

## Education and social conflict

The German political theorist and revolutionary Karl Marx viewed public schooling as a form of ideological control imposed by dominant groups. This perspective saw education not as building social cohesion but as reproducing a division of labour or enabling various status groups to gain control of organizations and to influence the distribution of valued resources. The German sociologist Max Weber regarded educational credentials as one such resource, in that credentials function as a form of “cultural capital” that can generally preserve the status quo while granting social mobility to select members of society.

## Education and personal growth

The American philosopher John Dewey believed that education should mean the total development of the child. On the basis of the observations he made at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools—the experimental elementary schools that he founded in 1896—Dewey developed revolutionary educational theories that sparked the progressive education movement in the United States. As he propounded in *The School and Society* (1899) and *The Child and the Curriculum* (1902), education must be tied to experience, not abstract thought, and must be built upon the interests and developmental needs of the child. He argued for a student-centred, not subject-centred, curriculum and stressed the teaching of critical thought over rote memorization.

Later, in *Experience and Education* (1938), he criticized those of his followers who took his theories too far by disregarding organized subject matter in favour of vocational training or mere activity for their students. If prudently applied, progressive education could, Dewey believed, “shape the experiences of the young so that instead of reproducing current habits, better habits shall be formed, and thus the future adult society be an improvement on their own.” Concurrent pedagogies appeared in European institutions such as Ovide Decroly’s *École de l’Ermitage* (the Hermitage School), which envisioned students utilizing the classroom as a workshop, and Maria Montessori’s *Casa dei Bambini* (“Children’s House”), which incorporated experiential and tactile learning methods through students’ use of “didactic materials.”