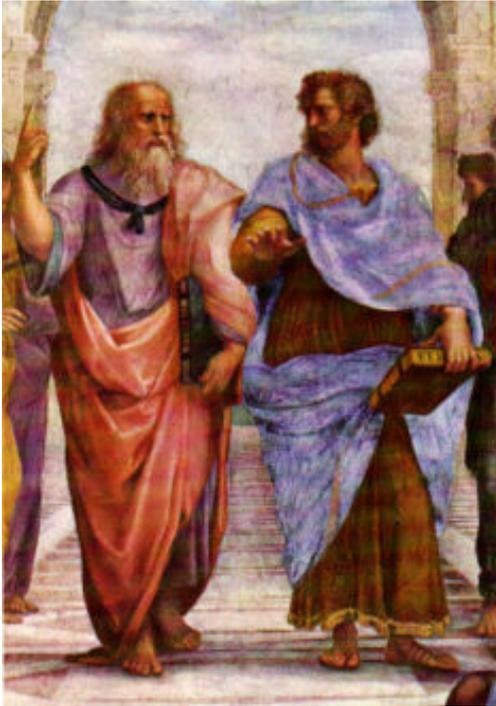


# Teachers who have paved the way

Margot Phaneuf, RN, PhD  
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## Introduction



In our educational institutions every effort is made to apply effective teaching methods which are appropriate to the age of the students and the demands of the discipline. We try to use dynamic strategies which correspond to modern teaching methods. Even though we frequently explore the possibilities, advantages and even the difficulties of modern teaching methods, we are often unaware of where they come from and to whom we owe the methods which have marked modern pedagogy. We believe in the virtues of attention grabbing means to stimulate and motivate our students and we often think that these have been recently invented and that we are pioneers in their use. However, some of these strategies, which appear to be the most innovative, have roots which go way back in time.

It is natural to want to learn about some of these thinkers who oriented and defended these methods for when we practice a profession it is important to have a minimum of the cultural baggage which characterizes it.<sup>1</sup>

## The Greek thinkers, precursors of our educators

From the moment that mankind wished to transmit what had developed over the ages, teachers appeared. The process of the transmission of information became the guarantee of the survival of culture and society. Thus, several hundreds of years before our era, thinkers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle brought a new vision of man and society, and began the grand educative tradition which marks the intellectual history of the western world.

To Socrates we owe, among other things maieutics, which is the art of dialogue, a dialectic which consists of letting students express their own ideas and questioning them in such a way as to develop their thinking so as to bring them to express knowledge which they did not know they had. The art of questioning, known as the Socratic Method, is still a useful educational method. In his own time, Socrates announced the contemporary idea that

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<sup>1</sup>. Image: Plato and Aristotle in a school in Athens. Raphaël, 1510:  
<http://home.worldcom.ch/jfjobin/Pages/plataraph.html>

education is not only a process of the transmission of information and understanding but an active procedure of discovery and the creation of knowledge.<sup>2</sup>).



Even though there were schools in Antiquity, it was not until the Middle Ages that the idea of an institution as a place of learning was born. Despite what the song of France Gall says, it was not Charlemagne who had the crazy idea of inventing the school. (Lyrics: Robert Gall music: Georges Liferman (1964). His influence, together with that of the clergy, did however play a major role in the conservation of the cultural heritage of the western world and in the development of the teaching of reading and writing, as well as the disciplines which we now call the human and natural sciences. (Clermont Gauthier, 2005, p. 50-51).

According to Clermont Gauthier, the institution which became the school grew under the influence of the Catholic Church, for to be a Christian one had to have a minimum of education; this enabled the spread of schools (2005, p. 45-47). Apart from its moral orientation, the study program basically involved teaching the young to read and write by copying texts, and to count and learn by heart some of the knowledge particular to the age (Clermont Gauthier, 2005, p. 49). However, one must acknowledge that at the time schooling was not widespread. Later, during the Middle Ages, thinkers like Rabelais infused an encyclopaedic character to education, while advocating a moral training for, as he said, “science without conscience is the ruin of the soul”.

