

Matilda as a Representation of Progressive Educational Principles

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the representation of educational progressivism in Roald Dahl's novel *Matilda* (1988) by examining the principles of progressivism in Matilda's character development, the depiction of progressivism in education within the story, and the rationale behind its portrayal. Using John Dewey's progressivism theory, the research employs a descriptive qualitative method to explore the novel's characters, plot, and themes. The findings reveal that Matilda embodies key progressivist values, such as experiential learning, critical thinking, and individual empowerment. Her self-directed learning and intellectual growth reflect Dewey's "learning by doing" philosophy, while Miss Honey's nurturing approach highlights the importance of student-centered education. In contrast, the oppressive environment at Crunchem Hall emphasizes the transformative potential of progressive education. The study concludes that *Matilda* promotes curiosity, independence, and democratic learning, offering valuable insights for educators and inspiring further research on progressive principles in literature. **Keywords:** children education; progressivism; Roald Dahl

INTRODUCTION

The novel *Matilda* (1998) by Roald Dahl is widely recognized as a work highlighting the importance of education, personal growth, and the power of knowledge. As an educational novel, it provides a rich field for analysis, particularly when exploring themes of learning, independence, and the challenges of overcoming oppressive authority figures. To examine these elements, progressivism can be effectively applied. This educational philosophy emphasizes active learning, critical thinking, and the development of individual potential. This theory aligns closely with the story of *Matilda*, where the main character thrives through self-driven learning and her love for books, embodying the values of progressivism in her journey toward self-empowerment and academic success.

Literary studies explore and analyze various aspects of literature, including themes, characters, and the messages conveyed through literary works. As an academic field, it provides insights into human experiences, cultural values, and societal changes. To conduct literary research, scholars often use theoretical frameworks to guide their analysis. "A theoretical framework is a reflection of the work the researcher engages in to use a theory in a given study" (Varpio et al., 2020). Commonly used theories in literary studies include psychoanalytic theory, which explores characters' psychological motivations, and other theories that analyze class struggles and social dynamics. According to Drapela (1995), "Psychoanalytic theory was founded by Sigmund Freud, who claimed that by gaining 'insight' and turning unconscious motives and thoughts into conscious ones, people could be cured. In Freud's view, the individual is pressured by overwhelming physiological forces that have a decisive influence on human life. They are major determinants of behavior and personality development." These theories help researchers uncover deeper meanings and interpretations of literary works, making them a vital tool for understanding the complexities of literature.

One of the theories that can be used in analyzing literature is progressivism. Progressivism is an educational philosophy that emphasizes personal growth, critical thinking, and active participation in learning. According to Dar (2021), "Dewey suggested that individuals learn and grow as a result of experiences and interactions with the world." Progressivism is rooted in the belief that education should center on the needs, interests, and experiences of individuals. It encourages learners to solve

problems, engage with their environment, and adapt to changing circumstances. This philosophy aligns with modern ideas of self-development and lifelong learning, making it relevant not only in education but also in analyzing literature that explores themes of growth and transformation. When applied to literary studies, progressivism can help highlight how characters evolve, how their experiences influence their actions, and how the story reflects progressive values such as adaptability, curiosity, and problem-solving.

This study will use Miles and Huberman's descriptive qualitative method to analyze the novel. According to Susanto et al. (2024), "Descriptive qualitative research focuses on providing a detailed account of phenomena, often using data from literature reviews and existing studies." This method helps to explain and understand different ideas by closely examining written information. It focuses on gathering, organizing, and carefully studying data to find patterns, themes, and connections. By using this method, researchers can thoroughly investigate how the ideas of progressivism are shown in *Matilda*. This approach helps to deeply understand the book's educational messages and literary structure, making it a good choice for analyzing the text with the selected theory.

Educational progressivism has long impacted educational philosophy and practice. This philosophy is based on the idea that learning should be experiential, student-centered, and flexible to meet individual needs. This concept often develops in literature through characters who challenge strict, authoritarian systems that limit potential and encourage creativity, critical thinking, and personal development in their learning contexts. This study focuses on how *Matilda* embodies the ideals of educational progressivism, particularly through its depiction of characters who encourage students' intellectual and personal freedom.

