AN EVALUATION OF SOME CURRICULUM PRINCIPLES IN

TERMS OF CERTAIN BASIC PHILOSOPHIC

CONCEPTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Certain philosophic concepts have, from time to time, been influential in determining the nature and scope of the curricula used in the public schools of the United States. Some of these philosophies have been more or less passing obsessions that have produced a momentary imprint upon the educational practices of the schools and then have come into disrepute, while the influences they temporarily exerted have faded out of the curricula, to be superseded by others of another nature or intent. Other philosophies, however, have succeeded in maintaining their influence and have long continued to play significant roles in the fashioning of educational practices. Some of these more important concepts are to form the basis of the present study.

The writer's problem as reported in this thesis is to make an analysis of certain curriculum principles in terms of selected basic philosophic concepts. For this purpose she chose to evaluate the curriculum principles set forth in a new and significant book, The Child and His Curriculum, by J. Murray Lee and Dorris May Lee. This particular work
was selected because of the wealth of curriculum principles that it contains, because of its comprehensive treatment of the relationship between the pupil and the curriculum, and because of the widespread recognition that has been accorded it since its publication early in the present year.

The basis of evaluation is to be five basic philosophic concepts: pragmatism, instrumentalism, humanism, rationalism, and idealism. A separate chapter is to be devoted to each of these philosophies, organized in the sequence named, although this arrangement is more or less arbitrary, since only the first three philosophies listed above are closely related and interlocking in principle. At the beginning of each chapter the philosophy to be discussed is defined briefly by means of a survey of some of its fundamental concepts as outlined in the literature on the subject; and in the same manner the educational implications of the philosophy are intimated. Then, following the definition of the philosophy, a number of curriculum principles from The Child and His Curriculum are analyzed in terms of the particular philosophic concept being considered at the time. This procedure is employed in connection with each of the five philosophies.

The final chapter of the study consists of a brief summary of the findings, along with certain generalized conclusions growing out of the investigation.
CHAPTER II

PRAGMATISM

Fundamental Concepts

The philosophy known as pragmatism has exerted a greater influence upon American education than has any other philosophic concept. It is regarded by educators as the typically American philosophy.¹ One writer has asserted that "... the interpretation of pragmatism, as the leading empirical philosophy in the American democracy, in either a more naturalistic and relativistic or a more idealistic sense, is of greatest bearing on both modern education and the future of democratic civilization."² This philosophy has been called "radical empiricism," and places primary emphasis upon the value of activity and experience in situations that are fraught with possibilities for learning. It is merely a method, and does not imply any definite results. William James, often considered the author of the pragmatic concept, declared that pragmatism means "an attitude of orientation" -- an attitude of "looking away from first things, principles,


and categories that are usually supposed to be necessities, and looking toward last things, fruits, consequences, facts.  

Pragmatism makes all learning incidental. The world of practice is the complete reality. "Practice" is understood to mean the control of experience; hence the "practical" is whatever serves, either directly or indirectly, to control events and outcomes. Although human thinking is always personal and individual, the thinking that leads to truth is universal, and is the same for all persons. Because of its universality, such thinking is objective in nature and possesses the traits of reality. Pragmatism is

an attitude and a habit of thought -- a habit of looking forward to results rather than backward to first principles. Everything is to be judged by its fruits, by its consequences. Thus it follows that any idea, theory, or dispute which does not make a difference in its practical consequences for us ceases at once to have any significance. All these are simply dropped; they cannot be tested.

The fundamental principles of pragmatism are grounded in the contention that the theories that work are true. This concept is quite different from the statement that true theories work, for in the former instance, practicability constitutes the very nature of truth, whereas in the latter case it is only one of the tests of truth. Almost anyone is

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3Ibid., p. 104.


5George T. W. Patrick, Introduction to Philosophy, p. 366.
willing to admit that true theories work sooner or later, but not everyone is willing to concede that any working theory is true. The latter view implies that truth is not eternal, but that what constitutes truth today may constitute a falsehood tomorrow. This changeable nature of truth is one of the high points in the philosophy of pragmatism. William James himself declared, in connection with this thought: "Truth is made, just as health, wealth, and strength are made, in the course of experience."\(^6\)

Pragmatism subordinates thinking to practice. In the pragmatic conception, knowing is the prelude to doing, and thought is secondary to action. "Cognition in itself is incomplete until discharged in act."\(^7\) Pragmatism, however, insists upon

the essentially practical character of all knowledge, to the extent even of confining knowledge altogether to this instrumental value, and so of eliminating the concept of an Absolute, and reducing reality to the flow of experience as such.\(^8\)

Knowledge is continuous in its connections with activities that modify the environment, and knowledge that does not function is no knowledge at all:

\[\ldots\] knowledge in its strict sense of something possessed consists of our intellectual resources -- of all the habits that render our action intelligent.\(^9\)

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\(^7\)Ruskin, p. 80.

Only that which has been organized into our disposition so as to enable us to adapt the environment to our needs and to adapt our aims and desires to the situation in which we live is really knowledge.\(^9\)

The pragmatist believes that knowledge is something which is wrought out in action. Before it is used, it is merely information:

> Information becomes knowledge when it is judged to be relevant to the solution of a particular problem, and that judgment is tested in the crucible of experience. . . . knowledge does not antedate learning but is forged as the pupil and teacher adapt means to ends as their project develops.\(^{10}\)

Pragmatism places emphasis upon knowledge as the controlling factor in any given situation. Communicated information does not become knowledge until it is used practically.\(^{11}\)

Knowledge is not just something which we are now conscious of, but consists of the dispositions we consciously use in understanding what now happens. Knowledge as an act is bringing some of our dispositions to consciousness with a view to straightening out a perplexity, by conceiving the connection between ourselves and the world in which we live.\(^{12}\)

Reason does not produce facts, but only organizes and classifies them into usable patterns. Pragmatism tries to interpret each idea and notion by tracing its representative and respective practical consequences. Each word and term must be given a practical-value interpretation and set to

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12 Dewey, p. 400.
work within the stream of personal experiences. Incentives to learning must be provided by practical activities.

The pragmatist is not particularly interested in the universe or in the physical, cosmic world, since it is the human world, the social world, the industrial world, the world of human affairs, which holds his attention. The world is in the making, and he wants to know how to make it better, that it may subservise his interests and his welfare.

Pragmatism, in its devotion to "the world of human affairs," advocates the truly American doctrine of co-operation, believing that, "as individual members of a pluralistic universe," people must recognize that even though they may personally contribute their best effort to an undertaking, the project will not necessarily be successful unless the good will and co-operation of others are enthusiastically proffered in support of the endeavor.

The pragmatic method insists that "for the pupil's full understanding of a principle he should see it in its application to facts, he should see it actually 'tried out.'" The so-called "purposeful act" has four steps: purposing, planning, executing, and judging, all of which are essential to fruitful effort. The distinctive merit that resides in these four procedures is that "the child is driven to

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13 Ulrich, p. 105.  
14 Rusk, p. 93.  
15 Patrick, p. 363.  
16 Curti, p. 454.  
17 Rusk, p. 83.
persevere by values which he himself sees and voluntarily accepts as his own. 18 In keeping with the above-mentioned elements constituting the "purposeful act," pragmatism has been defined as a "philosophy of action, doing, experimenting, achieving, overcoming." In the pragmatist's conception, the world is not "ready-made, perfect, beautiful, something to be enjoyed, contemplated, or worshiped; he thinks of it as a world to be made, or made over--remodeled to his desires and wishes." 19

The progressive's or pragmatist's theory of value not only lends importance to the role of interest in learning, but it also adds significance to several aspects of educational aims. Most readily deducible is the fact that the progressive has no fixed aims or values in advance. Educational aims, no matter how well authenticated by the past, are not to be projected indefinitely into the future. In a world rendered precarious and contingent by a compounding of the novel and the customary, educational aims must be held subject to revision as one advances into the future. If education has any general aim in the light of which these successive revisions can take place, it is only that of pupil growth. But growth itself has no end beyond further growth. In other words, education is its own end. Progressive education is not progressive because it is making a steady advance toward some definite goal but because it is growing in whatever direction a novelty emerging future renders most feasible. 20

Although pragmatism approaches value and truth in terms of the concrete experiences of some individual, it does not overlook the total range of all human experiences. The pragmatist ranks social intercourse very highly, and to him society itself is a mode of shared experiences. Participation

18 Brubacher, p. 328.  
19 Patrick, p. 362.  
20 Brubacher, p. 329.
in society is one of the most important ways in which education takes place. The freer and more unimpeded are the opportunities for sharing and participation, the more democratic is the society, and certainly the greater is the educational opportunity, for "... the free flow of social intercourse makes more experience available for judging what is true and good in the individual's experience."\(^{21}\)

In all his experiences with his fellows, intimates Dewey, man seeks certainty. Where can true certainty be found? It can be found in such an adjustment between the organism and the environment in which the organism finds itself as will lead to the most satisfactory adjustment between the exigencies, possibilities, and limitations of nature, on the one hand, and man's social life, on the other. What is the way to certainty? It is knowledge. But what is knowledge? It is experience. True experience, and consequently true knowledge, is functional. Its function consists in devising means, or tools, or instruments, with the help of which we can meet situations demanding adjustments and solve problems as they arise. In other words, knowledge or experience is functional as to its origin, its purpose, and the process of its growth. The final goal of its function is the reconstruction of society in the sense of betterment or "amelioration." Consequently, "social" is synonymous with "moral," and truth is the quality ascribed to a hypothesis which sufficiently stands the test of action.\(^{22}\)

Reason, according to the pragmatist, is not "the source of man's moral ideals and cultural products," but is reduced to a mere "power to perceive when better adjustments can be

\(^{21}\)Ibid., pp. 330-331.

