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# Education for Self-Control

## Some Similarities Between Dewey's *Experience and Education* and Locke's Theory of Rational Agency

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***Abstract*** One of the themes that runs through Dewey's *Experience and Education* is an argument to the effect that education aims at self-control. The details of this argument reveal close affinity between Dewey's philosophy of education and the ideals of the Enlightenment. They are also strikingly similar to John Locke's thoughts about freedom and education published in the seventeenth century. Comparison of their texts shows that Dewey and Locke worked with similar distinctions between positive and negative freedom. They both saw freedom and guidance as compatible, and conceived of self-control as dependent on autonomy-friendly habits instilled through education.

***Keywords*** Dewey, Locke, self-control, freedom, education, the Enlightenment

## INTRODUCTION

*Experience and Education*, published in 1938, was John Dewey's last major work on the philosophy of education. It is a very concise book and several different themes run through all the chapters. It can be read as an answer to criticisms of Dewey's earlier works on education. It can also be read as an attempt to go beyond what was seen as the opposition between progressive and traditional schooling. A third possible approach to the text is to see it as mainly an argument to the effect that, to improve schooling, we need scientific and philosophical understanding of

educative experience and how it differs from less-educative, or even miseducative experiences.

In what follows, I shall highlight a different argument that runs through the whole text: Dewey's view that education aims at self-control. I will also argue that what Dewey says about education for self-control is strikingly similar to the unifying motif of John Locke's works on freedom and education that were published in the last decade of the seventeenth century. These two philosophers both maintained that education involves guidance and control that ultimately prepares the pupil for autonomy and freedom.

According to the index to the collected works of Dewey,[1] the concept of self-control occurs in three of his other works in addition to *Experience and Education*. In only one of these works, the "Educational Lectures before Brigham Young Academy" that were originally delivered in 1901, is the concept connected to teaching and learning in schools. Therefore there are only two works from Dewey's vast corpus where the term "self-control" is used to say something substantial about education. Additionally, there are several remarks about self-restraint, self-direction, self-management, and self-control in *The Dewey School* (1936), written by two teachers in Dewey's experimental laboratory school which was housed at the University of Chicago from 1896 to 1903. Dewey himself wrote the introduction to this book, and there he praised its thorough account of the theory and practice of the school. In one of the examples of good schoolwork that the authors discuss, they say that when a question formulated by the student "was his own question," then he "needed no prod or spur." Therefore, the discipline in the school was self-discipline and "it resulted in self-control."[2]

Before I review what Dewey wrote about self-control in *Experience and Education*, it is worth quoting the 1901 lecture. There he tells a story about a class of schoolchildren who lacked self-control:

> There is a good deal of school discipline which is simply a scheme for relieving children of responsibility; and when I see teachers promoted because of mistaken admiration for such school government, I think that the public money is paid to men for carrying the entire burden of the school themselves and leaving the children barbarians and savages—unable to face any responsibility of life when it comes. One of the teachers in Boston had been thus promoted and her discipline was the pride of the town. When she fell sick, they had to put a substitute teacher in her place. She stayed there one day, then said she would beg to be excused from that place. They used up a teacher a day for two weeks, until this teacher could get back to those children. She had the government, but the children had not. When the pressure had been taken off, the children, not having undergone self-discipline, found themselves and all about them at sea. We need not assume, therefore, that

> will-training means that children must do just as they please in order to gain the power of initiative or self-control. It means the giving of freedom up to the limit of the responsibility that children are able to assume. We have no more right to burden them with too much liberty than to take it all away.[3]

This story ends with an admonition to grant children the right amount of liberty. The point of the story is that if children are relieved of all responsibility through discipline and control from above, they then become capricious. I take it that the children "used up a teacher a day for two weeks" because they were erratic. It seems implicit that these children's bad behavior was guided neither by their own desires nor by anything like an agreement or resolution. They simply lacked the ability to frame and actualize rational purposes.

## SELF-CONTROL IN *EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION*

In *Experience and Education*, published thirty-seven years later, Dewey elaborated upon the key elements of this story. In the first chapter of the book, entitled "Traditional vs. Progressive Education," he argued, as he did in many other works, against dualistic thinking and said that we should not see freedom and guidance as opposites. He refused to choose between freedom without guidance and guidance without freedom and maintained, as he did in 1901, that children needed the right amount of liberty. The next two chapters are entitled "The Need of a Theory of Experience," and "Criteria of Experience." At first glance, they seem to be primarily about experience rather than about self-control. Nevertheless, in the beginning of the second chapter, Dewey contended that miseducative experiences excluded self-control and that self-control required habituation.

