,
> or as poetry rendered in the plastic forms of art:
> as a child of God, whose supreme desire and glory
> it is to know about and to know his almighty Father:
> as a person of many parts and passions who must know

how to use, care for, and discipline himself, body,
mind, and soul: as a person of many relationships,
- to family, city, church, state, neighboring
states, the world at large: as the inhabitant of
a world full of beauty and interest, the features
of which he must recognize and know how to name, and
a world too, and a universe, whose every function
of every part is ordered by laws which he must begin
to know. It is a wide programme founded on the
educational rights of man; wide, but we may not say
it is impossible, nor may we pick and choose and
educate him in this direction but not in that. We
may not even make choice between science and the
"humanities." Our part it seems to me is to give
a child a vital hold upon as many as possible of
those wide relationships proper to him. (Mason,
1925, p. 157)

Like other perennialists, Mason concentrated on exposing
her students to classical works of literature, music, and art.
She believed that, depending upon their age, her young
students were capable of either listening to or reading books
that had originally been written for educated adults. She
stated,

The subject of "Children's Literature" has been well
threshed out, and only one thing remains to be said
- children have no natural appetite for twaddle, and
a special literature for children is probably far
less necessary than the booksellers would have us
suppose. Out of any list of the "hundred best
books," I believe that seventy-five would be well
within the range of children of eight or nine.
(Mason, 1907, p. 122)

Besides believing that children were spiritual equals and
respecting their individuality, Mason valued their minds, and
despised the presentation of what she termed educational
"twaddle." She felt that they must be fed from the start on
a diet composed of ideas. She carried this emphasis on the
need for educational "meat," instead of twaddle, down to the
preschool level, where she commented,

> If the little people were in the habit of telling
> how they feel, we should perhaps learn that they are
> a good deal bored by the nice little games in which
> they frisk like lambs, flap their fins and twiddle
> their fingers like butterflies. (Mason, 1886/1989,
> p. 187)

Whenever parents or teachers introduced children to the ideas found in great literature, art, or music, she insisted that such contact should be largely unmediated by the instructor. Stating that "ideas must reach us directly from the mind of the thinker" (Mason, 1907, p. 177), she cautioned teachers or parents against summarizing or condensing the works presented, and particularly urged them not to interject their own ideas into the presentation itself.

In the same manner, Mason was adamantly opposed to the use of textbooks, which she regarded as condensed, watered-down sources of knowledge that possessed little or no literary merit. She explained,

> I know you may bring a horse to the water, but you
> cannot make him drink. What I complain of is that
> we do not bring our horse to the water. We give him
> miserable little text-books [sic], mere compendiums
> of facts, which he is to learn off and say and
> produce at an examination; or we give him various
> knowledge in the form of warm diluents prepared by
> his teacher with perhaps some grains of living
> thoughts to the gallon. And all the time we have
> books, books teeming with ideas fresh from the minds
> of thinkers about every subject to which we can wish
> to introduce children. (Mason, 1907, p. 171)

Teachers and students. Like Hutchins and Adler, Mason believed that people must be liberally educated themselves before they are qualified to teach others. That is one reason for the broad liberal education she provided for the "governesses" who were trained at her House of Education. As a

perennialist, she was a bit unusual due to her advocacy of parental instruction for young children. However, she regarded such parents as professional allies, and insisted that they engage in professional activities, such as reading and discussing issues related to child development and education.

Although Mason viewed adults as authority figures, she placed a tremendous importance on the need for respecting the minds and the souls of the children as well. She stated that the principle of obedience to parents or teachers was,

> limited by the respect due to the personality of children, which must not be encroached upon, whether by the direct use of fear or love, suggestion or influence, or by undue play on any one natural desire. (Mason, 1925, p. ixxx)

Mason believed that the authority of adults over children was derived from the ultimate authority of God. As a corollary to this belief, she stressed that parents and teachers had been given an actual mandate to instruct their charges, and that they would be derelict in their duties if they failed to do so properly. In Home Education (1886/1989), she said,

> It is as much the parent's duty to educate his child into moral strength and purpose and intellectual duty as it is to feed him and clothe him; and that in spite of his nature, if it must be so. (Mason, 1886/1989, p. 103)

Despite this emphasis on the importance of the teaching role, however, Mason maintained that the main job of the instructor was to spread a bountiful feast before the students and then stand back and leave them alone. She was generally opposed to the censorship of reading materials, and believed

that children should be exposed to high-quality literature regardless of its source, and that any differences in point of view should be discussed intelligently with the students afterwards. However, she cautioned parents not to overdo lecturing students on the points covered in a particular book. She wrote,

> The less parents and teachers talk-in and expound their rations of knowledge and thought to the children they are educating, the better for the children. Peptonised [sic] food for a healthy stomach does not tend to a vigorous digestion. Children must be allowed to ruminate, must be left alone with their own thoughts. They will ask for help if they want it. (Mason, 1907, p. 162)

Disciplinary beliefs and techniques. As a perennialist, Mason believed that teachers and parents had to be capable of exerting moral authority over their children if they were to create an orderly environment for the pursuit of scholarly ends. However, Mason stressed that this authority was derived from God, and that parents and teachers needed to demonstrate to the children that they were themselves under authority. She suggested,

> It would be good work to keep to the front this idea of living under authority, training under authority, serving under authority, a discipline of life readily self-embraced by children, in whom the heroic impulse is always strong. (Mason, 1907, p. 103)

Mason's ultimate goal was to bring the children to the point where they were capable of self-discipline. Eventually, the children were expected to behave themselves on their own volition. In this regard, Mason wrote,

> Every time a child feels that he has chosen to obey
> of his own accord, his power of initiative is
> strengthened. The bearing-rein may not be used.
> When it occurs to a child to reflect on his own
> behavior, he should have that sense of liberty which
> makes his good behavior appear to him a matter of
> preference and choice. (Mason, 1907, p. 31)

Believing in the value of challenging work, Mason often pointed out the necessity for providing children with sufficient stimulation in order to prevent problems. She once stated, "A life full of healthy interests and activities is amongst the surest preventives of secret vice" (Mason, 1886/1989, p. 15).

Methods of teaching. As indicated previously, the primary method of instruction, as Mason outlined, was to introduce the students to classical literature, art, and music, and to allow the students unmediated contact with the ideas in these works. Rather than using textbooks, or giving short, disconnected reading assignments and then testing understanding by plying the students with questions, she exposed them to a complete book. She read to the younger students aloud, while the older students were given time to read their books silently. After a single reading, the children were asked to narrate the story back to the teacher, either orally or in writing. In this manner, Mason believed that she was requiring the students to listen or to read intelligently, rather than engaging in the mere "parrot-like cramming up on contents" which often occurred if the students were asked specific questions and allowed to refer back to the

story as needed (Mason, 1907, p. 180). Defending her method

against detractors, she once wrote,

> It is not a bad test of education to be able to give
> the points of a description, the sequence of a
> series of incidents, the links in the chain of
> argument, correctly, after a single reading. (Mason,
> 1907, p. 180)

When evaluating her students, Mason used either the oral

presentation or the essay test because she felt that these

techniques encouraged the students to think for themselves,

rather than merely to memorize possible answers and to repeat

them back to the teacher. However, despite her emphasis on

the importance of written and oral composition, she did not

believe in teaching composition directly. She felt that the

students would learn such things as spelling and grammar

through their exposure to literature, without requiring a

great deal of special instruction in such matters. Concern-

ing spelling, she wrote,

> It is impossible to teach children to spell when
> they do not read for themselves . . . but in
> thousands of cases that come before us we find that
> children who use their books for themselves spell
> well because they visualise [sic] the words they
> read. (Mason, 1925, p. 271)

Believing that any instruction in composition should

properly wait until the students reached the upper grades,

Mason made it clear that she was afraid students would lose

their spontaneity and style if such premature attention was

given.   In Towards a Philosophy of Education (1925), she

wrote,

> Let me repeat that what is called "composition" is
> an inevitable consequence of this free yet exact use

of books and requires no special attention until the pupil is old enough to take naturally a critical interest in the use of words. (Mason, 1925, p. 274)

As previously indicated, Mason was a bit unusual for a perennialist due to her interest in the early years of child development. In one of her books, School Education (1907), she devoted an entire chapter to the subject of the rights of children. She listed the very first one as the "right to be free in their play" (Mason, 1907, p. 36). In the schools she operated, she always limited academics to the first 3 hours of the day, and left plenty of time for free play. She also pointed out that organized games did not qualify as free play. She stated,

Boys and girls must have time to invent episodes, carry on adventures, live heroic lives, lay sieges and carry forts, even if the fortress be an old armchair, and in these affairs the elders must neither meddle nor make. (Mason, 1907, p. 37)

Considering the strong views Mason held concerning education, she wrote remarkably little concerning specific methods. She believed in giving her teachers and parents the freedom to work out methods for themselves, and trusted her many disciples to find techniques they could use to further her underlying goals. This may be one reason some of the modern-day disciples of Mason have strayed somewhat from her original ideas in the area of methodology, while retaining most of her important philosophical beliefs. Several of the authors who have disseminated Mason's ideas to the home-schooling population have included certain curriculum sugges-tions that Mason might not have approved. For example, both

Mary Pride, author of Schoolproof (1988) and Diane Lopez, author of Teaching Children (1988), have continued to include textbooks and workbooks in their suggested lists of materials, despite their emphasis on the value of high-quality literary experiences. The latter book also goes into a great amount of detail concerning instructional techniques in the areas of spelling and grammar, which do not seem to correspond to Mason's ideas about postponing such instruction until later. However, despite certain areas in which these various authors differ, the basic perennialist viewpoint they have been introducing to the home-schooling population has not been seriously diluted.

Summary

The influence of perennialism is a growing force within the home-schooling movement. The work of Child Light and the Charlotte Mason Research and Supply Company has proven quite successful in reviving interest in the ideas of the late Charlotte Mason, who primarily adhered to a perennialist philosophy of education. This influence can best be seen through the growing emphasis on the provision of a broad, liberal education for all students, and on the use of high-quality literature, art, and music in the curriculum of the perennialist home school. The perennialists in the home-schooling movement have also emphasized the importance of fully engaging the minds of their students and encouraging the development of self-discipline. They generally prefer to evaluate their pupils by using oral or written composition

rather than objective tests. While some of Mason's followers have apparently been exposed to additional philosophical influences, the re-publication of her own books has helped to ensure that her ideas will continue to be presented to home-schooling parents in their original form.

The Influence of Existentialism

Introduction

Making generalizations about existentialism is difficult, because there are so many differences among existentialist philosophers. Some of them, such as Camus and Sartre, appear very pessimistic to the casual reader. Others, such as Kierkegaard, Tillich, and Buber, sound a little more optimistic. A few believe in God, whereas others do not. To make categorization even more difficult, a salient feature of existentialist thought is a resistance to labels. The more vehemently an individual refuses to be pigeon-holed, or assigned any kind of a label, including that of an existentialist, the more he or she sounds like an existentialist. However, despite this resistance to labeling and categorizing, several underlying themes can be discerned.

The most basic theme of existentialist thought is the often-quoted "existence precedes essence" (Sartre, 1947, p. 18). In other words, people find themselves in this world without having asked to be brought into existence. Once here, it becomes their job to create meaning for their lives. This forces each individual to face up to a rather bleak possibility. What if there is no meaning? Facing this possibility, the individual goes through a period of "fear and

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trembling" while grappling with the most basic questions of human existence, such as death, shame, and man's inhumanity to man (Kierkegaard, 1843/1941).

This emphasis on the darker side of reality has earned existentialism a pessimistic, dismal reputation. However, existentialists maintain that only through facing the possibility of emptiness can man learn the meaning of true freedom. In this sense, existentialism may also be considered one of the most optimistic of all philosophies (Morris, 1966).

Existentialist thinkers are loosely divided into atheistic and theistic camps. The atheists believe that the universe truly has no meaning until the individual creates it for himself. The theists assert that the universe does have meaning, but there is no way to prove this through rational means. There is only one way to know God. One must leave rationality behind and take a "leap" of faith (Kierkegaard, 1846/1936, p. 269). The relationship between God and man is therefore a highly personal one. A belief in God represents a personal decision based on faith rather than knowledge. It cannot be arrived at through either scholarly study or familial inheritance. Due to their emphasis on this personal relationship, many theistic existentialists tend to avoid organized religions and focus their attention on their spiritual growth outside of church.

