

# *Prof. Rex Li's Writings*

**Category:** Education

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**Title:** Historical Thinkers on Education, Purpose and Society

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**Summary/ Abstract:** I offer a table of summary of historical thinkers on education and society. Simply put, they all invariably put education in the context of an ideal society and a political system. With the dawning of enlightenment, child and human development is taken into account.

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### Historical Thinkers on Education, Purpose and Society

Masters	Title	Theme (Political System)	Common Approach
Confucius (551 – 479 BC)	<i>Analects</i>	Virtuous men living in an ordered society, managing in harmony	They all invariably put education in the context of an ideal society and a political system, with respect of child and human development dawning in enlightenment.
		Hierarchical / authoritarian society	
Plato (424 – 348 BC)	<i>Republic</i>	An utopian society ruled by elites with knowledge (truth), and value (goodness) ↓ Aristotle = Truth, beauty, goodness	
		A Knowledge – value society	
Rousseau (1712 -1778)	<i>Emile</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Natural Unfoldment</li> <li>● Freedom to think / search</li> <li>● Social contract</li> </ul>	
		Liberal / free society	
Dewey (1859 – 1952)	<i>Democracy and Education</i>	Education for child development and social reform of democratic citizenship and well-reasoned social participation	
		Modern democratic society	
Egan	<i>The Educated Mind</i>	“The individual recapitulates the kinds of understanding developed in the culture’s history” (1997: 73)	Egan wants a society to respect cultural history and be critical with theoretical / scientific thinking.
		Contemporary western society	