In the third chapter, Dewey pointed out that "[e]very experience is a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into."[4] In what follows, he asked "whether freedom is to be thought of and adjudged on the basis of relatively momentary incidents or whether its meaning is found in the continuity of developing experience."[5] The text hints at the possibility that freedom in the long run may need periods of guidance and control.

The middle chapters of *Experience and Education* are explicitly about freedom and control. The main argument of chapter 4, entitled "Social Control," is that under many ordinary circumstances, social control "is not felt to involve restriction of personal freedom."[6] In support of this, Dewey mentioned games that children play and pointed out that without rules there would be no game. That does not curtail the freedom of the players; on the contrary, the rules make it possible for them to

play. He extended this to work and to education in "the new schools," where "the primary source of social control resides in the very nature of the work done."[7] He did not think, however, that control inherent to tasks and learning activities would relieve the teachers of their duties to provide guidance, set limits to the freedom of the children, and "arrange conditions that are conducive . . . to organization which exercises control over individual impulses."[8]

In chapter 5, entitled "The Nature of Freedom," Dewey made a distinction between negative and positive liberty. In this chapter, he described the positive aspect of freedom as paramount and maintained that

> freedom from restriction, the negative side, is to be prized only as a means to a freedom which is power: power to frame purposes, to judge wisely, to evaluate desires by the consequences which will result from acting upon them; power to select and order means to carry chosen ends into operation.[9]

In the beginning of the sixth chapter, entitled "The Meaning of Purpose," Dewey added that it is "a sound instinct which identifies freedom with power to frame purposes and to execute or carry into effect purposes so framed. Such freedom is in turn identical with self-control."[10] In the preceding paragraph, the last one of chapter 5, he says: "The ideal aim of education is creation of power of self-control."[11] So he said not only that self-control was the ideal aim of education, but that it was identical to freedom. It follows from this that freedom is the ideal aim of education. Granted that education requires guidance and proper limits to liberty, it also seems to follow that to make children free, their liberty needs to be limited. This may seem paradoxical, but keeping in mind the two distinctions that Dewey made—on the one hand, between two types of freedom, and on the other hand, between momentary incidents and freedom in the long run—we can see that he did not contradict himself. Controlling what children do today may enhance their freedom in the future, and guidance may enhance their abilities to form purposes and act upon them. In the last paragraph of the fifth chapter, Dewey described the complex relation between freedom and guidance where he said that "the mere removal of external control is no guarantee for the production of self-control,"[12] and added that those who were controlled by impulses were as unfree as those who lived under the control of other persons.

In the final chapters, entitled "Progressive Organization of Subject Matter" and "Experience—The Means and Goal of Education," Dewey reiterated that education enabled people to form purposes and to do so rationally. He also made it clear that this applied to education overall, not only to some modern educational policies like the ones that were labeled "progressive education" in the first decades of the twentieth century. In the very last paragraph of *Experience and Education*, he concluded

“that the fundamental issue is not of new versus old education nor of progressive against traditional education but a question of what anything whatever must be to be worthy of the name education.”[13]

If the above interpretation is right, then Dewey thought of education as involving guidance that enhanced positive freedom—which, in his view, was identical to self-control.

## LOCKE, DEWEY, AND POSITIVE FREEDOM

In *Experience and Education*, Dewey did not explicitly draw upon works by other philosophers. The book contains neither citations nor a list of references. Therefore, we cannot tell with any certainty to what extent the cursorily drawn distinction between negative and positive freedom was meant to be the same as analogous distinctions drawn by other philosophers from Spinoza and Locke, through Hegel, to Dewey’s contemporaries. In *Freedom and Culture*—a work published in 1939, the year after *Experience and Education* came out—Dewey mentioned a “European tradition of seeing freedom as rationality, being governed by the dictates of reason rather than the promptings of appetite.”[14] In his earlier years Dewey was a Hegelian,[15] and this European tradition he mentioned may very well be nineteenth-century Hegelian idealism with its emphasis on freedom as rationality or the ability to be guided by reason.