\(^{22}\)Quoted in Michael Demiashkevich, An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education, p. 112.
effected by varying our habits of reaction." The logical
outcome of this concept, as of all the concepts characteris-
tic of pragmatism, is the belief that "the good is what
pays." "

The pragmatist insists that

ideas . . . are not internal copies of external reali-
ties, but working plans of action, devised and in-
vented by man to remove pains and discomforts, escape
dangers, promote his affectional and practical inter-
est, maintain and enhance his own well being. . . .
mind has the strange power of creating a cultural en-
vironment by which human life is lifted far above that
of brutes. 25

In pragmatism, truth, then, as Durant so uniquely puts it,
is the "cash-value" of an idea. 26

Strictly interpreted, the pragmatic theory means
the pursuit, but not the possession, of truth. The
situation changing constantly, the ideas controlling
it must change constantly, and so the truth is no
sooner determined than it is dissolved again. . . .
Dr. Dewey admits this; knowledge ceases to be knowl-
edge unless it is being used over afresh in solving
new problems. 27

The pragmatic theory of truth

implies a very distinctive role for intelligence in
the world order. It is to be thought of as an instru-
ment of verification. In a precariously shifting en-
vironment, intelligence implements one to make satis-
factory adaptations, to use the old and familiar as a
tool for subjugating the novel and contingent. It is
the chief means of survival. . . . Again, this

23Rusk, p. 80.
24Hay Sinclair, A Defence of Idealism, p. 150.
background of pragmatism sheds light on the emphasis which progressive education places on the experimental way of both learning and teaching. When pupil and teacher enter on a project, there are no preconceived ends at which they must come out. The mutual challenge is to think their way out.  

The truth of any proposition, believes the pragmatist, is measured by its efficiency, by what it can accomplish as a guide to action. To know implies the ability to get something, to have something done. Pragmatists sometimes say that "the good life" is the criterion of the efficiency of action and conduct. "The good life" varies with variations in standards, and the criterion of the good life is to be discovered in some kind of ultimate certainty.  

The true is whatever proves itself to be good; hence, the "truth or validity of a principle or belief depends upon its effect on practice." Educational ends are not "termini to the road of education," but are employed as instruments for directing progress and for finding the way. As such, they are utilized experimentally. The pragmatist believes that truth, as has been intimated in preceding paragraphs, is to be conceived dynamically. Verification is literally truth-making. What turns out in the end to be true will depend to a large degree upon the aims or values decided upon at the outset. Hence learning must be purposeful. The truth the child learns is

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29 Demiashkevich, p. 110.  
30 Rusk, pp. 65-66.
inevitably affected by his purposes or aims. The test of the truth of all thinking is to be found in its practical consequences. If practical consequences are satisfactory, thinking is said to be true. This general concept is somewhat ambiguous, for the criteria for judging satisfactory consequences vary with individuals and with social groups.

Briefly, the pragmatic conception of truth is

the theory that the only criterion of the truth of ideas or beliefs is that they lead to satisfactory consequences; the sole proof of the intellectual pudding is in the eating thereof. All sorts of consequences -- emotional and practical, social as well as individual -- are tests of truth. No ideas or beliefs are inherently or absolutely true or false; they become true or false, are made so, by the issue of events. The pragmatic criterion of truth is thus bound up with the temporalistic conception of reality. Reality is always on the move, and truth is the apprehension by a mind of some phase or moment of its movement.

Ideas are true because they work and because they control reality successfully, and not because they represent reality correctly. Only the successful working of an idea constitutes its truth; "the ideas which on the whole and in the long run solve our problems best are true."

Ideas are meaningless apart from the activities to which they lead. Only through some form of expression do ideas

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31 Brubacher, p. 329.
33 Leighton, p. 377.
become real. This pragmatic conception removes the age-old distinction between ideas and external realities. It gives value to those things that science holds to be valuable -- experimentation and the objects of experimentation. This is a realistic philosophy in the modern sense of the term.  

Any idea that is useful in enriching and harmonizing experience, in satisfying the interest of the individual or society, by performing that function as a good instrument, becomes thus far true. An idea that cannot be put to work is meaningless. An idea that will not yield satisfaction when put to work is false.

Thus, briefly, in the preceding pages have been outlined some of the fundamental characteristics of the pragmatic philosophy of education.

Analysis of Curriculum Principles in Terms of Pragmatism

In the book which is being utilized as a basis for this study, a number of curriculum principles were discovered which embodied various phases of the pragmatic concept of education. It would be impractical to mention all of these principles, but some of the most significant ones have been singled out for particular attention and analysis on the basis of pragmatic concepts.

Pragmatism has much to say about satisfaction as an outcome of activity and experience. The following quotation

36Leighton, p. 381.
embodies this principle and also intimates to the reader the implication of two other pragmatic doctrines; namely, the belief that the pupil himself should be free to judge the worth of procedures and outcomes, and the principle that co-operation in a social group toward the accomplishment of a common purpose is essential for adequate learning experiences:

Satisfaction from good workmanship is not developed from a study of the topic. It results only from having an opportunity to do work which can be considered good and which children consider worth while. A realization of the social value of work comes only when the child has the opportunity to make an essential work contribution that furthers the purpose of the group. 39

Naturally, the pragmatic notion that pupils should be constantly experimenting in situations that are fraught with educational possibilities leads to much creative activity.

When work is creative, a child does it for its own sake, recognizes his purpose, and openly works toward the accomplishment of it. . . . Creative activity comes to claim this asset [intellectual adventurousness] as peculiarly its own. It was almost wholly lacking in the formal school. Under modern teaching there is no avenue of thought, no path of reflection, no field of speculation that may not be investigated. The only criteria are that the work should be according to the child's own plan and that, if he is to continue, what he finds there must be worth while. 39

In creative work the child sees the goal and some of the steps necessary to attaining it. His purpose is to reach that goal, and a very real and vital purpose it is. It makes work on the problem a most desirable activity, thus causing and developing a persistence of effort. . . .

The encouragement of creative activity gives the child opportunity of discovering what he is capable of doing. Formal teaching only permitted him to repeat

38 Ibid., p. 16. 39 Ibid., p. 539.
what was said or written, or copy what he and the group saw. Any initiative was likely to be suppressed as being "incorrect." Under the freer program the child is encouraged to be original, different, and by these efforts discovers his real abilities.40

Creative experience may be considered in two ways:

In the broad sense it includes the making of new interpretations and the seeing of new relationships in thinking and learning. In the more restricted sense it is the interpretation of one's own ideas, thoughts, and feelings into a tangible form which is original with the person concerned.41

In the foregoing quotations dealing with curriculum principles embodying the pragmatic concept of creative effort are to be found the pragmatic principles that all effort should be purposeful, pupil-planned, and satisfactory in outcome. Some idea of the goal to be attained should be kept in mind, and thought should be applied to the problem so that this goal may be realized. Also found here is the pragmatic principle that experiences and activities should, through their inherent values and interests, provide the real incentive to learning. Through the practice of empirical techniques, pragmatism advocates the well-rounded development of the individual to the end that his efficiency may be enhanced, and in the above passage is to be found the precept that creative effort provides the child with the opportunity to discover and utilize his abilities.

Logical sequence seems to call, at this point, for mention of a few of Lee and Lee's curriculum principles pertaining

40 Ibid., p. 538.  
41 Ibid.
to the nature and function of experiences in the school, for the discussion of creative effort given above implies the presence of empirical situations in which valuable learning experiences are taking place.

Experiences are the means by which . . . aims are attained. Only when these aims are continuously utilized as criteria for the selection and guidance of experience will their realization be possible. Two classes could have the same materials; one class might progress little toward the realization of the aims, whereas the other gained much. The second teacher used the materials and experiences as a means to develop definitely formulated aims, not as an end in themselves.42

There must be a sound basis of learning and experience all the way up to the level on which we wish learning to occur, in order to have efficient results.43

Pupil growth is in terms of experience, power, and needs.

Before a child may become truly interested in anything, he must have had experience that will furnish a background for it. Without such a background the material will be meaningless, or at best the meaning will be impoverished. Such material can hold little interest.44

The curriculum is considered to be the actual experiences of each pupil which are affected by the school.45

What children are encouraged to write about must be well within their experiences. . . . Language is learned like any other mode of social behavior. . . . Drill work should be in terms and as a result of a real need which is realized by the children as well as the teacher. . . .46

Here again the importance of having goals and aims as guides for experiences is emphasized, and this is a fundamental

pragmatic principle. Also, the idea of experiences arranged in logical sequence to lead to the goal is mentioned. Experiences must be logically continuous in their relationships. Experience is here dealt with, also, as an instrument of pupil growth; a certain amount of experience is necessary if a child is to have an interest in anything, and his previous experiences will deepen his interests which, in turn, will lead him into still more meaningful experiences. Thus crops out the pragmatic concept of the continuity of learning through channels of experience. Even the curriculum itself, according to the citation above, is now regarded as "the actual experiences of each pupil which are affected by the school." Social behavior is a result of experiences, and this belief coincides with the pragmatic notion that one becomes "socialized" by associating with other persons.