## Comenius and the European heritage



With the Renaissance, schooling evolved under the influence of thinkers such as Erasmus, Montaigne, and teachers such as Comenius (1592-1670). Comenius' objectives were to assure the well-being of the family and the state, as well as to create better human beings. He wanted the school to be a true creator of men where “the light of wisdom would shine upon the spirit of the students, and would enable them to promptly understand manifest and hidden things, and where the soul and emotions would be brought together in a universal harmony.” He also stated an important truth, that education is not solely the domain of teachers but also the responsibility of the family and the society.<sup>3</sup>

As we can see, this preoccupation, also expressed by certain educators of our time, is not new. Trained in the bosom of the Moravian Brothers (a school of thought born in Moravia, Czech Republic) which advocated independent thought in both religion and politics, he had a marked influence on the teachers of his time especially in Europe and even later, on Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Even though Comenius lived many centuries ago, his ideas are still

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<sup>2</sup>. Image: The education of the Virgin Mary, Delacroix, 1842. Musée Delacroix : <http://www.musee-delacroix.fr/fr/collection/peintures/education-vierge.html>

<sup>3</sup>. Image and citations  
(<http://www.silapedagogie.com/comenius.htm#les%20frères%20moraves#les%20frères%20moraves>)

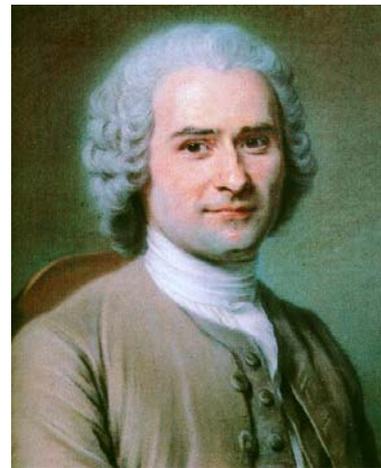
familiar to us. But they have been transmitted to us indirectly, with the result that we have forgotten their real origin. Comenius explained, among other things, that the child is like a seed which contains within itself all possibilities. We recognize here an idea which is familiar to us from the theories of Carl Rogers on the helping relationship.

In advance of his time, Comenius was also one of the first to develop the psychological bases of teaching. He maintained that education must respect the process of child development. Here again, it is via Piaget that these ideas have come to us.<sup>4, 5</sup>

The democratic ideas of Comenius were new in an age which did not recognize the capacities of ordinary people and even less, those of women. He used to say that “All must be considered capable of learning: girls as well as boys, the poor as well as the rich, the intelligent as well as the slow witted . . .” He even added in a poetic manner, “let us imitate the sun which shines upon, warms, brings to life, makes flower and fruit, all that lives, without distinction”.<sup>6</sup> His teachings are still today a grand lesson in democracy. But his innovative spirit led him even further and he dared advocate educative, practical activities and even games. The origin of active methods brought to the fore by Pestalozzi, Fröbel, Decroly, Dewey, Freinet, etc., find their source here.

### **Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the apostle of liberty**

Closer to us in time, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), during the age of the Enlightenment, was the author of a “work whose influence was without a doubt the most profound and the most durable on the evolution of the pedagogic movement”, according to Pestalozzi. He said that it was this book which was at the heart of all the developments in education in both the Old and the New World.<sup>7, 8</sup>



We should not be surprised that authors such as Pestalozzi, Fröbel, Dewey and Freinet, were later inspired by “Emile”, one of the masterpieces of this contested author. In it, he places the student at the heart of the educative process and above all, wants to make of him a “man” and not to have as the primary objective that he becomes a lawyer, soldier or priest. His theories were innovative for his time, for like Comenius, he was one of the first to base his educational principles on real psychological preoccupations of the process of child development.

In Rousseau’s approach, the teacher accompanies the child more than he teaches him. He favours formative experiences, motivates him and incites him to learn. The child should not be a passive being to be nourished intellectually from the outside but must remain dynamic and free and participate actively in the learning process. Some of us will surely recognize pedagogic ideas which are familiar to us. The pedagogy which we apply in our schools and colleges is certainly an echo of the principles of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

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<sup>4</sup>. Margot Phaneuf, [Carl Rogers: Carl Rogers, the man and his ideas](#), on Infriessources: Educational Crossroad, Great educators’ section.

<sup>5</sup>. Margot Phaneuf. [Piaget, chef de file du constructivisme](#), on Infriessources, « Carrefour pédagogique, section Grands éducateurs :

<sup>6</sup>. [Si la pédagogie m’était contée](#)

<sup>7</sup>. Jean-Jacques Rousseau : <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/publications/ThinkersPdf/rousseaf.pdf>).

