

## Quotations from Philosophers of Education

### John Locke

“The well educating of their children is so much the duty and concern of parents, and the welfare and prosperity of the nation so much depends on it...”

#### Vice

“...the early corruption of youth is now become so general a complaint...”

“Vice, if we may believe the general complaint, ripens so fast nowadays...”

#### Health, Reason, Virtue

“How necessary health is to our business and happiness, and how requisite a strong constitution, able to endure hardships and fatigue,...is too obvious to need any proof.”

“...they dare venture to consult their own reason in the education of their children rather than wholly to rely upon old custom.”

“...everyone has a concern in a future life, which he is bound to look after.”

“Due care being had to keep the body in strength and vigor so that it may be able to obey and execute the orders of the mind, the next and principal business is to set the mind right, that on all occasions it may be disposed to consent to nothing but what may be suitable to the dignity and excellency of a rational creature.”

“And the great principle and foundation of all virtue and worth is placed in this, that a man is able to deny himself his own desires, cross his own inclinations, and purely follow what reason directs as best though the appetite leans the other way.”

“For I advise their parents and governors always to carry this in their minds, that children are to be treated as rational creatures.”

“Virtue is harder to be got than a knowledge of the world.”

“I place virtue as the first and most necessary of those endowments that belong to a man...”

“Try all things, hold fast that which is good.”

## **Habit and Imitation**

“...only practice that improves our minds as well as bodies and we must expect nothing from our understandings any farther than they are perfected by habits.”

“The great thing to be minded in education is what habits you settle.”

“...nothing sinking so gently and so deep into men’s minds as *example*.”

“...natural endowments...to be the product of exercise and to be raised to that pitch only by repeated actions.

## **Children and Pedagogy**

“...and he that has found a way to keep up a child’s spirit, easy, active, and free and at the same time to restrain him from many things he has a mind to and to draw him to things that are uneasy to him, he, I say, that knows how to reconcile these seeming contradictions has in my opinion has got the true secret of education.”

“We are born to be...rational creatures, but it is use and exercise only that makes us so, and we are indeed so no farther than industry and application has carried us.”

“Children are strangers to all we are acquainted with; and all the things they meet with, are at first unknown to them, as they once were to us.”

“Curiosity should be as carefully cherished in children as other appetites suppressed....The naive and untaught suggestions of inquisitive children, do often offer things that may set a considering man’s thoughts on work. And I think there is frequently more to be learned from the unexpected questions of a child, than the discourses of man...”

“...you think it worthwhile to hazard your son’s Innocence and Virtue for a little Greek and Latin.”

“...and so proceeding by gentle and insensible steps, children without confusion and amazement will have their understandings open and their thoughts extended farther than could have been expected...have a care still that you do not clog him with too much at once....”

“Children generally hate to be idle...for they long to be busy, and the change and variety is that which naturally delights them...you must make what you would have them do a recreation to them and not a business. All the plays and the versions of children should be directed towards good and useful habits.”

“I have always had a fancy that learning might be made a play and recreation to children...he may learn to read without knowing how he did so...They quickly go

weary of the same thing, and so have almost their whole delight in change and variety. It is a contradiction to the natural state of childhood for them to fix their fleeting thoughts.”

“I confess this needs patience and skill, gentleness and attention and a prudent conduct to attain this at first.”

“For a child will learn three times as much when he is in tuned...yet it is of great moment and worth of our endeavors to teach the mind to get mastery over itself...”

“Children should very seldom be corrected by blows.”

“Keep the mind in easy calm temper when you would have it receive your instruction or any increase of knowledge. It is as impossible to draw fair and regular characters on a trembling mind as on a shaking paper....he should make the child comprehend (as much as may be) the usefulness of what he teaches him and let him see by what he has learned that he can do something which he could not do before.”

“...make them in love with the company of their parents.”

“Give them first one simple idea, and see that they take it right and perfectly comprehend it before you go any farther, and then add some other simple idea which lies next in your way to what you aim at; and so proceeding by gentle and insensible steps, children without confusion and amazement will have their understandings open and their thoughts extended farther than could have been expected. And when anyone has learned anything himself, there is no such way to fix it in his memory and to encourage him to get on as to set him to teach it others.”

