Tracing the Path of a Modern American Paradigm: Chapter 16

For chart portions above this point, see the chart for Chapter 13.

Calvin | Spencer | Rousseau | Social Contractists | Plato | Aristotle | Empiricists | Pythagoras

Calvinist: See Table 1
Focus: UPwards towards God, heaven, afterlife, importance of salvation.

Romantic: See Table 2
Focus: INwards on each child as precious, able to "organically" flower

Practical: See Table 3
Focus: OUTwards to local community & FORwards to a near-future time

Classical: See Table 4
Focus: BACKwards in time and INwards to the mind's processing capabilities.

Spencer: See Chapter 9

Late 19th century in the United States (Chap 12)

- Facing challenges due to waves of immigrant children, and under pressure from industrial capitalists, policy-makers decided to "sort" children based on their "given" intellectual abilities, assumed to be *very* modest.
- Emerging were "scientific" ways to test and measure human abilities (details Chapter 16); early testing confirmed that the school new-comers had, indeed, very modest abilities.
- Animated by "democratic" values, policy-makers arranged undemanding schooling "to meet the newcomers' needs."

Late 19th century in the United States (Chapter 13)

- The growing appeal of scientific thinking led to eagerness to quantify & measure whatever was observed, including the "given" intellectual capacity (aptitude) of learners.
- Thorndike's claimed proof of the invalidity of "transfer of training" was used as justification by those who wanted to "sort" students into various ability groupings and expand the curriculum offerings "to meet all students' needs."
- James's stand against "attempts to lubricate things for students" appealed to turn-of-the-century teachers but was eclipsed by the drive "to meet all students' needs."

Social Efficiency, late 19th - early 20th centuries (Chapter 14)

- Educational reformers were science-minded professors at relatively isolated university schools of education.
- The academic curriculum was popular; Latin enrollments were rapidly growing. The drop-out rate was high.
- Based on assumptions about "givens," reformers claimed that youth from the immigrant & laboring classes had no interest in, or capacity for, academics.
- Social efficiency in practice meant it was pointless or worse to make aca-demic subjects available to students whose "givens" destined them for menial labor or homemaking.
- Social efficiency in rhetoric was sus-tained by "democracy" and "meeting student needs" via "differentiation."

Child-Centered Instruction, late 19th - early 20th centuries (Chapter 15)

- Three popular authorities – Spencer, Parker, & Hall – promoted the belief that "givens" are beyond control.
- The Child Study Movement actively involved thousands of volunteers in seeking to reveal children's "givens."
- Insistent claims by scientists that "givens" could be measured supported decision-makers' sorting of young children in order to assign them to occupation-linked curricular tracks.
- Reformers advocated that the school should be fitted to the child instead of the child's being fitted to the school.
- "Manual training," thought useful for all students, slowly transformed into undemanding, non-academic work for lower groups, intellectually stimulating "active learning" for higher groups.

A Given Joins the Establishment (Chap 16)

- **Late 19th - early 20th century Europe**
- Belief in a single, inherited, gene-specific general intelligence – "g" – emerged in Europe. Mendel's pea-plant findings were erroneously said to support the "g" concept.
- Binet developed the first intelligence test; he disagreed that intelligence was fixed.
- **Late 19th - early 20th century United States**
- Binet's test was brought to the U.S. by psychologists committed to eugenics.
- Testing for "g" took a huge leap forward via the WWI Army Alpha and Beta tests. Army psychologists explained away data that revealed environmental influences.
- Army psychologists adapted the Alpha test to measure the "g" – aptitude – of students.
- The CEEB, originally administering subject mastery tests, adopted the aptitude tests.
- The SAT was first administered in 1926.

←Chart for Chapter 15 Overview of the Eight Key Beliefs [Chapter 17 has no chart]

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