

Education Through

PHILOSOPHY

"The philosophy of education as presented in this article is an attempt to illustrate that it is something more than the internal relations concerning a school program."

A CERTAIN DEGREE OF CONFUSION sometimes confronts the teacher when the term "philosophy" is mentioned as related to education. Moreover, the term is often conceived as representing several varied approaches to the concept of education and the dubiety of its meaning is thereby increased.

"Philosophy of education is . . . a source of the science of education in a degree in which it provides working hypotheses of comprehensive application. Both 'working' and 'hypotheses' are important. It is hypotheses, not fixed and final principles or truths, that are provided; they have to be tested and modified as they are used in suggesting and directing the detailed work in observation and understanding. They are working ideas; special investigations become barren and one-sided in the degree in which they are conducted without reference to a wider, more general view."¹

Education is the source we reserve to designate the formal means a society takes to submit its members to a common set of intellectual and social experiences . . . On the other hand, philosophy is a name for the process by which the aims of society can be made clear to itself and standards of truth

¹ John Dewey, *The Sources of Education*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation. Copyright 1929 by John Dewey. Quoted by permission of the publisher.

and values can be established as logically tenable; as Helen Lynd says, ". . . philosophy embodies the recurrent thrust of life against customs."²

Washburne, in the introduction to *A Living Philosophy of Education*, states:

"Education consists of helping children to develop in a way that is personally and socially satisfying. It consists, therefore, of providing the environment and opportunities, the stimuli and the guidance, that will satisfy both the needs of the growing individual and the needs of the complex, changing society of which he is an integral part.

"I have found it convenient to look at this whole process of education from four angles: First, we can think of it in terms of the child as a person, having certain basic needs in common with all other persons. These needs are for health and happiness, or, to put it another way, for physical well-being and for mental and emotional well-being. Second, we think of education in terms of the child as an individual, a unique creation, differing

² The Fifty-First Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I, *General Education*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952, p. 20. Quoted by permission of the Society.

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from all others, with a need for self-expression, a need for following out his own characteristic pattern of development in work and play and thought. Third, we can see the child as part of an intricate society which depends for its existence upon intercommunication, and in which, therefore, to play one's part, one must have mastery of the skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic, a common basis of knowledge of history, geography, and science, and, for comfort and acceptance, certain conventions, like spelling, punctuation, and grammar. And fourth, we can see the organic unity of society and the need for helping each individual to realize that unity and to act in the light of this realization—much of character, all of citizenship, and social responsibility, may be seen from this angle.”³

Call it philosophy or by some other name, we all philosophize whenever we try to express the things we believe about our lives and about our relations to the rest of life.⁴ A philosophy may be characterized as a ship at sea. With a rudder, this ship can steer a course toward whatever destination is desired; minus the rudder, it flounders aimlessly.

Only as the purposes and functions are clarified and executed in the actual practices of an educational system do statements of philosophy, lists of objectives and purposes become an integrated reality.

As an example of the work of a modern school system, a committee representing the Kenosha Public Schools suggests the following state-

³ Carleton Washburne, *A Living Philosophy of Education*. New York: The John Day Company, 1940, pp. xix-xx. Used by permission of the publishers. Copyright 1940 by Carleton Washburne.

⁴ Theodore Brameld, *Patterns of Educational Philosophy*, p. 30. Copyright, 1950, by World Book Co., and quoted with their permission.

ments relative to the system's educational philosophy:

“It is difficult—perhaps impossible—to present the general theory related to the application of the principles of child growth and development in an educational program. It is essentially a case in which the philosophy has out-distanced the science of education.

“The program of the modern school is not only changing—it is being reconceived!

“The role of the teacher in the traditional school was fairly well defined and relatively simple. It was simply a matter of assigning lessons and listening to the pupils recite. The program of today's school contrasts sharply with the one just presented and the teacher's function and responsibilities have become increasingly complex. Education is largely, if not entirely, a matter of experience and it is now recognized that educational experiences of children are no longer identified exclusively with a classroom or school building.

“Anything which happens to a child which in any way influences or modifies his pattern of growth and development is now regarded as an integral part of the curriculum.

“Today's education has consequently changed. It has become less synonymous with *schooling* and more synonymous with *living*. School activities are now centered in the lives of students. Human relationships have taken on a new and significant meaning. The learning process has been placed on a functional basis which emphasizes the importance and desirability of relating the facts, knowledges and skills taught to the needs and actual requirements of the students. Events of the last decade have served to convince even the most skeptical that that which is in a person's *mind* but not in his *mood* is apt to be of questionable value in later life.

"The good school, therefore, may be identified as the one which deliberately relates its program and activities to those of the community and society which it serves.

"Children differ widely in their outlook, their special abilities, and their interests. The Kenosha Schools believe that the differences in children should be of more importance and significance to teachers and parents than their points of similarity. The modern school recognizes that there are different *kinds* of intelligence.

"The really important consideration has to do with the quality rather than the quantity of intelligence.

"The Kenosha Public School System is, therefore, dedicated to the pleasant and exciting and challenging task of helping children to do better the things that they, as individuals, can do with some reasonable degree of success. Young people grow through a sense of accomplishment and self-assurance. While the Kenosha Schools will always continue to stress the so-called fundamentals or the 'Three R's' we recognize the fact that the 'Three C's' (*Citizenship, Character and Culture*) and the 'Fourth R,' (Relationships with others) are of equal importance in the American Way of Life."⁵

In the annual report of the Superintendent to the Fayette County Board of Education titled, "Report to Patrons 1950-51," no particular mention is made of an educational philosophy, but one page is devoted to the word "service" which implies a philosophical belief.⁶

⁵ By Harold R. Maurer. From Eunice Bacher, Mary Connelly, Genevieve Kelly, Warren Soetebier and Otto Steffensen, Chairman. *These Are Your Schools*, Kenosha, Wisconsin, p. 3-4.