“When anyone has learned anything himself, there is no such way to fix it in his memory and to encourage him to go on as to let him to teach it to others.”

“Recreation is as necessary as labor or food....We should be often unbent; and he that will make a good use of any part of his life must be allowed a large portion of it to recreation.”

“Esteem and disgrace are, of all the others, the most powerful incentives to the mind...”

“A lasting continued attention is one of the hardest tasks that can be imposed on them.”

“...children (earlier perhaps than we think) are very sensible of praise and commendation.”

“And as they grow in Years, they will grow in Attention and Application.”

## **Human Nature, Temperament, Individual Differences**

“Each man’s mind has some peculiarities, as well as his face, that distinguishes him from all others; “

“We are born with faculties and powers capable of almost anything.”

“The right improvement and exercise of our Reason being the highest perfection, that a man can attain to in this life.”

“A mind free and master of itself and all its actions, not low and narrow, not haughty and insolent, not blemished with any great defect, is what everyone is taken with.”

“Some men by the unalterable frame of their constitutions are *stout*, others *timorous*, some *confident*, others *modest*, *tractable* or *obstinate*, *curious* or *careless*, *quick* or *slow*. There are not more differences in men’s faces and the outward lineaments of their bodies than there are in the makes and tempers of their minds;...”

“We must not hope wholly to change their original tempers nor make the gay pensive and grave, nor the melancholy sportive, without spoiling them. God has stamped certain characters upon men’s minds, which like their shapes, may perhaps be a little mended but can hardly be totally altered and transformed into the contrary. He, therefore, that is about children should well study their natures and aptitudes...For in many cases all that we can do or should aim at is to make the best of what nature has given,...Everyone’s natural genius should be carried as far as it could,...”

## **Education’s Enemies**

“The love of power and dominion shows itself very early...all injustice generally springing from the great love of ourselves and too little of others...Covetousness...being the root of all evil should be early and carefully weeded out...since we are all, even from our cradles, vain and proud creatures.”

“If some defect in his constitution has cast a damp on his mind, and he be naturally listless and dreaming, this unpromising disposition is none of the easiest to be dealt with;...For where there is no desire, there will be no industry.”

“For the custom of tormenting and killing of beasts will, by degrees, harden their minds even towards men; and they who delight in the suffering and destruction of inferior creatures will not be apt to be very compassionate or benign to those of their own kind.”

“All the entertainment and talk of history is of nothing almost but fighting and killing; and the honor and renown that is bestowed on conquerors (who for the

most part are but the great butchers of mankind) farther mislead growing youth, who by this means come to think slaughter the laudable business of mankind and the most heroic of virtues. By these steps, unnatural cruelty is planted in us....”

“They frequently learn from unbred and debauched servants such language, untoward tricks, and vices as otherwise they probably would be ignorant of all their lives.”

### **Social/Emotional Education**

“...civility being, in truth, nothing but a care not to show any slighting or contempt of anyone in conversation...There cannot be greater rudeness than to interrupt another in the current of his discourse.”

“And indeed I think people should be accustomed from their cradles to be tender to all sensible creatures, and to spoil or waste nothing at all...to instill sentiments of humanity.”

“But affectation of all kinds wheresoever it proceeds, is always offensive.”

“Children (nay, and man too) do most by example. We are all a sort of chameleons that still take a tincture from things near us.”

“Tis not good husbandry to make his fortune rich, and his mind poor.”

## **Jean-Jacques Rousseau**

### **Books I-III**

“Childhood is unknown.”

“The bother of children, which is believed to be a importunity, becomes pleasant. It makes the father and mother more necessary, dearer to one another; it tightens the conjugal bond between them....Let women once again become mothers, men will soon become fathers and husbands again.”

“Harden their bodies against the intemperance of seasons, climates, elements; against hunger, thirst, fatigue.”

