# The History of Early Childhood Education

The study of educational history is basic to introductory education courses for many reasons. It helps us understand the context of ideas and institutions, along with our own context historically. It gives credit to our predecessors and underscores our traditions. And it serves to prevent us from reliving previously made mistakes. But there is a downside to history as well. The history passed to us is incomplete and distorted. The contributors and perspectives have a grossly "Eurocentric" slant; African, Indian, Arabic, Asian, Latino, Judaic and female educational philosophers or philosophies are largely or completely invisible. While it is true that American education is primarily the product of European roots directly, the ideas on which they are based did not exist in a vacuum nor were they always the only or even the best ones available. And all the more reason to seek out and now include the contributions and viewpoints of others.

Educational history really began in ancient China, four thousand years ago. Formal education began at the magic number of 6, a belief which has traveled down through Greece into Europe and then America. Not only did schooling and testing start, but so, interestingly, did gifted and talented programs and tracking by socioeconomic class, along with among the earliest known exercises in infanticide, aimed largely at female children. The mistreatment and exclusion of children, of females, of the disabled, of the poor, of minorities, will be a continuing theme throughout educational history. One notable early historical exception was ancient Egypt, the next great civilization known, from which archaeologists have unearthed dolls, balls and board games, indicating that children, even girl children, had decent childhoods. And then came ancient Greece.

Among the Greek philosophers who mused educational ideas was Plato. Plato was among the first educational philosophers we know of who focused on the importance of early childhood and of play. He noted that young children need concreteness, and recommended a system of "apples and garlands" with which to teach math. Young children should be removed from the home and educated in State run schools, so that they would be trained in the social good (the purpose of education) by experts, while their inexpert parents would be freed so that they, too, could devote themselves to the social good. The curriculum would be one of play, concrete manipulatives, physical development and aesthetics, followed at the age of 6 by formal education. It would only be for privileged children, but some girls might be included. Plato counseled against corporal punishment, force or embarrassment, and encouraged protecting children from sex and violence. His student, Aristotle, agreed with Plato on play and on the primary focus of education being on social development and good. But he disagreed that children should be raised by the State, and thought that children should, in fact, remain in the home until 7 (with the guidance of nurses and teachers). Unlike Plato, he believed in actually studying children, and in his studies determined that seven was indeed a more appropriate age for the beginning of formal education, with normal development being corrupted if it were imposed too early. He also determined that young children learned by doing, and were motivated not by logic but by pleasurable and painful events and consequences. So adults, he said, should use such positive and negative consequences to mold behavior and learning (making him, essentially, the first "behaviorist." Behaviorism is the psychology of shaping behavior using positive and negative reinforcement, rather than working with the natural, internal motivations and developmental stages of children. He even advanced the idea of "the blank slate" two thousand years before John Locke, who is usually credited with both.). Unfortunately, in his studies he also determined that girls should be ineligible to be educated.

From Greece we move to Rome, which essentially tried to replicate the Greek society, including its education. In Rome, the still widespread practice of infanticide was slowly being replaced by "potting," wherein unwanted children were being put in pots or baskets and left on doorsteps or sailed down the river. And orphanages, the early model for modern day care, were starting to be seen. Educationally, Rome took on the Aristotelian model, starting formal education at seven and preceding it with what they called "play," even if it wasn't. But Rome was not much interested in educational philosophy, and there were few thinkers of the status of Plato and Aristotle. One who did exert some influence was Plutarch, who wrote the first child care handbook, something that had little influence in his time but great influence upon its rediscovery after the so-called "Dark Ages." In it, he advocated an even more controlling form of behaviorism, aimed at the Roman value of "moderation." Praise them when they are down, rebuke them when they are up, keeping them in the middle. He also advocated humane discipline, though, using praise and encouragement, as beatings were more appropriate for slaves. And then there was Quintilian, also the father of the lecture method. He was the first philosopher to identify actual stages of child development,

and the first stage he accurately framed as the first seven years of life. In this stage, children are impulsive, self-centered and imitative, with lasting impressions formed, so adults should be good role models. He also saw that young children needed concrete materials, so he developed the first alphabet set, of ivory letters, and additionally wrote about the threat of corrupting natural development if formal teaching were imposed too early. And then came the Dark Ages.

For almost a thousand years, Europe was behind the veil of the "Dark Ages," wherein the single, Catholic church dominated all forms of thought and expression. There were no schools, no philosophies and few books, and the populace was kept uneducated and illiterate. Children were seen, essentially, as inherently evil little adults and the church counseled they be disciplined that way, including "dunking," whereby children would be held under water to expel the evil. Instead of infanticide, since children have souls, the church permitted accidental killing ("overlaying" in one's sleep) or accidental abandonment. Parents were told to not get too close to their children, as they were not only "brats" but they would probably die young, from the Plague, war or famine, anyway. By the twelve hundreds, some schools started to reemerge, soon, an alternate, more humane treatment and view of children as not being evil little adults ("coddling") began to develop as an alternative, and by the fourteen hundreds, finally another educator emerges.

In Italy, Vittorino deFeltre was asked to open up a school for the children of the royal family. But he expands it to include a cross-section of the population, including young children, girls and the poor, with financial assistance. With the young ones, he used games, activities and stories in essentially a whole language pre-reading program, and was known for an individualized, holistic, nurturing program. In Germany, in the fifteen hundreds, Martin Luther, the father of the Protestant reformation, reopened libraries closed by the Catholic church, encourages the dissemination of books to the people and develops the first public school. He advocated universal education, including girls and the disadvantages, although he was also known for his rabidly anti-Semitic views. The goal of education, to Luther, was, like in ancient Greece, the social good, and it would include intellectual, physical and spiritual education, along with play and the opening up career possibilities, which were theretofore out of the reach of the common people. And then there was Comenius.