Dewey’s distinction is also reminiscent of what Spinoza said about human bondage and freedom in the fourth and fifth books of his *Ethics*, originally published in 1677, where he drew a distinction between the absence of external constraint and human freedom, maintaining that “a man at the mercy of his emotions is not his own master,”[16] and that freedom depends on “the degree of control reason has over the emotions.”[17] After Spinoza, other philosophers on the European continent—such as Leibniz[18] and Rousseau[19]—made similar distinctions between different types of freedom long before Hegel. The text of *Experience and Education* does not, however, reveal any obvious influences from the works of any of the four continental philosophers I have mentioned.

If I had to name historical works of philosophy that conceptualized the relation between education and freedom in much the same way as Dewey did in *Experience and Education*, I would choose two works by Locke: the chapter entitled “Of the Idea of Power” (chapter 21 of the second book) in the second and subsequent editions of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*,[20] and *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*.[21] In the former, Locke argued for a distinction between two types of freedom where the more important type was self-control. In the latter, he described

a course of education where children were guided by adults in order to acquire self-control.

In the beginning of the chapter "Of the Idea of Power," Locke defined liberty, saying that persons were free insofar as they had the power to move or not to move, according to the preferences of their own minds. A little later in the text he questioned whether freedom so defined sufficed to make man truly free "if he be not as *free to will* as he is to *act what he wills.*"[22] In what follows, he expounded a theory about volition and rational agency that was not in the first edition of his *Essay*. Gideon Yaffe has written a thorough account of how this longest chapter of the *Essay* changed from the first to the second and subsequent editions.[23] In what follows, I draw upon Yaffe's interpretation where he argues that Locke took fully fledged free agency to require actions to depend on the agents' choices, and their choices to depend on sound knowledge and rational deliberation. I am also inspired by Antonia LoLordo's exegeses in which she underscores how Locke understood self-control to rely on training and education.[24]

According to Locke's theory about volition and agency, the will is determined by "some (and for the most part the most pressing) *uneasiness* a man is at present under."[25] Locke explained this notion of uneasiness as including pain of the body, disquiet of the mind, and all desires. Thus, on his account, reason can only guide our actions by modifying what desire or uneasiness is most pressing. The ability to stop and think, instead of being driven headlong without deliberation by some uneasiness, Locke denominated as "a second perfection" and said that it constituted what was commonly called free will. His two types of freedom were thus:

(a) Liberty: An ability to do what one wants to do, for example, to move or not to move, according to the preferences of one's own mind.
(b) The second perfection: An ability to suspend action while we reflect on our preferences and modify them.

His main point was that our initial preferences are always determined by some uneasiness, and if we do not have the second perfection, and are therefore unable to modify our uneasiness through rational deliberation, then liberty is not of much worth.

> This is so far from being a restraint or diminution of freedom, that it is the very improvement and benefit of it; it is not an abridgement, it is the end and use of our liberty; and the further we are removed from such a determination, the nearer we are to misery and slavery. [. . .] It is as much a perfection, that desire, or the power of preferring, should be determined by good, as that the power of acting should

> be determined by the will; and the certainer such determination is, the greater is the perfection.[26]

Locke described this second perfection as dependent on autonomy-friendly habits that were acquired through education. Such habituation does not bring us beyond the human condition; we are still controlled by uneasiness. The difference between those who are better educated and those who have been less well educated is that the former can stop and think about how beneficial each course of action is, and this creates a new uneasiness that makes them prefer what is better. In other words, true freedom involves the ability to be guided by sound knowledge and rational deliberation, whereas those who have only liberty, but lack the second perfection, are subject to caprice and impulsive behavior.

Some of the things Dewey says in the fifth chapter of *Experience and Education* are strikingly similar to parts of Locke's chapter "Of the Idea of Power." We find the same emphasis on the importance of being able to stop and think.

> The old phrase "Stop and think" is sound psychology. For thinking is stoppage of the immediate manifestation of impulse until that impulse has been brought into connection with other possible tendencies to action so that a more comprehensive and coherent plan of activity is formed. . . . Thinking is thus a postponement of immediate action, while it effects internal control of impulse through a union of observation and memory, this union being the heart of reflection.[27]

Like Locke, Dewey saw the ability to suspend action as closely tied to education and, moreover, as all important.