A related theme focuses on the individual's search for "authenticity." To be authentic, individuals must be prepared to be completely open and honest, both with themselves and

with others. As they go about the process of defining themselves and creating their own meanings, people must realize that they possess absolute freedom of choice. Few people are eager to accept the reality of total freedom. It is so much easier to assign responsibility or blame for their present circumstances to other people or external conditions. However, existentialists believe that people must not only be willing to assume the responsibility for making difficult choices, but to take appropriate actions and face up to potential consequences (Ozmon & Craver, 1976).

As a corollary to this emphasis on individual responsibility, existentialists believe strongly in the existence of certain human rights. They are opposed to the notion that the rights of the individual may be temporarily eclipsed when necessary for the good of the majority. Such rights are held by all people, regardless of arbitrary divisions based on nationality, racial origin, sex, or age. Young children, therefore, possess the same basic human rights as their elders, and should be given a full measure of respect.

Despite the existentialist emphasis on the individual, people are not considered to be total egocentrics. They are expected to strive for authenticity in their relationships with others around them. When people relate to others as "objects," subject to manipulation for their own ends, they not only dehumanize the others, but devalue their own existence at the same time. Martin Buber (1916/1958) suggested, therefore, that people should attempt to establish "I-Thou"

relationships instead of "I-It" relationships. These would be based upon mutual trust and respect, and would require reciprocal intimacy. Although difficult to achieve, they would be the only kind that could truly be authentic or meaningful. In order to enter into these kinds of relation- ships, the individuals involved must be willing to grant each other responsibility for making their own decisions. One person cannot be truly authentic while diminishing the potential for authenticity in other people. This holds true even in relationships between parents and their children.

The Influence of Existentialism on the Home-Schooling Movement

Modern existentialist thought arose from the ashes of World War II in Europe. During the 1950s and 1960s, it gradually spread to the United States, where it gave birth to a generation of "flower children, " or "hippies." By the late 1960s, many young people had become disenchanted with the materialistic way of life their elders had embraced. It was their search for personal freedom and authenticity that partially fueled the free school movement of the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the efforts at public school reform by such activists as Paul Goodman, Jonathan Kozol, George Dennison, and John Holt. When Holt gave up his reformist strategies and turned to the idea of home schooling, he attracted numerous followers among these "ex-hippies," who had already embraced many existentialist ideas, whether they realized it or not.

When the themes of existentialism are translated into educational theory and practice, several important trends

emerge. The emphasis on individual rights translates into an emphasis on the rights of learners, even when those learners are little children. The emphasis on the need for making choices, taking actions, and accepting consequences translates into the need for a curriculum freely chosen by the individual student that engages the student emotionally in the subject material. The emphasis on authentic relationships necessitates a new view of the teacher/learner dyad. The emphasis on personal authenticity suggests the need to eliminate measurement devices and labels that dehumanize children and diminish their potential for authenticity.

Holt did not specifically refer to himself as an existentialist. However, his personal quest for authenticity is a pervasive theme throughout his writings. Discussing his earlier life, before he learned to accept the responsibility for making choices, he said,

> In those days, I was a passenger in the car of life, not a driver. I accepted what came to me, and dealt with it as best I could. It had not yet occurred to me that I might actually decide what I most wanted to do and take steps to do it. (Holt, 1978, p. 48)

When Holt first began his teaching career, the curriculum and methods he adopted were quite traditional (Holt, 1983a). During his reformist period, when he was writing and lecturing on issues concerning the public schools, he passed through a period when most of his writing sounded very progressive. In such books as How Children Fail (1964) and How Children Learn (1967) he often sounded very much like Dewey. However, by the

time he began Growing Without Schooling in 1977 he had virtually given up such reformist strategies and began to sound more and more like an existentialist.

To begin with, he learned the importance of taking a stand on things that really mattered to him. In a biographical article in Yankee magazine, he commented that his actions were sometimes "on the edges of some kind of normal distribution curve" (Allen, 1981, p. 70). At that time in his life, he had begun to realize that he had to make decisions concerning certain issues, such as education and ecology, and be willing to follow up with appropriate actions. In addition to his educational writings, he addressed ecological problems through recycling water from his own showers, picking up aluminum cans during his walks around town, and raising earthworms to make compost out of his garbage, despite the fact that he had no garden of his own. He said that some of these actions may have appeared "nutty" to others, but that he regarded them as "eminently sensible . . . my contribution, however small, to a situation I can't do much to change" (Allen, 1981, p. 70).

Holt also demonstrated his existentialist leanings through his refusal to accept labels others continually tried to force upon him. He fought the insistence of certain members of the press when they wanted to call him the "guru" of the home-schooling movement. He further refused to let anyone know what kind of a degree he held, or where he had gone to school, saying,

I have come to believe that a person's schooling is as much a part of his private business as his politics or religion, and that no one should be required to answer questions about it. (Holt, n.d., p. 1)

Holt demonstrated his personal search for authenticity in many ways. Once, when a reporter wanted him to pose for a picture with some children, he replied, "I won't be photographed playing with children I don't know. . . . I won't make them into actors in a play called "See How Good John Holt Is With Children" (Allen, 1981, p. 69).

In a series of eulogies written by his friends for a memorial issue of Growing Without Schooling, a portrait was painted of an intensely emotional man, who was totally committed to life. George Dennison described the last ride he took with Holt, at a time when he was "so weak he could only walk a few steps at a time" (Dennison, n.d., p. 8). Holt was overwhelmed with the beauty of the countryside, and talked about what a wonderful place the world was. Then, breaking down and sobbing uncontrollably, he said, "It's not as if we don't know what to do. We know exactly what to do, and it would work, it would work. They're going to wreck it" (Dennison, n.d., p. 8). Dennison commented, "We all have feelings of this kind, but not many people, at the end of life, would feel this heartbroken passion for the world itself" (Dennison, n.d., p. 8).

Emotionally involved in life, willing to make difficult choices, act and face the consequences of his actions, Holt may have been the quintessential existentialist educator. His

writings have strongly influenced a large segment of the home-schooling population. This influence is continued through the efforts of the staff of <u>Growing Without Schooling</u>. Despite the fact that he has been frequently referred to as the "guru" of the home-schooling movement, however, there is a large segment of the home-schooling population that ignores his writings completely. Most of the parents who reject his ideas, with or without having personal acquaintance with his work, do so because they consider him to be a "secular" writer, who had no belief in God. However, Raymond Moore, who engaged in extensive correspondence with Holt, claimed that Holt was paying increased attention to the existence of God near the end of his life. Moore questioned what kind of a religion Holt's detractors were talking about, and asked "Was theirs a religion of love?" He said, "They didn't know John. They didn't know how he loved kids . . . and others" (Moore, n.d., p. 3).

<u>Assumptions about education and the learning process</u>. Early in his writing career, Holt began to criticize the schools for sowing the seeds of failure in their students. In <u>How Children Fail</u> (1964), he described the paralysis of mental powers that occurred when students were forced to "learn" things that were meaningless to them in an atmosphere of fear and coercion. In <u>Instead of Education</u> (1976), attempting to draw a distinction between "education" and "doing," he defined the former as "learning cut off from active life and done under pressure of bribe or threat, greed

and fear," and the latter as "self-directed, purposeful, meaningful life and work" (Holt, 1976, p. 3).

In <u>How Children Fail</u> (1964), he had described the plight of many children in school, who were using their energies in an effort to avoid humiliation and ridicule, rather than for the purpose of learning. He later described the difference between true learning and "success in school" as follows:

> Learning, to me, means making more sense of the world around us, and being able to do more things in it. Success in school means remembering the answers to teachers' questions, getting clever about guessing what questions they will ask, and about how to fool them when you don't know. . . . The first thing to understand is that these are completely different and separate activities, having almost nothing to do with each other. (Holt, 1989, p. xvi)

The concept of incidental learning is found throughout much of Holt's writings, and is a central issue in existentialist thought concerning education. Individuals are expected to learn and to grow constantly as they go about their daily lives. Adults engage in this type of learning all the time. They go to concerts, art galleries, or baseball games, not in order to learn about the world around them, but because they love to do these activities. Whatever their original motives for going, however, learning does take place whenever they are emotionally engaged and involved in the world around them. In <u>Never Too Late</u> (1978), Holt wrote,

> If we're working, doing our best, challenging ourselves, doing things that are hard for us . . . if we are fully involved in our music-making, interested in it, excited by it, then we are learning. (p. 201)

Many home educators apply this idea of "incidental learning" when structuring their classrooms. One reader of Growing Without Schooling wrote,

> Education is not limited to a desk and four walls containing 30 children, all the same age. [Home education] . . . is an expansive choice, not a restrictive one. Children have many more opportunities to experience the real world since they are not limited to a social setting. (Becker, n.d., p. 3)

Another parent, quoted in Holt's book Teach Your Own (1981), had this to say concerning her childrens' attitudes towards learning:

> Not having been encouraged to believe that one must go for certain months of the year to a place called school in order to learn things, they view the world around them and every day of their lives as the place and time in which they are free to learn. (Kendrick, quoted in Holt, 1981, p. 96)

Existentialist educators view education as an individual act of self-discovery. They believe that all children are intrinsically motivated to learn, unless they have had this built-in drive temporarily submerged through the substitution of external rewards or punishments. They feel that it is generally counterproductive to try to motivate children through the use of external techniques. A home-schooled student once wrote in to Growing Without Schooling to describe how he learned to ride a bike several years after most children his age had already learned. He commented,

> The funny thing is, the more people pushed me to learn, the harder it seemed. But when I felt ready to learn, I learned on my own, so it came easy. I find this true of a lot of things. (N. McAlpine, n.d., p. 29)

The branch of philosophy that studies the nature of knowledge and how it is acquired is called epistemology. In existential thought, epistemological questions concerning the existence of eternal truths are generally considered to be irrelevant. Whether or not such truths exist, truth is not truth for an individual until he or she has internalized it. Individuals, therefore, must assume total responsibility for their own knowledge. They must attach their own meaning to the facts they are gathering from the world around them. In many schools, the need for personal significance and emotional engagement in subject material is often ignored. Holt believed that ignoring this need for personal involvement in learning situations results in a lack of understanding. In Learning All the Time (1989), (a posthumous publication), he wrote that children,

> have to live with an idea or insight for a while, turn it around in some part of their minds, before they can, in a very real sense, discover it, say "I see," take possession of the idea, and make it their own - and unless they do this, the idea will never be more than surface, parrot learning, and they will never really be able to make use of it. (Holt, 1989, p. 25)

Holt believed that this "parrot-like" approach to learning is actually counterproductive. He often complained that, in his opinion,

> What often happens to kids in school is that they are required to repeat, as sense, what makes no sense to them, to the point where they give up trying to reconcile what people say about the world with what they really feel about it. They accept as true whatever authority says is true. (Holt, 1989, p. 100)

George Dennison, an activist in the school reform movement, has been widely read by <u>Growing Without Schooling</u> subscribers. Dennison's book, <u>The Lives of Children</u> (1969), is sold through John Holt's Book and Music Store. Dennison echoed Holt's ideas concerning the need for emotional engagement in learning situations when he wrote, "There is no such thing as knowledge per se, knowledge in a vacuum, but rather all knowledge is possessed and must be expressed by individuals" (Dennison, 1969, p. 9).