“The wise Locke, who spent a part of his life in the study of medicine, strongly recommends never using drugs on children either as a precaution or for slight discomforts.”

“Our didactic and pedantic craze is always to teach children what they would learn much better by themselves....”

“...how can one without indignation see poor unfortunates submitted to an unbearable yoke and condemned to continual labor like galley slaves, without any assurance that so many efforts will ever be useful to them? The age of gaiety passes amidst tears, punishments, threats, and slavery.”

“Men, be humane. Love childhood; promote its games, its pleasures, its amiable instincts...Why do you want to fill with bitterness and pains these first years which go by so rapidly and can return no more for them than they can for you.”

“Thus the words *obey* and *command* will be proscribed from his lexicon, and even more so *duty* and *obligation*.”

“To reason with children was Locke’s great maxim. It is the one most in vogue today. Its success, however, does not appear to me such as to establish its reputation; and, as for me, I see nothing more stupid than these children who have been reasoned with so much.”

“Childhood has its ways of seeing, thinking, and feeling which are proper to it. Nothing is less sensible than to want to substitute ours for theirs.”

“Besides a constitution, common to the species, every child at its birth possesses a peculiar temperament which determines its genius and character;...”

“Do not give your pupil any kind of verbal lessons; he ought to receive them only from experience.”

“There is no original perversity in the human heart.”

“Dare I expose the greatest, the most important, the most useful rule of all education? It is not to gain time but to lose it. Common readers, pardon me my paradoxes. When one reflects, they are necessary and whatever you may say, I prefer to be a paradoxical man than a prejudiced one.”

“One must know well the particular genius of the child in order to know what moral diet suits him. Let childhood ripen in children....Each mind has its own form, according to which it needs to be governed.”

“...I want to raise Emile in the country far from the rabble of valets—who are, after their masters, the lowest of men—far from the black morals of cities which are covered with a veneer seductive and contagious for children,...”

“Respect childhood,...You are alarmed to see him consume his early years in doing nothing. What? Is it nothing to be happy? Is it nothing to jump, play, and run all day? He will never be so busy in his life.

"It is easy to put into their mouths the words *kings, empires, wars, conquests, revolutions, laws*. But if it is a question of attaching distinct ideas to these words there is a long way..."

"Reading is the plague of childhood and almost the only occupation we know how to give it. At twelve Emile will hardly know what a book is. But, it will be said, he certainly must at least know how to read. I agree. He must know how to read when reading is useful to him; up to then it is only good for boring him."

"Present interest—that is the great mover, the only one which leads surely and far."

"Young teacher, I am preaching a difficult art to you, that of governing without precepts and doing everything by doing nothing."

"In general, children are overdressed, especially during their early age. They should be hardened to cold rather than to heat."

"Children must sleep long because their exercise is extreme."

"He does not know what routine, custom, or habit is. What he did yesterday does not influence what he does today. He never follows a formula, does not give way before authority or example, and acts and speaks only as it suits him."

"Let him know something not because you told it to him but because he has understood it himself. Let him not learn science but discover it. If ever you substitute in his mind authority for reason, he will no longer reason."

"Remember always that the spirit of my education consists not in teaching the child many things, but in never letting anything but accurate and clear ideas enter his brain....Reason and judgment come slowly; prejudices come in crowds."

"An error difficult to avoid is always to assume the child has the same taste for the activities about which the master is enthusiastic."

"I absolutely want Emile to learn a trade. A decent trade at least....All things well considered, the trade I would most like to be to my pupil's taste is the carpenter's. It is clean; it is useful; it can be practiced at home.."

"Moreover, let there never be any comparisons with other children, no rivals, no competitors, not even in running, once he has begun to be able to reason."

"I hate books. They only teach one to talk about what one does not know."

"Since we absolutely must have books, there exists one which, to my taste, provides the most felicitous treatise on natural education. This book will be the first that my Emile will read. For a long time it will alone compose his whole library...What, then,

is this marvelous book? Is it Aristotle? Is it Pliny? Is it Buffon? No. It is *Robinson Crusoe*. Robinson Crusoe on his island, alone, deprived of the assistance of his kind and the instruments of all the arts, providing nevertheless for his subsistence..."

