

STAGES OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DURING SCHOOL YEARS

Spring 1980
Tuesdays 4:30 to 8:20 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Kieran Egan

Purpose: to examine the process of educational development from first grade to adulthood. We will focus on a range of non-educational, and educational, theories of development in order to build up a relatively complex image of the process of educational development. We will constantly be concerned with the implications for teaching practice which may be derived from the various theories and the data that support them. We will focus on principles and techniques which may be drawn from the theories for engaging children's and students' interest and furthering their educational development at each stage. This course differs from the typical course on "development", in that this one's interests in psychological, psychosocial, conceptual, and intellectual development will be determined by a sense of what they can contribute to knowledge about those phenomena of most direct interest to education. That is, our central interest, and the one which will determine what items are of significance, will be that range of phenomena teachers and parents are concerned with in education: e.g. what kinds of things children and students are most interested in at different ages; what are the dominant categories they use in isolating and deriving meaning from what kinds of knowledge; how best one should organize knowledge for teaching and learning at different stages; what implications follow for the structuring of the curriculum; and so on. The appropriate phenomena of interest are rather more general than those to which psychology has contributed so much during the last half or quarter century.

The course will be divided into three parts. Part I will examine the main psychological or psychosocial theories of development and consider what education may learn from them. The second and main part of the course will be a closed examination of the educational theories available. The final part will be an attempt at a synthesis of the content of the two previous parts.

Part I: Non-educational theories of development and their implications for educational practice.

In this segment we will consider the most prominent developmental theories that yield ideas or data of use to educational practice. Our focus will be on the stages identified in children's and adolescents' psychosocial, psychological, conceptual development. The main purpose of this segment will be to familiarize students with the main theories from outside of education that have influenced educational thinking about students' development. It will serve to introduce, and criticize, the concept of "stage"- and provide a set of concepts about, and means of organizing, some dimensions of human development. We will spend four weeks on this section of the course, and will become familiar with a general characterization of the theories of Erik H. Erikson, Jean Piaget, and Jerome Bruner. One week will be spent on each theorist, during which students will learn the main "stages" of each of their models and consider what implications follow for educational practice. The fourth week will involve a general examination of the revisions and refinements of these theories that have resulted from recent empirical testing, and the implications of these for educational practice.

Part II: Theories of educational development and principles of teaching and learning derivable from them.

In this segment we will look in detail at the main theories of educational development available. Our focus will be on what stages each theory identifies, and what kinds of knowledge and skills each considers appropriate for those stages. We will consider the curriculum implications of these theories in some detail - looking both at the kinds of curricula suggested by their formulators and at the kinds of curricula we would build, based on these theories. Six weeks will be spent on learning and clarifying the theories of Plato, Rousseau, Whitehead, and possibly Dewey and deriving from them principles for teaching, learning, and organizing curricula for students at various stages of their educational development.

It perhaps needs stressing that this will not be an historical survey. History has to do with sequences of causal connections. We will not be concerned with what happened as a result of, for example, Plato's theory of educational development. Rather we will be concerned with what we can now do with it.

Part III: Synthesis

The final three weeks of the course will be spent on elaborating our image of the normal process of educational development. (We will draw on ideas and data from both of the previous segments to do this). Our primary purpose will be to derive principles for teaching and learning appropriate for each stage of children's and adolescents' development. We will be concerned also with other than normal development and the implications of uneven progress through stages.

Bibliography:

Part I - An exhaustive bibliography of material relevant to these topics would be enormously long. The main items that will be recommended for the course will include:

- Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society, 2nd Edition (New York: Norton, 1963).
- Jean Piaget, The Child's Conception of the World, (1929, rpt. New York: Littlefield, Adams, 1967).
- Jean Piaget, Six Psychological Studies (1964, rpt. New York: Vintage, 1968).
- Jerome Bruner, Towards a Theory of Instruction (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1966).
- Jerome Bruner, "The Course of Cognitive Growth", American Psychologist, 19, January, 1964, pp. 1-15.
- Herbert J. Klausmeier, Elizabeth Schwenn Ghatala, Dorothy A. Frayer, Conceptual Learning and Development (New York: Academic Press, 1974).
- David P. Ausubel, Edmund V. Sullivan, Theory and Problems of Child Development, 2nd Edition (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1970).
- Theodore Mischel, Cognitive Development and Epistemology (New York: Academic Press, 1971).
- John Sants and H.J. Butcher (eds), Developmental Psychology (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975).
- J. H. Flavell, Cognitive Development, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976).

Part II:

Plato, The Republic, The Laws, Protagoras.

The Emile of J.J. Rousseau (Selections), trans. and ed. William Boyd (New York: Teachers College Press, 1968).

A.N. Whitehead, The Aims of Education 1929 (rpt. New York: Free Press, 1976).

John Dewey, Democracy and Education, 1916, (rpt. New York: Free Press, 1966).

Part III:

K. Egan, Educational Development (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979)

Note on library holdings:

The main texts for the course - Plato, Rousseau, Whitehead, Dewey, and also Erikson, Piaget, Bruner - are held in multiple copies by the library. We have, of course, much more extensive holdings in both texts and journals for Part I than for the more central part of the course. (This is a result of historical factors peculiar to North America). The library support for Part II of the course, however, is adequate given the manner in which the course is to be taught. The primary need is for the basic texts - and these are all available in multiple copies, (except the Whitehead, which can be made available in photocopy, if necessary). Particular articles of use for criticizing and elaborating the text can be culled from a very wide range of education journals. (By the time the course is first offered I expect to have available a course text - Theories of Child and Adolescent Development for Education - which follows precisely the outline of the course).