<sup>8</sup>. Image : [Jean-Jacques Rousseau painted by Maurice Quentin de la Tour : Musée de montmorency](#).

Through the theories which put the emphasis on the child as learner, the school slowly but surely was transformed. Greater care was brought to bear not only on the lessons and the training of teachers but also on the physical space where teaching was carried out. The education of the masses had so little importance before, that it was not even considered necessary to spend much money on them. This painting of a Flemish master gives us some idea of what school was like.<sup>9</sup>



## The 20th century and the birth of a new pedagogy

Breaking with traditional methods, several educators of the 20<sup>th</sup> century made every effort to renew schooling where a dogmatic, authoritarian and encyclopaedic pedagogy predominated. They sought to educate, that is, to put in place a process which would facilitate physical, intellectual and moral faculties in the learning child. What was then established corresponds more closely to the definition found in the Robert dictionary of the term educate which comes from “ex ducere” and means “to conduct, to lead from” or more explicitly, to lead from ignorance and conduct towards knowledge, towards the acquisition of various competencies.

During the last century, educators who have left their mark and who still influence our teaching are legion. To try to choose among them seems restrictive and ungrateful since it necessarily leaves out the contributions of others who are worthy of interest. But the limits of this article oblige us to do so!

## Ovide Decroly, defender of initiative and discovery

Among modern thinkers, Ovide Decroly (1871-1932) medical doctor and psychologist, occupies an important place. He elaborated a method which was very much appreciated in his time, and which inspired one of his contemporaries, Dewey. All around the world, Decroly schools were born and some of them still have an enviable reputation, for example the school of Brussels. They put in place a programme which can be continued right through to university and which was designed so as “to learn how to learn”, a notion taken up by the European EQUAL project for adult learning.

The Decroly study program is also innovative. It is built around three major concepts still primordial for all sorts of programs whether in the humanities or the sciences. Firstly, **observation**, which is the base of all science; secondly, **association**, which enables the comparison between phenomena and more abstract ideas and which enables deduction, conclusions, opinion as well as seeking for causes and effects which characterize the scientific

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<sup>9</sup>. Image : The school master, 1662, Adrian van Ostade, Musée du Louvre : <http://www.insecula.com/contact/A009866.html>

method and finally, the third concept, the *expression* of ideas through language and artistic creation.<sup>10</sup>

Without knowing it, several of the principles which are still useful in our teaching methods stem from Decroly. You will certainly recognize some of these which tell us to proceed:

- from the simple to the complex
- from the concrete to the abstract
- from passive receptivity to action and personal engagement
- from subjectivity to objectivity
- from the pleasure principle to the principle of reality
- from that which is close to that which is distant
- from dispersion to unity.<sup>11</sup>



Another one of Decroly's interesting innovations was the putting together of a "life journal" where students could gather together all their knowledge and achievements in the form of files, drawings, etc. It is the ancestor of the portfolio, a method which is presently very much in vogue.<sup>12</sup> ()

His words: "Learning by living and learning for life" summarize the essentials of the Decroly method espoused by many other pedagogues who were later inspired by his principles.

## **Maria Montessori, a leader in the science of education**

Maria Montessori (1870-1952), teacher and first woman medical doctor in Italy, also had an enormous influence on education in the western world, in Europe, the United States, Canada, and even India where she lived during the war. Many schools, all over the world claim to live by the principles which she posited.<sup>13</sup>

After studying psychology and philosophy, she became interested in children and elaborated her pedagogic approach. Respecting the development of the child, Maria Montessori was convinced that the forces of growth are part and parcel of the living being and that the task of education consists of conserving the spontaneity of these forces and removing all that could weaken and prevent them from blossoming.<sup>14</sup> Strongly influenced by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Maria Montessori became a figurehead of the new education. She was also influenced by Ovide Decroly. In their lives and work, both have many points in common.

