

**A STUDY OF METHODS OF
PRESENTING EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

BY

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EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

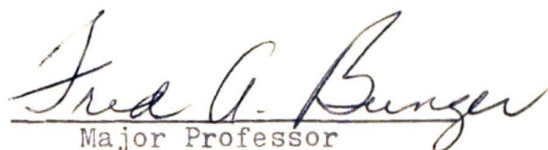
A Research Paper
Presented to
the Graduate Council of
Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in Education

by
Joann Brown Morton
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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Research Paper written by Joann Brown Morton entitled "A Study of Methods of Presenting Educational Philosophy." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Education, with a major in Administration and Supervision.


Major Professor

Accepted for the Council:

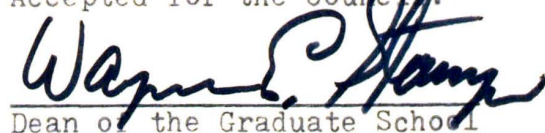

Dean of the Graduate School

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CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF THE STUDY

In recent years the study of the philosophical foundations of education has become an important part of the curriculum in colleges of education throughout the country. There is a great need for prospective teachers to understand the principles of philosophy as they apply to education, and a controversy has arisen as to the most meaningful method of presenting this complex unit.

It is often difficult for pupils who have not had previous training in philosophy to see the connection between philosophy and teaching. Since many young people do not know what they believe, this course should awaken them to a discovery of their own philosophy of life.

The following study explored the organization and structure of current textbooks to present their philosophy of education.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study was to survey the literature found in major textbooks of educational philosophy and analyze the various methods used to present this subject to prospective teachers. More specifically, answers were sought to the following questions:

1. What were the methods of presenting the philosophy of education to prospective teachers?
2. What were the common threads, if any, between them?
3. Was there any "best" way to present the philosophy of education?

Delimitations. This study was limited to five current textbooks written by nationally known writers in the field of educational philosophy which were available in the library of Austin Peay State University and the private libraries of Dr. Ellis B. Burns and Dr. Tom K. Savage. Five texts were chosen by the writer on the bases of the following criteria:

1. They were current textbooks.
2. Two of the five were in use at Austin Peay State University.
3. In the opinion of the writer, they represented diverse approaches to the subject.

Significance of the study. All students seeking teacher certification through study at Austin Peay State University must take Philosophical Foundations of Education.¹ In a survey of three sections of the course as it was

¹General Bulletin of Austin Peay State University, 38:60, April, 1968.

organized, Winter Quarter, 1969, students stated that Philosophical Foundations of Education caused them to think seriously about life but that they failed to see its application to education.

Brown and Vickery found a "belief gap" in teacher education with the most serious gap between what teachers said they believed about educational philosophy and what philosophy they actually practiced in the classroom. They concluded that any teacher with this dichotomy of belief and practice will "have trouble making headway in any direction."²

This study could be useful to anyone preparing to teach philosophy of education since it included suggestions for making the course more meaningful. It was hoped that this study would result in a better organization of this course so that students might see the functional role of educational philosophy in education.

It was also felt that:

By looking at the ways in which philosophy of education is taught, a sense of the different ways philosophy is conceived can be gained and hence an improved understanding of what is philosophy of education may result.³

²Bob Burton Brown and Tom Rusk Vickery, "The Belief Gap in Teacher Education," Journal of Teacher Education, 18:418, Winter, 1967.

³Christopher J. Lucas, What Is Philosophy of Education? (London: The Macmillan Co., 1969), p. 4.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

The terminology of this study followed, in general, accepted meanings as found in standard reference works within the field of educational philosophy.

Axiology. The study of the general theory of value, or a study of those things which are of worth.

Epistemology. The study of the theory of knowledge, or the attempt to find the sources and validity of knowledge.

Metaphysics. The study of reality. It was sometimes used interchangeably with ontology.

III. BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

This study was based on these assumptions:

1. There is a relationship between a teacher's philosophy and what he believes about methods of teaching, discipline, the nature of man, and the place of the school in the community.
2. What a teacher believes will in turn affect the way he behaves.
3. A teacher's effectiveness will depend for the most part on how well he understands himself, his role, and those about him.

4. Educational philosophy is a necessary part of the curriculum for a prospective teacher.

IV. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Sources of data. The sources of data consisted of current textbooks of the philosophy of education. Also considered were various articles in periodicals found in Austin Peay State University Library and the student evaluations of Education 341 for the Winter Quarter, 1969.

Analysis of the data. The analysis of data was basically a descriptive analysis of approaches to educational philosophy as described by major writers in the field of philosophy of education.

V. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The first chapter included a statement of the nature and significance of the study, the problems, delimitations, definitions of terms used, basic assumptions, and methods of procedure. Chapter II was devoted to a review of the literature. Chapter III presented the study of the methods of presenting the philosophy of education as reflected in the textbooks considered. Chapter IV was a summary of the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter contained the pertinent material found in the review of literature. Statements as to the significance of philosophy of education, some suggestions as to what a course in educational philosophy should contain, and a discussion of one system of classifying educational philosophy writings were chosen to be most relevant to this study and were included in this chapter.

The training of teachers was the biggest undertaking in higher education because "more college graduates enter the profession of teaching than any other vocation."⁴ This enterprise touched the life of every American in one way or another. However, "very little is really known about the intellectual basis that undergirds all pedagogy."⁵

Dr. James Conant and others have been quite critical of the inclusion of philosophy of education and other theoretical subjects in the curriculum of prospective teachers. He recommended that the state should require only that the candidate hold a baccalaureate degree and

⁴Charles J. Brauner and Hobert W. Burns, The Problems in Education and Philosophy (Foundations of Education Series, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), p. i.

⁵Ibid.

possess evidence of having successfully performed in a practice teaching situation of which the state Department of Education approved.⁶

There were convincing arguments diametrically opposed to this line of reasoning. Morshead, for example, stated that philosophy of education was not at all impractical, because the teacher was constantly faced with decisions about curriculum, personality, learning and administration which would require the handling of theory.⁷ Only philosophy of education was equipped to help teachers learn to theorize about education.⁸ Philosophy of education should allow prospective teachers "to understand the close functional relationship between philosophy and practice."⁹ Another point in favor of including philosophy of education in teacher preparation was made by Hetenyi:

No teacher should graduate until he has had to wrestle with some of the underlying human questions as these pertain to education...Philosophy of Education should be a necessary part of all undergraduate programs in teacher education.¹⁰

⁶Frederick Neff, Philosophy and American Education (Library of Education Series. New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1966), p. vi.

⁷Richard W. Morshead, "Philosophy of Education in Teacher Certification," The Educational Forum, 32:465, May, 1968.

⁸Ibid., p. 466.

⁹Brauner, op. cit., p. ii.

¹⁰Laszlo J. Hetenyi, "Philosophy of Education in the Undergraduate Curriculum," Educational Theory, 18:53, Winter, 1968.

The content and objectives of a course in philosophy of education were open to question. Since teachers need to learn to handle theory, some feel philosophy of education should include exercises in both inductive and deductive reasoning. These exercises should be accompanied by the study of linguistic analysis that would allow teachers to understand the complexities of our language.¹¹

In addition to the need for linguistic analysis, students began asking more questions about the meaning of man. These questions brought about the need for including Existentialism in philosophy of education courses.¹²

Philosophy of education has both a synoptic and a critical function; therefore, it is involved in construction of comprehensive theories. One must also learn to evaluate and analyze the theories constructed.¹³

Often, philosophy of education was taught in an eclectic manner in which a half dozen "schools of thought" were presented to students. This created a "superficial form of relativistic information about the merits and

¹¹Morshead, op. cit., p. 466.

¹²Leroy F. Troutner, "The Confrontation Between Experimentalism and Existentialism: From Dewey Through Heidegger and Beyond," Harvard Educational Review, 39:125, Winter, 1969.