#### **Book IV**

"I have always seen that young people who are corrupted early and given over to women and debauchery are inhuman and cruel."

"Thus what makes man essentially good is to have few needs and to compare himself little to others; what makes him essentially wicked is to have many needs and to depend very much on opinion."

"We have a very precise history of peoples who are destroying themselves; what we lack is the history of peoples who are thriving....If it is only the wicked who are famous; the good are forgotten or made ridiculous. And this is how history, like philosophy, ceaselessly calumniates mankind....Unhappily, Thucydides always speaks of war; and one sees in his narratives almost nothing but the least instructive thing in the worlds—that is, battles."

"It exhibits only the public man who has dressed himself to be seen. It does not follow him in his home, in his study, in his family, among his friends. It depicts him only when he plays a role. It depicts his costume far more than his person....Plutarch excels in these very details into which we no longer dare to enter. He has an inimitable grace at depicting great men in small things."

"The greatest idea of the divinity comes to us from reason alone."

"I also admit that the majesty of the Scriptures amazes me, and that the holiness of the Gospel speaks to my heart."

#### **Book V**

"Once this principle is established, it follows that woman is made especially to please man....If a woman is made to please and be subjugated, she ought to make herself agreeable to man instead of arousing him....From this there arises attack and defense, the audacity of one sex and the timidity of the other, and finally the modesty and the shame with which nature armed the weak in order to enslave the strong."

"Boys seek movement and noise: drums, boots, little carriages. Girls prefer what presents itself to sight and is useful for ornamentation: mirrors, jewels, dresses, particularly dolls. The doll is the special entertainment of this sex."

"From this habitual constraint comes a docility which women need all their lives, since they never cease to be subjected either to a man or to the judgements of men"



and they are never permitted to put themselves above these judgements. The first and most important quality of a woman is gentleness. As she is made to obey a being who is so imperfect, often so full of vices, and always so full of defects as man, she ought to learn early to endure even injustice and to bear a husband's wrongs without complaining."

"Women have flexible tongues; they talk sooner, more easily, and more attractively than men."

### **E. D. Hirsch**

***Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*** (Vintage Books, 1988)

"To grasp the words on a page we have to know a lot of information that isn't set down on the page." (p.3)

"...faulty policy in the schools is the chief cause of deficient literacy." (p.20)

"As a child of eleven, I turned against the conservative views of my family and the Southern community in which I grew up, precisely because I had been given a traditional education and was therefore literate enough to read Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*, an epic-making book in my life." (p.24)

"Young children enjoy absorbing formulaic knowledge." (p.28)

"At an early age when our memories are most retentive, children have an almost instinctive urge to learn specific tribal traditions. At that age they seem to be fascinated by catalogues of information and are eager to master the materials that authenticate their membership in an adult society." (p.30)

"Like children everywhere, American children need information at a very early age." (p.31)

"A consistent lack of necessary information can make the reading process so laborious and uncommunicative that it fails to convey meaning." (p. 60)

"...Many more students could become highly literate if they were presented with the right sort of curriculum, particularly in their early years." (p. 116)

"We need readers that contain a much larger proportion of non-fictional materials, as well as a larger proportion of traditional myths and stories...Young children are fascinated by straight-forward information and absorb it without strain." (p. 131)

"Facts and skills are inseparable. There is no insurmountable reason why those who advocate the teaching of higher order skills and those who advocate the teaching of common traditional content should not join forces." (p.133)

***The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them*** (Anchor Books, 1999)

"I would label myself a political liberal and an educational conservative, or perhaps more accurately, an educational pragmatist." (p.6)

"Psychological research has shown that the ability to learn something new depends on an ability to accommodate the new thing to the already known." (p.23)

"But against the principle of local autonomy must be weighed the paramount principles of education excellence and social fairness." (p.33)

"Pragmatists like me...prefer a mixture of naturalistic and more direct instructional methods." (p.51)