Pragmatists believe that the school should be a laboratory wherein the pupils acquire habits, attitudes, and outlooks that are in keeping with those prevalent in their respective communities. In other words, the school is to develop a well-rounded personality that will be able to function efficiently and harmoniously in society. The following curriculum principle coincides with this concept:

The development of habits and attitudes . . . is present all through school. Whether the teacher is conscious of the fact or not, pupils are learning ways of doing things and ways of thinking about things.
It is the school's responsibility to see that the school plant, the school situation, and school activities are such that the habits and attitudes developed are desirable ones.\(^{47}\)

Another brief passage in keeping with the same thought is the following:

*It is the responsibility of . . . education to make it possible for each child to become increasingly effective in meeting situations, both in the present and in the future.*\(^{48}\)

The pragmatic doctrine of active pupil-participation in schoolroom and life experiences is mirrored in the following excerpt from Lee and Lee's book:

Desirable development of interest is a progressive sort of thing. The more interested one is, the harder and more continuously one works at a problem, and if the other factors of interest have been fulfilled, the greater is the increase in that interest. The thrill of accomplishment, the pride in a task well done, the feeling of responsibility well discharged, all help to identify the child with the task. It is this identification of self with a definite aim or purpose that is real interest. It aids learning and stimulates specific interests as well.\(^{49}\)

This passage indicates that interest as well as learning is continuous and cumulative, and the pragmatic concept that interest is a valuable incentive to effort is clearly brought out. Although, as is definitely indicated, the child should identify himself actively with learning experiences, if they are to be most meaningful to him,

the worth of the activity must be judged in terms of the individual, the contribution it makes to his purposes and to whether it has resulted in growth

for him. It is not to be judged by the technical excellencies of the final product. 50

This thought is in harmony with the pragmatic theory that truth and value are not fixed, but change with the individual and with the situation; hence, what is true and valuable to one person is not necessarily true and valuable to his neighbor. The above passage is also reminiscent of the pragmatic concept that an idea or a belief, to be true, must work satisfactorily.

The following passage relating to the value of a purpose in activity strictly coincides with the pragmatic belief that worthwhile purposes are strong incentives to meaningful endeavor:

A child sees a need and purpose for the solution of a problem or the completion of a project, sets his whole energy toward the solution. Interest is inherent, and the whole personality is unified and growing and reaching a higher development. Thus purpose and interest are as valuable in developing a wholesome personality as in good teaching of any other sort. 51

The passage below contains several pragmatic elements which will be discussed briefly immediately after its insertion:

Learning is not merely a mathematical summation of knowledges, understandings, techniques, and attitudes. It is a unity and blending, a growth and development. Attitudes are the integrators of these elements and driving forces to action. More knowledge is not sufficient. It will not necessarily lead to understanding or action. . . . The mastery of facts offers little when contrasted with the development of understandings, attitudes, and techniques. 52

50 Ibid., p. 309. 51 Ibid., pp. 94-95. 52 Ibid., p. 297.
One of the most significant implications of pragmatism is that learning is growth. As has already been mentioned in another connection, the pragmatists hold that attitudes are incentives to effort. What is usually called knowledge is, according to this philosophy, merely information until it is put to work in worthwhile endeavor; and only when utilized does it become knowledge. Information and knowledge are derived from experiences and do not necessarily lead to activity. The development of desirable attitudes and traits of behavior is far more important than the acquisition of information. All of these principles of the pragmatic philosophy are clearly indicated in the above quotation.

As to the development of bases for learning, Lee and Lee have this to say:

The activities that develop during the unit are the basis for learning. The recent transition from restricted activities of dealing with textual material to a wide variety of learning experiences is one of the most worthwhile characteristics of the modern ... school.53

This brief passage bears out the oft-repeated pragmatic dictum that learning is an outgrowth of activity and experience.

The pragmatic principle that satisfactory outcomes are essential to the fullest meaning of activities and to the acquisition of worthwhile learnings is voiced by Lee and Lee as follows:

53 ibid., p. 215.
Success is absolutely necessary in some form and some amount. It is equally necessary that it be balanced with some difficulties. Too easy and constant success is as damaging as constant failure.54

The authors whose curriculum principles are being analyzed in this study devote extensive treatments to the relationship of the child and the curriculum in various subject-matter fields, but only a few of the outstanding principles will be mentioned here. The first group is from the social studies field, although the principles outlined are so general as to apply to some extent to any subject-matter area.

The social-studies program should be directed toward helping children to meet more effectively social situations.

The social-studies program should develop the beginnings of concern for important social and economic problems.

The social-studies curriculum should furnish experiences which lead children to an understanding and appreciation of life about them. . . .

Learning experiences should grow out of the present environment and aid in the interpretation of contemporary life. . . .

Methods should be used which furnish opportunity for a maximum of self-direction, self-appraisal, self-control, and cooperative endeavor. . . . 55

Included among the social-studies principles quoted above are the following pragmatic implications: the school should equip pupils so that they may be able to function efficiently in social situations; the child should be able to perceive problems and to map out possible attacks leading to a solution; worthwhile experiences lead to an understanding of life and its meanings; learning experiences should not be

54Ibid., p. 72.  
55Ibid., p. 298.
so remote from the child's sphere of knowledge as to be entirely unfamiliar to him; and the child should be free to go into an activity in his own way, in co-operation with others.

In the subject-matter field of health, the following passage possesses pragmatic elements:

The health program should be built on the philosophy that health is a way of living mentally, emotionally, socially, and physically. It must grow out of and be a part of all child experiences in school, home, and community. Health information, habits, and attitudes to be effective must be acquired from purposeful functioning situations.

Pragmatism involves the development of the whole child, and this would necessarily include the factor of health. This philosophy holds that all learnings should grow out of and be a part of actual experiences, and that meaningful knowledge must come from learning situations. These concepts as realized in and related to the health curriculum in the school are included in the above excerpt.

Some of the curriculum principles for science, as set forth by Lee and Lee, are significant in this analysis of pragmatic learnings and elements:

Science involves looking at the common acts and facts of everyday life in a new way -- the way of experimental thinking. . . .

Understanding of the concepts will not be achieved through their memorization but rather by the piling up of experiences through which the student will gradually

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56Ibid., p. 491.
arrive at significant understanding and make applications of understandings. The vicarious experiences of the pupils should, in many instances, be supplemented or displaced by direct experiences.

All experiences included should be real, challenging, and intrinsically worth while to the children.

It is deemed essential that the students actively and purposively participate in the experiences. . . .

Subject matter is an integral part of the program, but should be considered as a means to an end -- that of understanding and utilizing basic elements and concepts. . . .

Teachers of science . . . must recognize the fact that content is not true for all time in such a manner that will prevent the student developing the idea that it is. Man's conception of truth changes. . . .

The organization and procedure must insure experience in problem-solving, which is the nature of science. The learning situations must include those in which the scientific generalization is acquired, those in which it is applied, and those in which understandings are tested. . . .

The order of difficulty must be such that students through reasonable effort may gain the satisfaction of accomplishment.

The laboratory work should have the characteristics of experience-getting work rather than those illustrative or confirmatory work.

The "let's find out" attitude should be encouraged and attempts to "find out" carefully guided into acceptable methods. . . .

At the very outset of the above quotation is mentioned the fundamental precept of pragmatism -- that learning comes from experimenting. Other pragmatic concepts included in the passage are as follows: understanding does not come from the possession of information, but from experiences in which information is transformed into knowledge through the medium of utilization; the child learns best those things that he himself does; activities should be inherently

\[57\text{Ibid.}, \ pp. \ 461-462.\]
worthwhile; pupil participation, guided by definite purposes, is essential; subject matter is instrumental; truth is not unchangeable, but is qualified by situations; problem-solving is necessary if learning is to take place to any appreciable degree; the truth of a theory or belief is measured by how well it works; the pupil should be able to attain a satisfactory outcome; experience is learning; and interest is an important incentive to activity.
CHAPTER III

INSTRUMENTALISM

Fundamental Concepts

The modern development of the pragmatic philosophy is known as "instrumentalism," because of its stress on the instrumental nature of intelligence. Under the leadership of John Dewey, this philosophy has become one of the most influential movements in American thought.¹ Since it is an outgrowth of the older form of pragmatism, and a modification of some of its precepts, instrumentalism is sometimes referred to by writers as being synonymous with pragmatism. An example is the following:

Pragmatism is an experimental use of intelligence to liberate and liberalize action. It looks to a growing rather than a static world; thinking is not the reduplication of reality already complete, but the actual method of social advance. . . . ²

Intelligence is an active organizing principle. The successful operation of intelligence is an instrument of control that governs behavior.³ Thought is an instrument of readaptation; it is an organ as much as limbs and teeth. Ideas are imagined contacts, experiments in adjustment."⁴

¹Leighton, p. 377. ²Ibid., p. 383. ³Ibid., p. 400. ⁴Durant, p. 569.
According to the philosophy of instrumentalism, mind, ideas, and intelligence are "instruments for attaining certain ends, or removing difficulties and perplexities."\(^5\)

Thought is a "mere tool" for satisfying vital human demands.\(^6\)

\[\ldots\text{thought and intelligence are instrumental; they are instruments for environmental control; they enable an organism to deal with a new and perplexing situation.}\]

Dewey, who is, practically speaking, the "father" of instrumentalism, says:

The essence of \ldots instrumentalism is to conceive of both knowledge and practice as means of making goods -- excellencies of all kinds -- secure in experienced existence.\(^8\)

A somewhat broader view of the subject is limned in the following quotation:

The instrumental theory of knowledge does not mean that the value of knowing is instrumental simply to the knower. It means that knowing is instrumental to discovery, invention, practice art in the philosophic sense. \ldots Every mode of awareness, from a color or movement to an aesthetic experience, is a remaking of the meanings of events.\(^9\)

Certain fundamental concepts of instrumentalism, which are also true of pragmatism as discussed in the preceding chapter, are indicated in the following statements:

Experience \ldots is the intercourse of the living organism with its physical and social environment. \ldots The Instrumentalist \ldots is confronted with the task of controlling and moulding the environment to his own welfare; he must achieve the good and avert the evil. \ldots Thought is not a process of reduplication or

\(^{5}\)Patrick, p. 363. \(^{6}\)Ibid., p. 380. \(^{7}\)Ibid., p. 302.