> The crucial educational problem is that of procuring the postponement of immediate action upon desire until observation and judgment have intervened . . . there is no purpose unless overt action is postponed until there is foresight of the consequences of carrying the impulse into execution—a foresight that is impossible without observation, information, and judgment.[28]

The two philosophers also agree that liberty is worthless without self-control. Locke says that the second perfection makes freedom worth the name and that without it, mere liberty is not true freedom but madness.[29] Dewey concurs, although he does not use terms quite as strong:

> It may be a loss rather than a gain to escape from the control of another person only to find one's conduct dictated by immediate whim and caprice; that is, at the mercy

> of impulses into whose formation intelligent judgment has not entered. A person whose conduct is controlled in this way has at most only the illusion of freedom.[30]

Furthermore, both Locke and Dewey saw self-control as dependent on habituation; and in the seventh chapter of *Experience and Education*, Dewey said that "there is nothing in the inherent nature of habit that prevents intelligent method from becoming itself habitual; and there is nothing in the nature of emotion to prevent the development of intense emotional allegiance to the method."[31]

In my view the most plausible explanation of these similarities is that Dewey had read Locke. One of his early works, published in 1888, was a book-length exegesis of Leibniz's chapter-by-chapter commentary on Locke's *Essay*. There Dewey mentioned Locke's notion of uneasiness and his analysis of free agency.[32] In this early work Dewey did not, however, endorse Locke's view; but as Sidney Ratner has argued, he had a more favorable view of Locke's philosophy when he published his only paper on Locke in 1926.[33] That paper contains a quotation from the chapter "Of the Idea of Power."[34] In *Experience and Nature*, from 1925, there are also some brief remarks indicating that Dewey studied the *Essay*.[35]

So far, I have focused on the similarities between Locke's second perfection and Dewey's power of self-control. In the texts under discussion, neither of them wrote about free will or free agency as something that all people have no matter what. They both thought of people as being subject to impulsive behavior and lack of self-control. They also both described rational agency as a type of freedom and, simultaneously, as a human perfection that can be improved through education. There are, however, also differences. Although he said that a "purpose always starts with an impulse,"[36] and what he called "impulse" is somewhat like that which Locke called "uneasiness," Dewey did have a different and more sophisticated theory of action. His most detailed account of human agency and moral psychology is in *Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology*, originally published in 1922. There he described our actions as governed by an interplay of three types of causes which he called impulses, habits, and intelligence. The first is possibly similar to Locke's uneasiness, but nothing in Locke's texts corresponds to habits as Dewey described them. According to Dewey, habits "create out of the formless void of impulses a world made in their own image. Man is a creature of habit, not of reason nor yet of instinct."[37] This emphasis on habit is closely connected to Dewey's communitarian conception of the self as dependent on social interaction, and "always in the process of becoming," as Jeff Frank says in a recent book about *Experience and Education*.[38]

For Dewey, the ability to stop and think not only enabled us to avoid the tyranny of irrational impulses—what Locke described as uneasiness—but he also thought

of it as enabling us to modify our habits. In *Human Nature and Conduct,* he said that this was more difficult than to modify our instincts, as "it is precisely custom which has greatest inertia, which is least susceptible of alteration; while instincts are most readily modifiable."[39] This is not saying that Dewey thought we could order our affairs without habits. Just as Locke took it to be impossible to escape from the domination of uneasiness, Dewey saw impulses and habits as essential to the human condition. Locke thought that reasoning and deliberation were effective through modification of what makes us uneasy. Likewise, Dewey saw intelligence as an ability to modify both impulses and habits and argued that to view "all conventions as slaveries, is to deny the only means by which positive freedom in action can be secured."[40]

## EDUCATION FOR FREEDOM AND THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

In the first chapter of *Experience and Education,* Dewey granted that progressive schooling "emphasizes the freedom of the learner."[41] As I pointed out in the first part of this paper, he also argued that the liberty of children should be limited, and that they needed the guidance of their teachers who were responsible for planning and organizing their schoolwork and giving them the right amount of freedom. Discussing this, he used terms such as "control over individual impulses."[42] Some have read this as a new emphasis on adult control different from the advocacy of progressive schooling in Dewey's earlier works on education. This emphasis was, however, not new. It is evident from the quotation from his "Educational Lectures before Brigham Young Academy" at the beginning of this paper that, already in 1901, Dewey spoke for allowing children the right amount of freedom, neither too much nor too little. When he wrote *Experience and Education,* he had thought for a long time that teachers ought to have control over schoolwork. In *Democracy and Education*, published twenty-two years earlier in 1916, he argued for teachers' control over their own workplace and set forth reasons to think that to help children develop as free agents, the teachers themselves needed to be masters of their own affairs.[43]