¹³W. O. Stanley, "The Social Foundation Subjects in the Professional Education of Teachers," Educational Theory, 18:233, Summer, 1968.

demerits of Pragmatism, Experimentalism, Idealism, Realism, etc."¹⁴ To correct this situation, a better organization for educational philosophy should be found.¹⁵

One suggestion to improve organization was to structure education courses, including educational philosophy, around a series of concepts. This suggestion was based on two assumptions: that "unless one understands the structure of a discipline he cannot be said to command that discipline, and to understand something one must have clear concepts."¹⁶

Another suggestion for improving philosophy of education was to have students consider various questions such as "the good society, how can we achieve it, and its relationship to formal education."¹⁷ This would make philosophy of education more relevant to the moral, social, political, and economic problems of life.

Closely related to the "questions approach" was the suggestion that educational philosophy start with a

¹⁴Robert Ulich, "The Organization of a Field (An Essay Review)," The Educational Forum, 33:247, January, 1969.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 248.

¹⁶Charles Reavis and Frank R. Whittacre, "Professional Education of Teachers: A Spiral Approach," Peabody Journal of Education, 46:261, March, 1969.

¹⁷David E. Purpel, "Teacher Education: Followers or Leaders," The Journal of Teacher Education, 20:114, Spring, 1969.

systematic analysis of behavior observable in the classroom. Starting here one would work backwards to the "logically related belief and to considerations and corrections of incongruities found between beliefs and practice."¹⁸

Others felt that educational philosophy could be improved by including other than just Western thought.¹⁹ Many prospective educators erroneously learned that philosophy started with the Greeks and developed only in Western Europe; this eliminated the many contributions Oriental philosophy could make to one's growth as a teacher and an individual.

Hetenyi stated that he did not believe needs of students were met by studying axiomatic belief and syllogisms. Nor was he in favor of studying the classics in educational philosophy and then having students pigeonhole their ideas as answers to problems in education. Rather, he said, students should become aware of their own beliefs and the beliefs of others. In his program, he first had exploratory sessions in which students explored educational questions. Then he attempted to help students sharpen their reasoning ability by examination of arguments. This

¹⁸Bob Burton Brown, "Congruity of Student Teachers' Beliefs and Practices with Dewey's Philosophy," The Educational Forum, 33:167, January, 1969.

¹⁹Martin Levit, "Contexts, Inquiry and Philosophy of Education," Educational Theory, 18:311, Fall, 1968.

allowed them to use linguistic analysis to explore educational arguments. His theory was based on Alan Montefiori's topic or analytical area approach at Balliol College, Oxford.²⁰

A study of graduates of Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan, was made to determine their perception of their education in light of their experience in the first five years of teaching. Using a five point scale ranging from "no value" to "great value" with three being "some significant value" and four being "substantial value," educational philosophy taught by the analytical method was rated 3.38 by first year teachers and almost the same by second and third year teachers. Hetenyi then suggested that philosophic analysis of educational problems could be of value to beginning teachers.²¹

Christopher Lucas suggested five categories for the approaches to or strategies of teaching philosophy of education. They were as follows:²²

1. The "Great Minds" Approach. In this approach, the writings of great men in the field of philosophy were studied and applied to education.

²⁰Hetenyi, op. cit., p. 54.

²¹Ibid., p. 58.

²²Lucas, op. cit., pp. 4-16.

2. The "Systems" or "Schools of Thought" Approach.

This approach studied the various systems or schools of philosophy rather than individual writers.

3. The "Problems" Approach. This method considered certain important educational problems and had students philosophize about them.

4. The "Metaphilosophical" Approach. This method considered the social influences of culture as they applied to education from a philosophical aspect.