She understood that the developing human mind establishes itself by constant interaction with its environment. It follows then that the learning climate and the school environment must be rich in stimuli. The fundamental concept which underlies her work is that children must have an appropriate environment where they can live and learn. In her pedagogic approach, Maria Montessori placed equal importance on the interior evolution of the student as on their

<sup>10</sup>. Si la pédagogie... m'était contée : [http://www.silapedagogie.com/ovide\\_decroly.htm](http://www.silapedagogie.com/ovide_decroly.htm)

<sup>11</sup>. Image and text: Si la pédagogie... m'était contée : [http://www.silapedagogie.com/ovide\\_decroly.htm](http://www.silapedagogie.com/ovide_decroly.htm)

<sup>12</sup>. Portfolio numérique : dossier documentaire. [www.infiressources.ca](http://www.infiressources.ca) « Educational Crossroad », section « Being or becoming a teacher. », <http://www.infiressources.ca/MyScriptorWeb/scripto.asp?resultat=923821>

<sup>13</sup>. Image : encyclopédie Universalis : [http://www.universalis.fr/media-encyclopedie/87/ph040299/encyclopedie/maria\\_montessori.htm](http://www.universalis.fr/media-encyclopedie/87/ph040299/encyclopedie/maria_montessori.htm).

<sup>14</sup>. Maria Montessori : [http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria\\_Montessori](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria_Montessori).

exterior development, favouring language and good manners. And for her, the acquisition of competency was as important as the acquisition of knowledge.

She insisted on the development of certain physical and manual capacities and above all on the awakening of the senses which led her to enrich her teaching with a scientific and experimental element. Her approach encouraged the exercise of the freedom of thinking and decision making in the student as well as self-discipline and a sense of responsibility.

She was also the instigator of adequate teaching materials, but she insisted that their use must be methodically coordinated with theoretical learning. She attached particular importance to the development of bodily functions. Various exercises are practiced in a group and are followed by a discussion in order to combine the effects of various types of teachings, give rise to reflection and the practice of good judgment

### **Her preoccupation with teacher training**

#### **The student's quest**

**“Help me to do it myself.  
Give me the keys to understand the  
world.  
Teach me to live with my fellow  
human beings.”**

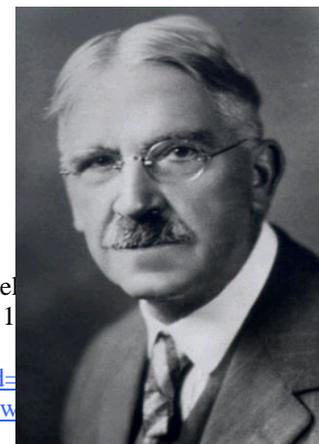
Being an advocate of the observation of learners, she was at the origin of teacher training and the science of education. For her, the work of a teacher was precious and must be precise. Each learning situation must be well prepared, conscientiously done, evaluated and corrected as required.

On the subject of teacher training, she said that “one must learn by observation which is the first step towards science. If one did not see the phenomena, it was as if they did not exist. Inversely, the soul of the wise person is made up of a passionate interest for what he sees and he who is initiated to see becomes interested and this interest is the motor which creates a wise spirit.”<sup>15</sup>

Maria Montessori's faith in the human potential was a breath of fresh air in the domain of education and led her to state that the individual “is what he is, not because of the teachers that he has had, but rather because of what he has accomplished himself”. She even went as far as to introduce the idea of “self creation” which she applied to all the human aspects of the development of the personality. This woman, pioneer in a world of men, is an example for us. (Maria Montessori : <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/publications/ThinkersPdf/montessf.pdf>).

### **John Dewey, educational reformer**

John Dewey (1859-1952) was a philosopher renowned for his attachment to democracy and the integration of activity in education. He was the apostle of “learning by doing”<sup>16</sup> However, his ideas, considered too romantic and Rousseauistic, are still strongly criticized by those who believe in a more traditional type



<sup>15</sup> .<sup>15</sup> (Maria Montessori, *Schule des Kindes*, p. 120, *Perspectives : revue trimestrielle* (Paris, UNESCO : Bureau international d'éducation), vol. XXIV, n° 1-2, 1994, p. 1 ©UNESCO : Bureau international d'éducation, 2000.

<http://lfinvest.free.fr/montessori/modules.php?name=Content&pa=showpage&pid=>  
<sup>16</sup> . Robert B. Westbrook : <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/publications/ThinkersPdf/dew>

of school. A false understanding of his ideas even led the detractors of his progressive methods to blame him for the weaknesses of our system of education.<sup>17 18</sup>

His principles are particularly applicable to nursing especially his theory of knowledge which insists on the necessity of putting thought and knowledge to the test of action.<sup>19</sup>

His functionalist pedagogy is well adapted to the context of nursing where the theoretical, practical, organizational and technical elements join together to enable the student to master the competencies required in nursing. The laboratory practices and workshops are the applications inspired by this progressive teaching method. Another method which is important for nursing and where the principles of Dewey can be seen, is the process of the experience's organization, divided into five stages:

- recognizing the problem
- defining the problem
- possible solutions
- expected results
- verifying the applicability of the solution.<sup>20</sup>

The process is related to the problem solving process used in the scientific method and is for health care a logical tool in the planning of personalized nursing care. Thus we owe a lot to Dewey's heritage.