John Amos Comenius was a Czech bishop of the 1600's who is referred to as "The Lost Founder of Early Childhood Education." He was so far ahead of his time that he had little impact during his life, and others are often given credit for ideas he originated, but he certainly planted seeds, throughout Europe and even into the American colonies, that bore fruit centuries later. Comenius traveled extensively, as an educational consultant, multicultural explorer and political exilee, during which time some of his writings were lost. But what remained showed a remarkably modern combination of scientific child development theory, progressive and humanistic education and moralistic and inclusive religion. He was particularly an advocate for the poor, the excluded and the "uneducable," including children of minority background and with disabilities. He saw early childhood education as a foundation for talents, morals and potentials. His contributions included: the first (known) picture book, the first alphabet book, the first child development theory book, an early childhood care handbook, the philosophy of "naturalism" and ideas including universal education, inclusion, and a learning by doing method comprised of concrete and age-appropriate materials, whole language, a curriculum of games, activities, music, fairy tales, nursery rhymes and nature study and a focus on play. His ideas on learning were that it shouldn't be rushed, it should be built on choices and self-motivation, it should move from the concrete to the abstract, the simple to the complex and its foundation is sensory experience and language development (much like Montessori and Piaget would say three hundred years later). He discussed the delicate balance between the needs of the group and of the individual, and posed a system of educational stages that strongly resembles our modern school system (with birth through six being the stage of "The Mother's Knee."

John Locke was an English teacher and philosopher of the later 1600's. He is best known for the "tabula rasa" theory, wherein it is perceived that the child is born a "blank slate" (or blank tablet or white paper or empty cabinet). S/he comes into the world with no natural proclivities to be good or bad (a departure from original sin), with no inherent knowledge and with no natural plan for development. Rather, everything s/he becomes is a product of experience. We are a product of our environment. This is a theory which was called "environmentalism," the forerunner of modern "behaviorism," of which he is considered the father. Ninety percent of what we become, Locke said in a time where teachers were not particularly valued, is because of teachers. They are the ones who write on the blank slate, fill up the empty cabinet, provide the experience and shape the child. Learning, he said, is a passive process of taking in experiences and reinforcements from the environment through our senses. The teacher should train the

senses and guide the process through repetitive drills and other bases of modern Traditional education, which Locke is also considered the father of. He did, however, say that the curriculum should fit the child, not the other way around.

Very different was the philosophy of Jean Jacques Rousseau in 1700's France. He was considered the father of "naturalism" (although Comenius spoke of it first), seeing the child as a flower to be allowed to blossom at the appointed time, rather than a lump of clay to be shaped and molded. To Rousseau, the child is, as the Church conveyed, a savage, but a "noble savage." He is inherently good and already on the right path, and should pretty much be left alone. Molding and shaping, particularly as done by schools, would take away the child's independence, individuality and spirit; education made children "unthinking and immoral puppets." Children should have a long, protected period of childhood, in fact the first twelve years, free of being rushed, corrupted or met with demands for "behavior," formal learning, logic or discipline. They should play, and otherwise use their senses and muscles to explore nature, people and themselves (an exaggerated version of Piaget's later theory). No instruction or books should be offered to children, except Robinson Crusoe perhaps. After twelve, schools should be freer, more flexible, more informal and more individualized, learning should be active, self-directed and based on interest and teachers should avoid memorization, recitation and discipline. They should guide and provide opportunities for hands-on experience and problem solving, rather than directly instruct. Children should never be punished, inhibited, made to conform or molded, they should follow their own path and their inherent natural plan for development. In short, the only good education is "negative education," one which would protect the child from the corrupting and conforming effects of society. Unfortunately, there were some contradictions. Despite his cries for democracy, his educational and philosophical visions, like those of Locke, did not include females or the poor. (This can probably be traced to the time, wherein a new philosopher class had emerged who envisioned a society led by those with wisdom and leisure – people like them.) And despite his writings about the importance and protection of children and the role the father has, he abandoned all of his children, from various mistresses (so much for love), to an orphanage. (This can probably be explained by the fact that Rousseau had been protractedly abused as a child and had great trouble with intimacy, trust, fatherhood, responsibility, etc.) In his classic book, Emile, the lead character was a "noble savage," taken in by nurturing people and raised in an enlightened society, to be a free, thoughtful, healthy individual. He, of course, was Emile in his dreams. Rousseau is credited with being the father of progressive education, of the ideas of age appropriate and facilitated learning, and of not only the French revolution, but in a sense the American revolution as well, based on his writings on freedom, democracy, individuality, rebellion and love.

Johann Pestalozzi, a Swiss educator of the late 1700's/early 1800's considered Rousseau his mentor. So much so that his own child at the age of eleven could not read or write. So, despite being a staunch naturalist and opponent of traditional schooling ("blown into children's ears," making them anxious, confused and passive), he did see the possibility and need for something more than "negative" education. Now, Pestalozzi was no hypocrite. He had taken children in, poor and victimized children, and had fed them with his own meager resoources. He saw early education as the chance for disadvantaged children to get a "head start" and a way to transform society. He developed a very complex philosophy of education, beginning with the bond between child and mother and expanding into the sphere of nurturing, informal teachers, who would use intuition, love and concrete materials to guide children's learning and development. The key was "anschauung," by which children, in their exposure to and manipulation of concrete materials become familiar with underlying more abstract concepts (which is very Piagetian). Out of this theory of learning came Pestalozzi's "object lessons," whereby teachers would present a carefully thought out sequence of manipulative materials to systematically develop children's learning. But the complex theory really came down to two simple things: naturalism and love. ("I tried to love and do everything for my children.") Pestalozzi became the best known teacher in the western world, starting and teaching at a number of schools, before finally settling in at a small school for young children on the French border of Switzerland where he would create his showcase. Here, as the director and father figure, he would finalize his curriculum of the "hand, head and heart," based on informal, nurturing, concrete teaching, with the goal of creating the first methodology of early childhood education. Anyone wanting to become a teacher was advised to go see Pestalozzi; only by seeing him could one know how it was to be done, and many were greatly influenced. But Pestalozzi was not an effective administrator or teacher trainer. One had to see Pestalozzi to understand him, as he had trouble, being largely illiterate, communicating his ideas or guiding others in following them. A natural child psychologist before there was any such thing, Pestalozzi did not understand that others did not have the intuition (or the love) that he

