

Are We Progressive?

Growing Up Progressive? Part I: Going to
Elementary School in 1940's Ontario

Growing Up Progressive? Part II: Going to
High School in 1950's Ontario

Charlie, Manny, Justine, Sara



The Articles

Growing Up Progressive? Part I: Going to Elementary School in 1940's Ontario

Growing Up Progressive? Part II: Going to High School in 1950's Ontario

Both written by Robert M. Stamp

A continuation of one story.



Thesis

Despite the government introducing new, progressive curricula, the reality of school life changed very little.



Format

- Written as a narrative/ chronology
- First person
- Is the “I” Stamp or is it a fictitious character based on truth?
- How much came from Stamp’s experience, and how much came from research?
- Inclusion of other works...poems (assume they are his... lack of proper citations)
- Sarcastic tone... “are we progressive?”



What is Progressive?



“Focus shifted from content to child, and from the child in general to the individual child.... The factory system of mass production is replaced by something approaching the care and study of the craftsman and artist.” (188)

Elementary:

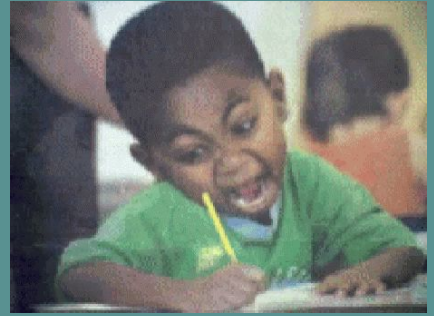
- Early years were more progressive than later
- Examples in almost every grade from 1 to 8

High School:

- Very few examples of progressive learning
- Two fun courses and one course of group work

“Our curriculum was never meant to address the contemporary world directly. It was designed by provincial authorities to expose us to the best of our Judeo-Christian and classical heritages, and give us basic critical skills for adult life.” (331)

What is Traditional?



Elementary School (Grade 1-8)

- Whether curriculum was traditional or progressive was dependant on the teacher
 - Older teachers kept with their Traditional approach in the curriculum

“Yet Miss Marsh’s Grade 2 classroom is mostly about the serious business of learning. She makes us sit up straight in our desks instead of lolling about on a carpeted floor. She teaches us to read more difficult words and to write more complex sentences. We begin spelling. In arithmetic, we learn the magic of subtraction. We don’t dare talk. We do no group work. There is no rhythm band.” (Stamp 11)

“The “departmentals” are our academic rite of passage. Success on these exams leads to university admission, professional careers, and “making something” of our lives. Everything depends on these exams. They alone determine our final Grade 13 mark in each and every subject, from algebra through to zoology. Teachers’ grades do not count.” (Stamp 18)

Highschool (Grade 9-13)

- Traditional Courses
 - Science, Math, English, Social Studies
- Provincial Exams
- Learning was traditional
 - Remembering and Reciting

Was his experience Traditional or Progressive



“We marched from a progressive, activity-oriented playground into a traditional desks-in-straight-rows, sit-down-and-be-quiet 1940’s Ontario elementary school.” (198)

Elementary School (Grade 1-8)

Highschool (Grade 9-13)

Progressive:

- Teachers create progressive curriculums due to their personal interests

“We sing in our seats, we sing at Friday-morning assemblies, at noon-hour and after-school practices for the annual Port Colborne Music Festival... We are versatile little singers.” (Stamp 21)

Traditional:

- Curriculum changes to traditional as students transition into a traditional society

“We read our Shakespeare play, Macbeth, over and over... We memorize our history textbook, practise French and Latin declensions and conjugations, work through math and science problems.” (Stamp 21)

Social Control vs Social Concern



- Social Control
- Stamp seems to suggest more social concern in elementary school and more social control in high school
- Elementary classrooms: “...’must follow the method of nature, stimulating the child through his own interests...experiences useful for the satisfaction and development of his needs.’” (188)
- High School departmentals, not marked by teachers, but essentially dictated “...university admission, professional careers, and ‘making something of our lives’”. (324)

Gendered School: Progressive vs Traditional

Elementary:

- Teachers were unmarried women
- Separated playgrounds

Secondary:

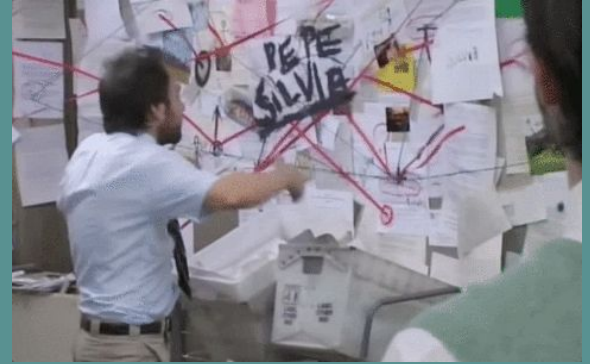
- Separate home rooms
- “Boys only classes”
- Forced, or encouraged?