CHAPTER III

A STUDY OF THE METHODS OF PRESENTING EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

This chapter contained an analysis of the organization and content of five current texts of educational philosophy. These five books were selected by the writer from twenty-one texts in educational philosophy available in the Austin Peay State University Library and the private libraries of Dr. Ellis B. Burns and Dr. Tom K. Savage. Two of them, Philosophy and the American School and Four Philosophies and Their Practice in Education and Religion, were used as textbooks in philosophy of education courses at Austin Peay State University. The other three were selected on the bases of the following criteria:

1. They were current textbooks written in the last ten years.
2. They presented diverse approaches to the subject.
3. They were recommended by Dr. Ellis E. Burns who was responsible for teaching Education 341 and Education 523 at the time this paper was written.

Each book was considered on the basis of its content, organization, size, and, in the opinion of this writer, its advantages and/or disadvantages as a text for prospective teachers.

Philosophy and the American School by Van Cleve Morris was the text used in Philosophical Foundations of Education, Education 341, at Austin Peay State University when this paper was written. It was adopted by the education department and was in use for several years. It was based on what the author called a "philosophy-to-policy-to-practice approach."²³ In other words, the author was attempting to show the beliefs of the various philosophies, how these beliefs related to the axiological questions in philosophy, and finally how these theories were reflected in educational practice.

The book was divided into six sections or parts with the first section being an introduction to educational philosophy. Using Mortimer Adler's categories of "operative" and "cooperative" arts, Morris explained the importance of theory and noted that theory and practice test one another. He discussed the relationship between philosophy and education, and also considered the various roles education could take in society. Finally, he introduced the three basic questions of philosophy: What is real?, What is true?, and What is good?

Sections II, III, and IV took the three major questions ontology, epistemology, and axiology in turn. In

²³Van Cleve Morris, Philosophy and the American School (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961), p. vii.

each section, the question or problem was considered first, then the answers given to the problem by five major philosophies--Idealism, Realism, Neo-Thomism, Experimentalism, and Existentialism--were taken; and finally, the application of these answers upon educational practice was discussed. For example, part II considered the problem of ontology. Then each systems view of ontology was discussed and illustrated with diagrams where necessary. Finally, the application to education was made of each philosophy's answer to the question of reality.

Part V of the text looked at the influence the five philosophies had had on American education. To do this, the writer grouped Idealism and Realism under the heading Essentialism, Neo-Thomism under Perennialism, Experimentalism (Pragmatism and Instrumentalism) under Progressivism (later Reconstructionism) and placed Existentialism in an unnamed class since it had no formal statement on educational policy. For example, one influence in American education has been the Council for Basic Education. This group based its belief in Essentialism on the philosophy of the Idealists and Realists, that education should give the child a proper background in accumulated knowledge and traditions of his culture.

The last section of this text looked at educational philosophy in practice in the classroom, both from the

standpoint of the teacher and the administrator. How philosophy influenced classroom management, teaching methods, and discipline were taken separately. Finally, the building of a personal philosophy of education was emphasized with suggestions made for how this could be accomplished.

There was a great deal of material in this text to be covered in a quarter course. It would be difficult to delete any of it since it was interrelated and necessary for the beginning student. To help the student organize this wealth of material, the author provided numerous graphs and charts. For example, he provided a schematic summary of the views of the five philosophies to aid students in building their own philosophy of education. The author also reviewed and summarized material presented often to reinforce learning. A list of questions for thought and an annotated bibliography for further reading were provided at the end of each section.

The second book considered, Four Philosophies and Their Practice in Education and Religion, was the text for Education 523, Modern Educational Thought, at Austin Peay State University. It was unique among the works studied for its inclusion of the effects of philosophy on religion.

This book consisted of seven major divisions, the first of which was an introduction to the approaches to

philosophy and a general background of the problems and history of philosophy. One interesting approach was the author's comparison of philosophy with science, art, religion, and education. It should be noted that this text was not limited to educational philosophy alone but was suggested by the author for use with philosophy and religion classes as well as education students. Because of this it took the more traditional "systems" approach to the study of philosophy. A glossary of terms was included in the first section. This glossary was necessary to aid the lay person in reading the text; however, the outline style chosen by the author for the glossary made it difficult to find a specific term and lessened its usefulness.