did. So while some teachers at this school were in step with Pestalozzi, others drifted to more formal and academic and less nurturing approaches. Amid chaos and resentment, Pestalozzi returned to his family farm and writing and died thinking himself a failure in the one thing he really wanted: creating that new methodology. But the philosophy he had developed, the people he had influenced, the seeds he had planted, made him anything but a failure.

One of the visitors to Pestalozzi's school was an Englishman (really Welshman) by the name of Robert Owen. Owen was, at the beginning of the eighteen hundreds, a wealthy mill owner who was very concerned with social reform and opportunities for poor children. After ending child labor in his mills, he thought about what should replace it, the answer to which was education. He developed "The Institute for the Formation of Character," his first "Infant School," to provide, like in Pestalozzi's vision, a "head start" for poor children, for which he is often credited. Part of the idea behind the institute was that, somehow, poor children needed more help with molding their "character," in a somewhat behaviorist and perhaps patronizing sense, but it was well intentioned, and was known for its kindly teachers, humanistic values of harmony and caring and informal, socially oriented teaching. Owen meant this Infant School model to be only part of a reforming of society, and actually came to the United States, to Indiana, and attempted to set up a utopian society, New Harmony, with the infant school as its centerpiece. It failed, he returned to England, and the Infant School movement began to spread through England and across Europe. But the philosophy behind it got lost after his death, and "infant schools" became a generic term for any early childhood program. The movement split, with the schools focusing on younger children becoming early day care centers without much educational focus and those focusing on older ones becoming more formal, academically oriented programs. But the philosophy of Owen would be recaptured in the infant school movement of the twentieth century.

But the most important visitor to Pestalozzi's school was Friedrich Froebel, from Germany. Not only did Froebel visit, but he stayed for several years, working with Pestalozzi, becoming increasingly passionate about Pestalozzi's philosophy and heart but increasingly frustrated with the lack of organization and science. Still no true early childhood methodology had been developed. In France, a Pastor John Oberlin had tried to develop "Knitting Schools," with a program for young children centering on religion and handicrafts, but it never really caught on or became a method as such. Then there were the Infant Schools, but, again, nothing more than a general philosophy emerged. With the onset of the Age of Science, more interest was being shown in systematizing and validating approaches. As a young boy, Froebel had been neglected, but in the process he tried to find himself, first through religion, then through math and then through education. When he decided on teaching, he was told to go see Pestalozzi. After working with him for several years, he returned to Germany and first further developed Pestalozzi's theories of education and child development, devoting great attention to the bond that Erikson would write about a century later, learning theories that Piaget would write about a century later, and the value of play. He wanted education to be a pleasant experience and for teachers to be nurturers ("mother-teachers"), undoubtedly based on what he had not had. He wanted to work with young children before the damage was done, and wanted teachers to be trained in a consistent and effective approach. In 1837, he developed the first "kindergarten," for children three to five years old, built around this new approach of his. The term "kindergarten," the garden of children, was based on the naturalist image of the child as a flower growing freely, with gentle nurturance, and it his/her own time.

This new, first methodology of early childhood education was built around Froebel's "Gifts and Occupations." The Gifts were, based on Pestalozzi's object lessons, ten concrete materials presented in a carefully developed sequence. Gift number one was six soft balls, the colors of the spectrum, suspended from a scaffold by string. The second was three wooden objects, a sphere, a cube and a cylinder. As the gifts proceeded, they became increasingly complex, whole to part and three to two dimensional. The occupations were creative activities used to support and expand the lessons of the gifts. They included clay, drawing, painting, paper folding and beadwork. In other words, there is only so much one can do with a wooden sphere, except for the learning that would take place through anschauung, but one can draw a sphere, paint a sphere, mold one out of clay or change one. The gifts and occupations were supported by a series of songs, games, fingerplays and stories meant to reinforce the learning, and Froebel developed a handbook on the ways, combinations and sequences that teachers should use. The short day started with an introductory meeting (circle time, Froebel's invention), followed by the support activities (songs, fingerplays), then guided use of the gifts, then outside time (including circle games and care of the actual kinder-garden), then work on the occupations, which would give the children something to take home to their parents. While the concepts being learned by this method were primarily mathematical, to Froebel,

even more important were his "first principles," great universal, spiritual truths of the universe that would also be unlocked through anschauung as children used the materials (remembering that math and religion were his two trainings). For example, with the first gift, the "truths" of unity (represented by the round shape, also explaining circle time and circle games) and moldability (represented by the texture of the balls), would supposedly be revealed. Having developed a methodology, the next step was to create a training school to teach it, and the new approach gained much attention. But the German government considered something so new, so focused on the poor, so spiritually oriented, possibly dangerous, so they closed the training school, and Froebel died thinking that he, too, had been a failure. But shortly after his death, the German government relented (possibly with him no longer being a potential threat) and reopened it, and the methodology caught on like wildfire, spreading across Europe and into America.