Holt believed that the process by which children appropriate knowledge and create meaning is the same process scientists use in the course of their work. Sounding reminiscent of Dewey, he wrote,

> Children observe, they wonder, they hypothesize, and they ask themselves questions. They think up possible answers, they make theories, they hypothesize, and then they test theories by asking questions or by further observations or experiments or reading. Then they modify the theories as needed, or reject them, and the process continues. . . . The . . . scientific method . . . is precisely what these little guys start doing as soon as they are born. If we attempt to control, manipulate, or divert this process, we disturb it. If we continue this long enough, the process stops. The independent scientist in the child disappears. (Holt, 1989, p. 95)

When children are encouraged to maintain this spirit of the scientist, when it is not submerged through coercive techniques and intentional manipulation, people can retain the spirit of excitement in learning throughout their lives. Existentialists believe in life-long learning. They are careful to distinguish this from life-long schooling, which

they fear is being espoused by other educators. The editor

of <u>Growing Without Schooling</u>, Susannah Sheffer, wrote,

> Lifelong learning sounds good. It sounds like
> something anyone would want. The trouble is, these
> days it is used, more often than not, as a slogan
> to advance the cause of lifelong schooling. . . .
> When we say growing without schooling, on the other
> hand, we mean learning, thinking, finding things
> out, mastering new skills, without necessarily going
> to school, and we don't think of this as something
> that has to stop at a particular age. Curiosity,
> resourcefulness, and interest don't and shouldn't
> belong only to children. (Sheffer, n.d.b., p. 1)

In Holt's book, <u>Never Too Late</u> (1978), he shared the

story of how he began to learn the cello when he was already

an adult. In this work, he attempted to destroy the myth that

early conditions determine a person's lot in life. Instead,

he believed that people could do anything they set their minds

to if their desire was strong enough and they were willing to

devote enough time and effort to it. This belief was once

echoed by a home-schooling mother in <u>Growing Without School-</u>

<u>ing</u>. Emphasizing the difference between housewives in the

1950s, who frequently limited themselves to taking custodial

care of their homes and families, and today's home-schooling

mothers, who are learning and growing along with their

children, she told the following story:

> My mother-in-law commented that she liked the fact
> that I was teaching the kids (letting them learn)
> music because she had always regretted not being
> able to play the piano. I wanted to shout, "It's
> not too late! You're only 65! You can learn."
> But, alas, she wasn't listening - her oven was dirty
> and there was a golf game on T. V. Simply a matter
> of priorities. (Howdyshell, n.d., p. 9)

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Educational goals. Although existentialists focus their
attention on individuals, rather than groups, they do have
some definite ideas concerning the type of society they would
like to live in. In this ideal society, the rights of the
individual would never be eclipsed by the needs of the
majority. Group activities would be available, but participa-
tion would never be mandatory. Problems would be dealt with
by individuals taking responsibility for the consequences of
their own decisions and actions. The society itself would be
in the process of striving to achieve "authenticity." Van
Cleve Morris (1966) explained,

> That society is authentic in the degree to which it
> fails to provoke in the individual citizen these
> urgings to escape from his freedom. That society
> is authentic which refuses to specify "the good" to
> its citizens. That society is authentic in the
> degree to which it summons the citizen to stand by
> himself, for himself, in shaping the direction of
> his life, and therefore the meaning of his exis-
> tence. That society is authentic which never
> achieves a "national purpose," which is, in fact,
> uninterested in achieving one, but interested only
> in being the host to individual purposes in its
> citizens. (p. 103)

In order to develop this kind of society, Holt believed
that people must become willing to trust in the inherent
goodness of human nature. He often pointed out that mankind
has never really been given the chance to demonstrate fully
this inner potential for good. In Instead of Education
(1976), he wrote,

> There is no way to find out how much good or
> kindness there may be in human nature, except to
> build or try to build a society on the assumption
> that people are or would like to be good and kind,
> a society in which to be good and kind is at least

not a handicap. Until we are able to do this, it
would be more wise and fair, and more prudent, to
give human beings the benefit of the doubt. (Holt,
1976, p. 117)

Emphasizing the importance of respecting children and
expecting their good nature to flower in an atmosphere of
trust and freedom, Holt suggested that parents and teachers
must allow children to assume responsibility for their own
lives and learning. He once cautioned educators about the
dangers that accompany the use of coercive educational
techniques. He stated,

You cannot have human liberty, and the sense of all
persons' uniqueness, dignity, and worth on which it
must rest, if you give to some people the right to
say officially and "objectively" that some people
are more able and worthy than others. (Holt, 1976,
pp. 8-9)

Existentialist educators dislike the use of measurement
devices and labels, primarily because they believe so strongly
in allowing individuals to create their own meaning for their
lives. They do not believe that educators have the right to
plan the future of their students, based on scientific
assessments of their abilities and interests. The desire to
encourage the development of self-potential and self-reliance
permeates existentialist educational thought. For many years,
Holt sought to reform the schools. He hoped to make them into
places where individuals could be given the freedom to
maximize their true potential. Eventually, however, he gave
up. He came to believe that organized education, by its very
nature, needed to create individuals who could be "adapted"
to the needs of society. Holt once likened the efforts of the

schools to shape their students to the antics of Procrustes, the mythological Greek giant who forced travelers to fit into his bed by either stretching them or chopping off body parts until they were the proper size (Holt, 1983a). Feeling that the schools were guilty of using similar tactics to force the standardization of their pupils, Holt came to believe that children could only gain true freedom by being removed from the environment of the compulsory classroom.

Unlike essentialist educators, who stress the need for mastery of specific information and skills, existentialist educators have as their highest goal the development of individuality in each student. One mother, while discussing her educational goals for her children, commented, "Academic prowess is important, but becoming the person they were meant to be is more important" (Clifton, 1989, p. 13).

Many of the home educators who demonstrate existentialist concerns carry over the desire for self-reliance into other areas of their lives. Not only do they teach their own children, but they also frequently grow their own food, build their own homes, and own their own small businesses. One parent explained,

> [We] . . . have always been do-it-yourselfers, questioning and challenging traditions . . . our outlook has led us into home births, "home church," and home education. (Clifton, 1989, p. 13)

These home-schooling parents often desire to help their children develop into self-reliant adults, and make an effort to expose them to an alternative kind of lifestyle, which

stresses the development of needed survival skills. To encourage them to become competent in such areas, many existentialist home educators encourage their children to use equipment other parents may consider too dangerous. Even young children are often allowed access to the same tools used by the adults around them. One such mother, discussing her experiences with her children, who were 6 and 4 years of age, told the following story:

> When Matt was less than two, one of his favorite snack foods was peas. Faith was going to sleep in my arms and I didn't want to get up and make him any, so he got a pan out, put water in it, got a chair and got a package of peas out of the freezer, opened it, put them in the pan and turned the fire on. From the time they were about one-and-a-half they have used knives (which had not been sharpened for a while) to cut vegetables and stood on chairs by the stove to cook them. They know how to cook french fries themselves. A couple of weeks ago they climbed up the ladder and helped David (their father) paint our mobile home roof white. . . . I don't think the risk is much greater, if at all, than the risk we'll get hurt doing the same things. (Price, quoted in Holt, 1981, p. 164)

This emphasis on developing self-potential is also extended to the adults in the family. While most home-schooling families have stay-at-home mothers, the largest segment of working mothers in the movement are probably from the existentialist camp. These mothers, some of whom work full-time outside the home, believe that their children can learn on their own without constant adult supervision, and that the experience will help prepare them for independent living later on. Addressing a working mother who was trying to decide whether to teach her child at home, Holt wrote,

Were she my child and I in your shoes, it is a
choice I would want to offer her. I would say to
her that for some time to come she was going to have
to either (1) go to public school, which may be as
bad as the one she is in now or (2) stay home for
much of the day and maybe all day by herself. Then
I would say, "If you want to take the second choice,
or be ready to take it, you are going to have to
learn a number of things, like how to cook and take
care of food, how to look up numbers in the phone
book, how to talk to strange adults over the phone,
and how to find interesting things to do all by
yourself for many hours at a time. Do you want to
do all this? It's okay if you don't, but then the
only other possibility is school." You can give
her plenty of time to think about this, talk it
over, and so on. But she will have to decide. If
she decides to prepare for independence and self-
reliance, you can start working on that right away.
(Holt, 1981, p. 82)

This emphasis on allowing children to make their own

decisions is viewed as an important step on the road to

helping them achieve authenticity. Existentialist educators

believe strongly in allowing children to make their own

choices and in encouraging them to take necessary steps that

might enable them to take responsibility for their own lives.

Holt frequently complained that the schools take this respon-

sibility away from children by structuring their time too

rigidly. In Teach Your Own (1981), he quoted a mother who

questioned,

Who can guess at the degree of personal alienation
we as a society cause our children by structuring
so much of their time for them? I am beginning to
think the greatest harm is not the "what" or the
"how" of this structuring, but in the very fact that
five days out of seven, nine months out of twelve,
six hours out of the center of those days, we remove
from children the responsibility for their time.
(Holt, 1981, pp. 177-178)

<u>Curriculum</u>. Existentialist educators reject the idea that there is a particular body of essential knowledge that must be transmitted to the learner to ensure adequate preparation for life. Instead, they believe that the curriculum must be freely chosen by the individual student in order for true, lasting learning to take place. This emphasis on student-initiated learning can be found throughout the work of Holt. Many of the other writers represented in Holt's Book and Music Store agree with him. For example, Allison Stallibrass (1989) wrote,

> It is not only futile but harmful to try, as the schools do, to impose a curriculum on children, to say, you must learn <u>what</u> we tell you to learn, <u>when</u> we tell you to learn it. Even those children who quickly learn to parrot what they have been told cannot use most of what they learn or build new knowledge on it. People who like to plan and control children's learning say, "But how can children know what they need to learn? " Of course they don't know what they may need or want to learn ten years from now. But they do know, far better than anyone else knows, or can know, what they want to learn, need to learn, and can learn right <u>now</u>. (p. 4)

Holt, himself, pointed out that the majority of adults have not retained the knowledge they were taught in school. In a 1983 interview, he was asked if the public believes that there are certain things which children need to know. He replied,

> Oh, I'm sure most adults could make up a list of things that kids ought to know. Only the adults don't know them. . . . The things that people really do, in fact, need to know in the world they are very good at finding out. We don't need to figure out what this is, try to put it into the curriculum, and try to cram it into kid's heads. (Holt, 1983a)

Educators who believe in a curriculum based on free choice are frequently criticized by others who are concerned that children can not cover the basics adequately when they are educated in this manner. In response to this type of criticism, a parent wrote,

> It simply isn't possible to learn a lot about dinosaurs or anything else without along the way learning and using knowledge and skills that are intellectually prerequisite. After all, the reason that we call "the basics" by that phrase is that they are basic, and to worry that a kid will learn just about anything without using the basics is like being worried that he might decide to build a house starting with the roof. (Home-schooling parent, quoted in Holt 1981, p. 211)

In The Self-Respecting Child (1989), Stallibrass explained how children's powers develop naturally if they are given the freedom to exercise them in an appropriate environment, where all necessary experiences and materials are readily available. Stallibrass believes that the ability to make personal choices in such an environment is a key factor in the development of self-esteem. She stated that self-esteem is gained "in one way only, by doing to our satisfaction things that we have chosen to do, because they seem to us worth doing" (Stallibrass, 1989, p. 3).

Holt agreed with this concept. In Instead of Education (1976), he stated,

> Children . . . will learn more . . . and grow more able to cope with the world . . . if they are able to explore that world in their own way, and in as many areas as possible direct and control their own lives. (Holt, 1976, p. 7)

As noted in the literature review, Williams (1984) conducted research that suggests that many home educators begin by using a structured curriculum and methodology, and gradually change until their methods and materials reflect this emphasis on child-initiative and direction. Holt also noted that home-schooling parents tend to move away from organized educational techniques as they discover that things go smoother when their children are allowed to direct their own learning (Holt, 1983a). The parents gradually modify their roles until they become resources, rather than bosses. One such parent wrote to Home Education Magazine,

> I tried a formal curriculum for two school years but that approach became counterproductive. Continual assignments which didn't interest, time pressure and grades did not work well for us and put undue pressure on me. Pressure is not conducive to learning or teaching. I've found that if the kids are interested in a subject they will learn without being taught. If they're not interested, I can't force them to learn. (Clifton, 1989, p. 13)

Parents who have chosen this approach often find it difficult to explain their procedures to school boards. The officials in charge are usually accustomed to seeing instruction that is carefully planned and organized in advance. A parent in Canada who was experiencing this problem wrote to the local ministry of education, saying,

> I would much prefer, as in the past, to report on Kevin's activities after they have taken place, when a much more accurate picture can be given as to how these activities fit into the Ministry's subject categories. Here is an example: I can report after the fact that Kevin built a miniature cable support system out of string, a small electric motor, pulleys, and Lego parts. This would fit into the category Science: Small Machines. I did not plan

this activity, nor would I have wanted to. Kevin learned more and derived far more satisfaction and pride from having thought of this idea himself than he would have if I had initiated the project. (Davies, n.d., p. 11)

In _Teach Your Own_ (Holt, 1981), another parent explained the curriculum he had followed during his oldest child's formative years. He said,

We simply left our oldest boy alone. He read, sometimes eight to ten hours a day. He watched some T.V., went to a fair number of movies. With no adults around to order him, to test him or spoon-feed him, he delved in metallurgy (his interest in cycling got him into this), nutrition (on his own he became a vegetarian), architecture. In fact, you name it, chances are he was into it - geology, Zen, meteorology, etc. . . . Mostly he used the library. Nobody taught him the Dewey Decimal System; he learned it because he needed to find books. . . . Shortly after he turned 17 . . . [he] . . . took his high school equivalency test and scored well in all areas. . . . The very first college he applied to . . . accepted him and gave him a full scholar-ship. (Harris, quoted in Holt, 1981, p. 126)

One of Holt's most frequently quoted comments is,

What children need is not new and better curricula but access to more . . . of the real world. . . . We have much to learn about how to make the world more accessible to them, and how to give them more freedom and competence in exploring it. But this is a very different thing from designing nice little curricula. (Holt, 1981, pp. 168-169)

Holt expanded on this idea by discussing the exploits of several drop-outs in New York City. These truants spent much of their time making extensive independent use of the librar-ies and museums in the city. Holt pointed out that the experiences of these children,

shows very clearly that, for all its hugeness and harshness, the modern city is rich in resources, and that children don't necessarily have to have an

adult holding them by the hand every second in order
to make use of them. (Holt, 1981, p. 172)

In addition to access to such resources in the real
world, children need increased access to people and the world
of work. Here, once again, the existentialist emphasis on the
importance of relationships comes into play. In The Lives of
Children, Dennison (1969) described the curriculum of the
First Street School as "talk, talk, talk," and emphasized the
importance of developing "really intimate relations between
teachers and pupils" (Dennison, 1969, p. 304).

