The theoretical roots of service-learning in John Dewey: Toward a theory of service-learning

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Document Type
Article

Publication Date
Fall 1994

Volume
1

Issue
1

Publication Title
Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning

First Page
7

Last Page
85

Abstract
As interest in service-learning research multiplies, there is a concomitant need for a theoretical base for service-learning. In this article the authors review aspects of John Dewey's educational and social philosophy that they identify as relevant to the development of a theory of service-learning, including learning from experience, reflective activity, citizenship, community, and democracy. The article concludes with a set of key questions for research and theory development.

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/slceslgen/150

Dewey's theories blended attention to the child as an individual with rights and claims of his own with a recognition of the gulf between an outdated and class-distorted educational setup inherited from the past and the urgent requirements of the new era. The educational system had to be thoroughly overhauled, he said, because of the deep-going changes in American civilization. They progress fastest in learning, not through being mechanically drilled in prefabricated material, but by doing work, experimenting with things, changing them in purposive ways. Occasionally children need to be alone and on their own. His disciples organized a John Dewey Society and the Progressive Education Association and have published numerous books and periodicals to propagate and defend his theories. The Theoretical Roots Of Service-Learning In John Dewey: Toward A Theory Of Service-Learning, Dwight E. Giles Jr., Janet Eyler. Service Learning. General. As interest in service-learning research multiplies, there is a concomitant need for a theoretical base for service-learning. In this article the authors review aspects of John Dewey's educational and social philosophy that they identify as relevant to the development of a theory of service-learning, including learning from experience, reflective activity, citizenship, community, and democracy. The article concludes with a set of key questions for research and theory development. Go to article. All Articles in Service Learning.