Previous studies on educational values in the literature show how different characters represent various teaching ideals, revealing both progressive and traditional approaches. For example, in the research titled "Novel Totto-Chan by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi: A Study of Philosophy of Progressivism and Humanism and Relevance to the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia" by (Amaruddin et al., 2024) explores the principles of progressivism and humanism through Tomoe Gakuen, a school led by the compassionate headmaster Mr. Kobayashi. Mr. Kobayashi's methods encourage students to explore, engage, and interact with their surroundings, embedding learning in their immediate reality rather than limiting it to classroom theory. This contrast illustrates the divide between progressive and traditional education. Similarly, John Dewey's theories in "Development of John Dewey's Educational Philosophy" by Ye and Shih (2021) stress the importance of a learning environment where students solve real-life problems. Other studies, such as Rakhmanina et al. (2021) highlight how literature can teach empathy, cooperation, and social responsibility. Furthermore, Qotrunnada et al. (2023) show that teachers who prioritize character development positively influence their students. These studies suggest that teachers' characters are progressive models in education, promoting a compassionate and flexible approach to learning that challenges rigid educational norms.

The elements of educational progressivism in *Matilda* are highlighted through *Matilda*'s journey and character growth, especially when we look at Dewey's theories and modern applications of progressivism. Kennedy (2022) and Do (2022) emphasize progressive values like experiential learning, critical thinking, and adaptability. These values mirror *Matilda*'s love for learning and her self-driven education. Her ability to solve problems independently shows her active engagement in learning, a core element Dewey emphasized in his progressive approach to creating capable and thoughtful individuals. Further research on the articles "Romance, Aesthetics, and Progressivism in Marathi Literary Culture: Narayan Sitaram Phadke and the Modern Marathi Novel" by Sarwate (2024) and "John Dewey and Progressive Education" by Hopkins (2017) reveals that progressivism focuses on personal and social empowerment.

In Roald Dahl's *Matilda*, the character of *Matilda* herself embodies the progressive ideals of education by demonstrating the importance of self-directed learning and critical thinking, which are emphasized in several studies. "Making Sense of *Matilda*: Interpreting Literature through Information Behavior Theory" by Tveit (2020) discusses how *Matilda*'s journey showcases the significance of

libraries and reading in empowering individuals. This highlights the idea that education should be accessible and enriching, which aligns with progressive educational values.

In “Unfolding layers of womanhood: A novel perspective of Roald Dahl’s *Matilda*” by Shaw and Fard (2018) *Matilda*’s fight against patriarchal systems is examined. Her desire for action and independence—two essential elements of progressive education—is highlighted. Last but not least, “*Matilda*’s literacy practices in Roald Dahl’s *Matilda*,” written by Putri and Retnaningdyah (2018), highlights how *Matilda* uses reading as a way to escape and empower herself in addition to enjoyment, confirming the notion that education should promote social awareness and personal development.

The study by Yudianto and Fauziati (2021) examines the role of progressivism in shaping students’ character within character education. It emphasizes that education should not focus solely on cognitive intelligence but should also prioritize moral and ethical values to develop superior character. Using a library research method, the study identifies progressivism as a foundational philosophy for character education. This approach aims to foster critical thinking, self-discipline, socialization, and democratic principles in students. The process of character formation is structured into three stages: Moral Knowing, Moral Feeling, and Moral Action. These stages ensure that students internalize and practice good character traits, aligning with national and educational goals. Progressivism further advocates for experiential and student-centered curricula that prepare students to adapt, innovate, and address modern challenges, ultimately producing competitive, initiative-driven, and creative individuals equipped for the demands of a rapidly evolving civilization.

Previous research has explored these ideals in various literary contexts, highlighting progressive characters who encourage self-directed learning and critical thinking. For instance, Totto-Chan illustrates progressivism through the nurturing environment at Tomoe Gakuen, and studies on John Dewey emphasize how supportive educational settings enable students to engage in problem-solving and intellectual growth. In *Matilda*, Miss Honey supports *Matilda*’s independence and love of learning, contrasting sharply with Miss Trunchbull’s oppressive methods. This body of literature reinforces Dewey’s progressivism, underscoring themes of personal development, social empowerment, and a nurturing approach to education.

In summary, this research investigated progressivism as depicted in *Matilda* (1998). Progressivism focuses on personal growth, critical thinking, and active learning, making it relevant for analyzing literature that addresses themes of development and transformation. The novel *Matilda* (1988) by Roald Dahl serves as an excellent example, as it highlights education, personal growth, and overcoming challenges. This study will utilize Miles and Huberman’s descriptive qualitative method to explore how these concepts are presented in *Matilda* (1988), providing valuable insights into its educational messages and literary structure.