Holt often suggested to parents that they develop their
own interests, find some work to do that they really believe
in doing, and then draw their children in with them by sharing
their honest enthusiasm for their work. At the offices of
Holt Associates, for example, children come in all the time
to help with mailings, run the copier, and do a variety of
helpful things. Holt commented that the kids "love to help
us," and feel that "one of the nice things to do in the city"
is to "come in here and have people treat you as a real human
being and have really serious stuff to do" (Holt, 1983a).

According to Holt, many of the leaders of the progressive
education movement acted as if they trusted children and
believed in giving them freedom of choice and access to the
real world. However, Holt thought that these educators were
often guilty of using such freedom as a motivating device.
While pretending to give the children freedom to choose their
own activities, they used subtle techniques to encourage them

to choose activities the adults had already planned in the back of their minds. Holt was concerned that this approach might actually be more harmful than the use of essentialist techniques, because it was less honest (Holt, 1983a).

Teachers and students. To build authentic relationships between teachers and students, Holt believed that the power structure needed to be altered radically. In the public schools, where attendance is compulsory, this reversal of power is almost impossible to achieve. In the early 1970s, Holt began to consider possible alternatives to compulsory education. After spending some time with Ivan Illich, author of Deschooling Society (1970), Holt began dropping his attempts at reform within the system, and concentrating on the development of alternative learning structures. It was also about this time that he abandoned his advocacy of most progressive techniques and began to sound more and more like an existentialist. Due to his growing belief that education could only be truly authentic for the individual when it was completely free from coercion, he began to discuss the difference between schools where attendance was mandatory, and schools where participation was voluntary (Holt, 1976). In Instead of Education, Holt (1976) suggested the need for placing more of society's money into resource centers, where anyone could go, regardless of age, to use and check out a variety of materials. Various models for such resource centers were discussed, such as the Beacon Hill Free School in Boston, the Learning Exchange in Evanston, Illinois, and

the Peckham Experiment in Great Britain. In Freedom and

Beyond (1972), he further explained,

> What we really need are schools or learning resource
> centers that are not just for kids, but where adults
> come of their own free will to learn what they are
> interested in, and in which children are free to
> learn with and among them. (Holt, 1972, p. 76)

After Holt began concentrating his efforts on the home-

schooling movement, he continued to suggest ways for home-

schooled students to participate voluntarily in a variety of

community settings. These included paid or volunteer work

experiences, as well as voluntary part-time attendance at

public schools. In his last years, he devoted a great deal

of energy to an attempt to help schools and home educators

realize the benefits of increased cooperation. However, he

always stressed that such participation would have to be 100%

voluntary on the part of the pupils. A cursory reading of

letters sent in to Growing Without Schooling shows that an

increasingly large group of parents have been able to work out

such cooperative relationships. One such parent wrote,

> Caitlin now has access to the elementary school
> library, takes an art class from a good teacher at
> school once a week, and swims at the pool with her
> kindergarten friends. She enjoys the freedom of
> being homeschooled while retaining involvement in
> those parts of school she finds fun. (Stern, n.d.,
> p. 7)

Many public school districts are not yet ready to make

such resources readily available to the families; however,

other home educators are creating private options with similar

purposes. In Teach Your Own (Holt, 1981), a parent suggested

that a growing market was opening up for "free schools

offering not 'teachers' but the resources necessary for self-teaching" (Home-schooling parent, quoted in Holt, 1981, p. 219).

By freeing students from the shackles of compulsory attendance or participation in educational settings, Holt hoped to encourage teachers and students to build a new kind of relationship, based on mutual trust and interest. This type of relationship, at first glance, seems difficult to achieve between parents and children in the home school setting. The mere fact that parents are larger and more experienced makes it almost impossible to equalize the power relationship completely. Holt attempted to help parents differentiate, however, between the kind of coercive authority which he believed to be counterproductive and something he and George Dennison called the natural authority of adults. In Freedom and Beyond (1972), Holt explained this concept as follows:

> Our natural authority as adults does not come from the fact that we are over twenty-one . . . but from the fact that we are bigger, have been in the world longer, and seen more of it, and have more words, more skills, more knowledge, and more experience. To the extent that our authority is natural, true, and authentic, we cannot abdicate it. (Holt, 1972, p. 59)

Although parents cannot ever totally abdicate the power they hold over their children, many existentialist home educators have taken steps to equalize the situation. Rather than organizing specific instruction for their children, they

teach them indirectly by sharing themselves and their own activities and interests with them. One mother commented,

> We never ask our kids to do things that we don't do ourselves, and consequently we all inspire each other. We all read a lot, we all write a lot, we all speak very broken French, we all practice the piano, etc. (Wallace, quoted in Holt, 1981, p. 133)

In _Existentialism and Education_ (1958), George Kneller described the kind of atmosphere desired by the existentialist educator. He stated that the teacher,

> must honestly be a free personality actively engaged in such relations and projects with individual students as to leave no doubt in their minds that they, too, are in fact free personalities and are being treated that way. (Kneller, 1958, p. 115)

This is also what Dennison had in mind when he wrote about the necessity for reality of encounter between teachers and pupils. His book, _The Lives of Children_ (1969), written about his experience in a free school in New York City, has been highly recommended by Holt and distributed to a large segment of home educators through Holt's Book and Music Store. In this book, Dennison stressed that teachers must be themselves and not play roles when they are interacting with their students.

To move towards the development of authentic relationships within a family, most existentialist home educators stress the need for assuming a non-directive role with their children. In _Home Education Magazine_, one parent wrote,

> The less I think about his future and about molding him to fit it, the more clearly I can see him and the more honestly I can be available to him. . . . I have learned that my relationship with my child

is the essence of my home education program. (Stevens, 1989, p. 51)

For parents to establish authentic relationships with their children, they must be willing to be open and honest with them. Holt used to complain about school teachers.

> We are not honest about ourselves, our own fears, limitations, weaknesses, prejudices, motives. We present ourselves to children as if we were gods, all-knowing, all-powerful, always rational, always just, always right. . . . We are, above all, dishonest about our feelings, and it is this sense of dishonesty of feeling that makes the atmosphere of so many schools so unpleasant (Holt, 1964, pp. 172-173)

David Colfax, the celebrated home educator whose three children have all gone to Harvard, once commented that,

> Few things elicit more admiration or loyalty from your children than the bigness it takes to admit mistakes, to reveal your humanity, to act with understanding, and to show that you are growing and learning right along with your children. (Colfax, 1989, p. 50)

Teaching methods. The methods of the existentialist teacher or home-schooling parent are inextricably entwined with their ideas about self-direction and the importance of establishing authentic relationships between the individuals involved. When the parents trust their children fully to choose their own learning experiences, the parental role largely becomes that of a facilitator, or resource person. However, in order to be authentic, the parents must also remain true to themselves. They cannot sit back and be totally passive, but must continue to grow themselves and share the learning experiences with their children. One

parent, who had previously been frustrated by her children's apparent lack of creativity, wrote,

> Finally I saw the irony in my desire to have creative children when I myself had been busily shoving my own creativity in the trashcan for years. . . . It never occurred to me that homeschooling would give my children the opportunity to watch me as I set forth on my own voyage of learning and growing. In fact, it never even occurred to me that I should be on such a voyage. (Hildreth, 1989, p. 19)

Holt cautioned, however, that sometimes, in their own zeal to create meaningful experiences for their children, parents or teachers might overstep their bounds. He wrote,

> We must always be ready to give up pet projects when they do not catch the interest and enthusiasm of the children, and to let them take the projects off in directions that we perhaps had not expected. More important, we must do this without disappointment, or rancor, or feeling that we have failed or been rejected. (Holt, 1970, p. 109)

One home-schooling parent summed up her ideas about sharing important learning experiences with her children. She wrote,

> When I am trying to "stimulate their interest" in something, the very artificiality of the endeavor (and rudeness, really - I have no business even trying) builds a barrier between us. But when I am sharing something I really love with them because I also really love them, all barriers are down, and we are communicating intimately. (Home-schooling parent, quoted in Holt, 1981, p. 179)

Even when adults view themselves as facilitators, rather than as instructors, there are certain things they can do to stimulate learning. Holt once suggested,

> What adults can do for children is to make more and more of that world and the people in it accessible and transparent to them. The key word is access: to people, places, experiences, the places where we

> work, other places we go - cities, countries, streets, buildings. We can also make available tools, books, records, toys, and other resources. . . . We can help children by answering their questions. However, all adults must be careful here, because we have a tendency when a child asks us a question, to answer far too much. (Holt, 1989, pp. 127-128)

Adults can also help children learn by freeing them from external pressures and by providing flexibility in the environment. Physically, the environment should be composed of materials the children can move around and rearrange to suit themselves. Temporally, any schedule that is designed should be flexible enough to give children time to achieve closure in whatever activity they are pursuing. In The Lives of Children (1969), Dennison wrote that "The mother of a child in a public school told me that he kept complaining, 'They never let me finish anything.'" Dennison added, "We might say of the child that he lacked important freedoms, but his own expression is closer to the experience: activities important to him remained unfulfilled" (Dennison, 1969, p. 4)

The freedom home-schooled children can be granted to structure their own time is often cited as an advantage by existentialist parents. In many progressive schools, the children were also supposedly given such freedom, but Holt pointed out that they were rarely allowed to use this time to do nothing. The realization that children occasionally need to rest from their intellectual pursuits, sometimes for extended periods of time, is a prominent feature of the existentialist way of thought.

Despite the obvious emphasis on flexibility that charac-
terized Holt's writings, he never appreciated the use of the
term "unstructured learning" to describe the methods he was
advocating. In Freedom and Beyond (1972) he stated,

> Almost everyone who talks or writes about learning
> situations that are open, free, non-coercive,
> learner-directed, calls these situations "unstruc-
> tured," and their traditional authoritarian,
> coercive, teacher-directed opposites "structured."
> People who support open learning use these words in
> this way as much as people who oppose it. It is a
> serious error. There are no such things as "unstru-
> ctured" situations. They are not possible. Every
> human situation, however casual and unforced . . .
> has a structure. (Holt, 1972, p. 9)

After Holt's death, Sheffer, the new editor of Growing
Without Schooling, extended these ideas when she wrote,

> Saying that a noncoercive or unprogrammed situation
> is unstructured implies that it is formless, that
> it lacks any structure at all. It implies that
> structure is always coercive and lack of structure
> always liberating. This is what John Holt objected
> to, and what we object to now. (Sheffer, n.d.a.,
> p. 35)

Nevertheless, despite Holt's insistence that all learning
takes place within some form of structure, it is apparent that
many of his followers within the movement use a very open-
ended approach to education. One such parent wrote,

> So far as our teaching is concerned, we do very
> little in the way of formal instruction. . . . We
> provide him with the material he needs . . . when
> he has a question or needs help with something we
> try to assist him. . . . Actually, the way we
> handle our son's education is the same way we've
> handled it from the beginning. We haven't changed
> anything just because he's reached "school age."
> . . . We think it's best to let children take the
> initiative so far as possible in their own educa-
> tion. (Hobart, quoted in Holt, 1981, pp. 128-129)

Another parent echoed this idea by saying,

> I do have the worst time explaining to people how
> I teach the kids. The trouble arises from the very
> basic concept, which most people can't grasp, that
> the kids actually teach themselves. . . . I continue
> with my major technique of just answering questions
> as well as I can and helping the kids to ferret out
> information when they want it. (McCahill, quoted
> in Holt, 1981, p. 208)

Freedom of choice, by itself, does not necessarily guarantee that meaningful learning will take place. Most of these home educators realize that for growth and development to occur the children must have sufficient resources available to them, both at home and in the outside world. The family circle may be viewed as the best place for starting out in life, but these parents believe that broader experiences do become necessary as their children grow older. Such experiences can be found in the surrounding community, and do not necessarily require the return of the child to the environment of the school. One parent listed some of the resources she had used over the years. She explained,

> Over the years we've written or phoned all sorts of
> places for help in getting information we wanted -
> museums, nature centers, the research departments
> of public libraries, chambers of commerce, foreign
> embassies, local utility companies, national cor-
> porations, religious institutions, historical
> societies, and hobby clubs. (K. McAlpine, n.d.,
> p. 15)

A home-schooled student wrote to <u>Growing Without School-ing</u> to explain the procedures she used to locate information when she became curious about the possibility of "implanting elephants with frozen, fertilized mammoth eggs." After asking her mother, (who, understandably, did not know the answer),

she wrote a letter to the National Geographic Society, which
in turn directed her to the Smithsonian Institute.   The
scientists there sent her a "very nice letter," and she
learned from the experience that "there are plenty of re-
sources beyond books and my parents" (Bromfield, n.d., p. 15).