"Rousseau may have written *Emile* in the suburbs of Paris, but his greatest influence on educational philosophy has been outside France, on such Romantic thinkers as Pestalozzi, Herbart, and Froebel and, through them, American educational professionals." (p.81)

"...the Romantic emphasis on the importance of play in early education is accepted by educational systems throughout the world..." (p.84)

"One finding of neurobiology is that all learnings require effort...effort and persistence are needed to for almost all secondary learning." (p.87-89)

"Emerson was the elitist, Horace Mann the true democrat...Today, the Enlightenment view of the value of knowledge is the only view we can afford."(p.113)

"Listening, like reading, is far from being a passive, purely receptive activity." (p. 134)

"...A chief aim in the elementary grades is to help students automate the maximum number of basic processes in reading, writing, and mathematics." (p.141)

"Cognitive science has shown that higher-order thinking requires both breadth of factual knowledge and points of depth as well....The best tool for higher order thinking is intellectual capital—that is, to know a lot, not just facts but also the domain-appropriate procedures and strategies for dealing with them." (p.158)

"Automating word recognition leaves the mind free to focus on comprehension." (p. 164).

"...classes should often begin with a review of an analogy which connects the new topic with knowledge students already have." (p.165)

“Within the general context of focused and guided instruction, my own general preference, and one followed by good teachers in many lands is for what might be called “dramatized instruction.” (p.174)

“Learning requires effort. Tests that carry high consequences have been shown over and over again to act as spurs to effort...” (p.178)

“It has been shown convincingly that tests and grades strongly contribute to effective teaching.” (p.181)

“...effort and learning have declined wherever grades and tests have been abolished.” (p.245)

Cooperative learning “has not been effective when used as the principle or exclusive means of instructing.” (p.247)

“Common sense and cognitive psychology also support the Jeffersonian view that critical thinking always depends on factual knowledge.” (p.247)

“The learning processes involve in the unnatural skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic are inherently slow at first, then speed up cumulatively and exponentially.” (p.249)

“Facts are central to ‘higher-order skills.’” (p.253)

“Antiverbal prejudices spell disaster for disadvantaged students, who have not been exposed to a breadth of verbal learning outside the school.” (p.253)

“Individual differences: a phrase reflecting the admirable desire to combine mass schooling with respect for diversity and individuality.” (p.253)

“This interactive, whole-class pedagogy is then supplemented by small group, cooperative learning, by moderate individual seatwork, and by individual coaching.” (p. 255)

“Effective teachers have always taught through a diversity of approaches.” (p.256)

“In most cases, the balance between depth and breadth is a subject of a complex judgment that takes into account subject matter, the purpose, and the stage of schooling.” (p.258)

“The concept [MI] has become highly popular, probably because it fits in with the already popular notions of ‘individual differences, individual learning styles, self-paced learning,’ and so on, not to mention its appeal to our benign hope for all children that they will be good at doing something and happy doing it.” (p.260-261)

“There is no evidence that a well-stocked and a well-equipped mind can be displaced by ‘assessing skills.’” (p.265)

“It is better for students to think for themselves than merely to repeat what they have been told. For all these reasons rote learning is inferior to learning that is internalized and can be expressed in the student’s own words.” (p.266)

“Few would dissent from the aim of teaching for understanding.” (p.268)

***The Knowledge Deficit: Closing the Shocking Education Gap for American Children*** (Houghton Mifflin, 2007)

“...We should not overlook the much more significant unfairness of the knowledge gap between children from different economic strata. (Nor should we overlook the other knowledge gap, here called the ‘knowledge deficit,’ between the majority of American students and those who attend more coherent systems of schooling in other nations.)” (p. xii)

“Reading ability correlates with almost everything that a democratic education aims to provide, including the ability to be an informed citizen who can actively participate in the self-government of a democracy.” (p.3).

