

NOTE: An abbreviated version of this article appeared in the February 2011 issue of the IIC Newsletter. But we know you'll agree this full version is better—enjoy! With special thanks to our IIC “Education Officer,” Manu from Germany.

## Education

### Applying it to Interchange



Education. You've probably heard this word several times during your work in CISV. But what does it really mean? And what does it mean regarding the Interchange program?

Let's start at the beginning and see what Wikipedia says:

**Education:** *In the largest sense is any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual. In its technical sense, education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another.*

Ok, the first three keywords are “formative effect,” “mind” and “character.” So, education means that someone is forming or shaping someone's identity. This can for example happen in school. Kids are sitting in file after listening to the teacher's instructions. Or a little child who touches—the flap gate of a hot baking oven knows thereupon pretty accurately that it shouldn't do that again.

This might already count as *hands-on learning*, but it's not stringently what John Dewey had it mind when he argued the following sentence: “If knowledge comes from the impressions made upon us by natural objects, it is impossible to procure knowledge without the use of objects which impress the mind.” (*Democracy and Education*, p.217-218). Dewey's thoughts in *Democracy and Education* went on to influence many other educationalists and their models of how education works or should work.

Once upon a time there was a CISV Info file called *Section T*. If you never heard about that, imagine the *Section T* as the grandmother of *Big Ed*. In this very *Section T* you could read that Doris Allen's idea of CISV grew out of three people's ideas: Gordon Willard

Allport, Kurt Lewin and John Dewey. Right, what's in a name? But these people excogitated a theory based on Dewey's *learning by doing*, which is related to *experimental learning*. In this theory education is based on attitude, skills and knowledge. You heard these words before, right?

To cut to the chase: education in this understanding is what we do in every program in CISV. Some do it in camp based situations, some educate in cooperation with other organisations and some crazy people bring children up in families. But it needs so much more than an educational background to bring an Interchange (and the other programs) to a successful experience. Leaders, Parents, Local and National Interchange Coordinators and last but not least the youth Delegates need both soft and hard skills. How to plan a good summer program? What are my rights and duties as a parent? What are these distracting deadlines for? How can I provide my partner with an as nice as possible time at my house?

It's hard to preconceive the whole caboodle... if you're not trained! That's why the IIC is offering trainings at RTFs and it's the reason why the Interchange Guide (finally!) gets a section about training. Yeah! Creating those curricula takes loads of time. The IIC does its very best to fill the training section with content, but please be patient.

Take the chance in the meanwhile and participate in one of our trainings. Check the *Training* section at <http://resources.cisv.org> to see what date fits you. We're looking very much forward to tell you more about attitudes, skills and knowledge. You're more than welcome!

Manu Melsa (GER)