Another resource available in many home-schooling
families is the presence of older siblings.   Holt often
commented on the benefits that could be achieved through peer
tutoring.   In How Children Learn (1967), he stated,

> One of the reasons why children learn so well from
> children a little older than themselves may be, not
> just that the older child understands the language
> of the younger and can speak his terms, but that he
> is a more helpful competence model because he is
> more within reach.   (Holt, 1967, p. 78)

A single parent, who had only one child and desired the
benefits of peer tutoring, once wrote the following:

> One idea I have had . . . about helping her to read
> in a nonschool setting is to hire a nine-year-old
> who is a good reader to help her.   The nine-year-
> old is the son of a good friend of mine and he is
> currently in trouble . . . because he has been
> choosing to read A Tale of Two Cities under his desk
> instead of working on his workbook.   (McConnell,
> quoted in Holt, 1981, p. 84)

Despite the loose guidelines Holt gives his readers
concerning methodological questions, there are a few things
to which he is adamantly opposed.   Among these are the use of
grades, motivating devices, and labels of any kind.   To
parents who are tempted to use such techniques, he said,

> Above all else, don't let your home become some
> terrible miniature copy of the school.   No lesson
> plans!   No quizzes!   No tests!   No report cards!
> Even leaving your children alone would be better,
> at least they could figure out some things on their

own. Live together, as well as you can; enjoy life
together, as much as you can. Ask questions to find
out something about the world itself, not to find
out whether or not someone knows it. (Holt, 1981,
p. 229)

Holt was extremely passionate about this particular issue
because he firmly believed that the substitution of external
rewards or punishments was the only sure-fire way to kill the
intrinsic motivation of the young learner. In <u>Learning All
The Time</u> (1989), he wrote,

The trouble with any kind of external motivation,
whether it be negative (threats or punishment or
scolding) or positive (gold stars, M & M's, grades,
Ph.D.'s, or Phi Beta Kappan keys) is that it
displaces or submerges internal motivation. (Holt,
1989, p. 140)

In a radio interview, Holt once discussed the way in
which typical schools turn children into "praise junkies," who
become dependent on a steady diet of approval, and suffer
acute withdrawal symptoms if they don't get it. Even praise
was viewed as a potential enemy of internal motivation,
especially when engaged in indiscriminately by the parent or
teacher (Holt, 1983a). He wrote,

What children want and need from us is thoughtful
attention. They want us to notice them and pay some
kind of attention to what they do, to take them
seriously, to trust and respect them as human
beings. They want courtesy and politeness, but they
don't need much praise. (Holt, 1989, pp. 140-141)

Like most existentialists, Holt despised the practice of
testing and evaluating children and then using the results to
label them and treat them differentially. In <u>Escape From
Childhood</u> (1974), he summed up these existentialist beliefs,
saying,

"Judge not, lest ye be judged." Those words mean that we may judge another man's act but not the man, that man is not knowable, measurable . . . no one has the right to reduce the fullness and mystery of a human being, as our teachers, testers, and psychologists so often do, to a label or a group of numbers or a rank in a pecking order. We all have a right to feel that we are not just what other people, even experts, say we are - not just this race, or size, or color, or occupation, or income level, or position, or I.Q., or personality profile - but that there is an essence that is much larger, more unknowable, and more important. (Holt, 1974, p. 109)

Disciplinary beliefs and techniques. Existentialists are opposed to the concept of one person managing other people's behavior for them. For this reason, they do not discuss discipline or classroom management in the same manner that other educators do. Nevertheless, total anarchy is not considered the inevitable result of the removal of external constraints. In Freedom and Beyond (1972), Holt wrote, "The idea of limits is not of itself opposed to the idea of freedom" (pp. 18-19). The type of order desired by existentialists is the kind that arises from the personal assumption of responsibility on the part of individuals. In The Lives of Children (1969), Dennison wrote,

When the conventional routines of a school are abolished (the military discipline, the scheduling, the punishments and rewards, the standardization), what arises is neither a vacuum nor chaos, but rather a new order, based first on relationships between adults and children, and children and their peers. (p. 9)

In Freedom and Beyond (1972), Holt explained that there were three types of discipline possible. The first type, which he rejected totally, was the discipline of superior

force. The remaining types were the discipline of nature, or reality, and the discipline of culture, or society. In the former, children learn by discovering the natural consequences of their decisions and actions. In the latter, they learn as a natural consequence of their desire to fit into the society around them.

Holt believed that the only proper disciplinary role for the parents to play arose from the natural authority they already possessed as adults. He agreed with Dennison, who once explained,

> Natural authority is a far cry from authority that is merely arbitrary. Its attributes are obvious: adults are larger, are experienced, possess more words, have entered into prior agreements among themselves. When all this takes on a positive instead of a merely negative character, the children see the adults as protectors and as sources of certitude, novelty, skills. . . . These two things taken together - the natural authority of adults and the needs of children - are the great reservoir of the organic structure that comes into being when arbitrary rules of order are dispensed with. (Dennison, 1969, pp. 24-25)

Holt never claimed that perfect order would be maintained if his ideas concerning discipline were carried out in real life. In fact, he suggested just the opposite. In Freedom and Beyond (1972), he talked about the kind of tension which is frequently present in situations where the children are allowed to make their own choices after weighing numerous alternatives. He believed that such tension is "simply built into the nature of things" (Holt, 1972, p. 27), and that learning to deal with it is an important part of education.

He summed up his reasons for allowing children to take responsibility for their own actions by saying,

> Every time we try to manage the lives of young people, we give up the chance to see how they might have managed their own lives, and to learn what we might have learned from their doing it. (Holt, 1972, p. 35)

Summary

The existentialist influence on the home-schooling movement can be seen most clearly in the work of John Holt and the staff of Growing Without Schooling. Many of the home educators who adhere to existentialist beliefs embrace a way of life that stresses independence and self-reliance. In addition to home education, they may be involved in related enterprises, such as home birth or home church.

Existentialist home educators tend to view education as an individual act of self-discovery. They believe in the right of children to choose their own curriculum and reading materials. Specific teaching methods are not usually planned in advance of instruction. Rather, the parents and children participate in a variety of learning experiences, together or separately, with the parents acting as facilitators and co-learners. The development of authentic relationships between individuals is stressed, and children are encouraged to develop self-reliance. Techniques of testing, measuring, and labeling students are rarely used. Discipline is maintained loosely, and is primarily based on the use of natural conse-quences. Physical and temporal flexibility is a predominant feature of the existentialist educational program. The

parents often show an interest in developing cooperative programs with the public schools, provided that participation in such programs remains totally voluntary.

Summary, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

Summary

This was a historical-descriptive study, which analyzed the influences of four contemporary educational philosophies on the home-schooling movement. The educational philosophies chosen for analysis were essentialism, progressivism, perennialism, and existentialism. First, outlines were constructed of the major tenets of each of these educational philosophies (see Appendixes A-D). Using these outlines as a basis for comparison, a content analysis was conducted of a representative sample of books, magazines, workshops, and curriculum materials targeted at the home-schooling population in recent years.

The original research hypothesis held that an examination of the influences found in these four educational philosophies would provide a basis for better understanding the diversity of beliefs, attitudes, methods, and materials found within the home-schooling population. No attempt was made to formulate a system of discrete categorization for home-schooling families. Such categorization would have been difficult, if not impossible, to achieve, because many individuals have been exposed to multiple influences and have developed personal belief systems which can best be described as eclectic.

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However, during the course of the research, it became increasingly apparent that the four educational philosophies in question had definitely exerted distinct influences on the movement. A study of the effects of these influences might help explain the philosophical and educational differences that can be observed among home educators.

Essentialism. The strongest essentialist influence was found in the work of Gregg Harris and in the majority of articles published in a national magazine, entitled The Teaching Home. This finding does not necessarily imply that either Harris or the editors and authors cited in the essentialist chapter should be labeled irrevocably as such. However, the majority of their educational beliefs were closely aligned with essentialist doctrine. The fact that the majority of this group were also outspoken Christians does not rule out the existence of other people, either inside or outside of the movement, who may subscribe to essentialist educational beliefs without sharing this particular set of religious convictions.

These authors and home-schooling parents demonstrated their essentialist leanings through their basic agreement with the ideas of essentialist educators on such issues as educational goals, the relationship between teachers and students, curriculum suggestions, and methods of teaching, evaluating, and disciplining students. The term essentialism is derived from their belief that they know, without question, what knowledge and skills are most essential for students to

acquire in order for them to become adequately prepared for adult life. Their goals are based on a desire to preserve traditional values and a democratic way of life. They believe that one of their primary purposes as educators is to ensure that their students will be enabled to take their place as future citizens.

In essentialism, the teachers are viewed as authority figures. In the home-schooling movement, this role has been taken over by the parents. A high priority is placed on the value of hard work and obedience on the part of the students. An orderly environment is considered mandatory, and tight control is maintained. The curriculum itself is heavily structured and subject-centered. The planning is done by the parents, who are advised to prepare scrupulously in advance of the actual instruction. They are also expected to take the dominant role in the presentation of lessons. Textbooks are considered to be the mainstays of the curriculum, although they are occasionally supplemented by a variety of projects. Discipline and evaluation are also the responsibilities of the parents. They are encouraged to supplement the traditional emphasis on punitive control with a variety of positive motivational techniques, such as praise, competitions, awards, and grades.

Progressivism. The second influence studied was that of progressivism. Although fewer home educators appeared to adhere to the underlying belief system that is generally associated with this educational philosophy, progressive

tendencies could be found in several areas. This influence appeared strongest among those home-educating parents and leaders who had been trained in professional schools of education. The most influential of these leaders were Raymond and Dorothy Moore. Although it is not necessarily the intent of the researcher to label the Moores as progressive educators, they have demonstrated their agreement with many of the curriculum suggestions and methodologies typically associated with progressive education. These areas of agreement include their research-based findings concerning readiness, their advocacy of unit instruction, and their recommendations concerning an activity-based curriculum that includes the students as participants in the planning process. Even Gregg Harris, who has strong essentialist tendencies, has occasionally demonstrated certain progressive influences. However, it was clear that both Harris and the Moores adhered to traditional Christian value systems and that neither would have agreed with Dewey's pragmatic philosophical ideas concerning the relative nature of truth and morality.

Perennialism. The third educational philosophy included was perennialism. Educators who adhere to perennialist ideals also believe in the existence of absolute values. They believe such values are timeless. Because they believe man is essentially the same in all cultures and at all times, they advocate the use of a single curriculum for all students. This curriculum emphasizes presentation of traditional ideas.

The home-schooling movement has been exposed to perennialist thought through the work of Child Light and the efforts of the Charlotte Mason Research and Supply Company. Both of these organizations are attempting to revive the work of Charlotte Mason, an English educator, who was active around the turn of the century. The influence of perennialism is not as pervasive as that of either essentialism or existentialism, but it is a growing force within the movement. Mason and her followers have demonstrated their perennialist leanings through their agreement with perennialist ideas in such areas as educational goals, the relationship between students and teachers, curriculum suggestions, and methods of working with children.