\(^{8}\)Quoted in Demiaashkevich, p. 136. \(^{9}\)Leighton, p. 386.
copying of a determinate objective world, but a process of experimenting with it, changing it, moulding it to suit one's vital demands.\textsuperscript{10}

From the instrumentalist's point of view, values are instrumental. "They implement a person to gain ends. Progress occurs if these ends are achieved." The value of any particular ends must be judged against still other ends, so that, at first thought, the process would seem to be endless as the learnings from one situation are applied to the solution of a more advanced problem, and so on, while the knowledge becomes highly cumulative and the problems more intricate from step to step. Which of several lines of conduct is most likely to lead to progress is judged in terms of specific situations. The pragmatist-progressive-instrumentalist has no general formula for total progress because he has no final or fixed values. It is impossible for him to have such values, for he sees experience and life as constantly emerging novelties.\textsuperscript{11}

The instrumentalist believes that education should concern itself with immediate problems and needs, with a view to assisting the pupils to become adjusted and to develop a sense of security in the world. "Indeed, the need of the ultimate certainty is to many, very early in life, and to everyone -- save significantly few exceptions -- at some time in life, the problem than which there is none more immediate

\textsuperscript{10}Patrick, pp. 370-371. \textsuperscript{11}Brubacher, p. 328.
nor more urgent.\textsuperscript{12}

In its implications for curricula, instrumentalism places emphasis upon the immediately practical, usable studies, an emphasis which has often been insufficiently developed either as a method of motivation or as a subject-matter area in the conventional theory and practice of education. Instrumentalism has also exerted some influence by its contention that the real universe is the one that corresponds to individual human needs, and that it is transformable by human action.\textsuperscript{13}

Often, says Dewey, one has to make choices, to let one thing go in order to take another. This establishes an order of preference, a greater and less, better and worse. Things judged or passed upon have to be estimated in relation to some third thing, some further end. With respect to that, they are means, or instrumental values.\textsuperscript{14}

**Analysis of Curriculum Principles in Terms of Instrumentalism**

In accordance with the purpose of this study, it is now necessary to examine some of the curriculum principles found in Lee and Lee's *The Child and His Curriculum* and to point out how certain ones conform to the elements of instrumentalism as an educational philosophy. Since instrumentalism is a phase of pragmatism, most of the material presented in the preceding chapter will also apply here; and only those

\textsuperscript{12} Demiashkevich, p. 140.  
\textsuperscript{14} Dewey, p. 230.
principles that are definitely instrumental in nature will be mentioned.

The first one to be considered is related to the unit as a method of teaching and learning:

. . . a unit consists of purposeful (to the learner), related activities so developed as to give insight into, and increased control of some significant aspects of the environment; and to provide opportunities for the socialization of pupils.15

The unit, activity, or class project, then, is to be used as an instrument in the performance of two significant functions of education -- a more thorough adaptation to social and physical environment, and a harmonious adjustment to social situations.

Three instrumental objectives of the elementary school state that the educational program should enable the child to have wide interests in art, music, science, and the world around him.

To be fairly capable of locating what he wants to know.

To have control over some working tools such as being able to use numbers, dictionaries, and maps.16

These three items -- interest in things, the ability to find needed information, and mastery of certain tools of knowledge -- are regarded as instruments for the preparation of the child for a more efficient participation in his social groups in the school and in the community. In this same connection, the following excerpt is pertinent:

15Lee and Lee, p. 192.  16Ibid., p. 4.
A free and active curriculum, involving ideas and materials interesting to the child and within his comprehension, helps to develop a happy, secure, and useful type of person, whereas the formal, rigid procedure dependent largely on memorization of facts is apt to kill interest and initiative, and because much of it is beyond his comprehension, it leads to insecurity.17

Here the curriculum itself, taken as a whole, is thought of as an instrument contributing to the development of well-rounded personalities. It should be noted that only "a free and active curriculum" serves this purpose, whereas the "formal, rigid" one is likely to "kill interest and initiative."

Implied in the above quotation pertaining to the curriculum is a reference to the so-called "activity movement," which, in its earlier stages, was carried to excess in the schools:

It was thought that "activity for activity's sake" was the goal. Any and every activity was considered to have value. The pendulum is settling itself, and teachers are more and more evaluating activity in terms of its contribution to learning.18

Activity, then, is a significant instrument of learning if it is wisely selected and carefully guided toward the goals that are governing the learning situation. This is pragmatism pure and simple.

The timeliness of materials, subject matter, and activities is hinted at in the following selection from The Child and His Curriculum:

17Ibid., p. 495.  
18Ibid., p. 309.
Materials and subject matter are left partially to the
decision of teachers and pupils working together so
that they may take advantage of the situation most
pregnant with possibilities at that particular time.
Textbooks have changed to libraries carefully built up
to furnish valuable materials on particular subjects
on a wide range of levels so that all in the group may
find materials well within their abilities from which
they may contribute their share.19

Opportune times possess instrumental values in learning, as
do well-equipped libraries which furnish basic materials for
the pursuit of activities.

Learning, says the instrumentalist, is not "merely the
memory of facts but rather the acquisition of knowledges,
skills, concepts, methods, attitudes, abilities, and anything
else that may be useful in helping the child to adjust to and
control the environment."20 This, too, is a fundamental
pragmatic concept.

With relation to experience, Lee and Lee have this to
say:

Experiences should meet the needs of the learner,
or there is no justification for them. This principle,
however, must be carried farther. The needs should
not be regarded and recognized by the school alone but
also by the child. If he does not recognize his need
for these experiences they are not likely to be of much
value when the need does arise. If society believes the
child has need of certain things it is the responsibility
of the school to help the child to identify those needs.
If the child has few recognized purposes of his own, it
is important that the school develop more. It is only
when experiences do meet such recognized needs and pur-
poses that they are effectively learned and really edu-
cative.21

These are also pragmatic principles that point out the value

19Ibid., p. 94. 20Ibid., pp. 141-142. 21Ibid., p. 169.
of experiences and purposes as instruments of learning.

Numerous instrumental functions of learning experiences are pointed out in the following list:

Experiences should be so selected and guided as:
To result in socialized human beings.
To give consideration to the health and physical development of children.
To make provision for the individual differences in children.
To meet the needs, purposes, and interests of children.
To be educative rather than mis-educative.
To enlarge the child's understanding of important concepts.
To aid in the development of new meanings and expand experiences through the utilization of previous meanings.
To develop new meanings through adaptation to the needs of the local community, utilization of available local resources, compensation where possible for environmental lacks, and participation in a wide variety of environmental situations.
To utilize some important aspect of thinking.
To make possible successful achievement by the child. 22

Most of these items, stated in different words, have been discussed in the chapter on pragmatism, and it is necessary here merely to mention the fact in passing that each of them possesses instrumental values in the development of personality or in the promotion of worthwhile learning experiences.

Three brief excerpts from The Child and His Curriculum will suffice to illustrate the general instrumental nature of much of the subject matter used in the schools:

Language is but an instrument or vehicle of thought. . . . Language must be utilized in all situations and not limited to artificial situations during language period. . . . 23

22 Ibid., pp. 172-173. 23 Ibid., pp. 335-336.
The teacher and the child should think of health as a matter of conduct, not as content of instruction. Since conduct is the desired end, knowledge and meanings are the means to an end. These should, therefore, not be taught in isolation from the experiences out of which they arise and in which they are to be applied.24

Health is that condition in which the mind, body, and spirit are working efficiently toward the realization of the fullest possible life.

Health education is the sum of all experiences within the school and in life outside which affect meanings, attitudes, and habits relating to individual and community health.

Every activity in the school curriculum has its health implications. Each should be so directed that these implications are clearly understood and utilized both by teachers and pupils.25

24Ibid., p. 492. 
25Ibid.
CHAPTER IV

HUMANISM

Fundamental Concepts

Humanism is the best-known type of pragmatism. It constitutes the very foundation of the modern educational system. Freedom of thought, self-expression, and creative activity are fundamental bases of current education, and all these are basic principles in the philosophy of humanism. The new freedom implied by these characteristics is the aim of humanistic education, "which strives for the expression of individual personality through art, literature, music, architecture, and nature."  

Humanism is possibly the oldest definite phase of pragmatic philosophy, for it became the refined successor to the ideals of medieval chivalry in Europe. It was largely influential in shaping the ideal "gentleman" and the curricula of the English public schools, and similarly influenced the development of the German "gymnasium" and French classical training.

1Brightman, p. 52.

2Elmer H. Wilds, Foundations of Modern Education, p. 256.
Among the early Italian humanists, the literary and aesthetic types of education were somewhat fused. The ancient literatures of Greece and Rome were studied not only for the knowledge they gave of the institutions and ideals of the Grecian and Roman worlds, but also for their inherent beauty and as models for new creative effort.

