

My Philosophy of Education

Known Philosophers:

There have been a multitude of philosophers that have discussed education and how we should go about educating students. Socrates had his “Socratic method” of questioning, which is one of the oldest, and most powerful forms of teaching tactics for critical thinking (Socratic Teaching, 2019). During Socratic teaching, the student is given questions, not answers (Socratic Teaching, 2019). This aided the view that education should encourage the pursuit of the life of reason. This view, the central place of reason in education, has been shared by some of the major persons within the history of philosophy of education. Plato, Socrates’ student, supported this view and believed that a fundamental task of education is that of helping students to value reason and to be reasonable (Siegel, H., 2020).

Aristotle said that the highest aim of education should be the fostering of good judgement or wisdom. This philosopher, Aristotle, emphasized the fostering of moral virtue and the development of character, with his emphasis being on virtue.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau believed that formal education was corrupting. He argued that education should enable the “natural” and “free” development of children, which is now known as “open education” (Siegel, H., 2020). Rousseau also thought about distinct education for boys and girls, while raising issues concerning gender and its place in education.

Another famous philosopher, John Dewey, argued that education should be tailored to the individual child. Dewey also emphasised the importance of the students own interests in determining appropriate educational activities. He also stressed the importance of students’ understanding of traditional subject matter. Some of Dewey’s themes are similar to Rousseau,

but Dewey emphasized the central importance of education for the health of democratic social and political institutions, while also developing his educational and political views from a foundation of systematic metaphysics and epistemology (Siegel, H., 2020).

Johann Herbart is known for the mechanism of apperception, when new ideas become associated with existing ideas. Within a classroom a teacher will start the lesson with something the class already knows, then introduces new material, associates the new with the old (the stage of apperception), finally, the ideas are applied and carried out individually (a problem-solving phase) (Siegel, H., 2020).

The Aim of Education:

There have been numerous philosophers that have proposed the many aims of education, some being: the cultivation of curiosity and the disposition to inquire; the fostering of creativity; the production of knowledge and of knowledgeable students; the enhancement of understanding, the promotion of moral thinking, feeling and action; and the maximization of freedom, happiness, or self-esteem (Peel, E. 2020). All of these proposed aims have been criticized and studied by past and present philosophers. These philosophers have devoted themselves to defending some conception of the aims of education or to criticizing the conceptions of others.

My own thoughts on the aim of education are in agreeance with the integration or balancing of the needs and interests of the individual student and the larger society; the cultivation of curiosity and the disposition to inquire; the enhancement of understanding; the fostering of skills and dispositions constitutive of rationality or critical thinking; and the maximization of freedom, happiness or self-esteem. I believe that my thoughts lie more with

the educational aim of critical thinking, particularly with Socrates. I believe that students should be able to reason well, specifically, they are able to construct and evaluate reasons that have been brought up against beliefs, judgments and actions. Students should also be disposed or inclined to be guided by reasoning, namely, students can believe, judge and act in accordance with results of reasoned evaluations. Because of my feelings towards critical thinking, I would assume that my philosophy of education leans more towards epistemology and is epistemological in nature. I also believe that my type of pedagogy is most likely a form of critical pedagogy. I can also say that I greatly agree with Johann Herbart, and the ways of apperception.

The Roles:

The act of teaching has two main parties, the teacher and the learner. The two work together as a team, to educate the learners' experience and understanding of a particular subject matter (Peel, E. 2020).

The most elementary role of a teacher is to aid pupils in learning, by teaching them and ensuring they have a positive learning environment. Teachers should enjoy and be capable of working with children and be able to modify their experience and understanding. The teacher should be mature, yet have a sense of humour, be firm yet reasonable, and be sympathetic while not being over personal. There are many roles a teacher may choose to take on such as, a disciplinary, a parent substitute, a confidant to their students, a bureaucrat, a community leader, the list goes on. Some of these roles may conflict with one another, such as being a disciplinary and a confidant to the students, a teacher should learn to balance and be flexible, while knowing when and how to act in a specific role.

If the role of a teacher is to educate students, then the role of the student should be to learn. To become a successful student, the pupil should be responsible by attending classes on time; paying attention to the lecture; being prepared for class; completing homework and other assignments; respecting themselves and others; students should participate in class activities and group discussion; a student should also maintain a positive attitude; and listen to and respect their teachers and other faculty (Responsibilities of Students, 2014). While this seems quite full and expectant of students, it is possible.

Politics:

A multicultural education attempts to create equal educational opportunities to all students by changing the school environment to reflect diverse cultures and groups within a society. This is an ongoing process; these goals are ideals that teachers and administrators are constantly striving to achieve. A pluralist liberal democracy should focus on content integration, prejudice reduction, an equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and social structure (Multicultural Education, 2020). Content integration is where teachers use examples and content from other cultures and groups to show key concepts. Prejudice reduction is when teachers help students develop positive attitudes towards different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. An equity pedagogy is when teachers modify their teaching to facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse backgrounds. By creating an empowering school culture and social structure, students from diverse backgrounds begin to experience equality and equal status. This does require the entirety of the school to be reformed. This includes changing attitudes, beliefs and the actions of faculty, curriculum and courses of study, as well as assessment and testing and finally, the styles and strategies used by teachers.

In Practice:

Due to my assumptions about my education philosophy being epistemological and having a more critical based pedagogy and my agreeance with apperception, I would think that my classroom would be very practical and would allow for the most optimal learning. I plan to have a very basic room, with very few posters, if any, while also having multiple plants throughout the room. I would like to have my desk at the back of the room to ensure it is not what students will focus on and have the projector screen or board at the front of the classroom. I would also like it to be easy for students to have group discussions, whether that means tables with more than one student or having the desks arranged within a circle.

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