The first American kindergarten opened up in the 1850's in a small German community in Wisconsin, begun by a Froebelian trainee, Margarethe Schurz, who was so concerned about keeping the purity of Father Froebel that it was taught in the native German. Elizabeth Peabody, a connected society woman and prominent educator in Boston, found out about it and wanted to bring it to Boston, which she did in 1860 as the first English speaking kindergarten. Kindergartens, targeted for the poor, spread through churches, through settlement houses (places for new immigrant groups) and finally into public schools. In the 1870's in St. Louis, William T. Harris, who would go on to become a leading American educator, was superintendent of schools, and he was very much opposed to the "manual training" or "manual skills" movement whereby public schools were being used essentially to train factory workers. He saw in this new Froebelian kindergarten an opportunity to move public schools toward a more play-oriented, concrete, informal, nurturing direction, so he hired Susan Blow to teach the first public school kindergarten. From then, kindergartens became subsumed within the public schools, becoming identified with five years of age. For the second half of the nineteenth century, this Froebelian kindergarten approach was the only way to educate young children, and Froebelians were rather strict interpreters of the gospel according to Father Froebel, so what had started as a dynamic, play-oriented, naturalistic approach quickly became rigid and teacher-centered. At the time (late 1800's), the leading American child advocate was G. Stanley Hall, the father of American child psychology. And he did not like this Froebelian Kindergarten at all. He found it unscientific, unhealthy (too much sitting and small muscle activity), undemocratic (too teacher-centered and arbitrarily controlling) and unAmerican (imported from a totalitarian social philosophy). He began to travel the country lecturing to kindergarten teachers, but most were horrified by criticisms of the single early childhood educational gospel and walked out on him. But in one such presentation, there were two kindergarten teachers present who had had reservations of their own and had begun to modify the strict Froebelian approach, Anna Bryan and Patty Smith Hill. Bryan had been a trained kindergarten teacher who had opened up her own training school in Lexington, Kentucky in which she taught a somewhat looser, more child centered version. Hill was one of her earliest graduates, who decided to stay and teach with her. When they heard Hall, their disagreements were confirmed, and the three of them started to develop an alternate movement in American early childhood education.

America in the mid-1800's was going through dramatic changes when it came to education. In early America, education was not seen as particularly important. With the emphasis on working on the family farm, children often did not go to school regularly, and only learned enough of the "four R'" (reading, writing, 'rithmetic, religion) to get by. Teachers were largely untrained and lacking in any methodology; learning was largely by recitation and whatever underlying philosophy there was came largely from England, particularly from Locke. Discipline was harsh, and the treatment of children harkened back to the mindset of the Dark Ages. But with the transformation of American society from agricultural to industrial and rural to urban, the society's needs changed, and education usually is designed to serve the perceived needs of the society (often rather than those of the children). Industrialists began the push for free, compulsory public education basically as a way of training a new working class to work in their factories and build their cities. Elementary and early childhood education would be only for the underclasses; the children of the industrialists would go to prep schools or have private tutors to allow them to avoid mixing with the "common" children and to skip to high school and college, which would be out of the reach of most of the commoners. Thus began the "manual training" or "manual skills" movement, whereby public schools emphasized factory-like values – conformity, obedience, low-level thinking, etc. But with this new emphasis on education, increased interest in a methodology of teaching was shown and teaching was treated more seriously. In the search for a new methodology, Americans looked again to Europe, to Germany now, and to the work of Johann Herbart. Herbart had been an educational philosopher and psychologist very interested in the science of teaching, and had also visited Pestalozzi. He had written

a very complex series of ideas on education, so complex that most did not understand them. Basically, they involved four steps of the educational process, a more benign form of discipline and creating interest in the appointed curriculum. While still quite teacher-centered, it was somewhat of a departure from the more uninspired and brutal approaches of the time. After his death, a group of followers calling themselves "Herbarians" attempted to "simplify" Herbart's theories, which became, essentially, five steps in the preparation, presentation and follow through of a lesson. This Herbartianism, the essence of modern traditional teaching, spread through Europe and to America as "American Herbartianism," and it became the singular way for elementary and secondary American teachers to teach (so that in the second half of the eighteen hundreds, American education, early childhood and above, was controlled by German philosophy, with its authoritarian roots). But just as with the Froebelian kindergarten, a small opposition movement had also begun.

After the American Civil War, Colonel Francis Parker became interested in education and decided to look for a way of teaching that would be consistent with the developing democracy. He was influenced by a group of American Pestalozzians, and traveled to Europe to further explore Pestalozzian ideas. Now, ironically, whereas the followers of Froebel, Herbart and, later, Montessori, were to turn the ideas of their mentors into a rather rigid and orthodox system, because Pestalozzi was never quite able to fully articulate or systematize his approach and because one had to see him to understand him (and was very affected by seeing him with children), his followers had remained true to the spirit of nurturing, informal, concrete teaching. And these were the seeds that they passed. From these seeds, Parker began developing a "New Education." His rallying cries were "Free Child, Free Teacher" and "The social factor is the highest factor." The latter slogan was a throwback to the old Greek perspective that social values and skills, rather than academic, should be the foundation and goals of education. Becoming the Superintendent of Schools in Quincy, Mass., this new "Quincy Approach" became very controversial. Parker began advocating not just concrete materials, informal teaching, nurturance and attention to social factors, but the elimination of tests and grades as well. It served as the small but growing opposition movement to the "manual training" and Herbartian movements as they developed. Toward the end of the century, Parker moved to Chicago, where he met a young educator who also had serious misgivings about the course of American education, John Dewey.