Connections to Other Readings

Myers, Tamara and Mary Anne Poutanen. “Cadets, Curfews, and Compulsory Schooling: Mobilizing Anglophone Children in WWII Montreal.”

- Myers describes government intervention into lives of children, instilling traditional patriotism and militaristic discipline
- Stamp describes impact of the war on schooling via Junior Red Cross work, air raid drills in elementary and acquiring ribbons of accomplishment from school level competitions sewed onto cardigans like military stripes



Chunn, Dorothy, “Boys Will Be Men, Girls Will Be Mothers: The Legal Regulation of Childhood in Toronto and Vancouver,”

- Chunn shows clear divide between boys and girls based on a traditional bourgeois middle class family pattern.
- Also reflected in Stamp’s article, “Boys shy away from what seem to be gender-specific courses and programs” (323)
- Communications program 90% girls

Sources:

Part 1:

- Thornton Mustard, "The New Programme of Studies," *Educational Courier* (Oct. 1937): 8-10.
- Viola Parvin, *Authorization of Textbooks for the Schools of Ontario, 1847-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 99.
- Ontario Department of Education, *Programme of Studies for Grades I to VI of the Public and Separate Schools* (Toronto, 1937), 5-9
- "The Day the World Ended" *Qwerty* (Fall 2003): 64
- The School* (elementary edition) (Oct. 1940): 93.
- J.S. Thompson, "New Education has Come to Canada," *Dalhousie Review* (July 1941): 230.
- Toronto *Telegram*, 16 April 1942
- Public Archives of Ontario, Record Group 3, George Drew file, "Notes for Platform: Ontario General Election," 29 Sept. 1941. Toronto *Globe and Mail*, 12 July 1943.



Part 2

- Canadian School Journal*, April 1937, 126.
- Provincial Archives of Ontario (POA), Record Group 3, George Drew File, J.G. Althouse to Drew, 27 March 1945.
- Canadian School Journal*, June 1937, 235.
- POA, Royal Commission on Education, Brief No. 125.
- Ontario, *Report of the Royal Commission on Education in Ontario* (Toronto: King's Printer, 1950). 23-40.
- Ontario Department of Education, *Annual Report* (AR), 1951, 1.
- Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, *Bulletin*, March 1953, 63; AR, 1952, 2; Toronto *Globe and Mail*, 16 April 1958.

Good Sources... bad sources... meh sources?

- Mainly Primary
- Magazines and Newspapers problematic...biased
- Some seemingly official sources
- Couldn't find many of the sources now
- More of an opinion piece, vs a scholarly journal
- Very few actual citations



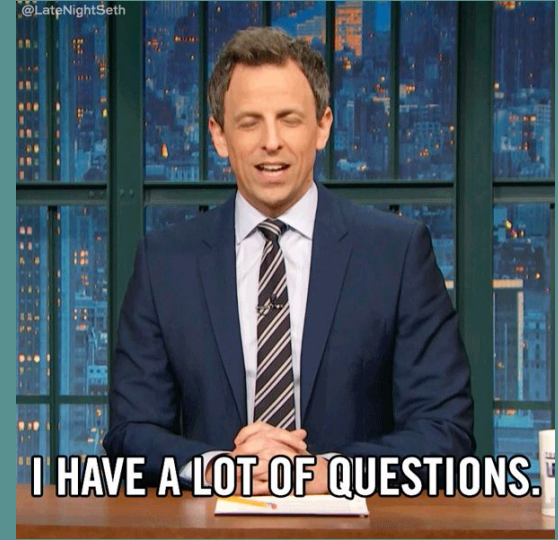
Class Question:

In what ways do our education systems show the roots of progressivism and traditionalism? Do YOU think our education system has changed to become progressive?



Our Questions:

- This article is written in the first person, should we assume this was Stamp's personal experience, or a fictitious retelling based on truth? Is it dangerous to make an assumption?
- IS TRACY PROGRESSIVE?? (I.e this class?)



LOONEY TUNES

