

Unit One contained many varying degrees and perspectives on how a child can become a successful learner within the classroom. Many concepts spur from Dewey and his progressive ideas regarding teaching. Although Dewey is revered in the teaching society, do his practices make for better students or just add variation to the original agenda? Some teachers feel that the newer concepts of teaching take away from the students' actually learning subject matter but instead create an environment that is fun instead.

The progressive ideas of Dewey definitely engage students more actively. This activeness makes the students more prone to learning. By implementing engaging activities the students are in control of their learning processes. This not only helps the students learn but it enables them to be in charge of how they are learning. I feel that this allows them to focus on their interests within the subject material being presented. Dewey's progressive school did just that by allowing students to be in charge of how the learned presented materials. Instead of learning the chemical properties of how yeast rises, the students at Dewey's school would instead bake bread then dissect what they learned from the interactive process.

Many people argue though that this is not the best way to teach students. The students can easily overlook facts regarding the material. They will generally focus more on what interests them about the subject rather than what does not interest them. This often includes the nitty gritty details. The details seem to be presented in a more boring sense. Why is it then that the "boring" way of teaching leads to more results and higher standardized test scores? E. Donald Hirsch Jr, explains in his article *Romancing the Child* that it is often true that public schools have lower scores because "Catholic schools...follow a rich and demanding curriculum; provide a structure, orderly environment; offer lots of explicit instruction, including drill and practice; and expect every child to reach minimal goals in each subject by the end of the year." The rote learning of the above mentioned laid out structure makes learning not as "fun" for the student but creates expected results. Newer practices do not reach these results because the student is not retaining information. Instead they are retaining experiences. Then it is important to question whether or not experiences make for positive learning? Will a student who experiences growing a garden be able to answer questions relating to the growth process of a plant? Experiences are very beneficial to the nature of the child and create memories but that sometimes does not always create retainable information or information that can be decipherable by the student.

I feel that a combination of the two types of learning would help students experience and retain factual information. As a teacher you should try to incorporate an intellectual way of teaching the students while engaging their nature. This requires a lot of work and a careful balance on the teacher's behalf but is manageable. It can be obtained through guiding the student as they create their own way of learning the materials. For example, a student can pick varying ways to present a topic in history. As long as the teacher guides the student through the project: whether it is a paper, presentation, video blog, reenactment, or more traditional poster board project, then it manageable to have students retain the information that needs to be established. If this is not done though, then the student can veer off into multiple directions and therefore missing the main points of the subject material.

Unit One discusses many different ideas regarding how successful a student can be compared to the type of classroom instruction they receive. Some philosophers believe that rote, memorization learning is the best way to express facts to students while others follow a

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Dewey oriented perspective on teaching the student based on what their interests are. It is important to appeal to the interests of the students at the same time as presenting the facts in an acceptable manner. If a balance is obtained between the two then as teachers we can meet the best of both concepts. I do not think that there is a right or wrong way to teach students when it comes to memorization and interesting lessons. It is plausible to balance the two and share both concepts to create a successful student.