⁶ N. C. Turpen, *Report to Patrons 1950-51*. A publication of the Fayette County Board of Education, Lexington 2, Kentucky (September, 1951), p. 4.

Referring to the Minneapolis Public School System, a recent volume states:

"For a number of years there has been a growing realization that the end-goals of the educational program are of importance to all teachers and that each teacher has a responsibility for planning her instructional program in the light of these goals. With more and more attention being given to curriculum planning at the local level, and with faith in general education increasing, it has become imperative for Minneapolis teachers to assume responsibility for determining these goals and for making use of them in curriculum planning and development."⁷

The proposed design for secondary education is as follows: Within the limits of his capacity, every student should:

"(a) Develop physical and mental health.

(b) Communicate ideas effectively.

(c) Assume his share of family responsibility.

(d) Be an intelligent consumer.

(e) Know and understand the principles on which democracy has been founded and accept the obligations of citizenship in an expanding context; that of home, community, country, world.

(f) Understand the scientific method, and approach problems of daily living with faith in the rational procedure.

(g) Use leisure time well.

(h) Acquire salable skills."⁸

The same volume further cites:

"The quality of education desired for Florida boys and girls may be inferred from the following stated objectives,

⁷ Hollis L. Caswell and associates. *Curriculum Improvement in Public School Systems*. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1950, p. 262. Quoted by permission of the Bureau of Publications.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 262. Quoted by permission of the Bureau of Publications.

which have been used to guide the thinking of both pre-service and in-service teachers since the objectives were first formulated:

1. To develop boys and girls who are socially sensitive.

2. To develop boys and girls who strive for increasing control over those skills necessary for participation in a democracy.

3. To develop boys and girls who strive for increasing control over the process of reflective thinking and the scientific method.

4. To develop boys and girls who strive for increasing understanding and control over self and over the relations of self to other people.

5. To develop boys and girls who will strive to produce and to enjoy the processes and products of creative effort.

6. To develop boys and girls who will strive to perform some useful work and to see the relationship of their work to democratic living."⁹

In summing up the work carried on in Alameda County, California, it is stated that the county staff looks forward to:

"Making diagnostic and clinical services available to all children.

Extending recreational facilities to all county areas.

Keeping the community schools open throughout the year, with adequate personnel and equipment for various purposes.

Employing fine teachers who are good for the children.

Providing opportunities for supervisors to grow and improve in their services each year.

Supplying each child with the learning situations and aids that will enable him to learn by doing.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 371. Quoted by permission of the Bureau of Publications.

Constructing buildings to promote experience curriculum.

Interpreting more research findings on which to base curriculum.

Continuing the revaluation and redesigning of secondary offerings.

Gaining further insights into the maturing of children.

Engaging with all school and community personnel in fact-finding to underwrite the curriculum.

Building more active public interest in and understanding of what boys and girls may do in the school."¹⁰

If we assume that the work carried on in Alameda County represents the philosophy of the county staff, we may additionally presume that the functions enumerated are characteristics of a modern secondary school.

Schools which are modifying their activities and which find their functions in the larger role of the community-minded school accept responsibilities as listed in *Schools for a New World*."

- "1. To nurture within the orbit of the school's influence the primary conditions and requirements of social health which are prerequisite to the growth of wholesome personalities and the happy, useful adjustment of individuals to their social environment. . . .

2. To provide for and direct the participation in and contribution to the organized life of the immediate community of individual pupils and school groups.

3. To assume responsibility and furnish competent leadership (a) in developing community consciousness of the needs of children and youth, and (b) in

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 363. Quoted by permission of the Bureau of Publications.

¹¹ *Schools for a New World*, Twenty-fifth Yearbook, American Association of School Administrators, Washington, 1947, p. 263-264. Quoted by permission.

co-ordinating the work of the community's youth agencies.

4. To serve to the limit of its resources the cultural, recreational, and communal needs of the adults of its community.

5. To develop in each pupil the competence that will equip him:

(a) To handle well his personal problems,

(b) To give socially valuable expression to his unique abilities,

(c) To make a constructive contribution to the betterment of the social and economic groups of which he is a part,

(d) To cope realistically and intelligently as an individual citizen with the economic and civic issues of his time.

6. To train pupils in the ways of democratic behavior and the technics of the democratic processes of group intercourse, enterprise, and action.

7. To guide the growth of each pupil toward physical, mental, and emotional health."

The philosophy of education as presented in this article is an attempt to illustrate that it is something more than the internal relations concerning a school program. Broadly speaking, education today through philosophical guidance seems to probe into the assumptions and purposes of every field of endeavor. The far-reaching effects of such a philosophy is actually a means, not an end, to differentiate its external characteristics from those patterns which may influence it from within the school system. The ideas, concepts and beliefs that school people discuss might be classified as symptoms of actions mirroring the results of the total environment in which they are conceived and grow to maturity so as to assist in shaping that milieu—including public education.



RUTH LARSON

A Study of Children's Values

This article reports use of a research instrument designed to sensitize teachers to the social values held by their pupils.

PLANNING FOR MORE effective value education in the schools could be aided tremendously by the development of instruments for the analysis of children's values. Knowing their pupils' values could aid teachers in the following ways: (a) they would have more reliable bases for planning with children creative and satisfying experiences that contribute to the strengthening of democratic values; (b) they

would have more understanding of their pupils' adjustment problems; (c) they would be guided in the development of more harmonious teacher-pupil relations; and (d) they would be able to develop evaluation criteria for ascertaining their pupils' value growth. Moreover, the knowledge of values which children accept and reject at various age levels should contribute to the research needed in the develop-

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