Progressivism

Progressivism is an educational philosophy that emphasizes student freedom, independence, and a process of change marked by teacher and student creativity (Khairani et al., 2023) rather than focusing on rote memorization or strict rules, progressivism encourages students to actively participate in their learning and connect it to real-life situations. The goal is to make education meaningful and relevant, fostering skills like problem-solving, collaboration, and independence. "Education is neither a process of unfolding from within nor is it a training of faculties resident in mind itself. It is rather the formation of mind by setting up certain associations or connections of content by means of a subject matter presented from without" (Dewey, 1997a). For Dewey, progressivism in education means creating an environment where students are encouraged to interact with their surroundings, engage in problem-solving, and reflect on their learning.

In *Experience and Education*, (Dewey, 1997b) explains that education should be an ongoing process that is directly connected to real life, not merely a preparation for the future. By saying, "education is not preparation for life; education is life itself," he argues that learning should happen through meaningful experiences rather than passively absorbing facts. Dewey believed that students learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process, engaging with ideas, and applying knowledge

in practical, real-world contexts. This philosophy supports a learning environment where students are encouraged to explore, ask questions, and connect what they learn in school to their everyday lives. Through this active engagement, students gain knowledge and develop skills in problem-solving, critical thinking, and collaboration, making education a vital, dynamic part of their growth as individuals.

Dewey believed that education should prepare students for future roles and enrich their lives by fostering curiosity, democratic values, and personal development. "To imposition from above is opposed expression and cultivation of individuality; to external discipline is opposed free activity; to learning from texts and teachers, learning through experience; to acquisition of isolated skills and techniques by drill, is opposed acquisition of them as means of attaining ends which make direct vital appeal; to preparation for a more or less remote future is opposed making the most of the opportunities of present life; to static aims and materials is opposed acquaintance with a changing world." (Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 1938). There are several of Dewey's key principles of progressivism, as follows:

1. Learning by Doing

Dewey strongly advocated for "learning by doing," also known as experiential learning. He observed that children learn more effectively when they are actively involved in the process, as this immersion in present tasks makes learning more meaningful than focusing on distant goals like final exams.

For example, in a biology class, students could build a mini water cycle model instead of just reading about the water cycle in a textbook. They would use simple materials to create a small system where water evaporates, condenses, and falls as "rain." By doing this experiment themselves, they learn how the water cycle works, and the process becomes more memorable because they can see it happen right in front of them.

2. Discussions

Dewey valued discussions in the classroom because he believed they prepared students for life in a democratic society, where people need to be able to share ideas and listen to others. Through discussions, students learn to express their opinions and consider different points of view.

For example, in a history class, students might discuss the importance of voting. Some might argue it's a duty, while others think it's a personal choice. Dewey would encourage students to express their views, listen to others, and then think about how they could make their opinions heard in the community, like organizing a school event to raise awareness about voting.

3. Interactivity

Dewey's teaching was all about interaction. He believed that learning should be an active process in which students interact with both the environment and each other. When students sit passively, they don't learn as well. For example, in a geography lesson, students could go outside and use a compass or GPS to find specific locations instead of just looking at maps in a book. They could even create their map of the schoolyard or neighbourhood. This hands-on approach allows them to actively engage with what they're learning and apply it in real-world settings.

4. Interdisciplinary Learning

Dewey championed interdisciplinary learning, believing that connecting subjects helps students reinforce and expand their understanding. In Dewey's view, continuity is key to comprehension, and by linking different subjects, students build on prior knowledge. For example, in an art project, students could use their math skills to measure and cut materials for a sculpture. Then, they could write a short story in English about the sculpture they created. By connecting these subjects, they understand that skills from different areas can work together and help them express their ideas more fully.

METHODS

This research employs a descriptive qualitative design to explore the representation of educational progressivism in Roald Dahl's *Matilda*. Descriptive qualitative research, as defined by Miles et al. (2013), provides "well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts" (p. 1). This approach is particularly suitable for analyzing how progressive educational values are portrayed through character development, dialogue, and narrative structure. The study relies on qualitative textual data, primarily from the novel itself, and secondary sources, such as academic articles and studies on progressivism and literary analysis. The primary data include dialogue and narrative text that reveal progressive and traditional educational philosophies, while secondary data contextualize these themes within broader educational theories, including John Dewey's progressivism.