Dewey had graduated from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, having studied under, among others, G. Stanley Hall. Several years thereafter, he found himself in Chicago, at the University of Chicago, as the Head of the Division of Philosophy, Psychology and Pedagogy (Education), which is a pretty good description of his talents. There, he started "The Laboratory School," the first American lab school, through which he intended to develop a new American education. Dewey had been greatly affected by two sources. One was a journalist, Joseph Mayer Rice, who had traveled the country at the end of the 1800's in order to expose the scandalous nature of American education. He had written about the sterile, uniform, often brutal way American children were being taught. In every classroom one would either hear everyone reciting or else no one talking. Every classroom across the country used the same tests, the same texts and the same curricula. Bullwhipping was the "discipline" of choice. Dewey became an outspoken opponent of traditional education. "Children should be working to learn, not learning to work." He criticized Herbartianism as being more the educational psychology of the teacher than of the child (more teacher-centered than child-centered). Having had the torch of the "New Education" passed to him by Parker, he began to call it "Progressive Education" in deference to the Progressive Movement that was developing, with Chicago as its center. The other great influence on him was Jane Addams, the leader of the Settlement House movement, a movement for immigrants for education, housing, health care, child care, support services and justice. She subsequently won a Nobel Peace Prize for her women's rights, children's rights, anti-war, anti-poverty, social justice work. Dewey wanted education to serve the growing experiment with democracy and the goals of the Progressive Movement to truly realize that democracy. He thought that American education, not an education imported from a totalitarian country, should help develop free thinking individuals and socially responsible citizens, a needed balance between freedom and responsibility. He wrote that the classroom should be a "microcosm of society," a scale model and introduction of the rights and responsibilities, behaviors and examples, of life in a diverse, democratic society. But Dewey was not an early childhood specialist, so he needed someone to run the "kindergarten" division of his lab school and help bring American early childhood education in line with this progressive idea. So he contacted Anna Bryan in Lexington, Kentucky, who came to Chicago and worked with Dewey until her untimely death, leaving Patty Smith Hill now in charge of the training school and southern early childhood movement.

Toward the beginning of the 1900's, Dewey moved again, from Chicago now to New York, to accept a teaching position at Teachers College, the educational wing of Columbia University. In fact, anyone who was anyone in the field of education came to T.C., where great ideas about the course of twentieth century American education were developed and debated. There, Dewey further developed his new philosophy and approach to education, which he began calling "Open Education." Based on "learning by doing," he advocated cooperative (rather than competitive, individualistic) learning and problem solving rather than rote drills. Learning should be based on children's experiences and should build on their interests. The curriculum should be meaningful, integrated, holistic and socially responsible. Dewey posed a three tiered vision for American education: "The Play Way," wherein the young child would learn first through play ("Play is a child's work"); "The Project Method," whereby the child would learn in an integrated way through doing meaningful projects and activities rather than through isolated and abstract subjects; and "The Contract Plan," whereby the older child would develop an independent study contract with the teacher, who would then act as guide and resource for the child's collaborative or individual projects and studies. Dewey's philosophy and framework for a new methodology unique to and appropriate for American education greatly influenced its course and continues to serve as the spirit behind progressive alternatives to traditional education at all levels.

Also coming to Teachers College was Patty Smith Hill. She was hired for two roles. First, she was to teach a course on, essentially, "Foundations of Early Childhood Education," but not alone. Rather, she was to team teach with Susan Blow, now one of the last diehard Froebelians. So, the defender of the old order and the pioneer of the new together taught about the direction of American early childhood education in the twentieth century. The other role was to head T.C.'s "Kindergarten-Primary" (i.e., early childhood) division. In that capacity, she was to supervise the student teaching at T.C.'s own lab school, The Horace Mann School. She made so many changes at Horace Mann in the process of redefining American early childhood practice that she became known as "The Great Educational Experimenter." She turned Froebelian work time to free play time, his symbolic materials to the doll corner, and instructive art and music to free, creative versions. She added sand and water play, field trips, an outdoor climber, a giant construction set and "the Patty Hill blocks," the large, hollow blocks still often found on preschool playgrounds. Among the many tragic figures in early childhood educational history, from Rousseau to Pestalozzi to Froebel and on, Patty Hill was the exception. Her childhood was wonderful. She grew up on the grounds of her father's private girls' school and enjoyed the grounds, the ponies and, most of all, "The Knock House," which contained wooden boards and wheels and beams and connectors from which children could make various things, from which she got some of her ideas about children's playthings. She even introduced a song, "Good Morning to You," which later also became "Happy Birthday to You." And she founded the N.A.N.E., the National Association of Nursery Educators, which would later broaden its base and be renamed N.A.E.Y.C., the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the leading organization in our field. She would continue her work as a leader in the kindergarten movement; having steered it from the grips of the Froebelian approach, she continued to provide leadership against incursions by traditional/teacher-centered teaching.

Much was happening at the beginning of the 1900's, particularly in Europe. In Italy, Dr. Maria Montessori, the first woman doctor in Italy, had begun, in her work as a pediatrician, to work with children who were considered "mentally deficient," presumably a catch-all, judgmental label rather than a meaningful diagnosis. She determined that the problem was at least as much within the scope of education as medicine. In other words, these children were being miseducated. She was asked to teach a course on "The Education of the Feebleminded" to a group of school teachers in Rome, essentially one of the first "special education" trainings, and it was so successful that she was then asked to start and run a state sponsored school working with children with "mental deficiencies." She did so for two years, during which time she began to develop some of the materials and ideas that would be associated with her emerging method. At the end of her tenure there, she began to think that if she could influence this new field so quickly and profoundly, why could she not have an influence over all of education? She had always greatly resented education, and had rebelled against her parents' wishes for her to be an educator. She abhorred the harsh, controlling, judgmental, destructive teacher of her time. But she finally relented and went back to school to take some pedagogy courses, and in 1905 was asked by a group of poor parents in a slum of Rome to help open up a parent cooperative program for their young children, which they decided to call the "Casa dei Bambini" (The Children's House). That was where the Montessori Method was born. There she introduced her "didactic" (teaching) materials, meant to be auto-educational and self-correcting, so that formal instruction was avoidable. One has to assume that these materials, which would

