



PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION | Enlightenment and the Development of Reason

FEEDBACK FROM ONLINE LEARNING

What do we understand about scholasticism and humanism?
What is/should the role of religion and/or spirituality be within education?
How has that changed over the years
How does the views of the philosophers you have considered fit into this?



TASK



If you were asked to write the 5 pieces of advice that you would give to the next generation about how to live their lives, what would those be?

MORAL PHILOSOPHY

Virtue ethics – related to character development and personal dispositions

Deontology – Actions are governed by rules, obligations etc which are determined independently of the individual/group.

Consequentialist ethics – outcomes of actions as a determinant of right or wrong and links to general happiness..

THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Roughly around the 18th century – a philosophical, political, social, educational and a historical period

Celebration of the autonomy of reason and rational self-governance

The advent of 'natural religion'

Key concerns at the time

1. Compatibility of religion and peace
2. Compatibility of scientific and moral knowledge

"At its core, rationality...consists in doing (or believing) things because we have good reasons for doing so...if we are going to determine whether a given action or belief is (or was) rational, we must ask whether there are (or were) sound reasons for it."

Siegel (1988)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF REASON

Reason is absolute
Reason is man's tool of understanding
Clarity
Needs identifiable building blocks on which to base the understanding
Logic, deduction, induction

CRITICAL THINKING, RATIONALITY & REASON

Critical people and rational people
Critical thinking is the culmination of rationality, therefore education directed towards critical thinking thereby encourages rational individuals
We make judgements and evaluate based on our reasons
How does this work in practice?

A critical thinker must have a good understanding of the principles which govern the assessment of reason

1. Subject-specific principles
2. Subject-neutral principles

'A student would learn not only what is thought to be the case in a given field (that is, the "facts") but also why it is so regarded. With this kind of understanding ...a person is then in a position to make the kinds of judgement required of a critical thinker.'

J.E. McPeck

THE CRITICAL ATTITUDE

Developing the 'critical spirit'
Judgement and action is based on objective valuation of relevant evidence, impartiality, intellectual honesty
Desire to judge impartially even if it conflicts with self-interest

"The attitudes we seek to foster in the critical reasoning discourse might be summed up under the label 'love of reason.' We not only want our students to be able to reason well; we want them actually to do it, and so we want them to be eager to do it and to enjoy it – to think it important. We want it to assume an important place in their lives"
Binkley (1980)

"The use of reason is a passionate business"
R.S. Peters (1971)

RENE DESCARTES (1596-1650)

Discourse on Method (1637)
Rules for the Direction of our Native Intelligence (began in 1619)
Criticism of the scholastic approach
Education of the passions



**"THE SOURCE OF EVERY CRIME, IS SOME DEFECT OF THE UNDERSTANDING;
OR SOME ERROR IN REASONING; OR SOME SUDDEN FORCE OF THE
PASSIONS."**

THOMAS HOBBES LEVIATHAN (1651)

Self-preservation as the primary goal of all rational individuals

Leviathan – links with contract theory, should be taught in universities

Revision of civic system of education required



HOBBES & HUMAN NATURE

Human beings – 'naturally selfish'

Fundamental laws of nature

Laws of nature are rules of reason which act in contrast to human nature therefore needs enforcement by authority

Significance of speech

Errors as incorrect reasoning

Scientific knowledge as conditional and not absolute

Philosophy

- 1. Natural philosophy
- 2. Politics & social philosophy

" IDEA IS THE OBJECT OF THINKING."

JOHN LOCKE AN ESSAY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING (1689)

Human beings driven by emotion and reason

They are both self-interested and naturally social or altruistic

Through reason human beings can be entrusted to self-manage without intrusion of government

Tabula Rasa



SOME THOUGHTS CONCERNING EDUCATION (1693)

First treatise – authority of fathers not comparable to that of kings

Second treatise – Shared authority of both parents not absolute authority of the father

Parental authority is temporary

Freedom is dependent on reason

'is a charge so incumbent on parents for their children's good, that nothing can absolve them from taking care of it.'

Childhood as a developmental process

LOCKE'S APPROACH TO EDUCATION

Vocational i.e. utilitarian and pragmatic

Education fit for your station in life - landowners, politicians, officers etc.

Virtue is the key to everything in education – more likely to occur under the influence of the father

Physical health – plenty of fresh air and exercise and poorly made shoes!

'Children should be brought to deny their appetites; and their bodies exercised with hardships; but all this, without giving them any mark or apprehension of ill-will towards them.'

LEARNING

Virtue is first, book learning is second in terms of priorities

Orderly method is the key to successful teaching

The need to make learning interesting and positive

Recognition of the limits of the individual learner

Reading and writing are central to the curriculum

'Tis better it be a year later before he can read than he should get an aversion to learning.'

Curriculum based on principles of utility

LOCKE AND ADULT SELF-EDUCATION

Conduct of the Understanding – published posthumously

Aim is to diagnose intellectual pathologies and recommend cures for them

Mental slavery – we need intellectual labour to free our minds

JOHN STUART MILL (1806-1873)

Based on principles of utilitarianism

Practical art of education

Promotion of social, economic and political emancipation through education

Emphasis on training the intellect in childhood

The educative effect of social institutions