Data collection involves document analysis as outlined by Miles et al. (2013), which includes initial reading, coding, thematic analysis, and interpretation of the text. The data analysis process follows three stages: data reduction, where relevant information is identified and organized; data display, using visual aids to summarize themes and patterns; and drawing conclusions, which involves iterative verification of findings. To ensure trustworthiness, the study uses triangulation by comparing data from multiple sources, including *Matilda* and related academic literature. This method enhances credibility by identifying consistent patterns and refining interpretations based on agreement across sources. By combining document analysis and triangulation, this research provides a robust and well-supported examination of progressivism as depicted in *Matilda*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this discussion, the key principles of progressivism in *Matilda* will be explored through the lens of the character's development, the portrayal of progressive education in the plot, and *Matilda*'s alignment with the core values of progressive education. By analyzing *Matilda*'s self-directed learning, the interactive and interdisciplinary nature of her education, and her critical thinking, this section will highlight how the novel reflects the key concepts of progressivism. Additionally, these findings will be compared with existing research to validate the data and gain a deeper understanding of how the principles of progressive education are represented in both the character and the narrative of *Matilda*.

The Role of Learning by Doing in *Matilda*

The story of *Matilda*, written by Roald Dahl, is a great example of how children can learn and grow through their own actions and experiences. This idea is connected to a philosophy called progressivism in education. Progressivism focuses on learning by doing, where children are encouraged to take an active role in their own learning. It emphasizes hands-on experiences, curiosity, and real-life problem-solving rather than just memorizing facts from books. In *Matilda*, we see these principles come to life through the main character's journey of learning and self-discovery.

Progressivism in education prioritizes child-centered education, limits teachers' activities to mentors, supervisors, and advisors, and aims to make educational practices democratic and more respectful of children's potential and abilities (Sulistyaningsih, 2023). One of the key ideas of progressivism is that children learn best when they are actively involved in their education. Instead of just listening to a teacher or reading from a textbook, children are encouraged to explore, ask questions, and try things out for themselves. This approach values the child's natural curiosity and creativity. It also sees teachers not as strict authority figures but as guides or mentors who help children discover knowledge on their own. Progressivism also believes that education should be democratic, meaning it should respect each child's unique abilities and interests. In *Matilda*, we see these ideas reflected in how she learns and grows.

By the time she was three, Matilda had taught herself to read by studying newspapers and magazines that lay around the house. At the age of four, she could read fast and well and she naturally began hankering after books. The only book in the whole of this enlightened household was something called

Easy Cooking, belonging to her mother, and when she had read this from cover to cover and had learnt all the recipes by heart, she decided she wanted something more interesting (p.7)

Matilda is a perfect example of a child who learns by doing. From a very young age, she takes charge of her own education. Even though her family doesn't encourage her to learn, she finds ways to teach herself. For example, by the time she is three years old, Matilda has already taught herself to read. She does this by looking at newspapers and magazines that are lying around her house. This shows her natural curiosity and desire to learn. By the age of four, she can read quickly and well, and she starts looking for more challenging books to read. The only book in her house is a cookbook called *Easy Cooking*, which belongs to her mother. Matilda reads it from cover to cover and even memorizes all the recipes. But she soon realizes she wants something more interesting to read. This shows how Matilda is motivated by her own interests and curiosity, not by anyone forcing her to learn. Matilda's self-directed learning is a great example of how progressivism works. Instead of waiting for someone to teach her, she takes the initiative to learn on her own. This is a key idea in progressivism: children should be active participants in their learning, not just passive receivers of information. Matilda's desire to find more interesting books and her efforts to explore new ideas show how important curiosity and practical learning are in education. These are core ideas in progressivism, which believes that learning should be driven by the child's own interests and experiences.

Discussions on Progressivism: Education and Empowerment in Matilda

Progressivism also emphasizes dialogue and interaction in the classroom, encouraging critical thinking and reflective learning. Progressivism emphasizes critical thinking, societal improvement, and interactive pedagogy, making education more relevant and connecting societal problems to learning (Kahdim et al., 2023). A pivotal moment occurs when Matilda engages in a thoughtful conversation with Miss Honey about how she solves complex multiplication problems. Through this exchange, Matilda is able to express her thinking process and connect it to her own logic, which is reflective of the type of deep, interactive learning that progressivism encourages. Miss Honey's open-ended questions foster a learning environment where Matilda can explore her intellectual abilities freely, highlighting how dialogue can enhance understanding and inspire critical thinking, central goals in progressive education.

In one scene, Matilda and Miss Honey have a thoughtful conversation about how Matilda solves complex math problems. This conversation is a perfect example of how dialogue and interaction can help students learn in a deeper and more meaningful way. Miss Honey asks Matilda to explain how she solves a multiplication problem, like fourteen multiplied by nineteen. Instead of just giving the answer, Matilda is encouraged to share her thought process. This helps her think more carefully about how she solves problems and allows her to connect her own logic and reasoning to the task.