“There is little in the human organism that prepares us naturally for alphabetic reading and writing (decoding and encoding), which have been very late and rare attainments . The inherent unnaturalness of learning to read is part of the reason that it is at first so difficult and, for many, so painful.” (p.8)

“To those who argue that the solution lies in hiring better teachers, I respond that much of the talk about low teacher quality is misplaced.” (p. 16)

“Let’s take another example against formalism. School children all over the nation recite the Pledge of Allegiance, and gradually many of them begin to understand it. When they do, they construct an accurate situation model from the words.” (p. 43)

“The effective teaching of reading will require schools to teach the diverse, enabling knowledge that reading requires.” (p. 74)

“From the standpoint of progress and language right now, schools themselves should try to become supereffective middle class homes. If we can do that, higher school achievement and greater equity will be the result.” (p.86)

“Some people blame ineffective teachers for our poor showing over time on international comparisons. But so-called low teacher quality is not an innate characteristic of American teachers. It is a consequence of the training they have received and of the vague, incoherent curricula they are given to teach...” (p. 83-4)

“This combination of forces—the anticontent ideas of the teaching profession and the let’s-change-America culture of many intellectuals—has for several decades been delaying a descriptive approach to deciding what needs to be taught if children are to be able to read with comprehension.” (p.122)

***Making of Americans: Democracy in Our Schools*** (Yale University Press, 2009)

“To equalize opportunity through schooling is to create competent and loyal citizens.” (p.xii)

“A lack of knowledge, both civic and general, is the most significant deficit in most American students’ education.” (p.11)

“My research has led me to understand that reading and writing require unspoken background knowledge silently assumed.” (p.12)

“Progressivism...could more accurately called the anti-curriculum movement.” (p.27)

“Their main emphasis shifted to the individual student’s personal development. It was as if the public school had decided to train students more for private than public life.” (p.31)

“Students need to leave school with a good understanding of the civic principles under which the United States operates and with an emotional commitment to making this political experiment continue to work.” (p.76)

“It takes many exposures to a word to gain a confidence sense of its potential connotations. The slow cumulativness of vocabulary growth cannot be overemphasized...children learn a tiny bit each day about hundreds of words.” (p.142)

“We go to school for many years partly because it takes so long to build up vast general knowledge and vocabulary. We need to become mature readers.” (p.161)

“Wide knowledge and a large vocabulary—the prerequisite to achievement in high school—are gradual accretions.” (p.167)

“...enriched by the humane traditions of pedagogical practice that the child-centered movement introduced.” (p. 188)

**Howard Gardner**

***Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*** (Basic Books 1999)

“In the West more support for the view...that intelligence is inborn.” (p. 15)

“...more sense to think of the brain as harboring an indefinite number of intellectual capacities...a highly differentiated organ.” (p.20)

“What it means to be intelligent is a profound philosophical question.” (p. 22)

“...challenging the widespread belief...that intelligence is a single faculty and that one is either ‘smart’ or ‘stupid’ across the board.” (p. 34)

“I have no objection if one speaks about eight or nine talents or abilities.” (p. 83)

“I do not doubt that human abilities and human differences have a genetic basis.” (p. 87)

“Taking human differences seriously lies at the heart of MI perspective and how people acquire and represent knowledge.” (p. 91)

“Unfortunately throughout human history, the schooling of choice has been uniform.” (p. 150)

“No one can educate students effectively if most of the students come from homes that are seriously troubled.” (p. 192)

“...the actual intelligences are identified and delineated on the basis of empirical findings from brain science, psychology, anthropology and other relevant disciplines.” (p. 185)

***The Disciplined Mind: Beyond Facts and Standardized Tests, The K-12 Education That Every Child Deserves*** (Penguin Books, 2000)

“A discipline is a distinctive way of thinking about the world and a distinctive way of analyzing it.” (p.xiv)

“...disciplinary knowledge and understanding are entirely different from the memorization and regurgitation of facts and information that characterizes what I have termed ‘subjectivity’...(p.xiv)

“The understandings of the disciplines represent the most important cognitive achievements of human beings. It is necessary to come to know these understandings if we are to be fully human, to live in our time, to be able to understand it to the best of our abilities, and to build upon it.” (p.11)