become known as the "Montessori materials" were a direct descendant of Pestalozzi's object lessons and Froebel's gifts. But Montessori always denied her educational lineage, preferring to pick as her mentors two French physicians, Dr. Itard, who worked with "the wild child" and Dr. Seguin, a pioneer in special education. She also introduced the idea of "The Prepared Environment." The environment, she said, is very important. It should be well organized to help develop skills in organization and care of the environment, should be attractive to build self-esteem and should be systematic to reveal certain mathematical relationships. And it should be based in reality, "practical life." Everything in the classroom was meant to be reality-based; there was no fantasy, creativity or pretend. Now her reason for this was that these children, poor and often considered "mentally deficient" needed to learn how to take care of themselves and their environment, how to cope with reality and survive. Many of her activities involved, and still do, things like dressing, cleaning, decorating and food preparation. While today some may see this as almost silly, one must remember that these children really lived in the tenements the school was a part of and were often doing real rather than symbolic tasks. One could argue, however, that imagination may be even more important for poor children, because in coping with harsh reality, one has to imagine what options one might have beyond what surrounds him/her. "Family style" (mixed, like a family) age grouping was also introduced, and Montessori's intention in this was very respectful. (In fact, all of her ideas derived from her view that respecting children is of ultimate importance.) She felt that if teachers had a wider range of ages, they would be discouraged from comparing children with each other, setting up a competitive environment or having one set of expectations that all children would be molded to. Perhaps most controversial was "the neutral character of the adult." Montessori was so distrustful of the traditional teacher that she essentially wanted to remove that teacher entirely as an influential person. The teacher, thus, is reduced to pretty much a tool for children's learning, with no criticism, no praise, no human influence. Beyond being a "directress," directing children to the appropriate task or material and then directing its execution (which in fact is hardly non-influential), the adult is merely a "guest" in the house of children.

Montessori worked long, ten hour days, and at the end of this experiment, all of the children, society's outcasts and presumed "uneducables," passed the highest achievement test generally offered to Roman schoolchildren, proving to Western society that these children could learn. Word of this "Montessori method" spread. And with it, Montessori began to further disseminate her ideas. She wrote of the child's "absorbent mind," whereby the child was seen as a sponge, soaking up knowledge from his/her environment. To this, Dewey remarked that the child is not a sponge, but a verb, actively seeking out rather than passively absorbing information, something that in the view of the progressives the Montessori method did not effectively allow. She also wrote of "sensitive periods," times of special or heightened readiness, explosions, and in her view, if these special opportunities were not taken advantage of when they occurred, the chance might be lost forever. Again, there was some theoretical disagreement. It seems that she got this idea from her mentor, Dr. Itard, whose work with the "wild child" implied a broad sensitive period for the emergence of language, and it is known now that if the brain center for language is unstimulated during the broad range of childhood it will atrophy, and in adolescence language will no longer be able to fully develop in its full human and inter-human sense. It is also now known that the period from birth to three is critical and if a child is unstimulated in terms of experiences and interactions, needed neural connections will never be developed and the foundation for learning will be devastatingly undermined. But these are much broader periods than Montessori had in mind, and most developmental scientists believe that opportunities can be recaptured, even if it might be better that they are met when they initially arise. Nonetheless, out of this idea of "sensitive periods" came her premise that there are three corresponding foundations of learning to exploit when the time is right, involving motor skills, sensory perception and language development, the foundations of later learning (of which Piaget and others would later agree). So, Montessori came up with a three-staged approach to build on these three foundations of learning. The method she developed focused on individualism (probably in part due to her own struggles), competence, respect, practical life, the absorbent mind (which, in its behaviorist execution [copying what the teacher directs] seems to clash with Montessori's own naturalist views) and the (allegedly) neutral teacher.

Montessori traveled to India, where the method caught on quickly and a chain of Montessori programs spread. She also came to the United States, to the San Francisco world's fair, and set up a booth displaying her materials and books. But the progressive movement, fresh off the defeat of the Froebelian kindergarten, was just laying in wait for another educational method imported from a totalitarian country which is nothing like it advertises itself to be. William Heard Kilpatrick, a colleague of Dewey's, who had

helped Dewey develop "the project method," had gone to Italy to see the method first hand, and had come back and had written a scathing attack called "The Montessori System Examined," wherein he called it "a party trick." It had little to do with her wonderful writings about learning, play, social and emotional development, naturalism and respect for children, and, in fact, ended up doing the same thing that traditional education did: create unsocial, unthinking workers. As a result, the Montessori method did not get a foothold in America; not a single Montessori program was developed here until the late fifties, when, suddenly, it started to become very popular and spread.

Also at the beginning of the 1900's came the nursery school movement. In England, two sisters, Margaret and Rachel McMillan, were social and child activists, particularly in the field of health care. They developed the idea for a "nursery school," whose name combined the ideas of nursing care (the English nursery) and nurturing. So the underlying philosophy of the nursery school was the priority of the physical and emotional well-being of the child. They developed "The Open-Air Nursery School," in deference to the healthful importance of outdoor activity, and also introduced things like snack time and nap time for the same purpose. Upon Rachel's untimely passing, it was renamed "The Rachel McMillan Nursery School," which was soon recognized by the British Government as an ideal environment for young children, the first but not the last time that the British Government put its weight behind progressive ideas in early education. Word of this nursery school idea spread, and received much interest in the United States. Patty Smith Hill and Arnold Gesell, who was a student of G. Stanley Hall and the leading child psychologist of early twentieth century America ("the terrible two's"), sent a student of theirs, Abigail Eliot, to England to work in the nursery school and bring the philosophy back to America. She did so, and founded the Ruggles Street Nursery School in Boston, which some consider the first American nursery school. It was the first with the particularly English slant, which included a lot of parent involvement. Eliot would go on to work at bringing together more the fields of nursery education and child care, as they were in England, and would have dumped on her the responsibility of trying to manage the otherwise irresponsible wild expansion of child care during the Great Depression, when child care was treated as a jobs program for the lesser skilled teachers and others. But two other nursery schools had been founded before Ruggles Street, and for their stories, we go back to Teacher's College and Patty Smith Hill.