If we conceive of freedom as the absence of control or guidance by other persons—that is, as exclusively negative—then *Experience and Education* may appear to advocate control at the expense of freedom. The same applies to the advice Locke gave to parents and educators in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. Some, like Joseph Carrig[44] and Joel Spring,[45] for instance, have seen Locke's philosophy of education as authoritarian and not concerned with freedom at all. This view has been supported by quoting texts where he says that the mind of the child should be "made obedient to Discipline, and pliant to Reason,"[46] and that a child who "is not used

to submit his Will to the Reason of others, *when* he is *young*, will scarce hearken to submit to his own Reason, when he is of an Age to make use of it."[47]

Rita Koganzon has reviewed the literature on Locke's educational philosophy and argued that those who read him as disciplinarian do not appreciate his sophisticated notion of free agency and rational self-control.[48] Hina Nazar[49] and the author of this paper[50] support the same conclusion, arguing that—on Locke's account—guidance does not exclude freedom. On the contrary, children do not become truly free unless their elders help them to cultivate autonomy-friendly habits. Other commentators, who read *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* in the light of Locke's theory about rational agency in the *Essay*, support the same conclusion: namely, that Locke wanted to give children the right amount of liberty so that they could acquire the type of freedom that he called a second perfection. Nathan Tarcov, for instance, points out that controlling the child the way Locke proposed can "prepare for autonomous rational self-control."[51] In the final pages of his book on Locke's philosophy of education, he concludes that liberty requires the self-control and rationality Locke wanted to instill through his program of education.[52] Ultimately, Locke wanted our conduct to be determined not only by our own desires, but by desires that were guided by our own judgment.

Both Locke and Dewey distinguished between reasonable guidance and unreasonable adult imposition, and both refused to see freedom and guidance as incompatible. They also both thought that freedom was not only absence of constraint or control by other persons, but that to be truly free, people also needed self-control that could only be acquired through habituation and guidance. Arguably, both thought that the right amount of negative freedom was more extensive than most school children enjoyed. Although they wanted to limit the liberty of children, they seem to have wanted to limit it less than was then customary.

Dewey advocated consulting with students about what they should learn and for what purposes. In chapter 6 of *Experience and Education*, he says that lack of such consultation is the greatest defect of traditional schooling.[53] Here as elsewhere, he refused to think in either-or terms and, later in the same chapter, he added that we should not "pass lightly over the need for careful observation, for wide range of information, and for judgment if students are to share in the formation of the purposes which activate them."[54] Likewise, Locke suggested engaging children in discussion and deliberation, and he saw reasoning with them as a pedagogical device combining guidance and respect for their rational agency.

> It will perhaps be wondered that I mention *Reasoning* with Children: And yet I cannot but think that the true Way of Dealing with them. They understand it as early as they do Language; and, if I misobserve not, they love to be treated as Rational

> Creatures sooner than is imagined. 'Tis a Pride should be cherished in them, and as much as can be, made the great Instrument to turn them by.[55]

R. S. Peters, the English philosopher of education, described the fact that young people "enter the palace of Reason through the courtyard of Habit and Tradition" as the paradox of moral education.[56] From some points of view, autonomy and habituation may seem incompatible, and from the same viewpoints, freedom and guidance may appear as opposites. One of the things that Locke and Dewey had in common was that they both saw freedom and guidance as compatible and complementary.

## RATIONAL SELF-CONTROL AS AN OVERARCHING AIM OF EDUCATION

In the very beginning of *Experience and Education*, Dewey warned against one-sided views of what education is and what it is for. Although much of the text can be read as an argument for self-control, or freedom, as the overarching aim of education, Dewey did not say that this should push other aims aside. As David Wong has argued, he thought that it was sometimes good to allow oneself to be passive, receptive, subjective, and emotional and that he, therefore, saw reasons to warn against excessive emphases on rationality and self-control.[57] Neither does Locke maintain that self-control was the singular aim of teaching and learning. Probably he realized, as Dewey did, that educational purposes are multifarious. These reservations notwithstanding, it is noteworthy that Dewey described growth in judgment and understanding as "essentially growth in ability to form purposes and to select and arrange means for their realization."[58] It is also noteworthy how much is encompassed by self-control as an overarching aim of education.