Aesthetic education was of the broadest type, aiming at appreciation not only of literature, but also of art, architecture, music, and drama. The aestheticism, which had been wholly absent from medieval education, was the outstanding new element in humanistic education, and has always been characteristic of it.3

The socially-minded humanism of northern Europe stressed a religious, moral, and social education far more than it emphasized the aesthetic elements. "Literary training of the broadest type was encouraged, but as a means to a religious and social end rather than for its own sake. Careful religious instruction was invariably coupled with the liberal classic training." Northern humanism represented an attempt to provide a democratic type of education rather than an aristocratic one, as in Italy.4 Hence the humanism of the North was more social than individual. Its emphasis was not so much upon subjective and aesthetic results as upon objective and moral results. Education did not aim so definitely toward the attainment of individual happiness as at social reforms and the improvement of social relationships.

Education was not directed toward a breadth of interests in human life, and the northern humanists had no interest in the pleasures and riches of earthly life beyond the development of a practical religious and social life. The selection of the classics to be translated, edited, and read in the educational program was determined by one thought alone -- that of removing "the ignorance of the common people and the greed, selfishness, and hypocrisy, and tendency toward exploitation of the social leaders -- that is to say, of the leaders of churches, monastic orders, universities, and governments." Northern humanism was narrow from the standpoint of the development of personal freedom and individual character, but it was broad in its relation to the development of the social welfare. "Instead of aiming at a rich and full life for the individual, as in Italy, Northern humanism aimed at a rich and full life for society as a whole. The aim in the North was more reformatory than scholarly or aesthetic."\(^5\)

\(^{5}\)Ibid., p. 264.
there has resulted no well-rounded and organic training of the modern man. Even he cannot live by bread alone nor by the sciences, though both are essential to living. They are the means but not the end, as they have tended to become. An introduction to the methods of experimentation, to the materials of technical procedures, and to vocational life is needed on every level of a modern educational system. On the other hand, unless we are to become slaves of a technical civilization which for lack of human freedom ceases to be a civilization, we must master it through the capacity to subordinate our labor to a meaning which satisfies human existence in its totality.\(^6\)

The humanistic aim, even in modern education, naturally relies upon literary and aesthetic curricula. The educational program fostered by the Italian humanists was practical in that it prepared young nobles for active participation in the everyday affairs of human life as they knew it. It was not at all vocational in the sense of providing preparation for a definite profession. A feeling still exists, unfortunately, that vocational education and literary education are antagonistic to each other. The advocates of a liberal humanistic education usually look down upon what they consider a narrow vocational training.\(^7\)

The subject matter of the humanistic education has always included all human interests within its scope so that the humanist curriculum has always been almost as broad as life itself. The most varied of all the humanistic schools were those of the Renaissance period, which opened to the student three aspects of life that had remained practically

\(^6\)Ulrich, pp. 163-164.  
\(^7\)Wilds, p. 257.
unknown and unrecognized throughout the medieval educational set-up. One of these new worlds was a comprehensive study of the real life of the past, the life of the Greeks and Romans with its wide variety of interests, knowledges, and expressions, and the incomparable literature and art of those amazing peoples. The second world included in the new educational plan was that of the emotions.

An attempt was made to develop the joy of living and the contemplative pleasures of speculation about things of this life; to inculcate an appreciation of the beautiful; and to foster an interest in introspective observation and analysis from the aesthetic and human standpoint. This was done through participation in the activities and interests of life, through self-culture and improvement, and through the appreciation and creation of literature and art. The third world opened up to the humanistic scholar was the world of nature, a world almost unknown to the medieval scholar, and, in general, deemed by him ignoble and debasing in its effect upon mankind.8

Dewey deplores the misconceptions that have tended to identify the "humanities" exclusively with classical literature and linguistic studies. These studies, he admits, have made such tremendous contributions to civilization that there should always be ample opportunity for the learner to make their acquaintance. Continuing, he asserts:

But to regard them as par excellence the humane studies involves a deliberate neglect of the possibilities of the subject matter which is accessible in education to the masses, and tends to cultivate a narrow snobbbery: that of a learned class whose insignia are the accidents of exclusive opportunity. Knowledge is humanistic in quality not because it is about human products in the past, but because of what

8Ibid., pp. 258-259.
it does in liberating human intelligence and human sympathy. Any subject matter which accomplishes this result is humane, and any subject matter which does not accomplish it is not even educational.  

Despite its emphasis upon literature and aesthetic studies, the early humanistic curriculum was not restricted to these fields. Instruction in morals, manners, and health was included, and a wide range of physical exercises was utilized. Maxims of morality were drawn from both ecclesiastical and classical writers; and manners were taught as an essential supplement to moral education. Dancing and music were taught for the social as well as their aesthetic values.

Humanism has always contended, and still holds, that what satisfies human nature as a whole is true.

The humanist would say, Whatever fulfills my purposes, satisfies my desires, develops my life, is true. This assertion readily lends itself to caricature; for it is notorious how many of our desires cannot be fulfilled; how many of them, when fulfilled, lead to error and evil, instead of to truth. But if emphasis be laid on life as a whole, the position becomes more plausible; and it makes a wide popular appeal in that it can easily be grasped, and lends itself to ready support of religious beliefs.

Dewey states that the humanistic philosophy of education means being imbued with an intelligent sense of human interests. The social interest, identical in its deepest meaning with a moral interest, is necessarily supreme with man. . . . Any study so pursued that it increases concern for the values of life, any study producing greater sensitivity to social well-being and greater ability to promote that well-being is humane study.

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9 Dewey, pp. 268-269.  
10 Wilds, p. 259.  
11 Brightman, p. 52.  
The two following quotations lead additional light upon the definition and significance of humanism in education:

Versatility is the keynote of this new conception of education -- to be versatile in order to develop individual personality to the fullest extent, to receive life's greatest enrichment, and to live the most abundant life. The aim of humanistic education is always the living of life and the living of it abundantly. The humanist aims at getting the most out of life in a really satisfying way; he aims at the living of a fine, rich, full life.13

... humanity, with all its natural and cultivated qualities, is rooted in sources of energy not reducible to rigid classifications, but best conceived of as integral realizations of universal and encompassing energies.14

The implications of the humanistic philosophy also extend out to encompass government and politics, for the humanist hopes for the arrival of a time when "political barbarities" will be "as outmoded as the settling of private disputes by violence." Humanism stands for tolerance, for the elimination of prejudice. Man is still inclined to regard as inferior those opinions with which he cannot agree, and to demand persecution before the point is proved one way or another.15

In summary, it may be stated that the logical outcome of the humanistic philosophy of education is that the good is the pleasant or the desirable or the beneficial.16

13Wilds, pp. 256-257.  
14Ulich, p. 38.  
15Ibid., p. 146.  
16Sinclair, p. 150.
Analysis of Curriculum Principles in Terms of Humanism

The humanistic principle that education should teach morals, manners, and criteria for social behavior is apparent in the educational objective advanced by Lee and Lee to the effect that the experiences offered by the school should enable the child "to understand and practice desirable social relationships."\(^{17}\) The same thought is elaborated in the following additional objectives that imply that the school should equip the child

To get along well in work and play with his playmates and with older people. . . .
To be able to do his share, either of work or play. . . .
To have some understanding of the processes by which man lives on this world. . . . \(^{18}\)

Thus the fundamental principles of humanism, the co-operative effort of the child in social undertakings and a comprehensive understanding of how man lives and works, are mirrored in the curriculum objectives in *The Child and His Curriculum*. The whole matter is summarized in the authors' statement that the unit of work in the school should "provide opportunities for the socialization of pupils."\(^{19}\) These principles are definitely humanistic-pragmatic in nature.

In a further discussion of the unit and its worth and significance, Lee and Lee state:

\(^{17}\)Lee and Lee, p. 597.  \(^{18}\)Ibid., p. 4.  \(^{19}\)Ibid., p. 192.
The primary value of the unit is that it furnishes opportunities for more than the intellectual development of the child. It provides for social and emotional development through working and planning together. Certainly the ability to work co-operatively in the solution of problems is a primary attribute of good citizenship. The ability to locate and organize information should be an important outcome. Creative expression is much more apt to be encouraged.\textsuperscript{20}

This quotation is an implication that refers to Dewey's concept that whatever contributes to human efficiency, to the social welfare of persons, and to their enjoyment of life is humanistic in nature.

Not only the unit of work, as has been previously mentioned, but the entire scope of learning "experiences should be so selected and guided . . . as to result in socialized human beings."\textsuperscript{21} Learning experiences should "provide opportunity for children to work together cooperatively," and some of the activities should be "drawn from the resources of the community, resulting in relating material to life needs."\textsuperscript{22} The humanistic import of these principles seems to be readily perceptible.

In recent years the generally accepted purpose of the social studies curriculum in the school has changed from that of "knowledge concerning the past," to that of "more effectively meeting situations involving social relations."\textsuperscript{23}

In connection with the science curriculum, the following excerpts are pertinent:

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., p. 197.  
\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., p. 172.  
\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., p. 219.  
\textsuperscript{23}Ibid., p. 297.
It is essential that science in the elementary school be liberal and cultural rather than vocational.

The science program must accord stress to the social and personal significance and possibilities of all facts and principles.