“It should be evident that I believe even less in ‘core knowledge’ or cultural literacy; not only is this an idle pursuit, but it conveys a view of learning that is at best superficial and at worst anti-intellectual...”(p. 24)

“I am a demon for high standards and demanding expectations.” (p. 25)

“Education has the focus on the approximately half of one’s ultimate accomplishments that are due to nongenetic, environmental factors.” (p.51)

“In short, schools must be individualized and personalized.” (p. 72)

“...people may be most motivated to learn when they undertake activities for which they have some talent.” (p. 76-77)

“With most scientists, I acknowledge the surprising large role played by heredity and performance achieved by human beings.” (p. 82-3)

“We want all students to acquire basic facts and basic literacies...”Yet many of us also want youngsters to go beyond these elementary capacities—not only because they can thus grapple with more complex and subtle ideas but also because the world of work will increasingly require them to go beyond basic competencies. Recently, psychologists have explored the so-called higher cognitive functions—problem-solving, problem-finding, planning, reflecting, creativity, and deeper understanding.” (p. 87)

“...it amounts to a hodgepodge of concepts and facts.” (p. 118)

“Teachers need to feel expert, and they need to embody expertise in the eyes of their students...Education for understanding is difficult to pursue without a cohort of teachers who are committed to understanding for themselves as well as for their charges.” (p. 133-4).

“To be an informed member of our world today, one needs to have background knowledge...But what one needs is of far more importance: some understanding of what is implied by these names, terms, and concepts.” (p. 184)

“Hirsch believes that education is basically about acquiring information...I believe that the purpose of education is to master the fundamental ways of knowing.” (p. 257)

“I see motivation arising intrinsically...Hirsch believes motivation arises...from a healthy dosage of testing with its concomitant pains and reinforcements.” (p. 257-8)

“I am asking a lot of teachers.” (p. 259)

***5 Minds for the Future*** (Harvard Business Press, 2008)

“Human beings did not evolve over the millennia in order to have accurate explanations of the physical, biological, or social worlds.” (p. 23)

“The young child overgeneralizes; the older child prefers to resist generalizations even when they may be apt.” (p.65)

“The United States has moved towards uniform curricula, texts, and standards, while progressively tinted education (which I personally favor) is on the defensive.” (p.86)

“The insights from sociobiology and evolutionary psychology are genuine.” (p. 105)

“...I do concur with Harris that one of the most important functions assumed by parents is the determination of the peer group.” (p. 133)

***The Unschooled Mind: How Children Think and How Schools Should Teach*** (Basic Books, 2004)

“Stated simply, I believe that the primary intellectual mission ought to be to inculcate in students the capacities to think in the ways that characterize the major scholarly disciplines.” (p.xiii)

“Moreover, the more factual the information that one needs to master, the less likely that anything else will be learned. This is the major problem with the “cultural literary” approach embraced by E. D. Hirsch, who argues that school curricular should largely be organized around facts, definitions, and numbers. An education in the disciplines is an entirely different matter. A discipline is a distinctive way of thinking about the world and a distinctive way of analyzing it.” (p.xiii)

“A historian attempts to reconstruct the past, principally using written documents but also graphic and other forms of information. He considers people’s motives and goals and he tries to recreate the issues that they face. He assumes as well that there are larger forces over which individuals have little control. He knows that history cannot be repeated and that any reconstruction is necessarily incomplete and tentative. He also knows that each generation must write its own history, and although he benefits from earlier efforts, these do not relieve him of the necessity of creating his own historical account.” (p.xiv)

“They constitute anything but natural ways of thinking. That is because human beings evolved so that they can reproduce and remain on the planet; we did not evolve to have accurate theories about the world.” (p.xiv)

“The understandings of the disciplines represent the most important cognitive achievements of human beings. It is necessary to come to know these understandings if we are to be fully human, to live in our time, to be able to understand it to the best of our abilities, and to build upon it.” (p.11)



“Students learn in ways that are identifiably distinctive. The broad spectrum of students—and perhaps the society as a whole—would be better served if disciplines could be presented in a number of ways and learning could be assessed through a variety of means.” (p.12)