**The new education is a current pedagogic method which champions the principle of the active participation of an individual in his own training. In this approach, learning, before being an accumulation of facts, must, above all, be a factor in the global progress of the person. In order to do so, it must start from his centres of interest and try to awaken a spirit of exploration and cooperation; it is the very principle of active methods. This orientation advocates a global education, according equal importance to the various educational domains: intellectual, scientific and artistic as well as physical, manual and social.** (Wikipedia, [éducation nouvelle](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89ducation_nouvelle) : [http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89ducation\\_nouvelle](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89ducation_nouvelle) ).

His approach is imbued with a respect for the learner. For him, the young human being was necessarily curious and active and it is up to the teacher to give meaning to this capacity for action. "According to his principles, the student was animated by four instincts which it is important to recognize and whose blossoming and persistence one must cultivate: to communicate, to construct, to seek knowledge and to refine one's way of expressing oneself."

For him, a passive education can neither favour the acquisition of knowledge nor the development of the qualities of the personality. He reproached traditionalist teachers for not relating the subject matter to the interest of the students and to significant and adapted activities. For him, it was important to continually seek the conditions which stimulate and open up the capacities for action of the students in order to enable them to accomplish their proper destiny.<sup>21</sup>

Dewey was also the advocate of good teacher training. For him, this was essential. He stated that in order to orient the development of the student in a non-directive manner, one needs

<sup>17</sup>. Robert Westbrook : <http://ienbonne.edres74.ac-grenoble.fr/methodes/deweyf.pdf>).

<sup>18</sup>. Image : NNDB. Tracking the entire world : <http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.nndb.com/people/407/000087146/john-dewey-1->

<sup>19</sup>. Robert Westbrook, p.1 <http://ienbonne.edres74.ac-grenoble.fr/methodes/deweyf.pdf>

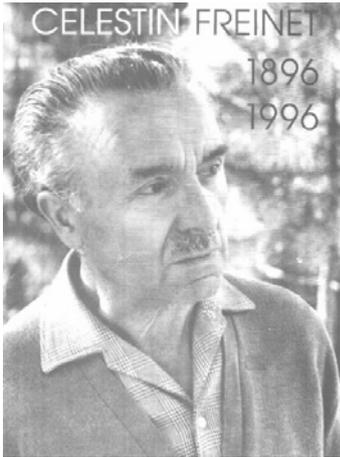
<sup>20</sup>. Si la pédagogie m'était contée. John Dewey : [http://www.silapedagogie.com/john\\_dewey.htm](http://www.silapedagogie.com/john_dewey.htm)).

<sup>21</sup>. Robert, B. Westbrook, p.2 : <http://ienbonne.edres74.ac-grenoble.fr/methodes/deweyf.pdf>

highly qualified teachers, who master the subject matter that they teach, who are trained in psychology and well-versed in the techniques which will stimulate the student to integrate the knowledge which is proposed to him.<sup>22</sup> (Robert Westbrook, p. 4 : <http://ienbonne.edres74.ac-grenoble.fr/methodes/deweyf.pdf> ).

Dewey's teachings enable us to discover an active pedagogy, which uses efficient means and which is organized in a pragmatic manner. It is not always easy for us, but his theories are still today a source of inspiration for teachers who are eager to learn.

## Célestin Freinet and the pedagogy of participation and cooperation



Célestin Freinet (1896-1966), impregnated with the principles of the “new education” and active teaching, situated the ideal learning milieu in a united group. At the same time he advocated the development of individual potential, mutual learning and open communication.<sup>23</sup>

Traumatized by the war, and psychologically and physically weakened on his return, he tried to develop a teaching approach where the student becomes more autonomous and less at the mercy of his teacher. His personal condition and his opinions as to the capacities of initiative, creativity, work and free expression, led him to develop an innovative teaching method.