The development of social sensitivity on the part of each pupil is of paramount importance. The teacher should take advantage of every opportunity to increase the pupil's awareness and understanding of the social aspects of science.24

24Ibid., pp. 461-462.
CHAPTER V

RATIONALISM

Fundamental Concepts

Rationalism, defined in a word, is the belief that reason directly influences conduct. In its origin rationalism was largely religious in its implications, for it contended aggressively with Christianity against the latter's acceptance of divine criteria as bases for the judgment of human actions. The eighteenth-century rationalists even refuted any belief in a divine Lawgiver. Most of them, however, retained their fundamental belief in the immanent spiritual nature of the world and substituted a philosophic deism for the earlier belief in a personal God. Rationalism was originally intended as a protest against the antiquated and arbitrary authority of the church and state, but it ultimately assumed the nature of a reaction against the newly awakening forces of democracy and universal education. In its appeal to reason, as against the hampering restrictions of tradition and authority, the movement was commendable; but it was inadequate in that it neglected the needs of the masses and the rights of the common man.

True knowledge, believes the rationalist, comes from thought itself, from the activity of reason. He also insists that "truth is a function of the power of thought to constitute a totality." Knowledge is "more than a connection of experiences by passive repetition and association and by emotionally engendered beliefs." Reasoning is merely "a process of actively relating and classifying our experiences." Rationalism insists on the purposive activity of the mind in knowing and holds that the success of this activity implies a vital intercourse between the mind and reality. ... the materials of knowledge come to us in experience, but the materials of knowledge thus given are organized by the activity of reason into the texture of our sciences. ... The universal principles of knowledge are the mind's fundamental ways of working as these develop in and through the organization of experience.

Rationalism aimed at developing an individual who could control all the aspects of his life by means of coldly critical reasoning and suppress all spontaneous enthusiasm and feeling. The rationalist realized that this aim was attainable by few individuals; and so it was that the rationalistic philosophy of life and the rationalistic aim in education were applied only to the upper classes. In a sense, rationalism aimed at the education of the young gentleman as much as did disciplinarianism. It was directed toward teaching the youth to think for himself, to control his passions by reason, to avoid all display of vulgar feeling, to live the "reasonable" life of a highly artificial society. It aimed at the intellectual education of the few; so that reason might replace tradition and dogmatism among those who controlled society, and so that the educated classes as a whole might be dominated by reason. The aim of the rationalist was to build up a new aristocracy of intelligence to replace the old aristocracy of family, of position, of the church; a new aristocracy of brains to replace the old aristocracy of blood.

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4 Leighton, p. 553. 5 Ibid., p. 555. 6 Wilds, pp. 370-371.
"The human reasoning power is the supreme regulator of life," asserts the rationalist. Social evils have their source neither in the "native and incorrigible disabilities of the human being nor in the nature of the external world, but simply in human ignorance and prejudices." Any effort to improve the state of man involves the "matter of doing away with ignorance and removing errors, of increasing knowledge and diffusing light." This school of thought holds that the only true history of the human race is the history of the fundamental ideas that have governed the progress of civilization. The growth of universal reason is the remedy for the miseries of social life. What is reason? It is, according to the French philosopher, Descartes, founder of the rationalist school of thought, "the power of judging aright and of distinguishing Truth from Error which is properly what is called Good Sense of Reason." 7

The chief characteristic of the rationalists' methods was that

of applying the cold light of reasoning to every phase of human life and human institution, and cynically rejecting everything that could not stand the test. As a result of their exclusive concern with such a process, they naturally neglected the whole feeling side of life and scornfully tossed aside all faiths and institutions as enemies of clear and logical thinking. The worship of reasoning as the sole means of enlightenment was exalted almost to a degree of religious fanaticism. Reason veritably became their god.8

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7 Demiashkevich, p. 271. 8 Wilds, p. 374.
An interesting and illuminating defense of rationalism is included in the following quotation, which deals with the necessity and significance of thinking:

Man . . . must think, if he is to keep pace, even briefly, with those more fortunate creatures which have no need to think in order to succeed. . . . Man, the thinker, has not lost the race as yet; if he cannot be ranked with certainty first in success, yet he does beyond question surpass all other living things in the versatility of his intelligence. The groundwork of that versatility, nevertheless, is probably his capacity to learn, rather than his power to reason. . . . Thinking, indeed, may point the way to action for fulfillment of desire, but it does no more than that.  

Dewey gives an interesting and practical definition of reason in the following words:

'Reason' is just the ability to bring the subject matter of prior experience to bear to perceive the significance of the subject matter of a new experience. A person is reasonable in the degree to which he is habitually open to seeing an event which immediately strikes his senses not as an isolated thing but in its connection with the common experiences of mankind.  

Patrick discusses knowledge and the principles of rationalism in the following manner:

Knowledge is a selective process, choosing those aspects of reality which it can make use of, appreciate, or understand. . . . The new Rationalism emphasizes . . . the importance of the constructive and creative power of the mind in the acquisition of knowledge. . . . The discovery of the best method, the formation of an hypothesis from which to work, the planning of the experiment, the designing and setting up of the apparatus, the computation of the results -- all these are the significant things, and they are the work of the mind.

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10Dewey, p. 400.
11Patrick, pp. 342-343.
The rationalist believes reasoning to be a mode of response to stimuli only to the extent that the action in which it culminates is successful. Man reasons not for the sake of reasoning but because he has to reason in order to solve the problems with which he is confronted. He often resorts to other expedients before he comes finally to apply serious reasoning to the question in hand. Reasoning is useful to the individual only if it results in action that is useful, and "without such a conclusion is a merely useless compromise with difficulty, hardly, if at all, more satisfying than the first failure in adjustment" which led to the reasoning. Reasoning, then, is useful only in the measure that its outcome is practical, that it attains results or approaches nearer to their attainment.\textsuperscript{12}

Man is a machine, and all the higher mental processes are the results of impressions made by things upon his physical sense organs. Only that which influences the senses can be known; hence all reasoning has to proceed according to the Baconian inductive method. There is no place in the philosophy of rationalism for revelation, imagination, or feeling: "Everything must be approached in the attitude of cold-blooded critical analysis."\textsuperscript{13}

In the mind is the source of life and the chief source of all harmony in life. The mind is the real origin of the just and the beautiful. There is no real greatness except

\textsuperscript{12}Eaton, pp. 50-51. \hfill \textsuperscript{13}Demiashkevich, pp. 373-374.
that which issues from reason.  

The original aim of rationalism in education was to train individuals to reason so that they could "throw off the binding shackles of religious, political, and social authority which restricted their intellectual freedom." The objective was to enable men to think for themselves, to test all things human and divine by the power of their own reason. The ultimate purpose of the philosophy was to free the intellect from all repression and the mind from the "control of supernatural terrorism and of traditional beliefs in religion, and to liberate the individual from the legal injustices and political tyranny of the state."  

Although these original purposes are no longer dominant in the elements of rationalism that still subsist in educational theory today, modern rationalism aims toward the preparation of the individual for efficient functioning in society, and his efficiency rests to a considerable extent upon his ability to think his way through his problems.

Analysis of Curriculum Principles in Terms of Rationalism

One important objective of education, according to Lee and Lee, is "to cultivate the habit of critical thinking," which certainly is a rationalistic principle through and through.

14Ibid., p. 292.  
15Wilds, p. 370.  
16Lee and Lee, p. 597.
through; for if rationalism has any one primary characteristic, it is that of the advocacy of critical thinking. The following excerpt is illustrative of the same principle:

The recognition that the development of . . . thinking in actual situations is the function of the . . . school, carries definite implications for the selection of experiences. . . . experiences which are used to develop . . . thinking must be associated with actual situations.\(^{17}\)

Thus it is apparent that reasoning, to be most effective, must be in connection with actual situations that present challenging problems to the individual. This evident truth is an application of the rationalistic principle that thinking or reasoning is problem-solving. Lee and Lee further state that "learning experiences should grow out of the present environment and aid in the interpretation of contemporary life."\(^{18}\) This curriculum principle is in keeping with the rationalistic dictum that is embodied in the first sentence of this chapter, to the effect that reason influences conduct.

That interest and activity are interacting with reason -- a rationalistic concept -- is intimated in the following quotation from The Child and His Curriculum:

\begin{quote}
Interest cannot be developed by something about which pupils know little or nothing. The new and the unfamiliar may attract attention, and they may arouse curiosity. Both of these are short-lived, but may be temporary stepping-stones to a real interest if properly used and supported with knowledge and increasing abilities.\(^{19}\)
\end{quote}

\(^{17}\)Ibid., p. 415. \(^{18}\)Ibid., p. 298. \(^{19}\)Ibid., p. 145.
A further relationship between knowledge and interest is mentioned as follows:

No one can be interested in that which he does not know. When one has merely heard of something he may be curious about it, but he is not interested in it until he has considerable knowledge as a basis.\(^{20}\)

Meaning is always based on experience, and that experience is meaningful in terms of previous understandings. A thing can have meaning only in terms of what the child already understands.\(^{21}\)

Thus knowledge comes from experience and is, in turn, necessary to the processes of reasoning, according to the principles of rationalism. It is obvious that, if one is to think, he must possess knowledge as source material for his thoughts.

"Experiences," say the authors of The Child and His Curriculum, "should be so selected and guided as . . . to utilize some important aspect of thinking."\(^{22}\) The fact that reasoning ability, like other abilities, develops with usage presents a direct challenge to the school to provide instruction and experience which will lay a foundation and develop habits of accurate reasoning and causal thinking. A wide familiarity with the phenomena of nature, and experience in thinking about them for themselves, should be a large part of all children's school life.\(^{23}\)

The rationalistic implications of these principles are self-evident.