In the next five sections, the philosophical systems of Naturalism, Idealism, Realism, Pragmatism, Existentialism, and Language Analysis were considered. With each, the author covered first the history of the system through the writings of the great men in that area. Then he compiled a systematic synopsis of each philosophy covering the metaphysical, epistemological, logical, and axiological considerations of the system. Next the author discussed the individual philosophies as they affected education as a social institution, the pupil, the objectives of education, and the educative process. Next the relationship of each philosophy and religion was considered. Such problems as

the status of religion, our experience with God, the nature of God, and the nature of man were studied in eight of each philosophies. Finally, the strengths and weaknesses of each philosophy were discussed. It should be noted that this outline was consistent except for Existentialism and Language Analysis which were not completely developed philosophies when this text was written.

The last section of this book was the conclusion in which the author urged the building of a philosophy of education. He gave some guides to help readers build their own philosophies.

This text was rather long (528 pages) to be covered in a one quarter course since it contained so much information. The author, however, suggested that chapters such as those concerning religion could be omitted in an education course without altering the impact of the material. The book was difficult reading for students without prior background in philosophy but compensated for this level of difficulty by a very careful, concise organization of the material. The chapters which covered the strengths and weaknesses of each philosophy had great value for the serious student who was attempting to analyze the systems.

Problems in Education and Philosophy by Charles J. Brauner and Hobert W. Burns was a part of the Foundations of Education Series published by Prentice-Hall, Inc. It

was designed to be used separately as an educational philosophy text or with the rest of the series for a "foundations" approach to education. The authors felt various areas of knowledge such as a familiarity with learning theory, social history, and philosophy were a necessary foundation for prospective teachers. Since it was practically impossible to combine all these into one text, the series was designed with a small book covering each area.

This text was oriented to the "problems" approach to educational philosophy. A group of educational problems were presented and then an attempt was made to analyze and understand them from a philosophical point of view.

Since one concern of the "problems" approach was which problems to consider, the author gave the following criteria for selecting the problems:²⁴

1. They had to be of some immediate concern to educators.
2. They had to lend themselves to the exhibition of the different sides of educational philosophy, viewed as both method and content.
3. They had to be a problem prospective students could grasp emotionally as well as intellectually.

²⁴Brauner, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

The text consisted of five chapters. The first chapter was basically an introduction to philosophy and educational philosophy. The questions of metaphysics, axiology and epistemology were discussed.

The next four chapters took a problem and examined it from the classical or traditional and the modern point of view. The various answers classical and modern philosophy gave for the problem and the implications of these for education were discussed. For example, Chapter II covered the problem of how the intellect should be developed. Chapter III considered the problem of progressive education. Educational criticism was discussed and a strong case was made for Pragmatism. Chapter IV discussed the social problems of academic excellence and dropouts, while Chapter V covered the problems of human nature as they applied to creativity and conformity.

The authors relied heavily on analogies to aid students in understanding the educational, philosophical problems and made some attempts to define terms as they progressed. They were quite successful in picturing how man's view of himself and society could be developed into a philosophy of life and would affect his actions with others. For example, if one believed that man was a noble savage corrupted by society, he would attempt in the classroom to give the child freedom to develop. This writer

found it difficult at times to follow the authors' train of thought and felt that the approach had merit but might be confusing to the beginning student if used as a primary text for a course in educational philosophy. It was a short (153 pages) text which would have appeal in supplementary reading.

Thomas O. Buford in Toward a Philosophy of Education took still another approach to educational philosophy. The author attempted to compile a series of essays to enable students to "see how issues in the philosophy of education can arise and to think philosophically about these issues."²⁵ This might be considered the "metaphysicological" approach.

