



Paideia Seminar Lesson Plan



Text:

My Pedagogic Creed (Article IV) by John Dewey

Grade/Subject

Adult / Community



Ideas, Values:

Action, Education, Emotion, Idea



Pre-Seminar Content



Launch Activity:

Have participants read slide/poster: Imagine you are going to write a blog for your students' parents explaining your "Pedagogic Creed." What would you say? Spend a few minutes brainstorming—refer to pages 2-3 in the *Active Thinking Through Dialogue Seminar Training Manual*, discuss with others, take notes.

Read the dedication page of *The Paideia Proposal*. Then read the second paragraph of page 3. Pass the book around and have volunteers read from the third paragraph on page 3 through the first paragraph on page 5 (this paragraph begins on the bottom of page 4). Reflect on the alignment of Dewey and Adler.

Ask if anyone has read Dewey. In particular, has anyone read "My Pedagogic Creed?" Ask what they know/remember...

Inspectional Read:

Distribute the text and ask participants to anticipate what they expect this reading to be like. Read the text the first time aloud. Underline unfamiliar vocabulary. Label the sections 1-17.

Background Information:

Share that this article by John Dewey is taken from a larger work written in response to a colleague who asked prominent educators to write creeds outlining their beliefs about teaching, and was published in 1897.

Vocabulary:

Ask participants to highlight words, phrases, and sentences of import and interest. Use context clues to clarify meaning of words underlined as unfamiliar.

Analytical Read:

Have participants read slide/poster: Read this excerpt of “My Pedagogic Creed” analytically. Mark text by: 1) putting exclamation points next to 3 sentences that you most strongly react to (either in agreement or disagreement); 2) put a question mark next to at least one point that you are unsure about; 3) if possible, note an example from your life next to at least one point.



Pre-Seminar Process

-  *Define and state purpose for Paideia Seminar.*
-  *Describe the responsibilities of facilitator and participants.*
-  *Have participants set a Personal Goal.*
-  *Agree on a Group Goal.*

Seminar Questions

Opening (Identify main ideas from the text.):

- ❖ Do you agree or disagree with this statement from paragraph 6? “If nine-tenths of the energy at present directed towards making this child learn certain things were spent in seeing to it that the child was forming proper images, the work of instruction would be indefinitely facilitated.”
(vote/round-robin response)
- ❖ Why or why not? (spontaneous discussion)

Core (Analyze textual details.):

- ❖ According to Dewey, what is “consciousness?”
- ❖ What is the relationship between action and thought?
- ❖ What are “arbitrary symbols” according to the text? Why does Dewey discourage their emphasis?
- ❖ Based on this text, what is an image? Why are images so powerful according to Dewey?
- ❖ What do you think Dewey is suggesting about emotion and sentimentality in education?

Closing (Personalize and apply the ideas.):

- ❖ What is worth remembering about Dewey’s philosophy, based on this excerpt and our discussion?

Post-Seminar Process



Have participants do a written self-assessment of their personal participation goal.

 Do a group assessment of the social and intellectual goals of seminar.

 Note reminders for next seminar.



Post-Seminar Content

 *Transition to Writing:*

Have participants take notes to brainstorm ideas that they heard, read, thought during seminar related to their personal Pedagogic Creed (i.e. add to their writing from the *Launch Activity*).

 *Writing Task:*

What is your pedagogic creed? After reading an excerpt from John Dewey's "My Pedagogic Creed," write a blog for your students' parents in which you explain your pedagogic creed. Use at least two quotes from Dewey to support or illustrate your blog.

(LDC Task#: 14)

 *Brainstorm:*

Invite participants to talk in pairs for two minutes to share thoughts about what the writing task is asking.

 *Structure the Writing:*

Allow a few minutes for all to sketch an outline for their writing by listing key points about their philosophy of teaching, and identifying the quotes from the text that they will use in support. Remind participants to use the outlining process to refine their thinking.

First Draft:

Allow time for all to compose their blog based on the outline generated in *Structuring the Writing* above.

Collaborative Revision:

Have participants work in pairs to read their first drafts aloud to each other with emphasis on reader as creator and editor. Listener says back one point heard clearly and asks one question for clarification. Switch roles. Give time for full revisions resulting in a second draft.

Edit:

Once the second draft is complete, have participants work in groups of three-four and this time take turns reading each other's second drafts slowly and silently, marking any spelling or grammar errors they find. (Have dictionaries and grammar resources available.) Give time for full revisions resulting in a third and final draft.

Publish:

Encourage all to complete and share the blog.

This Paideia Lesson Plan was created by:

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"MY PEDAGOGIC CREED" (1897)
John Dewey

ARTICLE IV--The Nature of Method

I believe that the question of method is ultimately reducible to the question of the order of development of the child's powers and interests. The law for presenting and treating material is the law implicit within the child's own nature. Because this is so I believe the following statements are of supreme importance as determining the spirit in which education is carried on:

1. I believe that the active side precedes the passive in the development of the child nature; that expression comes before conscious impression; that the muscular development precedes the sensory; that movements come before conscious sensations; I believe that consciousness is essentially motor or impulsive; that conscious states tend to project themselves in action.

I believe that the neglect of this principle is the cause of a large part of the waste of time and strength in school work. The child is thrown into a passive, receptive, or absorbing attitude. The conditions are such that he is not permitted to follow the law of his nature; the result is friction and waste.

I believe that ideas (intellectual and rational processes) also result from action and devolve for the sake of the better control of action. What we term reason is primarily the law of orderly or effective action. To attempt to develop the reasoning powers, the powers of judgment, without reference to the selection and arrangement of means in action, is the fundamental fallacy in our present methods of dealing with this matter. As a result we present the child with arbitrary symbols. Symbols are a necessity in mental development, but they have their place as tools for economizing effort; presented by themselves they are a mass of meaningless and arbitrary ideas imposed from without.

2. I believe that the image is the great instrument of instruction. What a child gets out of any subject presented to him is simply the images which he himself forms with regard to it.

I believe that if nine tenths of the energy at present directed towards making the child learn certain things, were spent in seeing to it that the child was forming proper images, the work of instruction would be indefinitely facilitated.

I believe that much of the time and attention now given to the preparation and presentation of lessons might be more wisely and profitably expended in training the child's power of imagery and in seeing to it that he was continually forming definite, vivid, and growing images of the various subjects with which he comes in contact in his experience.

3. 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 for the educator.

I believe that these interests are to be observed as showing the state of development which the child has reached.

I believe that they prophesy the stage upon which he is about to enter.

I believe that only through the continual and sympathetic observation of childhood's interests can the adult enter into the child's life and see what it is ready for, and upon what material it could work most readily and fruitfully.

I believe that these interests are neither to be humored nor repressed. To repress interest is to substitute the adult for the child, and so to weaken intellectual curiosity and alertness, to suppress initiative, and to deaden interest. To humor the interests is to substitute the transient for the permanent. 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 interest.

4. I believe that the emotions are the reflex of actions.

I believe that to endeavor to stimulate or arouse the emotions apart from their corresponding activities, is to introduce an unhealthy and morbid state of mind. I believe that if we can only secure right habits of action and thought, with reference to the good, the true, and the beautiful, the emotions will for the most part take care of themselves.

I believe that next to deadness and dullness, formalism and routine, our education is threatened with no greater evil than sentimentalism.

I believe that this sentimentalism is the necessary result of the attempt to divorce feeling from action.

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