The following excerpt from Lee and Lee's discussion of

\(^{20}\)Ibid., p. 38.  \(^{21}\)Ibid., p. 143.

\(^{22}\)Ibid., pp. 172-173.  \(^{23}\)Ibid., p. 47.
critical thinking is significant in terms of the rationalistic philosophy of education:

One of the largest and most neglected responsibilities of the school is to develop in each child the ability to think well. Materials used in the schools must, of course, be in themselves worth while, but their main function is to furnish the means for practice in thinking. In setting up their own problems pupils learn to think through a situation, analyze what the problem is and what they must learn to find the solution. In seeking the desired material they learn to consider it critically to find what is pertinent. In determining the solution they synthesize what they have learned. Then when they have a solution, they critically evaluate it in the light of all factors. . . .

Critical thinking is most sorely needed in the world to-day. If all pupils could be taught to think critically and honestly about the things around them, advertisers and manufacturers would have to change their tactics; labor problems would be readily settled, in case they ever arose; and democratic government, from the nation to the small organization, would be most successful.24

Once again the rationalistic principle that one must possess knowledge before he can think is the intimation of Lee and Lee in the following statement:

Too often teachers presume that children can suggest the important problems involved in a unit when actually they know nothing about the area. A period of orientation, through reading, discussing, or questioning must precede any statement of problems by the pupils.25

Two subject-matter fields are mentioned in The Child and His Curriculum as being particularly related to the rationalistic system of educational theory. In the following quotation, principles of rationalism that apply to arithmetic

24 Ibid., pp. 171-172.  
25 Ibid., p. 314.
in the school are mentioned:

Arithmetic is a system of meanings to be utilized in quantitative thinking. . . .
The process of thinking employed by the child is as important as the actual product of his thought. . . .
Insight is not developed through mere repetition.

Three outstanding concepts are implied in the above principles: (1) arithmetic is a tool or an instrument for thinking, (2) the act of thinking itself is as important and valuable as the product of thought, and (3) thinking is different from memorization. Rationalistic principles are clearly implied.

As to science, the following quotations are applicable:

Procedure in science must at all times attempt to present the truth. Distortions should be avoided. All explanations by way of the mystic should be omitted. Superstitions should be noted as such.
Much time and energy must be devoted to activities which will insure significant understanding of the meaning of terms employed. The degree of success achieved depends to a large extent upon making meanings of words.27

Science, then, is an instrument for the discovery of truth, which, according to rationalism, comes from the processes of reasoning.

26Ibid., p. 434. 27Ibid., p. 462.
CHAPTER VI

IDEOALISM

Fundamental Concepts

The term "idealism" originated in the metaphysical doctrines of Plato, who believed and taught that the ultimate reality consists of pure forms or ideas, of which things observable or perceptible to man's senses are merely imperfect reflections or shadows. Hence "idea-ism" would be a more appropriate term, the "l" in "idealism" having apparently been inserted only for the sake euphony.1

The idealists isolate the meanings of things and put these meanings in a so-called spiritual world that is aloof from things, explains Dewey.2 The philosophy of idealism has to do with ideas as mental states. It holds, after careful analysis, that the only knowledge that man has of his environment is his idea of it, since environment in itself can never be known directly. "It can only be known through the intermediary ideas of a human knower. The form which the learner's knowledge takes, therefore, is bound to be in part the product of his human way of apprehending it." Concepts

1Demiashekevich, pp. 54-55. 2Dewey, p. 401.
are supplied by the mind of the human learner, and are a priori categories of thought. The idealist "builds up a hierarchy in which matter is degraded to nonexistence and spirit is elevated to the position of sole reality."

Idealism contends that the material and physical universe known to science is an incomplete expression of reality, that it exists but to subserve, and requires to complement it, a higher type of reality, a spiritual universe. Idealism also emphasizes the distinctiveness of man's nature. It attributes to him the possession of powers which issue in the form of intellectual culture, art, morality and religion. These powers and their products are peculiar to man, and differentiate him from other animals; they lie beyond the range of the positive sciences -- biological and even psychological; they raise problems which only philosophy can hope to solve, and make the only satisfactory basis of education a philosophical one.

Fundamentally, idealism is a belief in the reality of ideas:

... ideas, or concepts, are the only real entities, and ... the objects known through the senses are only copies of these ideas, "specimens of the species," as it were. Human senses are deceptive and true knowledge can be attained only through an "intellectual and abstract grasp of universals."

Reality is of the nature of mind. Even nature depends upon mind, or spirit, or idea. The philosophy of idealism simply signifies that whatever is ultimately real in the universe is such stuff as ideas are made of rather than such stuff as stones and metals are made of. That is, if we are looking for the substance of things, the true ultimate being which explains all other beings, we shall find it to be mental in nature, -- the thinker and his thought,

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3 Brubacher, p. 339.  
4 Ulrich, pp. 40-41.  
5 Rusk, pp. 94-95.  
6 Wilds, p. 184.
the will and its doings, the self and its self-expression. And whatever appears to be other than this, independent of it or hostile to it, as matter, or force or space and time, will be found to depend on the mind for its very existence.\footnote{William E. Hocking, Types of Philosophy, p. 248.}

Ultimate reality is spiritual or immaterial -- something like thought or images, something unextended in space.\footnote{Demishkevich, p. 54.}

Ideas represent any situation correctly. Truth is the agreement of statement with fact. "Ideas are not true because they work; they work, if they work at all, because they are true."\footnote{Horne, Democratic Philosophy of Education, p. 501.} This concept is in direct opposition to a fundamental principle of pragmatism which asserts that ideas are true only to the extent that they work.

"Ideas are the sole contents or stuff of our experience when we perceive things by means of the senses. The being of things consists in being perceived."\footnote{Leighton, p. 277.} Mind is not merely a recent biological acquisition of mankind, but it is a primordial stuff which is the very essence of reality itself. Since the world is the child's idea, education is a sort of world-building in which the child tries to construct an inner world-view which as nearly as possible approximates outer reality, the Absolute.\footnote{Brubacher, p. 341.}

Since the absolute is all-inclusive of everything that ever has been or ever will be, truth and goodness must be an open book to the mind of the absolute. . . . Truth and goodness set the models to which the child's learning should conform. They set the bounds of what is essential. Learning is not a creation, but a realization of the absolute idea of truth and goodness. In
the idealistic school, ideas do not become true because of the value they have for accomplishing some pupil project. Rather, ideas work well there because they are true. Their worth is intrinsic, not instrumental. They are representative of ultimate reality and are, therefore, worth learning as ends in and of themselves. Truth has always been true; it does not become true.\textsuperscript{12}

This immutable nature of truth, contained in the idealistic philosophy, is another contradiction to pragmatism. Still another departure from the pragmatic concept is the fact that the idealist's curriculum, insofar as it is composed of knowledge that is consistently true, can be made up and even learned in advance of its use. Hence, experience is not fundamental.\textsuperscript{13}

If the true reality is spiritual, if it is in the nature of thought or imagery, then our senses, which work only in conjunction with material stimuli addressing themselves to our physiological organs, cannot be the channel through which the true reality can be reached. The senses themselves are, according to the idealistic epistemology, merely confused ideas, and our problem is not to fit our perceptions to the world, but the world to our perceptions, because there exists nothing except what exists in the Absolute Mind and in our finite minds which partake, to a degree, of the Absolute Mind. What mind projects into the world is reality and the only reality there is. The external world is nothing but a landscape painted by our minds or spirits.\textsuperscript{14}

Mind is ultimately spiritual, not materialistic; it could not be otherwise when mind is conceived of as partaking of the nature of the absolute. Even body and environment are ultimately reducible to mind. Hence, any educational psychology overlooking data revealed by introspection is

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid. \textsuperscript{13}Ibid. \textsuperscript{14}Demiashkevich, p. 55.
necessarily untrustworthy. The child is more than a behaving organism that responds to the stimuli of its environment. This concept is too atomistic. Idealism stresses a certain wholeness -- nothing occurs in any part of the system that does not affect the whole.\textsuperscript{15}

Idealism . . . puts the emphasis upon mind, as in some way prior to matter. It says, in effect, if you seek for elemental things, you will find them not in matter and motion and force, but in experience, in thought, in reason, in intelligence, in personality, in values, and religious and ethical ideals. These are the world's realities and they have a cosmic rather than a mere human significance, while matter, physical bodies, and physical forces are in some way secondary, being perhaps a kind of externalization of mind or else a phenomenon or appearance to mind. . . . Idealism says that mind is real and matter just an appearance.\textsuperscript{16}

Ideas are of ultimate cosmic significance; they are more than mere mental states; they are rather

the essences or archetypes which give form to the cosmos. They are the immaterial molds into which all matter is cast. They are the ideals or standards by which the things of sense are to be judged. While matter is known through the senses, its idea or principle is grasped by the mind.\textsuperscript{17}

Idealism asserts that freedom of the will exists. In his choices and decisions man can defy adverse external mechanical factors, and naturally wishes to do so. What is still more important, man is capable of inner freedom. A tyrannous political power or a slave driver can by torture or by menace of it force the subject or the slave to do almost anything against his will, and appear cheerful and pleased in doing it; but the oppressed and mistreated ones cannot be forced to enjoy in their heart of hearts their abject condition or to believe the oppressor a good man.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{15}Brubacher, pp. 341-342.  \textsuperscript{16}Patrick, p. 211.