"Now tell me, Matilda," Miss Honey said, still polishing, "Try to tell me exactly what goes on inside your head when you get a multiplication like that to do. You obviously have to work it out in some way, but you seem able to arrive at the answer almost instantly. Take the one you've just done, fourteen multiplied by nineteen."

"I . . . I . . . I simply put the fourteen down in my head and multiply it by nineteen," Matilda said. "I'm afraid I don't know how else to explain it. I've always said to myself that if a little pocket calculator can do it, why shouldn't I?" (p.102)

Miss Honey's approach is very important here. She doesn't just tell Matilda how to solve the problem or give her the answer. Instead, she asks open-ended questions, which are questions that don't have a simple yes or no answer. These kinds of questions encourage Matilda to explore her own thinking and explain it in her own words. For example, Miss Honey says, "Now tell me, Matilda, try to tell me exactly what goes on inside your head when you get a multiplication like that to do." This kind of question creates a safe and supportive environment where Matilda feels free to share her ideas

and think creatively. It also helps her develop her critical thinking skills, as she has to analyze her own thought process and explain it clearly.

Matilda's response shows how this kind of dialogue can lead to deeper understanding. She says, "I simply put the fourteen down in my head and multiply it by nineteen. I'm afraid I don't know how else to explain it. I've always said to myself that if a little pocket calculator can do it, why shouldn't I?" This shows that Matilda has developed her own way of solving problems, and she is able to connect her thinking to something she understands, like a calculator. By explaining her thought process, she is not only reinforcing her own learning but also showing how she applies logic and reasoning to solve problems.

This scene is a great example of how progressivism works in the classroom. It shows the importance of discussion and interaction between teachers and students. Miss Honey doesn't just teach Matilda math; she helps her think about how she learns and solves problems. This kind of teaching encourages students to be curious, to ask questions, and to explore their own ideas. It also helps them see how what they learn in school connects to the real world.

Interdisciplinary Learning and Character Growth in Matilda

Interdisciplinary educational approaches foster knowledge and competencies for sustainable development in primary education by increasing understanding, reflection, and critical thinking development (Bassachs et al., 2020). The idea of interdisciplinary learning is an important part of progressivism, and it is clearly shown in Matilda's story. Interdisciplinary learning means connecting different subjects and ideas to help students see how everything fits together. This approach encourages students to think broadly and make connections between what they learn in school and the world around them. In Matilda's case, her ability to connect her understanding of math to a practical, real-world example—like a pocket calculator—shows how she is thinking across disciplines. She doesn't just see math as a set of numbers or rules; she connects it to technology and everyday tools that people use. This kind of thinking is a key part of progressivism, which values active engagement, collaboration, and making learning relevant to real life.

For example, when Matilda explains how she solves multiplication problems in her head, she compares her thinking to how a pocket calculator works. She says, "I've always said to myself that if a little pocket calculator can do it, why shouldn't I?" This shows that Matilda is not just memorizing math facts; she is thinking about how math applies to the real world. By making this connection, she is using interdisciplinary thinking, which helps her understand math in a deeper and more meaningful way. This kind of learning is a big part of progressivism because it encourages students to explore ideas from different angles and see how they relate to each other.

"Who taught you to read, Matilda?" Miss Honey asked.

"I just sort of taught myself, Miss Honey."

"And have you read any books all by yourself, any children's books, I mean?"

"I've read all the ones that are in the public library in the High Street, Miss Honey."

"And did you like them?"

"I liked some of them very much indeed," Matilda said, "But I thought others were fairly dull." (p.111-112)

Another example of interdisciplinary learning in Matilda's story is her love for reading. Reading is not just about learning to spell words or understand sentences; it is also about exploring new ideas, learning about different subjects, and developing critical thinking skills. When Miss Honey asks Matilda about her reading habits, Matilda explains that she has taught herself to read and has read all the children's books in the public library. This shows that Matilda is not limited by a traditional school curriculum. Instead, she is exploring a wide range of topics and ideas on her own, which is a key part of interdisciplinary learning.

