

Conservative vs. Progressive view of Education

Assignment #2 - Dr. Amerman

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Idea	E.D. Hirsch Jr. (Conservative)	Grant Wiggins (Progressive) Critic's argument
1. Content-rich curriculum (Hirsch, 1998)	Hirsch's idea of "Theory of Value" states that students who have the same common content-rich, curriculum will "make people competent regardless of race, class, ethnicity" (O'Neill, 1999). His belief that if everyone is on a level playing field, equipped with a "lasting body of knowledge in math, language skills, world history, mastery of art, music and literature" curriculum it will give them the tools they need to be competent citizens.	Wiggins (2013) while not against content knowledge argues that the content must be relevant, in some way, to the learner in order for it to be meaningful so students retain the information. Content knowledge is important but in isolation it is not as effective as when it is used together with vocabulary and reading strategies. This allows students to "frame meaning" which allows for student "buy-in" and therefore engaging in deeper understanding of the learning (Wiggins, 2013).
2. Intellectual Capital (Hirsch, 1996)	Hirsch's "Theory of knowledge" insists that the more "intellectual capital" in the form of a rich core-knowledge base and skills will allow the learner to gain an equal amount of intellectual success in which the student gain even more knowledge. He compares this to people who have (made) a lot of money. People who make a lot of money will make more money. (O'Neil, 1999)	Wiggins (2012) states that it is the participation in learning (playing soccer, cooking, playing music) that allows the learner to acquire the knowledge that is needed. When the student is "doing" rather than "learning" (ie. learning about the rules of soccer, strategies, techniques, etc) in a lecture type environment instead of "doing" the student learns more. It is not knowledge for knowledge's sake, but a desire to become knowledgeable that drives real acquisition of knowledge.

<p>3. Learning builds on learning (Hirsch, 1996)</p>	<p>Hirsch's "Theory of Learning" (1996) states that learning by repetition, drills, and practice will build a student's knowledge base. As the student knows more they will be able to learn more. His premise is that by memorizing/learning "common core-curriculum" it will allow the individual to learn more and more. Essentially, "if you know more, you will learn more." (Hirsch, 1996)</p>	<p>In <i>Understanding by Design</i> (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006) the authors assert that in order for student learning to "stick" and be relevant to the learner, there needs to be value. Will the memorized facts will be used later for some higher-order thinking task, or will they be used to apply new concepts or to transfer learning? Wiggins & McTighe (2006) assert that students need buy in for new learning to "stick." (Watkins, 2017)</p>
<p>4. Reading Instruction</p>	<p>"Core-content knowledge" leads to successful reading skills, as suggested by Hirsch (2006). This "domain knowledge" (see #1) "increases fluency, broadens vocabulary, and enables deeper comprehension" (Hirsch, 2006). His belief that factual knowledge is good for reading instruction as it focuses less on reading strategies (Knight, 2017) and more on building the core knowledge which will improve reading skills.</p>	<p>Students are not inclined to retain facts that are not connected in some way to what they know or is of interest to them. Wiggins (2015) is insistent that in order for students to "buy into" learning there should be a goal at the forefront. When students are interested (connected) to the content in some meaningful way, reading skills as well as reading strategies can be taught as well as absorbed.</p>
<p>5. Inequality in education</p>	<p>Teaching all students "common content-rich curriculum" would give every student, whether from an underserved population or affluent culture, access to "common cultural language" thereby allowing all citizens to "eventually communicate effectively with strangers" even though they may not</p>	<p>While there has been no specific statements about how inequality in education between the "haves and the have-nots" Wiggins (2013) does state that "teachers and schools make a difference" and we can only make an impact in what we can control in the time that we spend with students." By having students</p>

	have started at the same place. (Knight, 2017)	learn with a goal upfront - all students know where they are headed.
6. Achievement Gap	A major tenet of Hirsch's "Theory of Opportunity" (Hirsch, 1999) is that "knowledge is the great equalizer, and the schools have a huge opportunity and responsibility to provide more equal life chances for all students, no matter where they come from" (Hirsch, 1998). His belief that core-knowledge will be especially impactful for disadvantaged students, thereby eventually narrowing the achievement gap (Hirsch, 1999)	According to Wiggins (2011) students should be learning, with the end in mind, as they study in subjects that "suit their passions, talents, aspirations, and needs." If students are able to tap into learning with something that is familiar and engaging, students will better understand themselves. This understanding helps give learners access, not just to a core content of knowledge, but strategies that will allow them to apply the process to any situation, thereby raising all student to achieve.
7. Curriculum Design	Hirsch's (2012) curriculum is a very specific "whittled" down curriculum, with the focus on his idea of the "essential knowledge that children should acquire. This body of knowledge would "allow them to function as fully rounded citizens." According to his "Theory of Society" it would then allow students to participate in both political and economic arena which would allow them both independence and freedom (Hirsch, 1996)	Wiggins believes, that in order for student to improve, they must begin with the end in mind. His <i>Understanding by Design</i> ® (<i>UbD</i> ™) is standards based and focuses on helping teachers develop clear learning goals, create engaging activities, and use of assessments that will have impact on student learning. (Wiggins, 2015).
8. Community responsibility	Hirsch's "Theory of Human Nature" believes that in order for students to become literate members of society they need to be educated by the adults	While there was no specific mention of the role of community per say in <i>Understanding by Design</i> (Wiggins, 2015) the nature of

	<p>and leaders in the community. The commonly shared information and “symbols” that a community creates helps to acculturate children. His belief is that natural talent will only get you so far and one must work hard and commit in order to succeed and community support is important (Hirsch, 1987).</p>	<p>knowing what the goal is before the learning begins, gives a students an opportunity to understand how they are part of that community. When students are aware of the broad scope of what they learn and it can affect their community, they can create authentic meaning through their learning.</p>
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