Like other perennialists, Mason wanted to introduce her students to the great ideas of western civilization and to improve society by providing a broad, liberal education for every person. Disdaining premature specialization, she designed a curriculum that exposed her students to great literature, art, and music. Teachers were viewed as authority figures but were expected to show equal respect for the minds and spirits of their students. The presentation of quality material was done in a manner that downplayed the actual instructional role of the teacher, as it placed the students in direct contact with the best minds in all fields of endeavor. High expectations were placed upon the students themselves, whose characters were gently guided towards the development of self-discipline. Although techniques of

evaluation were certainly present in Mason's classes, the teachers were always encouraged to engage the minds of the learners fully. They generally made use of either written or oral composition for the purpose of evaluation, rather than relying on objective testing procedures.

In addition to reviving Mason's educational ideas through publishing some of her works that had been out-of-print for several decades, her home-schooling disciples have written two new volumes, which make specific suggestions concerning curriculum planning and the choice of high-quality literary experiences (Lopez, 1988; Wilson, 1987). Some of the suggestions contained in these works indicate the presence of additional philosophical influences. However, they have been largely responsible for the revival of interest in Mason's work, and in the resultant resurgence of perennialist thought within the home-schooling population.

Existentialism. The fourth philosophy discussed was existentialism. Existentialist beliefs extend to all of life, rather than concentrating specifically on educational concerns. For this reason, some of the existentialists' underlying assumptions about life and learning were explored before specific educational matters were examined.

Existentialists, loosely divided into theistic and atheistic camps, share several characteristics, although they resist attempts at labeling and categorizing. The emphasis throughout existentialist thought is clearly on the individual and his or her relationship to the world and to other people.

People are expected to strive for authenticity by making personal choices; accepting the consequences of their actions; and relating to each other in an honest, direct manner. Existentialists focus on the rights of all individuals, as opposed to groups, and believe that such rights are possessed by all people, regardless of age.

When these themes are translated into educational practice, several important issues are raised. An emphasis is placed on the right of individual learners to choose their own curricula; to enter into authentic relationships with their parents, teachers, and fellow students; and to retain their individuality by avoiding exposure to measurement devices and labels.

The existentialist influence on the home-schooling movement is strongest among followers of the late John Holt. Many of these home-schooling parents developed their personal philosophies of life during the 1960s and 1970s, when existentialist thought in the United States was at its peak.

Holt, himself, demonstrated his existentialist leanings through his emphasis on attaining personal authenticity and through his intensely emotional approach to life. He influenced the home-schooling movement through his many books, articles, and speeches, as well as through the continuing efforts of Growing Without Schooling, a publication he began in 1977. Typically existentialist in approach, this magazine is made up almost entirely of letters written in by home-schooling parents and children, themselves. A supplemental

catalogue of materials, entitled, "John Holt's Book and Music Store," offers a variety of books and learning materials that reflect Holt's basic philosophy of life and learning.

The educational goals existentialist parents have for their children typically reflect their concern with the personal growth of the individual students. The students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, and to develop a variety of skills that will help them become self-reliant individuals. The curriculum is freely chosen by the students, who are encouraged to become emotionally involved with the subject matter.

Parents and children are expected to strive for authenticity in their relationships with each other. The parents frequently participate in the learning and growing experience right along with their children. At some point, the children are encouraged to move beyond the family circle and to participate voluntarily in a variety of community activities, which may or may not include part-time involvement in a local public school.

As facilitators of learning, these parents do not consciously adopt special methods of instruction or discipline, but allow learning situations to develop spontaneously. They emphasize the use of natural consequences to assist the development of the student's ability to co-exist successfully with others in the environment. Although many of the parents themselves refer to their methodologies as unstructured, Holt objected to this term. He believed that all human experiences

possess some form of a structure. However, physical and temporal flexibility is stressed in the existentialist home school, and external forms of motivation are shunned, as are the use of measuring devices, labels, and grades.

Conclusions

The original research hypothesis asserted that an examination of the philosophical influences found in essentialism, progressivism, perennialism, and existentialism could provide a basis for understanding the diversity of beliefs, attitudes, materials, and methods found within the home-schooling population. During the course of this research, it became apparent that this was, indeed, the case. Although discrete categorization of either home-schooling advocates or parents was not attempted, several distinct philosophical and educational differences emerged among the four groups of books, magazines, workshop materials, and curriculum sources that were analyzed.

The wide variety of beliefs held by home-schooling authors and parents have previously been categorized by researchers along religious lines. One of the most significant conclusions of this research was that such religious beliefs, while important, did not necessarily coincide with educational beliefs and assumptions. Rather, it was found that people who possessed a variety of religious affiliations and beliefs were scattered among the various groups. Furthermore, Christians, who had previously been lumped into a single group by most researchers, did not all agree on a single set

of educational beliefs and assumptions. It was also noted that the disparate educational beliefs of the various groups were translated into practical terms through their differential selection of curriculum materials and their adoption of a variety of methods of instruction, evaluation, and discipline. Only in progressivism was a slightly disparate conclusion drawn. In this particular case, it appeared that a number of home-schooling leaders and parents had adopted some of the materials and methods used by progressive educators without necessarily adhering to the pragmatic beliefs and assumptions associated with the founders of that educational philosophy.

Previous research concerning the attitudes of home educators on a variety of issues have either treated home-schooling parents as a monolithic, homogeneous group, or have divided them along religious lines. This analysis has suggested that some of these attitudes can be understood more accurately through an examination of both the religious and the educational beliefs of the participants. For example, the essentialists appeared to be the most adamantly opposed to public school instruction, whereas perennialists and progressives appeared to be more accepting of other parents who chose a public school alternative. At the opposite end of the spectrum, some of the existentialists actually were pursuing the development of cooperative ventures between public schools and home educators.

The types of curriculum materials chosen by the four groups were a reflection of their underlying beliefs and assumptions about education. The essentialists typically bought structured, packaged curriculum materials from religious sources, such as Bob Jones University and Abeka Publishers. The progressives tended to gather materials from a variety of sources for use in a project-oriented curriculum. The perennialists stressed the use of traditional literature, art, and music. The existentialists, acting strictly as facilitators, assisted their children in locating information as needed.

The differences among the groups were especially apparent in their methods of selecting reading materials. The essentialists displayed a marked tendency towards parental censorship. The perennialists believed that high-quality literature should be presented to the children and that any differences in point-of-view should be discussed openly. The progressives provided a certain amount of guidance in the selection process, but allowed the children a great deal of input as well. The existentialists, on the other hand, generally believed in allowing children freedom to choose their reading material on their own.

Methods of instruction also differed from one group to another. The essentialists stressed teacher preparation and presentation of instructional materials. Textbooks formed the backbone of their curriculum, and evaluation was performed through a variety of objective testing procedures. Discipline

was tightly maintained, and punitive controls were supplemented with a variety of motivational techniques. The progressives granted students a larger role in the planning and implementing of learning experiences, and stressed the need for an activity-based curriculum. Evaluation was also viewed as a joint activity. The perennialists stressed the importance of allowing students unmediated contact with the great authors, composers, and artists of western civilization. They used oral and written expression as a means of evaluation, and stressed the need for developing self-discipline. The existentialists allowed children free choice of materials, participated alongside the students in a variety of learning experiences, and stressed the development of independence and creativity. Discipline was maintained loosely, and evaluation techniques were extremely informal.

Based upon the foregoing analysis, the major conclusions were as follows:

1. All four educational philosophies included in the study have exerted an impact on the home-schooling movement in recent years.

2. Home-schooling advocates, leaders, and parents are a heterogencus group of educators, who possess a wide variety of educational beliefs and assumptions.

3. These disparate educational beliefs and assumptions do not necessarily coincide with the religious affiliations or beliefs held by the participants.

4.   These beliefs are translated into educational practice through the adoption of a wide variety of curriculum materials and methods of instruction, evaluation, and discipline.

5.   Discrete categorization of home-schooling advocates or parents is difficult to achieve because many of them have been exposed to multiple influences and have adopted a set of beliefs and techniques that can best be described as eclectic.

6.   Despite this difficulty, it was possible to analyze the educational beliefs of individuals and groups within the movement, and to demonstrate the ways in which differing educational beliefs and assumptions affected choices of curriculum materials, methods of working with children, and attitudes towards the possible development of cooperative ventures with the public school system.

Implications of the Study

Several implications can be drawn based upon the conclusions presented. They are directed at three groups of people: researchers, educational policy-makers, and participants in the home-schooling movement itself.

Up to this point, researchers have either tended to view home educators as a monolithic, homogeneous group, or to divide them into categories based primarily on their religious convictions. Future researchers may find it more instructive and potentially more valid to focus on the educational beliefs and assumptions of the families involved in a study. Because

of the wide variety in beliefs, assumptions, curriculum materials, and methodologies used, it is also particularly important either to locate an unbiased sample or to limit research conclusions to a specific subpopulation of home educators. In the past, samples drawn from such lists as Holt's Growing Without Schooling directory or the files of the Hewitt Research Foundation, which has previously been affiliated with Moore, have tended to generate samples that possessed biases towards particular educational philosophies.

Several implications can be drawn that would affect educational policy-makers. If it is true that home educators are a diverse group, it is important to recognize that fact when drawing up legislation and setting policies regarding the supervision of home-schooling parents. Several alternative means of curriculum design and evaluation should be allowable under state law to avoid requiring families to abandon their educational beliefs in order to avoid prosecution. Any criteria used for evaluation should be sufficiently broad to ensure that different approaches can be judged appropriately.

Policy-makers and educators should also be aware that different home educators may have a variety of reasons for choosing the home-school alternative, and may differ in their attitudes towards public education. In some cases, it may be in the best interests of both public educators and home educators to work together to design and develop a variety of cooperative programs. In other cases, the home educators may

prefer to have minimal contact with the public school system. In these cases, private schools may desire to serve the families involved in some mutually beneficial manner.

Finally, it is important for policy-makers to recognize that no single individual, group, or organization, either on a local or national level, can possibly hope to represent the views of all home educators adequately. Whenever policy decisions are made, it is important to include representatives of the home-schooling movement in the planning process. However, the views of minorities within the movement should be given consideration and the concerns of those individuals or groups who are most noticeable or vocal in a given area should not be allowed to dominate the discussion completely.

Home educators may find it helpful to recognize that religious convictions, while important, do not always mesh neatly with educational beliefs. Perhaps this realization may help ease some of the tensions that currently exist within the movement among participants with the same religious beliefs who disagree over educational matters. If educational differences can be recognized outside the context of specific religious beliefs, it may help the various segments of the movement to understand some of their disagreements and enable them to work cooperatively in those areas where unity is desirable.

Home educators are cautioned to avoid using the results of this study for the purpose of categorizing and labeling themselves and others. For the purpose of analysis, several

generalizations were made concerning the various educational philosophies. The fact that a parent was quoted in a particular chapter does not necessarily mean that he or she is in general agreement with the points discussed in that chapter. Understanding some of the influences that have affected them may, however, prove helpful when parents are attempting to formulate their own philosophies of education. This, in turn, may prove to be beneficial when they are choosing curriculum materials, planning instruction, and communicating their needs to legislators and educational authorities.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. As stated in the preceding section, future researchers should be careful about their sample selection, and either find an unbiased sample or limit their findings to a specific home-schooling population. As state-wide registration of home educators becomes more widespread, it may become possible to avoid using the lists of specific organizations to obtain such samples.

2. When unbiased sources of samples become available, future survey research could attempt to discover the proportion of participants in the movement who have been influenced by each educational philosophy. Any attempts along these lines, however, should recognize the inherent difficulties in categorizing and labeling home-schooling parents who have been subjected to a variety of philosophical influences.

3. Qualitative studies could be conducted to study a small group of home-schooling families who appear to lean

towards the ideas of particular educational philosophies. Comparisons or contrasts could then be drawn between families with a variety of educational beliefs and practices.

4. As the movement grows, a larger group of home-educated students may be found who have re-enrolled in public or private schools after a certain age. Future research could seek to determine how these children compare with their age-mates who have not been taught at home. If a large enough sample size can be located, it may also be possible to analyze differences between home-schooled children from many families that have adopted disparate educational beliefs and practices.

5. Longitudinal studies could be conducted to determine how the beliefs and practices of home educators evolve over time, and to determine whether or not parents tend to alter any of their beliefs, attitudes, or practices as they become more knowledgeable and experienced in the field.

