

## Philosophy of Education

Contemporary Philosophy of Education

*"We educate ourselves so that we  
can make a noble use of our leisure."*

Aristotle

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## What are the key issues in society today?

- Technology
- Media
- Cultural variables
- Globalisation

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## The sphere of education

- Value of education in society today
- Pervasive nature of education
- The need to understand what education means
- Cannot make decisions about education unless we understand it

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## The significance of education

- Number of roles within schools beside education
- Categorisation and stereotyping of individuals
- Training and developing
- Training to specific socially accepted behaviour
- Difference between education and schooling

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## Self-determination, authenticity and the self

- Identification of the self
- The need to establish social relationships and educational processes that enable self-determined growth
- Social conditions

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## Self-determined learner in a learning community

- The role of trust
- 'Self-determined learning can occur only in a situation where there is agreement to participate' (Walker, 1995)
- Where there is no agreement, there is no self-control in respect of the learning itself

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Over the last week or so we've been asking you for ideas about what subjects ought to be taught in schools but are not taught. Now, there have been many suggestions: basic conversation skills, that was one of them; how to change a plug; map-reading, could be useful for some; but the overwhelming winner – you may be surprised by this – was philosophy.

John Humphreys, Today, BBC Radio 4 26/8/04

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### Existing provision

- QCA and NFER maintain comparative archive of curriculum and assessment frameworks in 20 most economically developed countries
- None include philosophy in its prescribed curricula at primary or lower secondary
- Post compulsory is better especially in continental Europe but generally the opportunities are limited
- Philosophy for Children (P4C) and thinking skills

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Do you agree with the ideas presented in this video?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DLzXAJscXk>

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## Liberation and education

- Liberating power of education comes from agreements between people to learn together
- Agreement to community is essential through embedding conditions for its expression in social practice
- A condition for self-determination is the enhancement of the conditions for further self-determination

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## Why do we feel philosophy is a 'difficult' subject?

- There are no right answers, or are there?
- Michael Hand(2009) such a view renders philosophical thinking a pointless task
- Lack of progress
- Canonical view of philosophy
- One solution is through conceptual analysis

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## Moral Education

- Link between philosophy and education should be about encouraging enquiry, to seek clarification of meaning
- Moral dilemmas are an excellent way to encourage this in the classroom
- Moral reasoning

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## Religion

- ⦿ Two key concerns
  1. Encouragement of such a thinking attitude is to promote relativism
  2. Parents should have the right not to have religious beliefs scrutinised by the school
  3. IPPR (2004) Children should be exposed to a range of religious faiths and atheism and should be taught to think critically about religious belief
  4. The problem of relativism

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## Schools and epistemology

(Hand and Winstanley, 2009)

- ⦿ Capitalizes on natural student interest
- ⦿ It is essential for a proper understanding of critical thinking
- ⦿ Essential for a proper understanding of the desirability of education for critical thinking
- ⦿ Allows for understanding contentious epistemological issues before they develop
- ⦿ Allows full meeting of obligation to students

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## Philosophy in Secondary Education

- ⦿ Cultural and social knowledge of adolescents
- ⦿ Philosophy offers a way of integrating the fragmented curriculum into a coherent whole
- ⦿ Can also assist in understanding the subject matter itself

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Philosophy, like politics, literature, and the plastic arts, is itself a phenomenon of human culture. Its connection with social history, with civilisation, is intrinsic.

(Dewey in Hickman and Alexander, 1988, p.79)

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## Granny and the Goldfish

• <https://youtu.be/CkefjZvoEak>

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## P4C

• <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=btuxO-C2lzE>

• Write down as many questions that you can think of inspired by that video. These may be further questions that you have or issues that you would like to explore.

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## Let's categorise

- Open questions
- Closed questions
- Research questions
- Philosophical questions

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