\textsuperscript{17}Brubacher, p. 338.  \textsuperscript{18}Demiashkevich, p. 57.
Since the ideas that condition the very pattern of the world in which the child lives are held to be in fixed and final form, they must necessarily constitute the essentials of his education. Inevitably, they become the backbone of the curriculum, a "must" program for the school.  

The idealist in Education, believing that the intangible values are the ultimate and eternal realities, will also emphasize the spiritual aspects of experience, insisting that knowledge, art, morality and religion are the aspects of life of supreme moment.

Idealism is akin to Aristotle in declaring that what a developing organism is to become, the organism already latently is. The idea or ideal toward which his mind matures must potentially exist within the child before he starts to learn. Learning merely makes definite what formerly was inchoate.

Idealism does not mean, as the man in the street thinks, that nothing exists outside the perceiving subject; but that a goodly part of every object is created by the forms of perception and understanding: we know the object as transformed into idea; what it is before being so transformed we cannot know.

Certain principles of idealism were responsible for many of the educational innovations of the nineteenth century. Among these were this philosophy's high regard for individuality and freedom in education, and its conception of an activity program that should be voluntaristic and developmental.

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19 Brubacher, p. 339.  
20 Rusk, p. 109.  
21 Brubacher, p. 339.  
22 Durant, p. 297.  
23 Brubacher, p. 338.
Analysis of Curriculum Principles
in Terms of Idealism

In terms of idealism, the authors of The Child and His Curriculum suggest a number of curriculum principles that are applicable to this philosophy in the educational program of the modern school. A few of the most significant ones will be mentioned here.

A free and active curriculum, involving ideas and materials interesting to the child and within his comprehension, helps to develop a happy, secure, and useful type of person, whereas the formal, rigid procedure dependent largely on memorization of facts is apt to kill interest and initiative, and because much of it is beyond his comprehension, it leads to insecurity.24

In this passage the value of ideas in the educational program is emphasized in relation to the development of the individual child. Ideas form the fundamental elements of the idealistic philosophy, which is therefore intimately present in the above excerpt.

The idealist has two interpretations of creative experience which are self-explanatory in their implications of idealistic philosophy:

In the broad sense it includes the making of new interpretations and the seeing of new relationships in thinking and learning. In the more restricted sense it is the interpretation of one's own ideas, thoughts, and feelings into a tangible form which is original with the person concerned.25

Also, "Experiences should be so selected and guided as . . .

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24Lee and Lee, p. 495.  
25Ibid., p. 538.
to enlarge the child's understanding of important concepts. Generalities that are comprehensible to the learner should first be presented in introducing a project or unit of learning. Particulars can later be learned without effort and without memorization.

If the child sees the plan or general nature of the material, the details then seem natural and become an integrated part of the whole – that is, the more easily and readily the child sees meaning, the easier is the learning. Material that has a plan -- material so related that the pupil understands and appreciates the relationship -- is readily learned.

Much time and energy must be devoted to activities which will insure significant understanding of the meaning of terms employed. The degree of success achieved depends to a large extent upon making meanings of words.

Real interest ... is self-motivated activity that takes place when a person has an active purpose of his own, sees the steps necessary to attain it, and finds those steps as well as the final aim largely within his experience, power, and needs. In other words, the child must have a goal, see the vital relationships in the steps leading to that goal, and be free and able to accomplish them.

If they have meaningful content, general principles, plans, and ideas are more readily learned and less easily forgotten. "Details have meaning only as they are seen in relation to the larger idea or principle."

Creative thinking and learning may be in terms of any concepts and material. It constitutes the seeing of a new relationship, the recognition of a new meaning or the making of a new interpretation. Likewise, the expression of creative ideas may be through

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26 Ibid., pp. 172-173.  27 Ibid., pp. 143-144.  28 Ibid., p. 462.  29 Ibid., p. 130.  30 Ibid., p. 143.
any of the various media of expression. It may be spoken or written, in prose or in verse; sung or played on a musical instrument; pictured through any of the wide variety of art media; expressed through bodily activity, as rhythms, the dance, or pantomime, or through combinations of these as in dramatization. . . .

Creative expression cannot take place without ideas and thoughts to express. Since one cannot create something out of nothing, it goes without saying that the wider and richer the background, the greater the creative possibilities. The reorganization of experience requires experience to reorganize. Thus, the wider the experience, and the greater the wealth of facts and concepts, the greater may be the creative activity.31

The writer believes that the idealistic implications in the material quoted in the above passages are apparent and require no further elaboration.

31 Ibid., pp. 539-540.
CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

The writer believes that a few general statements by way of summary will serve to crystallize the main findings brought out in this investigation of five fundamental educational philosophies as reflected in modern curriculum development. To this end, the investigator recalls that:

1. Some of the fundamental principles of the philosophy of pragmatism are as follows: experience is learning; the workability of theories is a test of their validity; truth is not fixed and eternal, but varies with persons, situations, and the application of ideas to the solution of problems; information does not become knowledge until it is used practically; participation in society is one of the most important ways in which education takes place, and society itself is a mode of shared experiences; the test of the truth and validity of all thinking is to be found in its practical consequences; ideas are meaningless apart from the activities to which they lead; all effort should be purposeful, pupil-planned, and satisfactory in outcome.

2. The book by Lee and Lee, The Child and His Curriculum,
emphasizes a number of pragmatic elements in its development of curriculum principles. Chief among these is the value of experience in learning; time after time the need for worthwhile learning activities and experiences in real-life situations is stressed. The need for satisfying outcomes for all activities is also frequently mentioned. Haphazard, hit-or-miss techniques of teaching and learning are definitely deplored, and the necessity for having purposes and goals to guide all activity is pointed out in more than one instance by these authors. Another significant item in the pragmatic philosophy is the extensive treatment of the principle that problem-solving is necessary if learning is to take place to any appreciable degree.

3. Instrumentalism as an educational philosophy holds that intelligence is "an active organizing principle" whose successful operation is an instrument of control that governs behavior; thought is an instrument of readaptation; mind, ideas, and intelligence are instruments for attaining certain ends, or removing difficulties and perplexities; values themselves are instrumental; education should concern itself with immediate problems and needs, with a view to assisting the pupils to become adjusted to and to develop a sense of security in their social groups and in the world; emphasis should be placed upon the immediately practical, usable studies.

4. Lee and Lee treat the unit, activity, or class project
as an instrument in the performance of two significant functions of education -- a more thorough adaptation to social and physical environment, and a harmonious adjustment to social situations. The mastery of certain tools of knowledge that contribute to individual efficiency in a world of people is held to be important. The curriculum itself is conceived of as an instrument that contributes to the development of well-rounded personalities.

5. Humanism is a democratic philosophy advocating freedom of thought, self-expression, and creative activity; it strives for the expression of the individual personality. It holds human welfare, individually and collectively, to be the important thing in life, and fosters those studies and procedures that liberate human intelligence and human sympathy; it contends that whatever satisfies human nature as a whole is true. The "good" is the pleasant or the desirable or the beneficial.

6. Lee and Lee mention a number of humanistic principles, among which are the following: frequent mention is made of the fact that the school should enable the child "to understand and practice desirable social relationships." The need for the co-operative effort of children in social undertakings is emphasized. The unit of work itself should "provide opportunities for the socialization of pupils." And, further, the entire scope of learning experiences should be so selected
and guided as to result in "socialized human beings."

7. Rationalism is the belief that reason directly influences conduct. True knowledge comes from thought itself, from the activity of reason. The human reasoning power is the supreme regulator of life. Reasoning is a mode of response to stimuli only to the extent that the action in which it culminates is successful. Man's efficient functioning in society depends to a considerable degree upon his ability to think his way through and out of his problems.

8. One important objective of education, according to Lee and Lee, is "to cultivate the habit of critical thinking." This certainly is a rationalistic principle through and through. Reasoning, these writers say, if it is to be most effective, must be in connection with actual situations that present challenging problems to the individual. Knowledge comes from experience and is, in turn, necessary to the processes of reasoning.

9. Idealism is a philosophical belief that the ultimate reality consists of ideas, of which things perceptible to the human senses are merely imperfect reflections or shadows. The only knowledge that man has of anything is his idea of it, and ideas alone are real. "Ideas are not true because they work; they work, if they work at all, because they are true." Truth is unchangeable.

10. Lee and Lee, in The Child and His Curriculum, repeatedly emphasize the value that ideas and concepts have in
relation to the development of the individual child. Learning experiences, they point out, should be so guided and developed that they will enlarge and crystallize the child's understanding of important concepts.

Conclusion

In the light of the material surveyed in pursuit of this study, a brief summary of which has been given above, the writer is led to conclude that:

1. The authors, Lee and Lee, in their book, The Child and His Curriculum, are predominantly pragmatic in their approach to the study of the curriculum and its relationship to the learner. More pragmatic principles were discovered in their writing than was true of any other philosophy. This is particularly striking in view of the fact that humanism and instrumentalism are phases of pragmatism and may be considered as pragmatic philosophies.

2. No significant inconsistencies in their philosophical approach to the curriculum were discovered in the work of these writers. The principles of rationalism and idealism that they point out can easily be interpreted in conformity to the pragmatic philosophy of education.

3. Although elements from numerous philosophies are reflected to some extent in modern curricula, the present-day school tends to be pragmatic, both in theory and in practice.
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