Upon graduation from courses with Hill, Dewey, etc., a group of four young women decided they wanted to pursue careers in early childhood education. Caroline Pratt, a carpenter by trade, became interested in children's playthings, and developed "the Pratt blocks," the unit blocks now in every block area, among other materials. She went on to found The Play School (later renamed "City and Country"), which was the first American nursery school, and would later write her autobiography, "I Learn from Children." Harriet Johnson, a nurse by background, founded a toddler program, essentially the second American nursery school. Evelyn Dewey was John Dewey's daughter. And Lucy Sprague Mitchell was the theoretical leader. She had grown up in Chicago, had become interested in the work of John Dewey, and had followed him to New York to become his follower and friend, presumably recruiting his daughter into the group she began. The group called itself "The Bureau of Educational Experiments" (after the great educational experimenter), and dedicated themselves to supporting existing programs that were of benefit to young children (teacher training, child development, parent training, material development, etc.) or, in their absence, help develop them. They managed to get funding through Lawrence Frank, a foundation president and friend of the Mitchell family who became, over the years, fascinated in child development theory and ultimately became a motivational speaker on "The Needs of Children." As they adopted the two nursery schools as labs with which to develop materials and ideas, they pointed themselves toward the ultimate goal of developing that first American early childhood methodology consistent with the philosophy of Dewey and the practice of Hill.

In the 1930's, the group, now led by Mitchell along with Edna Shapiro and Barbara Biber, announced that they had indeed devised such a methodology, which they dubbed "The Developmental-Interactive Approach." The title was meant to convey the following. The "developmental" part referred to the study of child development, incorporating the work of Freud and, along the way, Piaget, Erikson, Susan Isaacs (who will be discussed later) and others. The "interactive" piece referred to the child's interaction with his/her environment and people in it, including the teacher. So, it was meant as the balance and interaction between nature and nurture, child study and education (so that education would be what is now referred to as "developmentally appropriate"), child initiation and teacher interaction. It reflected an interactionist rather than purely naturalist or environmentalist perspective, as the "interactive" part also referred to the interaction between the spheres of the child's development, a holistic perspective on working with the child. This new approach incorporated the ideas of learning by doing and integrated

curriculum of Dewey, the emphasis on social skills and values of the new education/progressive education movement generally, humanistic and developmental principles of child psychology and where Hill had brought the field until then. Having developed such a methodology, naturally they decided to open up a training school to introduce others to it, so the "Cooperative School for Student Teachers" was started. In the 1940's, during one of the periods of time in which the needs of and opportunities for underprivileged children were being considered, the Bureau was asked to write a paper on these things from the perspective of experts in early childhood. In it, they decided on the priorities in the education of underprivileged children. In the cognitive sphere, language development and thinking skills were key in unlocking a future for such children, and in the social-emotional realms, self-esteem, self-motivation and socialization should be the focuses. The question, they posed, was how to build those cognitive goals without neglecting or undermining the social-emotional ones, as traditional education often did, and, at the same time, how to directly develop the social-emotional ones so as to reinforce the cognitive ones. In other words, how do we develop an interaction between the spheres? They concluded by reflecting that poor children really do not need anything different from other children. Perhaps they need more, and certainly need equal access, but these five priorities should be priorities for all young children, so these became the driving forces of their approach. The Bureau and the Cooperative School wanted to have their own lab school but needed more space than their building in the Columbia University area allowed. So they moved down to Greenwich Village, to a little street called "Bank Street," where they opened up "The Bank Street School for Children," nicknamed the rather complexly named approach "The Bank Street Approach," and named the whole entity "The Bank Street College of Education." Subsequently, they would move back uptown to the Columbia University area, where they are today, and what T.C. had been in the first half of the century, Bank Street became in the second. Lucy Mitchell would spend the rest of her life at Bank Street, teaching two courses. The first was an early childhood curriculum course where she taught the integrated curriculum centered around social studies (social skills, social values and social themes; the job chart, block play and classroom meetings [of Pratt's design] and dramatic play [of Hill]). The other was children's literature, since Mitchell was a well known children's book author, having written "The Here and Now Storybook," a groundbreaking work for young children, as it was the first piece of realistic fiction (as opposed to academics, morals or fantasy), relating to their own lives and perspectives, written for young children. One of her first graduates was Margaret Wise Brown, the most influential picture book writer of her time.

Now back in England, during the twenties, a rather radical interpretation of Open Education was forming. The so-called "free schools" were a dozen independent private schools with strong beliefs about freedom. They took their philosophical ideas from Rousseau, and were sometimes called "nature schools" for their naturalism. They took their psychological ideas from Freud and the "permissive discipline" that grew from his work. And they took their educational ideas from Dewey, including his three stages of education, despite the fact that Dewey was rather critical of the free schools because he felt that they did not uphold the balance between freedom and responsibility that he advocated. They were "schools without walls," literally as well as figuratively, a big open plant with emphasis on outdoor activity and natural materials. There was little discipline, and children (older than preschoolers, admittedly) had substantial choice over what classes to go to and whether to go, along with the curriculum. The focus was on spontaneity, on flexibility and, most of all, on emotional development, with a rather hands-off, nurturing role model of a teacher. This radical experiment lasted for approximately fifty years, and in 1960, the headmaster of the most famous of these schools, Summerhill, a man by the name of A.S. Neill, summed up this "free school" approach (or, rather, anti-approach, a la Rousseau's "negative education). "If the emotions were free, the intellect would follow along." He noted that many schools were created wherein the intellect was the primary focus, that they created schools where "emotions came first," that were built around freedom, self-esteem, emotional health and love.