During the war, he became conscious of the equality of men before death, an observation which greatly influenced his teaching orientation. Already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Jules Ferry<sup>1</sup>, gave birth to the idea that every citizen had a right to a basic education but in practice quality education was still an affair of the elite. This is why Freinet, influenced by the ideas of Marx and Engels, invested himself so heartily in order to demand more resources for education and a change in pedagogy itself.

What he proposed was more democratic as far as the relationship between teachers and students was concerned. He questioned the lecture and encyclopaedic method which was then popular. Moreover, his method was based on the development of the student by various means and activities and made use of his creativity through free choice texts, the establishment of an intra and extracurricular correspondence, running a printing press, the student newspaper, conferences which shared the information with a group, etc.<sup>24</sup> It was a window on life, a way of giving meaning to a school, an orientation towards the individualization of learning and towards cooperation. Freinet also advocated what he called “experimental trial and error” where observation, repetition and even error was authorized, enabling the “young person” the pleasure of discovering for himself. He also introduced the idea, considered ludicrous at the time, that error is not a catastrophe but an aid to progress.



<sup>22</sup>. Ibid, p. (Robert Westbrook, p.4.

<sup>23</sup>. Photo : Qui était Célestin Freinet? <http://www.ordiecole.com/images/freinet.jpg>).

<sup>24</sup> . Si la pédagogie... m'était contée : <http://www.silapedagogie.com/freinet.htm>).

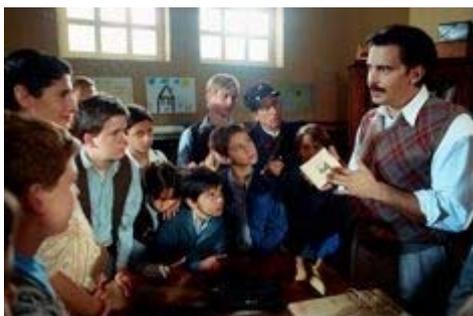
In this type of learning situation, learning by games is present but does not constitute the core. On the contrary, the orientation was towards taking responsibility and the accent was on the need and interest of work, as well as on cooperation. Freinet was convinced that if the work was stimulating and well organized it would arouse a lot of interest with the students and would thus become an intrinsic factor of motivation making discipline much less necessary. He was convinced that the student “should no longer be a machine which learns, but rather a human being who reflects”.<sup>25</sup> His pedagogy, although strongly contested, made its way and many Freinet schools saw the light of day even in Quebec.<sup>26</sup>

His way of viewing teaching was innovative for his time and still is, for despite a fairly widespread point of view that pedagogy is liberalized, our strategies are still generally rather traditional and our evolution remains timid. An author like Jacques Belleau believes that the pedagogy of Freinet could find a fertile terrain in our colleges and become an interesting contribution.<sup>27</sup>

## Some principles of the Freinet school

Many principles set forth by Freinet are still useful:

- Develop the personality of the student to its maximum in a rational community which he serves and which serves him. The socioconstructivist pedagogy largely practiced at the college level (Piaget and Vigotsky) is it not more or less the same thing?
- Learning should take place in a community. Cooperation is the guiding principle. Learning takes place best in collaboration.
- Each individual is unique and should find a personal way of expressing his particularities. Freinet's techniques favour expressing oneself orally, in writing and in the creative arts according to which is most appropriate.



- The personality is constructed with the help of an educator who puts the accent on confidence in the creative and active capacities of the student and enables him to always go a bit further.

- Activity is the key word of all learning. Like Montaigne, Freinet favoured thinking but he also put a value on expert hands rather than considering the student as an empty vase to be filled. In this approach,

trial and error and experimentation become the roads to learning.

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<sup>25</sup> . Pédagogie et révolution. Célestin Freinet un intellectuel en rupture : Delphine Lafon.

[http://delphine.lafon.free.fr/old/Freinet/freinet\\_1\\_1.php](http://delphine.lafon.free.fr/old/Freinet/freinet_1_1.php)

<sup>26</sup>.Image : Freinet parmi ses élèves : École pour les parents. <http://ecolepourlesparents.over-blog.com/article-5961630.html>).