APPENDIX A

Outline of the Main Tenets of Essentialism

I.   Basic Assumptions

A.   About the nature of man

1.   Essentialism has roots in both idealism and realism.

2.   Essentialists, as a group, do not possess a unified philosophical position on metaphysical questions. Some essentialists are religious, and consider man to be the most important creation of a Divine Being. Others view man from a more scientific, naturalistic viewpoint. Little consensus can be found on general philosophical questions, although the essentialists tend to be a conservative group.

B.   About the nature of education and the learning process

1.   Essentialists believe in the existence of a basic, central body of knowledge, or truth, which must be transmitted to the younger generation.

2.   Essentialists believe that education is a preparation for adult life.

3.   Essentialists believe that they know, without question, what the truth is and what knowledge is essential for students to learn.

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4.   Essentialists believe that education consists of the assimilation of prescribed subject matter, presented in a logical manner by a trained teacher.

5.   Essentialists believe that learning involves hard work and diligent application. In order to achieve goals that will prove desirable in the future, students must be required to apply themselves to their studies, even when they find such efforts distasteful, or are uninterested in the subject matter.

II. Goals of Education

A.   For society

1.   The essentialist desires to preserve and promote the principles of democracy (Bestor, 1955; Brameld, 1955).

2.   The essentialist desires to preserve and promote traditional values through the maintenance of cultural stabilizers, such as "time-tested content, orderly sequence, inherited principles, guided discipline" (Brameld, 1955, p. 204).

3.   The essentialist desires to prepare future citizens for life by giving them an adequate knowledge base and providing them with those tools and skills they will need as adults.

B.   For the individual

1.   The essentialist wants the individual to "get to know the world as it really is" (Kneller, 1964, p. 59).

2. The essentialist wants the individual to become prepared for adult life, through:

    a. assimilating a large capital of knowledge, consisting of both facts and basic principles;

    b. developing habits that will be needed in adult life, such as attention, respect for authority, and orderly behavior; and

    c. internalizing societal ideals and values.

3. The essentialist wants the individual to "develop a disciplined mind" (Bestor, 1955, p. 56).

III. Teachers and Students: Roles and Relationships

A. Teachers

1. Teachers are the authority figures. The initiative in education lies with them.

2. Teachers should be well-educated themselves and should prepare thoroughly in advance of each lesson.

3. Teachers should attempt to motivate the students, using either their own interests or a system of extrinsic rewards and punishments. However, when motivation fails, teachers are still responsible for compelling adequate performance from their pupils.

B. Students

1. Students are expected to be respectful and obey their teachers.

2. Students are expected to work hard at their studies in anticipation of future rewards.

IV. Discipline and Classroom Management

    A. Discipline

        1. "The first condition of effective discipline is respect for the authority of the teacher" (Bagley, 1907, p. 93).

        2. Teachers must learn to manage and control their classrooms through whatever means they may have at their disposal.

    B. Classroom management

        1. Teachers are expected to plan scupulously in advance of actual instruction.

        2. Teachers are expected to secure students' attention through provision of adequate variety.

        3. Teachers are expected to maintain control of their classrooms through:

            a. using rewards or competitions (i.e., certificates, attendance awards, etc.);

            b. establishing clear rules of conduct at the beginning of instruction; and

            c. enforcing adherence to such rules through punishment of infractions.

V. Curriculum and Teaching Methods

    A. Curriculum

        1. The curriculum should be subject-centered.

        2. Keeping in mind that the goal is preparation for adult life, there should be some differentiation in the

curriculum. The curriculum of college-bound students will be somewhat different than that of vocationally oriented pupils.

3. Despite the presence of a variety of curriculum options and electives in the secondary school, a core of essential subjects must be completed by all the students.

4. The core curriculum should consist of all subjects which the community considers essential for successful entry into adult life.

B. Teaching methods

1. Essentialists tend to be somewhat eclectic in their teaching methods. There are, however, several common threads.

2. The following are generally valued in the essentialist classroom:

a. careful planning by the teacher;

b. maintaining orderly behavior in an orderly environment;

c. establishing standards for neatness and cleanliness;

d. attentive listening during lectures;

e. orderly talking during discussions (i.e., waiting to be called on by the teacher, taking turns); and

f. maintaining absolute silence during study periods.

3. The best period of the day, when the students are most attentive, should be used for the most critical subjects. In practice, this means that the mornings are

typically used for reading, writing, and arithmetic in the elementary school, and the afternoons for extras, such as art, music, and physical education.

4. Incentives are used liberally. These may include:

a. praising and encouraging students;

b. helping students to internalize societal ideals, set high standards for themselves, and work hard to meet them; and

c. using grades, awards, prizes, or special privileges to help motivate students.

5. Evaluation is achieved primarily through the use of objective tests designed to determine the students' retention of factual material. Competency testing and the use of standardized examinations are common.

APPENDIX B

Outline of the Main Tenets of Progessivism

I.   Basic Assumptions

    A.   About the nature of man

        1.   Many of those progressive educators whose beliefs are rooted in the philosophy of pragmatism have been influenced by Darwinian beliefs concerning evolution, and view man primarily as a social animal.

        2.   However, not all progressive educators necessarily adhere to a single set of philosophical or religious beliefs.

        3.   Most progressives believe that man learns through experiences that take place in the physical and social environment surrounding him. These experiences are viewed as mutual transactions, which result in continuous adaptation in both man and the environment.

    B.   About the nature of education and the learning process

        1.   Progressivism was originally rooted in the philosophy of pragmatism. Pragmatic philosophy generally denies the existence of absolute truth and eternal values. Truth is viewed in a flexible manner and is defined primarily in terms of its consequences. Morality is no longer rooted

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in the authority of family, law, or custom, but is considered in the context of specific situations.

2. John Dewey, who was one of the first to apply pragmatic ideas to the field of education, preferred to call his philosophy "experimentalism" or "instrumentalism," rather than pragmatism. He desired to apply scientific methods to the field of education and constantly experimented in his laboratory school at the University of Chicago, adapting ideas and methods as needed.

3. Dewey believed in process. He preferred to speak about the "process of knowing" rather than knowledge. He believed that the essence of life was change, growth, and adaptation.

4. Dewey's educational ideas, which influenced the growth of the progressive education movement in America, included the following:

a. The school life should be an extension of the home life of the children.

b. All education should be active. It is a "continuous reconstruction of experience" (Dewey, 1897/1959, p. 27).

c. Education is broader than schooling. It encompasses the entire life of the child, at home, at school, and out in the community, and is a process that continues throughout the course of an individual's lifetime.

d. All learning should reflect the develop-mental level of the individual children involved.

II. Goals of Education

    A.   For society

        1.   Education is viewed as a "fundamental method of social progress and reform" (Dewey, 1897/1959, p. 30). However, it is only one institution. Others also exist, such as the home and the church. Functioning alone, the school cannot determine the direction or the nature of social reform.

        2.   The type of society Dewey wanted to move towards would be democratic and group-oriented.

    B.   For the individual

        1.   Children's experiences in school should build on their experiences at home and in the community.

        2.   Children should be enabled to continue growing and learning to adapt to life in a changing society.

        3.   Children should be enabled to deal with problems. Their ability to think reflectively and solve problems that confront them should be developed through the provision of experiences that make use of these skills.

III. Teachers and Students: Roles and Relationships

    A.   Teachers

        1.   Teachers are guides, who observe the children carefully, search for meaning in their interests and activities, and help them to continue growing by expanding on their interests and providing direction to their experiences.

        2.   Much of the direction provided by the teachers comes from their ability to shape the environment of the children while they are at school.

B.   Students

1.   Children are active partners in the learning process.

2.   As partners, they are encouraged to participate in all phases of the instructional process: planning, implementing, and evaluating progress.

IV. Discipline and Classroom Management

A.   Discipline

1.   Values and ethics are viewed in the light of specific circumstances.

2.   Proper discipline develops in the context of the social environment of the classrom.

B.   Classroom management

1.   An orderly school environment does not have to be characterized by silence. "There is a certain disorder in any busy workshop" (Dewey, 1899/1959, p. 41).

2.   Any rules that need to be set should arise out of the specific situation, and should be arrived at jointly by teachers and students acting as a team.

3.   Rules should be flexible and should be altered as necessary if the situation changes.

4.   Infractions of rules should be dealt with as a mutual activity of teachers and students. The nature of any rewards or punishments should be decided upon jointly.

V.   Curriculum and Teaching Methods

A.   Curriculum

1. The curriculum should be an organic whole. "Relate the school to life and all studies are of necessity correlated" (Dewey, 1899/1959, p. 88).

2. Dewey believed that all subjects were inter-related. He believed that, no matter what the point of entry, the entire curriculum would eventually be covered, provided teachers developed experiences thoroughly.

3. The unity in the curriculum should stem from the "unity of the personal and social interests" of the child (Dewey, 1902/1959, p. 93).

B. Teaching methods

1. All teaching should stress experiential learning.

2. All experience is not necessarily educative. In order to be educative, the experiences must be of high quality. They must be based on the principles of continuity and interaction.
(Dewey, 1938,)

3. The unit of instruction should not be the lesson, but the enterprise, or the project.

a. A project should have a unifying theme.

b. It should arise out of a problem that is relevant to the children themselves.

c. It should involve the children in active intellectual and physical work.

d. The best experiences are the least contrived that flow naturally out of the children's own interests, under the guidance of a good teacher.

4. The order of presentation must follow the order of development of the child's own powers.

a. Learning should never be hurried or pushed on a child who is not ready to deal with a particular type of experience.

b. The "active side precedes the passive" in the order of development (Dewey, 1897/1959, p. 28).

5. The interests of the children are "neither to be humored nor repressed" (Dewey, 1897/1959, p. 29). Good teachers will be aware of the developmental stages the children are passing through, and will note special interests. These interests are the "signs and symptoms" of the developing capacity of the children (Dewey, 1897/1959, p. 29). The teachers should make use of this knowledge when planning and guiding activities and arranging environmental conditions.

6. Evaluation should be included as an integral part of every project, and should be approached as a joint activity of teachers and students acting as a team.

APPENDIX C

Outline of the Main Tenets of Perennialism

I.   Basic Assumptions

    A.   About the nature of man

        1.   Perennialism is rooted in realism, and is largely based on the philosophical ideas of such writers as Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. As a group, perennialists believe in the existence of eternal values. Many of them base this belief on a recognition of God as the ultimate authority and law-giver of the universe. The foremost spokesman for the religious perennialists has been Jacques Maritain, a French educator, author, and philosopher. Secular perennialists, while retaining Aristotelian principles concerning the presence of universal truths and timeless knowledge, have separated their philosophical and theological beliefs, and concentrate on the former. The best-known secular perennialists are Robert Hutchins, former president of the University of Chicago, and Mortimer Adler, author of <u>The Paideia Proposal</u> (1982) and <u>The Paideia Program</u> (1984).

        2.   Maritain, speaking for the religious perennialists, characterized man as,

            a.   "an animal endowed with reason, whose supreme dignity is in the intellect";

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b. "a free individual in personal relation with God, whose supreme righteousness consists in voluntarily obeying the law of God"; and

c. "a sinful and wounded creature called to divine life and to the freedom of grace, whose perfection consists of love" (Maritain, 1943, p. 7).

3. Maritain further pointed out that the essence of man is his spirit, which is the root of personality. The other important aspect of man is his individuality, which is rooted in matter. The prime function of education should be the "human awakening of the spirit" (Maritain, 1943, pp. 8-9). However, training of the senses, which focuses on the material nature of man, also plays a subsidiary role in the preparation of the young.

4. Both branches of perennialists believe that, although individual human beings have differences, these are outweighed by their similarities. Basic human nature is the same in every epoch and every culture. "Individual differences are always and only differences in degree, never differences in kind" (Adler, 1982, p. 43).

5. All children are born with the desire and need to learn, but they need to be provided with intellectual nourishment in order to achieve their full potential.

B.   About the nature of education and the learning process

       1.   There are absolutes in the universe. Eternal truths exist despite the presence of cultural variations.

       2.   Because eternal truths exist, and men are everywhere the same, education should basically be the same at all times and in all cultures where such education is possible (i.e., all civilized cultures).

       3.   Education and schooling are not synonymous. Education is a life-long process, which begins at birth and should continue throughout a person's lifetime.   Basic schooling for youth is a preparatory phase.   No one can be truly educated at the age of 18 or 20.   It takes maturity to become educated.