For instance, Miss Honey asks Matilda, "Who taught you to read, Matilda?" and Matilda replies, "I just sort of taught myself, Miss Honey." This shows that Matilda is a self-directed learner, which

means she takes charge of her own education. She doesn't wait for someone to tell her what to learn; she seeks out knowledge on her own. Miss Honey then asks, "And have you read any books all by yourself, any children's books, I mean?" Matilda responds, "I've read all the ones that are in the public library in the High Street, Miss Honey." This shows that Matilda is not just reading books that are assigned to her in school; she is exploring a wide variety of books on her own. When Miss Honey asks, "And did you like them?" Matilda says, "I liked some of them very much indeed, but I thought others were fairly dull." This shows that Matilda is not just passively reading; she is thinking critically about what she reads and forming her own opinions.

This kind of self-directed, interdisciplinary learning is a big part of progressivism. It encourages students to follow their interests and explore topics they are passionate about. Instead of being limited to one subject or one way of learning, students are free to make connections between different areas of knowledge. For example, when Matilda reads books, she is not just learning about literature; she is also learning about history, science, and other subjects. This helps her develop a broader understanding of the world and fosters a love for lifelong learning.

Exploring Interactivity and Engagement in Matilda

Matilda's learning experience also embodies the principle of "learning through experience," a key principle of progressivism. Progressive educational approaches emphasize interdisciplinary collaboration, reflective practice, and a commitment to continuous improvement (DeMulder & Eby, 1999), the power of hands-on, experiential learning. Matilda's ability to comprehend and enjoy the poem is not only a result of her natural intelligence but also of the extensive reading experience she has cultivated over time. This highlights the importance of providing students with opportunities to learn through exposure to various educational experiences, reinforcing the idea that learning is most effective when students engage with content in a meaningful, real-world context. As we can see in Data 1.4 below:

"This is a book of humorous poetry," she said. "See if you can read that one aloud." Smoothly, without a pause and at a nice speed, Matilda began to read:
"An epicure dining at Creve
Found a rather large mouse in his stew.
Cried the waiter, "Don't shout
And wave it about
Or the rest will be wanting one too."
Several children saw the funny side of the rhyme and laughed. Miss Honey said, "Do you know what an epicure is, Matilda?"
"It is someone who is dainty with his eating," Matilda said.
"That is correct," Miss Honey said. "And do you happen to know what that particular type of poetry is called?"
"It's called a limerick," Matilda said. "That's a lovely one. It's so funny." (p.107-108)

The findings show that the key principles of progressivism, as seen in *Matilda*, focus on self-directed learning, interactive dialogue, interdisciplinary exploration, and hands-on experience. Matilda teaches herself to read, engages in thoughtful conversations with her teacher, and explores a wide range of books, reflecting the progressive ideals of child-centered education and learning through experience. These ideas align with John Dewey's progressivism according to (Ye & Shih, 2021), which emphasizes active learning, critical thinking, and connecting education to real-life situations. However, the previous study highlights how Dewey's philosophy evolved after World War I, shifting to include social issues and democratic education as essential parts of learning. While Matilda's story demonstrates individual growth and curiosity, Dewey's later work stresses the importance of addressing societal problems and preparing children to contribute to a democratic society. In conclusion, both Matilda's experiences and Dewey's philosophy show that education should be

engaging, meaningful, and connected to the real world, but Dewey's broader focus on social responsibility adds an important layer to the progressive approach.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research provide several pedagogical implications for educators, particularly in promoting progressive education principles in classrooms. By emphasizing the value of experiential learning, educators can create student-centered environments that encourage curiosity, independence, and creativity, as reflected in Matilda. For instance, incorporating activities that allow students to explore and solve real-world problems can foster critical thinking and self-directed learning, similar to how Matilda teaches herself and discovers her unique abilities. Additionally, the nurturing role of Miss Honey highlights the importance of a supportive and interactive teacher-student relationship. Educators should prioritize open communication, personalized guidance, and fostering intellectual curiosity to help students realize their full potential. These practices align with John Dewey's emphasis on dialogue and active participation as essential components of meaningful learning.

Furthermore, the contrast between Miss Honey's progressive teaching style and the rigid, authoritarian approach of Miss Trunchbull offers a valuable lesson on the impact of teaching methods. A democratic and student-focused approach, as shown through Miss Honey, can empower students and promote lifelong learning. This underscores the need for educational systems to move away from traditional, restrictive practices and adopt more flexible, holistic methods that recognize students' individual strengths and interests. By integrating progressive educational principles into curricula and teaching practices, educators can create a transformative learning experience that mirrors the empowering journey of Matilda. These implications encourage the adoption of innovative strategies that prioritize the development of critical thinkers, problem-solvers, and independent learners in modern education.

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