<sup>27</sup>. Jacques Belleau. Une approche pédagogique alternative au collégial: la pédagogie Freinet [http://www.infiressources.ca/bd/recherche/pedagogie\\_collegiale/13\\_1/Belleau\\_Jacques.pdf](http://www.infiressources.ca/bd/recherche/pedagogie_collegiale/13_1/Belleau_Jacques.pdf)  
<http://www.aqpc.qc.ca/index.php?q=fr/octobre1999-approche-alternative>

- Freedom of expression is a condition of creativity. The development of self determination and self-management of learning constitutes one of the keys to this approach.
- Each individual learns at his own rhythm which is specific to him and the educational organization must have the flexibility enabling it to respect this.
- The teacher must play a new role, that of guide and resource person.
- Our methods must continue to evolve and not become fixed in time.<sup>28</sup> <sup>29</sup>

The influence of Freinet, with his confidence in the student, the freedom of the educational climate and the new relationship between the teacher and learner, was very important on our pedagogy. We can see this in many ways in our colleges. But we must remember his warning to be wary of stagnation.

## Freinet and modern technology



In Freinet's time, teaching methods were not what they are today. He recommended better adapted active strategies and methods and would probably have been enchanted by the arrival of modern technology in our classrooms. We can suppose that he would use the Internet in a constructive manner, as a means of freedom of expression, in the same way that he made use of printing and the school newspaper as teaching strategies. Since for him, education should open onto life, he would most likely be delighted to note the ease of

communication that the Internet provides and would certainly have used it to encourage autonomy, creativity and an interest for research in his students.

It is true that technology can constitute a challenge, but why not dare? Bernard Shaw once said, "Some look at things that are and ask why. I dream of things that never were and ask why not?"<sup>30</sup>

## The present era

We are the heirs of these educational thinkers and among the strategies which we use daily can be found, without our being aware of it, one or other of the innovations which they recommended. Unfortunately, to choose among the philosophers, psychologists and educators who have marked us, such as Steiner, Piaget, Rogers, Binet, Bloom, Alain, Freire,

<sup>28</sup>. Célestin Freinet : <http://www.tact.fse.ulaval.ca/fr/html/sites/freinet.html#1.%20QU'EST-CE%20QUE%20L'ÄCOLE%20FREINET>

<sup>29</sup>. Image : « Le maître qui laissait les enfants rêver. » Film réalisé en 2006 par Daniel Losset <http://perso.orange.fr/marc.datteri/>).

<sup>30</sup>. George Bernard Shaw. Alors, pourquoi ne pas risquer le changement?

Illich, Neill, Vygotsky, as well as others closer to us, such as Meirieu and Perrenoud, is perilous and reductionist, which almost makes us regret the fact that there is no predominating influence in our teaching.



We have a multitude of renowned predecessors, but despite all these beneficial influences, we live in an age of change and thus, incertitude. Torn between the strategies of the transfer and construction of knowledge, between the transmission of the “master” and the responsibility of the student, we sometimes have difficulty in situating ourselves. We hesitate between an authoritarian relationship and a helping relationship and some among us have trouble seeing clearly what is best. Thus we are a bit like Magritte’s “Schoolmaster”, someone without a face who is seeking his real identity.<sup>31</sup>

Should we embark on a strategy of problem solving and thus sacrifice our pedagogic certitudes? Or is it better to continue our habitual manner of teaching? We hesitate for it is notorious that change always brings fear! But the quality of the training of future nurses who are already confronted with difficult realities and must thus be prepared in a more appropriate manner to face the challenges of our times, depends on our present decisions. We must evolve our teaching strategies and it is not easy for all of us. Resistance is understandable, but evolution is necessary! Victor Hugo wrote a long time ago “Teachers are the gardeners of human intelligence” which should make us remember that culture methods always evolve with the succession of time

## Conclusion



We owe a lot to previous civilisations who have left us a rich heritage in the domain of teaching. Whether it is the Greek philosophers such as Aristotle, or thinkers such as Montaigne or Rabelais, they have all influenced us. It is a good thing to look back and “count our blessings”, but looking back should not become an obsession. We should look forward and match our teaching strategies to the needs of our times. The words of Gaston Berger (the inventor of the term “futurology”) are particularly appropriate. “We

live not in a new world which we can at least describe, but in a changing world, which means that the concept of adaptation must be generalised in order to remain applicable to our accelerating societies”.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>. Image : Galerie Météorologie - Mes peintres préférés : Le maître d'école R. Magritte : [http://www.jmbprofessionnel.org/photo-222795-le-maa-tre-d--a-cole\\_jpg.html](http://www.jmbprofessionnel.org/photo-222795-le-maa-tre-d--a-cole_jpg.html)

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