       4.   Learning requires mental activity. The teacher must engage the learner's own powers in order for learning to take place. The "principal agent" in the process of development is the mind of the learner (Maritain, 1943, p. 31).

II.   Goals of Education

    A.   For society

       1.   The perennialist desires to develop a society where learning is valued; a truly democratic society where all people are given the opportunity to become rational, intelligent, contributing members (Adler, 1982; Hutchins, 1953, 1968).

       2.   The perennialist desires to preserve and pass on the great ideas of western civilization, and, in so doing,

to forge a common thread among members of all classes, thereby promoting increased communication and understanding (Hutchins, 1953).

    3.   The perennialist desires to impart knowledge of eternal truths (Adler, 1982; Maritain, 1943).

    4.   The perennialist desires to improve society "by the improvement of the individuals who compose it" (Hutchins, 1953, p. 68).

    B.   For the individual

    1.   The perennialist desires "to improve man as a man" (Hutchins, 1953, p. 68).

    2.   The perennialist desires to cultivate reason and rationality (Adler, 1982; Maritain, 1943).

    3.   The religious perennialist desires to guide the spiritual progress of the students in his charge (Maritain, 1943, p. 10).

    4.   The perennialist desires to cultivate self-discipline in the students (Maritain, 1943).

    5.   The perennialist desires to prepare students for continued learning beyond basic schooling, by motivating them and providing them with the skills, habits, ideas, and techniques they will need to accomplish this (Hutchins, 1953).

    6.   The perennialist desires to lay the foundations for the development of wisdom (Maritain, 1943).

    7.   The perennialist desires to equip students for earning a living by providing them with a broad knowledge base

and those skills that are common to all occupations (Adler, 1982, 1984).

8. Perennialists believe that training in manual skills must always take a back seat to education, which aims to develop the mind (Maritain, 1943). However, as long as the primary aims of education are recognized, perennialists are not opposed to using whatever time remains to develop a wide range of specific skills. As in Adler's Paideia Proposal (1982), the emphasis is usually placed on the development of useful living skills, rather than on training for a specific vocation.

III. Teachers and Students: Roles and Relationships

A. Teachers

1. Educators are viewed as professionals. They should therefore be well educated themselves.

2. Adults are derelict in their duty towards the young if they fail to provide them with guidance.

3. Mutual respect should exist between teachers and students.

B. Students

1. Especially in youth, most learning requires the presence of a teacher. "Only geniuses can educate themselves without the help of teachers. For most students, learning by discovery must be aided" (Adler, 1982, p. 50).

2. All learning must involve the active engagement of the mind of the individual learner.

IV. Discipline and Classroom Management

    A.   Discipline

        1.   Teachers must be capable of exerting moral authority over their students. Religious perennialists believe that this is a derived authority, which must be grounded on a recognition of the ultimate authority of God.

        2.   Students must be guided towards the development of proper habits. However, they must not merely be drilled in the formation of such habits, but must be made cooperative partners in the endeavor. The eventual goal must be the development of self-discipline.

    B.   Classroom management

        1.   An orderly environment is necessary for proper instruction to take place.

        2.   A lack of challenging work and intellectual stimulation may result in a lack of discipline (Adler, 1982).

        3.   In the presence of stimulating work and high expectations, students will arise to the occasion and will experience the "joy that arises from hard work well done and from the participation of one's mind in a common task" (Adler, 1982, p. 32).

V.   Curriculum and Teaching Methods

    A.   Curriculum

        1.   At the level of basic schooling, education should be liberal and general (Adler, 1982; Hutchins, 1953; Maritain, 1943).

2. Although the mind of the learner is to be respected, the teacher must never lose sight of the importance of the subject material. The same basic curriculum should be followed for all students, although some flexibility should be maintained concerning the speed with which students pass through the materials (Adler, 1982).

3. According to Maritain, there are three levels of basic schooling that correspond to the age of the learner. During the phase of elementary schooling, the imagination of the child must be appealed to through the use of stories. During the period of adolescence, the youth is in a transition phase, where his reasoning power is being developed, and instruction should appeal to his rationality. The third phase should consist of a broad, liberal arts college education. Premature specialization is to be avoided (Maritain, 1943).

4. According to The Paideia Proposal (Adler, 1982), three kinds of learning need to be included in the curriculum. They are:

a. the acquisition of organized knowledge;

b. the development of intellectual skills; and

c. the enlarged understanding of ideas and values.

5. The books used in the curriculum should be the great books, not textbooks or works of lesser value. The purposes of using classical literature in the curriculum are:

a. to help students learn to use intellectual skills (i.e., reading, writing, listening, speaking);

b. to help the students develop the ability to think critically; and

c. to introduce the students to the ideas present in these works.

6. Music, art, and drama activities also should consist of experiences with classical works. The purpose of these experiences is to increase the student's understanding of these works, not to encourage self-expression (Adler, 1982).

B. Teaching methods

1. A variety of teaching methods may be employed, as long as they are designed to promote the perennialist goals of education.

2. All methods must reflect the need for active engagement of the mind of the learner.

3. Because perennialists believe that man is body as well as spirit, they approve of experiential learning, on the condition that it is "directed towards the awakening of the intellectual powers and the development of the sense of truth" (Maritain, 1962/1976, p. 48).

4. The Paideia Proposal (Adler, 1982) lists three methods of instruction that correspond to the three types of learning. They are:

           a.   didactic instruction (lecturing, presiding over question-and-answer sessions, monitoring achievement through examination);

           b.   coaching and supervised practice of skills;

           c.   presentation of works of literature, art, and music, followed by discussions of these works.

           5.   Any efforts at evaluation must take into account the need to engage the mental processes of the learner. Oral or written composition is preferred to the use of objective testing procedures.

APPENDIX D

Outline of the Main Tenets of Existentialism

I.   Basic Assumptions

    A.   About the nature of man

        1.   Existentialist thinkers can be loosely divided into two camps: theistic and atheistic existentialists. Both groups believe that "existence precedes essence" (Sartre, 1947, p. 18). In other words, man finds himself placed in this universe without having asked to be born, and must create his own meaning for his life.

        2.   Theistic existentialists believe that there is a Divine Being, and that there is probably a meaning to the universe. However, this meaning cannot be found through rational means. Man can only get in touch with God by leaving rationality behind and taking a "leap of faith" (Kierkegaard, 1846/1936, p. 269). Atheistic existentialists believe that the universe is completely without meaning until individuals create such meaning for themselves.

    B.   About the nature of education and the learning process

        1.   Education is an active process. The student must be emotionally engaged in an individual act of self-discovery.

2.   Whether or not eternal truths exist is an irrelevant question. Truth is not truth until an individual appropriates it for himself.

3.   Education should "provide the occasions and circumstances for the awakening and intensification of awareness" (Morris, 1966, p. 117).

II. Goals of Education

A.   For society

1.   Existentialists desire to build a society where individuals have the freedom to develop their unique potentialities; where problems are dealt with by individuals taking responsibility for their own actions; where group membership is available, but no one is coerced into joining group activities; where independent thought is valued; and where the rights of individuals or minorities are not eclipsed by the will of the majority.

2.   Existentialists desire to shape, through the efforts of many individuals, a truly authentic society.

B.   For the individual

1.   Existentialists desire to encourage the development of individual potential.

2.   Existentialists desire to encourage the development of self-reliance.

3.   Existentialists desire to prepare individuals to make personal choices, take responsibility for their actions, and be willing to accept the consequences.

4.   Existentialists desire to encourage individuals to grapple with meaningful issues, such as suffering, death, and inhumanity to man.

5.   Existentialists desire to encourage active involvement and emotional engagement in subject material.

6.   Existentialists desire to help individuals move towards developing personal authenticity. To be authentic, people must be aware of their freedom and their ability to make their own choices. They must be willing to take action and get involved in the world around them, and to accept whatever consequences may follow from their decisions and actions.

III. Teachers and Students: Roles and Relationships

A.   Teachers

1.   Teachers and students should be considered equal partners in the learning enterprise.

2.   There must be an atmosphere of honesty and mutual trust.

B.   Students

1.   Unless participation in any educational setting is voluntary for the participants, an element of coercion is present and true authenticity cannot be achieved.

2.   Students, as well as teachers, can both assume a variety of roles, as long as these roles are truly authentic and are not artificially contrived or engaged in for ulterior purposes.

IV. Discipline and Classroom Management

    A.   Discipline

        1.   Students are to be respected and trusted.

        2.   Students are expected to develop self-discipline.

    B.   Classroom management

        1.   Existentialists are opposed to the concept of managing someone else's behavior.

        2.   Individuals who trespass on the rights of other individuals must be prepared to accept the consequences of their decisions and actions. Any problems that arise should be dealt with openly and honestly by the individuals involved, whether they are teachers or students.

V. Curriculum and Teaching Methods

    A.   Curriculum

        1.   The curriculum must be freely chosen by the individual student. It is not just child-centered, it is individual-centered.

        2.   It follows that the curriculum will vary from one student to the next, depending on specific interests and abilities.

        3.   The most worthwhile subjects are those that are most worthwhile to a specific individual. However, existentialists tend to prefer subjects that either encourage self-expression or engage individuals in discussions of meaningful questions. The most obvious of these include history, literature, creative writing, art, music, and drama. However,

any subjects may be worthwhile if the students are actively involved and deeply interested.

    B.   Teaching methods

        1.   Existentialists believe that children are intrinsically motivated to learn, unless such motivation has been temporarily subdued by coercive techniques or the substitution of external rewards and punishments.

        2.   As much as possible, learners should teach themselves. Most of the initiative in learning should come from the students. However, teachers are also free individuals, and they should feel free to express themselves and initiate activities, too, as long as the students' involvement remains voluntary.

        3.   Absolutely no manipulation of students should occur, either directly or indirectly. This means that there should be no labels, no grades, no pre-ordained system of rewards or punishments, and no products created for the means of impressing other people.

        4.   When teachers are presenting information to students, they should try to present all sides of an issue. They should honestly explain their own position, and tell the students how they made their decisions. They should then help the students clarify their own thinking on the subject.

        5.   Teachers may also lead discussions, or set up and engage in experiences with the students. If any students do not want to participate, or are busy doing something else, they should not be forced to join.

6. Teachers may act as facilitators, helping students develop or locate the means to carry out their own self-directed activities.

7. Teachers may sometimes sit back and learn from the students, or they may simply stand back and leave them alone.

8. Time periods and physical arrangements should be flexible and subject to alteration.

APPENDIX E

Addresses of Schools, Curriculum Suppliers, Organizations, and Publications

Schools and Curriculum Suppliers

Abeka Publishers
Box 18000
Pensacola, FL 32523-9160

Alpha Omega Publications
P. O. Box 3153
Tempe, AZ 85281

Bob Jones University Press
Greenville, SC 29614

Calvert School
105 Tuscany Rd.
Baltimore, MD 21210

Clonlara School
Home-based Education Program
1289 Jewett St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

KONOS
P. O. Box 1534
Richardson, TX 75083

Santa Fe Community School
P. O. Box 2241
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Weaver Curriculum
2752 Scarborough
Riverside, CA 92503

Organizations

Charlotte Mason Research and Supply Company
P. O. Box 172
Stanton, NJ 08885

Child Light
P. O. Box 2035
430 Boyd Circle
Michigan City, IN   46360

Christian Life Workshops
180 S. E. Kane Rd.
Gresham, OR   97030

Hewitt Research Foundation
P. O. Box 9
Washougal, WA   98671-0009

Holt Associates
2269 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, MA   02140

Moore Foundation
Box 1
Camas, WA   98607

Parent's National Education Union
World-Wide Education Service
Strode House
44-50 Osnaburgh St.
London NW1 3NN

Publications

Growing Without Schooling/
GWS Directory/
John Holt's Book and Music Store
2269 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge,MA 02140

Home Education Magazine
P. O. Box 1083
Tonasket, WA   98855

Home School Researcher
Dr. Brian Ray, Editor
Seattle Pacific University
Seattle, WA   98119

Moore Report
Box 1
Camas, WA   98607

The Teaching Home
P. O. Box 20219
Portland, OR   97220-0219

APPENDIX F

Workshops Attended by the Researcher
During the 1989-1990 School Year

Family and School Seminar
(Dr. Raymond Moore and Dorothy Moore)
October 16, 1989
Belhaven College
Jackson, MS

1990 Southern Regional Home Schooling Workshop and Curriculum
Fair
(Gregg Harris/Christian Life Workshops)
March 9-10, 1990
Birmingham, AL

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