“For example, instead of cultural literacy, we may need to call for understandings shared by all students; and instead of local control of educational policy, we may need to embrace single, nationwide standards whereby these understandings can be authentically assessed.” (p.19)

“The contrast between mimetic and transformative modes is clearly related to another, perhaps more familiar contrast—between an emphasis on basic skills and an emphasis on creativity.” (p.119)

“Today, the modern secular school is encountered all over the world. In such a school, the religious, moral, and political messages that dominated (and also sustained) earlier schooling have receded in importance.” (p. 131)

“Ideally, these concepts are presented so that students will be able to apply them in new contexts; all too frequently, however, they are treated simply as lists of words to be memorized—instances of inert knowledge.” (p.132)

“Education—indeed, even education for understanding—can flourish under such circumstances. In most cases, however, school teaching at least below the secondary or higher levels, is considered a low prestige occupation, and those charged with the education of the young may have only modest intellectual abilities and pedagogical skills. The gifted women who might have gone (or perhaps would have been forced to go) into teaching two generations ago are now attracted to higher paying, more prestigious positions, depriving the schools of a cohort that was of enormous value in the past.” (p.141)

“Hence the challenge for the educator is threefold: (1) to introduce these often difficult or counterintuitive notions to the students; (2) to make sure that this new knowledge is ultimately synthesized with earlier ideas, if they are congruent with one another; (3) to ensure that the newer disciplinary content supplements previously held conceptions or stereotypes that would in some way collide with or undermine the new forms of knowledge. At last we can confront directly the primary reasons why school is difficult. It is difficult, first, because much of the material presented in school strikes many students as alien, if not pointless, and the kinds of supporting context provided for pupils in earlier generations has become weakened.” (p.149)

“It is not surprising that an education veered toward understanding is a low priority in such schools; by their nature, bureaucratized institutions have difficulty in dealing with ends that cannot be readily quantified.” (p.150)

“For many of them, in fact, history is facts, with issues of interpretation scarcely arising at all. If history is seen as being about people, the people are viewed as generic and remote rather than as particular persons who, like themselves, exhibit an amalgam of conflicting goals and feelings. For example, as children they learn to trust certain people like parents and teachers, and in later years, they assume that anything told them by a trusted parent or teacher is accurate and exhaustive. The injunctions to ‘consider the source’ or ‘examine the evidence’ seem harsh, but they are important to heed.” (p.174)

“Our public school system has rarely served well the less-advantaged students.” (p.187)

“Nowadays, highly literate men and women rarely enter the teaching professions below the collegiate level; most people in the profession do not lead a life in which literacy is greatly featured (it has been reported that the average school teacher reads a book a year)”. (p.188)

“Hirsch would like students to acquire such cultural literacy so that they can have a chance to enter their national community. Again, if one could simply snap one’s fingers and achieve this stock of factual information, few would quarrel with its desirability. Moreover, Hirsch’s general analysis of what it takes to be able to read a text in a culturally literate way seems on the mark. But controversy surrounds the issues of how to achieve cultural literacy and what to do once one has in fact achieved it.” (p.188)

“I have already revealed my greater sympathy with the vision generally termed ‘progressive’.” (p.191)

“The fact is that progressive education, appropriately instituted, is a difficult undertaking, one that ultimately defeated Dewey as well as many of his most dedicated followers....And it requires a student body sufficiently motivated and responsible so that it can make the most of the opportunities offered and accept the responsibilities it entails.” (p.195)

“Put another way, progressive education works best with children who come from richly endowed homes whose parents are deeply interested in their children’s education and who arrive at school with motivation and curiosity.” (p.197)

“We have already noted that students often come to history, literature, art, or social studies classes with deeply held prejudices, stereotypes, and simplifications.” (p. 236)

“In one definition, a skilled teacher is a person who can open a number of different windows on the same concept.” (p.246)

“Even under ideal circumstances, an education rooted in understanding takes time and effort to attain.” (p. 252)