The text was divided into four sections with the first section covering the contemporary American society which gave rise to questions for educational philosophy. Section II covered four methods which were available for educational philosophy. These were Analytical by O'Conner, Normative by Dewey, Speculative by Whitehead, and Existential by Buber. In Section III various philosophies of learning were discussed through the writings of Plato, Augustine, Kant and others. The final section covered the aims of education as seen by various views of culture. For example, the writings of John Dewey were used to illustrate

²⁵Thomas O. Buford, Toward a Philosophy of Education (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1969), p. v.

the Progressive view of society. This text would be valuable to supplement a primary text, such as Van Cleve Morris' book, because of its emphasis on modern writers.

It included a very helpful glossary of terms which would facilitate the beginning student. Another interesting feature was the section which contained biographical notes on several philosophers whose writings were cited in the text.

The final text studied in detail was Philosophy and American Education by Frederick Neff. It was a part of the Library of Education Series sponsored by the Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc. In this book, the author discussed what he considered to be the five major philosophies and their implications for education. He took the "historical" approach to the presentation of each philosophy.

The first chapter dealt with the nature and scope of educational philosophy. He stressed the importance of theory and the necessity of educational philosophy. He felt that education and philosophy were inseparable.

In the next four chapters, the author discussed Idealism, Realism, Pragmatism, Philosophical Analysis, and Existentialism in turn, with the last two systems included in one chapter. Each philosophy was viewed in a historical context. Its origins and development were traced by citing

the men who built that philosophy. At the end of each philosophy, its educational implications were discussed.

This was a brief (109 pages) text which was very readable. It was logical in arrangement according to the author's stated purpose of presenting the basic philosophies which undergird education. It contained no glossary of terms and the philosophical terms would be a stumbling block to the student reader.

In conclusion, the five texts represented varying approaches to educational philosophy. Each had its strengths and weaknesses as a text for prospective teachers. Not one of the authors presented any scientific proof to support his idea that his approach and organization was a superior way to handle the subject.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to survey the literature found in major textbooks of educational philosophy and analyze the various methods used to present this subject to prospective teachers.

It was the writer's purpose in this chapter to identify the major findings of this study, to draw conclusions, and make appropriate recommendations based on the findings of the study.

I. FINDINGS

1. There appeared to be no established way of categorizing the writings of educational philosophers although various attempts were made to do this.
2. Among the writers who emphasized systems, there was some agreement as to which system or schools of thought should be included. Neff, Butler, and Morris agreed that Idealism, Realism, Pragmatism, and Existentialism were necessary systems. Neff and Butler agreed that Linguistic Analysis should be taught. Only Butler included Naturalism, and only Morris touched on Neo-Thomism.
3. All the writers emphasized the importance of developing one's own philosophy of education.

4. Van Cleve Morris' book was the most comprehensive of the works studied.

5. Each writer reflected his own philosophy of education, and no complete agreement could be found concerning educational philosophical belief.

II. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There was confusion and lack of concrete objectives in the area of educational philosophy. Basically little was known about attitudinal development and change. Since attitudes were of major concern to educational philosophy, agreement needed to be reached as to what educational philosophers were trying to teach and how they planned to do it.

2. Attempts such as the "social problems" approach to make educational philosophy more relevant to today's young prospective teachers might well be incorporated into the traditional material used at Austin Peay State University.

3. More emphasis should be placed on the last half of Morris' textbook. This would be difficult to accomplish in a quarter course since most students have no orientation to philosophy, but the last half of the text concentrated on American education and the building of a personal philosophy which would be most helpful to prospective teachers.

4. Students should be encouraged to crystalize their philosophy of education including being able to put their thoughts in writing.

5. Dialogue should be encouraged so that the students become aware of others views of life and education.

6. There was no "best" way to teach educational philosophy, but whatever method was used, care needed to be taken that educational implications of philosophy became clear to students.

7. A textbook in educational philosophy should include a glossary.

8. Experimentation should be conducted with the various methods and approaches to educational philosophy.

9. Innovations should be sought to make the subject more relevant to prospective teachers.

10. Behavioral objectives should be designed for educational philosophy.

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