During this time span in England, other influential developments were occurring. Susan Isaacs, as a young woman who had shown interest in education, had responded to an ad for a new, experimental "infant" school. She was hired as director, and used it as her own laboratory in interconnecting the progressive educational ideas of Dewey with the psychoanalytic child development theories of Freud. The results, and her writings, first in an advice column and then in widely read books, greatly influenced the field, from the Developmental-Interactive Approach in America to the nursery and the public schools in England. As a beloved teacher trainer in her later years, before her untimely death, she taught about developmental and humanistic education, the importance of play and the importance of teachers. As to the public schools, during World War Two England was under siege. Especially in London, which was

sustaining regular bombing, teachers never knew which children of what ages would be attending on any given day, so they, of necessity, moved to a more informal, individualized and mixed age way of teaching. After the war, some decided they liked it and did not wish to return to the old way, leading to the development, in the primary grades of kindergarten to second, a new "infant" movement, now more in line with Owen's intentions. Marked by a mixing of the ages, attention to social development, nurturing teachers and a more informal approach, these "infant schools" would draw increasing attention, including from the British Government. In 1966, a government commissioned report on English education, the Plowden Report (named after the commission's royal figurehead, Lady Plowden), not only traced the evolution of progressive early childhood ideas, from Rousseau to Pestalozzi, Owen, Froebel, Montessori, Dewey, Freud, Isaacs, Piaget, etc., but endorsed the two tiered system of nursery schools followed by infant-primary programs as an appropriate model of early childhood education. This gave further impetus to the movement and increased worldwide attention, particularly from America, where the "pushed-down curriculum" had moved early childhood education in the opposite direction. A number of progressive American educators came to visit the infant schools, for ideas and for reassurance.

World War Two was important to American early childhood education as well. As in other times of war, women were once again needed for the workforce with their husbands abroad. So the government began to support child care once again through the Lanham Act, and the propaganda changed from day care being unhealthy and a sign of family dysfunction to it being good and patriotic. Rosie the Riveter was the new American heroine. But women were concerned with what they had heard about its poor quality and detrimental effects and stayed away. Defense industries were, thus, in the position of having to provide their own child care if they wanted women workers. The best child care center the nation has ever seen was started by the Kaiser Shipbuilding Industry, who hired top early childhood educators, paid high salaries, built beautiful facilities, set up twenty four hour programs for toddlers through school age children and charged almost nothing for it. Of course with the end of World War Two, the short sighted, conservative view of child care reemerged and funding was once again withdrawn, although some protests resulted in small concessions. The story continued through 1970, when President Nixon vetoed the only comprehensive attempt to establish a national day care policy with a commitment to standards and funding, and America remains virtually the only country in the industrialized world without them.

With the Sixties came many new developments. Increased focus on the separation of church and state, the beginnings of school desegregation (which would slowly continue until the eighties) and the "War on Poverty" changed the landscape of American education. In that initiative to give opportunity to underprivileged children, Head Start was born. So, too, were two new approaches to early childhood education, driven by two very different visions of how to address the needs of poor children. In Ypsilanti, Michigan, David Weikart, Director of Special Education for the failing public school system, was growing increasingly frustrated. He decided to do what others have also done: try to get to children before the damage is done, to focus on young children to get them that "head start" and a vaccination against traditional schooling. He gathered a team of top early childhood educators and child development specialists, who created a laboratory school, the Perry Preschool, in which to develop a new methodology to meet the particular needs of preschoolers in poverty. Open education would serve the need, but, seemingly, it would have to be an open education that was a bit more systematic, a bit more teacher-influenced, a bit more cognitively-oriented than their perspective of what open education would otherwise be. After briefly concluding that the key to this new approach should be language development, they soon shifted their attention to cognitive development as the linchpin. They dubbed their new methodology "The Cognitively Oriented Curriculum," and it, known as "The Perry Preschool Project" or "Ypsilanti Project," gained nationwide attention, including from the federal government. Having just established the Head Start initiative, they were looking for an approach to drive it, and thought they might have one in this one out of Ypsilanti. They funded Weikart's foundation, the High/Scope Foundation with that goal. Although Head Start never did settle on one consensus approach, the money was used for research nonetheless. One particularly influential bit of research coming out of the foundation is relevant to this day. They traced youngsters coming out of the Perry Preschool as compared to those from similar disadvantaged backgrounds over a period of fifteen years, and found that, generally, those who had had the good preschool experience had higher educational achievements and income levels and lower rates of juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, etc. In other words, each of the social ills being debated at the time could be significantly addressed at the preschool level. This study, and studies like it commissioned by Head Start, continue to be used by advocates for early childhood education who lobby state and federal governments

for more funding at the front end (expanded Head Start, child care, prenatal care, etc.) so at least equivalent funding does not have to be paid at the back end (expanded prisons, drug treatment, etc.).

Sensitive to criticisms from some progressive educators that their approach was too cognitively oriented, perhaps sacrificing needed attention to social-emotional goals, the "Cognitively Oriented Curriculum" moniker was later dropped for what had become its easier nickname, the "High/Scope" Curriculum, and the approach continued to be developed, to make it more widely applicable and more enriched. The centerpiece of the approach continues to be, for the child, the "Plan-Do-Review" sequence (planning time > work time > recall time), and, for the teacher, the "key experiences" (scales of child development in various domains to be facilitated by the teacher, a "partner" in the learning process). Similar to Bank Street in a number of ways, its differences lie in the math and science versus social studies primary focus, the somewhat more comparatively active teacher role and the emphasis on children's formal planning, allowing, some argue, a less spontaneous process than does Bank Street. Like Bank Street, many of the foremost early childhood educators flocked to High/Scope, which continues to be particularly popular in Head Start programs, among other types.