If people have self-control, then what they do is determined by what they intend or decide. This basic self-control fails if we, say, resolve to eat only healthy food but yield to a desire for candy, throw a tantrum after deciding to keep calm, or spend the day playing a computer game although we sincerely intended to finish reading a textbook before the exam tomorrow. As argued by scholars such as Richard Holton[59] and myself,[60] the concept of self-control involves more than the ability that Dewey described as the power to execute or carry into effect the purposes we have framed. It also includes, as Dewey said, the ability to frame purposes and do so intelligently.[61] Borrowing Locke's terminology, we can say that if our purposes or decisions are "determined by anything but the last result of our own minds, judging of the good or evil of any action"[62] then we have less than perfect self-control. Dewey expressed the same view, saying we were then "at the mercy of impulses into whose

formation intelligent judgment has not entered."[63] Self-control thus involves different abilities: one is to execute our decisions, and another is to adjust our decisions to what we believe is the best course of action. These two abilities, however, do not suffice. Self-control also requires our beliefs to be guided by available knowledge and sound reasons rather than, say, unexamined habits, irrational impulses, or social pressures. This third aspect of self-control calls for extensive learning and a wide range of abilities to criticize knowledge claims, to distinguish between trustworthy information and propaganda, and to deliberate about what is to be sought and what is to be avoided.

These three types of abilities constitute individual self-control. We can also conceive of collective self-control, that is, the abilities of groups or societies to reason about their affairs and act on their decisions. Dewey did not discuss such collective self-control in *Experience and Education*, but in *Freedom and Culture* he wrote about "the ideals of self-governing communities," indicating that self-government or self-control is something people can have as a group.[64] If we think of self-control as simultaneously a perfection of individuals and of collectives, then education that enables people to acquire the knowledge and understanding that enable their communities to make well-informed and judicious decisions becomes education for self-control. In the 1939 publication *Freedom and Culture*, Dewey emphasized that a democratic society needed education, and that science and learning were necessary for collective self-control. He warned against thinking that democratic conditions maintained themselves automatically, and argued that these conditions required a community of beliefs based on scientific rationality. This, he said, does not come easily since people tend to be dogmatic and believe what they want to believe, while "the future of democracy is allied with spread of the scientific attitude. It is the sole guarantee against wholesale misleading by propaganda."[65]

Many commentators have seen Dewey's proposals about the content of school education as rather traditional, emphasizing academic learning that aims at scientific rationality, wide ranging knowledge, and deep understanding of nature and society.[66] If we think of freedom as self-control that includes the ability to form intelligent purposes, then it should not come as a surprise that a thinker who saw freedom as the overarching aim of education endorsed curricula that included academic subjects. This is what Dewey did in the seventh chapter of *Experience and Education*, where he said that "it is impossible to obtain an understanding of present social forces (without which they cannot be mastered and directed) apart from an education which leads learners into knowledge of the very same facts and principles which in their final organization constitute the sciences."[67] As Piet van der Ploeg has pointed out, Dewey did not think of education for citizenship as something different and separate from education in subjects such as arithmetic, languages, geography, and history.[68]

It does not follow from what Dewey said about the content of education that he endorsed traditional schooling or rejected the progressivism that he advocated in his earlier works on education. In *Experience and Education*, he described the old school with epithets such as "artificial"[69] and "autocratic,"[70] and spoke of it as "imposition from above" with "brutal features."[71] While acknowledging that progressive schools needed to do better in "selection and organization of intellectual subject matter," he insisted that "they should break loose from the cut and dried material which formed the staple of the old education."[72] In his view, a progressive curriculum was rich in academic content.

Locke also saw education for self-control both as more engaging and entertaining than traditional schooling, and as encompassing academic subjects.[73] In his book about education, he described a course of study for children that included reading, writing, mathematics, natural and social sciences, geography, history, a modern foreign language, and ethics. However, he did not think that children should only learn from books, as his proposed curriculum also had room for dance, agriculture, carpentry, and drawing.[74]

In his book about progressive education, John Howlett says that Locke was one of the most important precursors of progressive education.[75] Likewise, Gregory Lewis Bynum has pointed out that the educational philosophies of Locke and Dewey share progressive conceptions of childhood and education.[76] Hilary Putnam has also argued that Dewey should be read as an Enlightenment thinker.[77] Howlett, Bynum, and Putnam are right in placing Locke and Dewey in the same camp, because as philosophers of education they do have much in common.

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