

## Why Have Progressive Schools?

*Excerpted from an essay by John Dewey in the  
July 1933 issue of Current History.*

The progressive education movement is the outgrowth of the realization by educators of the fact that our highly complex, rapid, crowded civilization demands and has been met by changes in school subjects and practice; that to make these changes effective something more is needed than simply the addition of one subject after another. The new subjects should be introduced with some relation to each other and the ways in which they operate and integrate in the world outside of school. It is also the outgrowth of the desire to put into practice in the classroom what the new science of psychology has discovered about individual learning and individual differences.

The kinds of schools, together with the methods used in them, which have developed from the desire to adjust the curriculum to society and to use the new psychology to increase the pupil's learning are numerous, almost as numerous as the schools themselves. When an individual or a group tries to adjust the curriculum to society, it immediately becomes necessary to formulate a conception of what that society is. What are its strengths that should be stressed in the schools, what its weaknesses that children should understand?

Is it a good thing to bring up the young with desires and habits that try to preserve everything just as it is today, or should they be able to meet change, to weigh the values and find good in the new? . . .

In a world changing as rapidly as ours, in a democracy with so short a history to draw on for choice of the best ways to succeed, expression of differences of opinions by different kinds of schools is a wholesome sign. In developing anything new, it is a good plan to have different methods working side by side, to experiment, to compare. ■