

1st meeting

Reprint

REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE
ON
PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION IN THE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION OF TEACHERS
REGION 4

Hotel Gordon, Albany, Ga. November 11 - 13, 1948

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

I. An Undergraduate Course in Philosophy of Education as Part of Program Leading to Certification

The trend in Region 4 is away from including a course in philosophy of education as part of the basic professional training of the teacher. This may mean a swing back toward emphasis on technique, with tendency to assume underlying orientations or to have them stated authoritatively. It may mean, on the other hand, that the outcomes formerly sought through a separate course in Philosophy of Education are now being sought through other courses in the certification program.

If philosophy of education is to be made a part of other or all professional courses in the certification program, there must be some definite planning to see that this is adequately done. The teacher of philosophy of education might serve, under the Dean of the College or the Chairman of the Department, as liaison person. Periodic meetings of all those involved in the professional training of the undergraduate - in which the "philosopher of education" would participate - should be held to coordinate efforts along this line.

Beyond this, a course in Philosophy of Education might well serve as the final integrating course for the undergraduate program.

There is a trend toward raising the professional training of teachers to the graduate level - or making the total program a five year program. If this is done, there should be ample opportunity to include a first course in Philosophy of Education in the basic professional program for teachers.

II. The Peculiar Function of Philosophy of Education as a Field of Study

There is no part of the field of education that can be said to belong peculiarly to Philosophy of Education. Just as History of Education deals with all aspects of education from the point of view of social setting and development, just as Educational Psychology may deal with all practices in education from the point of view of their effect on the individual as learner, just as Educational Administration deals with all phases of education from the point of view of making education function, so Philosophy of Education is concerned with the total field of education from the point of view of values, consistency, and intelligent approach. Philosophy of Education is the process of dealing with aims, methods, and curriculum of education critically, comprehensively, systematically, and responsibly.

The immediate concern of philosophy of education is (1) with problems, issues, conflicts (whether recognized or implicit) in the total field and process of education (from pre-natal influences to post-death possibilities); (2) with assumptions and pre-suppositions that are conditioning thinking and behavior in education; (3) with the use of intelligence (the process of thinking) as the basic means of resolving conflicts in education; (4) with the process of group deliberation and thinking as essential in reaching the best, long-time solutions to educational problems; (5) with generalized concepts (principles, standards) which are intelligently arrived at, intelligently held, and which will be intelligently modified or interpreted through further experience and thought.

III, Changes in Attitude and Behavior Which the Study of Philosophy of Education Should Bring About

A list of objectives should include the following;

1. The development of a criticized standard or body of principles as relating to education.
2. Skill in testing practices by the application of an overall standard or body of principles, and of testing and re-testing principles in the light of continuing experience.
3. The habit of making choices of educational procedures in the light of the total range of foreseeable consequences.
4. The tendency to seek to make explicit the premises - of value and fact - implicit in conflicting positions regarding education.
5. Increasing ability to use critical thinking in facing educational difficulties and conflicts.
6. The tendency to rely on cooperative group thinking and decision, where possible, in dealing with educational problems that are of group concern.
7. The attitude of seeking to widen the area of shared interests in educational work.
8. The attitude of expecting to work cooperatively with people who differ.

IV. Methods of Teaching Philosophy of Education

The methods employed must secure practice with satisfaction of the attitudes and behaviors listed as objectives. A problem-solving method relying largely on genuine group discussion, under guidance, of problems and issues recognized as important by the students seems to be called for. Since the central aim is not a philosophy but to philosophize, the method of the course must be one in which students philosophize.

V. Content of the First Course in Philosophy of Education

Central for the course should be a set of pertinent present problems in the field of education and source materials needed in the study of these problems. The problems that constitute the course should be those that involve conflicting conceptions of educational aims, methods, materials; that have to do with the improvement of present practices in education; that look to the

future as seeking to build a better civilization. Systematic content drawn from historical and contemporary philosophies of education has a place as it contributes to the study of the problems; it should make an important contribution to the understanding of present forces and trends and the possibilities (alternatives for choice) as next steps.

Background is needed for fruitful study of problems. This background includes: understanding of the nature of the process of human living, and of tension areas in the present; an understanding of the democratic process; a knowledge of the more important pitfalls (fallacies) in thinking and problem solving; a criterion or set of standards to be used in evaluation. This background must be secured either as preliminary to the introduction of the problems referred to or be made a matter of special concern in the process of the study of the problems.

While the content of the course, as presented to the students, may well be a series of problems to be studied, the instructor should have a systematic framework of content organization. This may or may not be in terms of traditional and current philosophies; it may be in terms of a body of principles of education.

List of problems from which a first course might draw:

1. Kilpatrick's Syllabus for a Course in Philosophy of Education
The developing organization here is in terms of (1) social and psychological background leading to formulation of the broad purposes of education; (2) principles of educational administration; (3) principles of method; (4) principles of curriculum.
2. Ganders and Armentrout's Introduction to Philosophy of Education - A Syllabus.
3. Dunham's Man Against Myths presents ten social superstitions the consideration of which might provide an approach to the course or if treated in their full implication for education might constitute the course.
4. Implicit pre-suppositions in our culture. A mimeographed list of beliefs which a group of experienced secondary school teachers say are widely held by students, was furnished by L. E. Metcalf.
5. Robert S. Lynd's chapter, "The Pattern of American Culture", contains a series of statements which suggest outstanding assumptions in American life.
6. Contributions to a List of Problems from Members of the Conference follow:
 - (1) What is the place of the state in education?
 - (2) What is the teacher's job? How, in broad aspects, does it differ from the job of other professional workers?
 - (3) What does equality of opportunity mean as relating to inequality of capacity?
 - (4) Why is the period of adolescence in modern American society a period of turbulence?
 - (5) Should all adolescents be in school?
 - (6) Under what conditions is work experience educative? Can industry - under supervision - be an agency of sound education?
 - (7) What is the place of religion in public education?

(8) What are the international implications of community education?

Books considered by individual members of the Conference outstanding for use in a first course are:

Bode, How We Learn

Bode, Democracy as a Way of Life

Dewey, A Common Faith

Dewey, Individualism Old and New

Otto, Things and Ideals

Knode, An American Philosophy of Education

Kilpatrick, Source Book in the Philosophy of Education

Kilpatrick, Foundations of Method

Dewey, Democracy and Education

Finney, A Sociological Philosophy of Education

(No attempt was made to compile a list of books; the titles given were mentioned incidentally during the discussion.)

VI. The Teacher of Philosophy of Education

Growth in service of the teacher of philosophy of education may be promoted by individual or group study of problems now demanding the attention of workers in the field.

A few such problems are:

1. Idealist and realist philosophers have given clear statements of their programs of general education. What is the program of general education from the point of view of pragmatic philosophy?
2. What are the demands on education of the increasingly short work week?
3. The translation of technical professional writings into common language. Can modern philosophy of education talk in terms that the non-specialist can understand?
4. The building of a list of conflicts implicit in our culture; with emphasis on conflicts generally unrecognized.

The above section from the report of the conference held in 1948 has been reproduced and is being sent you as a basis for orientation. The statements of the report do not represent decisions nor official findings but rather a summary of ideas that were batted around during two days of informal discussion; they do in the main represent consensus.