

Sample of an Essay on Education

Innovative Education

The term “innovative education” has been presented to scientific community by American pedagogue James Botkin about twenty years ago and received numerous and rather controversial response, for it suggested complete and irreversible revision of the principles traditional educational theories consider to be axiomatic.

To begin with, while traditional education considers the main value of educational process to be the knowledge transferred to the student, Botkin’s innovative education presents the knowledge as a means rather than an end, at the same time orienting at the development of the student’s personality through knowledge. It is less concerned with controlling the educational process, trying to create circumstances in which the student would establish his or her own goals and achieve them, while transforming his or her own self and self-regulating the studying process.

Traditional education represents in itself more or less stable structure, without undergoing dramatic differences in the course of years. The accumulation of knowledge goes on, of course, but only in the subjects where it is impossible to avoid, for example, history and literature, which are being expanded all the time. Curriculum for exact sciences, like physics or mathematics may not change for decades. Botkin offers another decision, which presupposes that educational system is dynamic, ever-changing structure that is being regrouped and renewed constantly, with new programs and educational disciplines appearing all the time.

As opposed to reproductive nature of traditional education (the student perceives information and reproduces it), innovative education is supposed to be only and specifically creative process. It should teach students to create text irrespectively of its subject, understand information even if it has never been perceived by the student yet, solve any problems by means of independent thinking rather than applying pre-existing, memorized solutions.

It also cancels the long-lasting tradition of relationship “teacher-student” as “superior-inferior”, making both the teacher and the student equal participants of educational process, who work on one and the same task in cooperation, rather than submission. Any kind of outside control is supposed to be harmful for the process and, therefore, abolished, with its place taken by self-control, mutual control and coordination.

Of course, the self-sufficient system of education based on equality of teacher and student may look really alluring, but all the same, it is more of a utopia than reality. Botkin idealizes children and thinks that it is possible to create such system; reality would most likely say “no”.