

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION



AIMS OF THE SESSION

- To provide an outline of the structure and nature of the module
- To introduce you to the study of education from a philosophical perspective
- To identify key philosophical themes within education

INITIAL QUESTIONS

- Make some notes as to what you think is important in education. Think about what we teach, why we teach, where we teach etc. What matters to you?
- Why do we need to study the philosophy of education? How might this help us as educators? Discuss in groups and prepare to feedback to the rest of the class.

INITIAL THOUGHTS

- 'Philosophy begins in wonder' (Socrates)
- 'Philosophy is not a theory but an activity' (Wittgenstein)
- Philosophy comes from the Greek '*philo*' (love of) and '*sophia*' (wisdom)

MAIN AREAS FOR DISCUSSION

- Thinking philosophically about education
- Policy & practice
- The aims of education
- Society or the individual
- Teaching, morality and virtue



SOME INITIAL POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

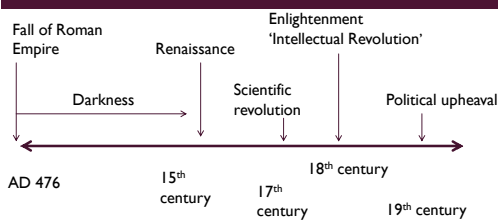


- Does an individual have a 'right' to education?
- What does it mean to be an 'educated' person?
- Should schooling be compulsory?
- Should the aims of education be universal or allow for differentiation?
- How is knowledge constructed? Is it objective reality or a social construction?

A BRIEF HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

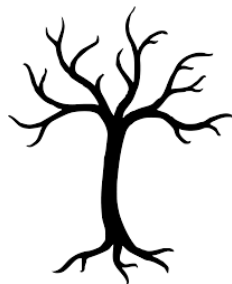
- 'Western philosophy' – Ancient Greece around 2500 years ago
- Eastern philosophy

A TIMELINE



MAIN BRANCHES OF PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY

- Moral philosophy
- Epistemology or philosophy of knowledge
- Political philosophy
- Philosophy of mind
- Religious philosophy
- Aesthetics



THE COW IN THE FIELD – EDMUND GETTIER

A farmer worries his prize cow has wandered off until the milkman tells him he's seen it wandering in a nearby field. Farmer goes to check and sees a familiar black and white shape of a cow and is happy his cow is there.

Later the milkman goes back to double check and notices the cow is hidden behind some bushes. There is also a large black and white piece of paper stuck between the trees which is obviously what the farmer saw.

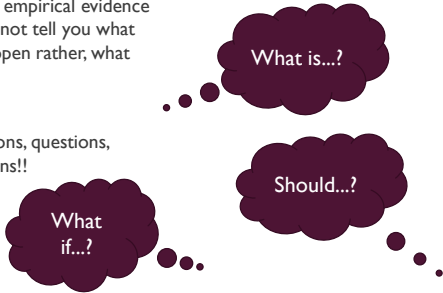
- The question is, even though the cow was in the field, was the farmer correct when he said he knew it was there?



THINKING PHILOSOPHICALLY ABOUT EDUCATION

- Lack of empirical evidence – does not tell you what will happen rather, what has.

- Questions, questions, questions!!



TEST ASSUMPTIONS AND NEVER ASSUME



POLICY & PRACTICE

- Philosophy of education is an applied discipline
- Philosophy and philosophers add to our understanding of education
- 1. Some have specific interest in education others engage in debates on education – some key theorists were teachers themselves
- 2. Practising professionals are a key element of the philosophy of education – asking questions, debating etc.
- Conversation is key

THE AIMS OF EDUCATION

Education as conservation:

1. Transmitting culture (essentialism)
2. Encouraging learners to grasp external and universal truths (perennialism)



Education as change - progressivism

SOCIETY OR THE INDIVIDUAL?

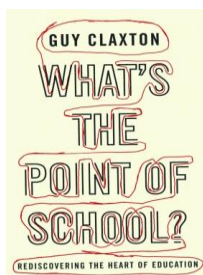
- Key question: should education work for the individual or society?
- Traditionally a strong inclination to elevate needs of society above needs of individual
- Economic purpose of education
- Child centred ideas of education

TEACHING, MORALITY AND VIRTUE

- 20th century emphasis on standards, efficiency and intellectual development
- What is moral education?
 1. Instruction in specific moral rules
 2. Teaching children to think morally in different situations
 3. Developing in children the qualities of a 'good' person

CLAXTON (2008) THE 'BIG 8'

1. Curiosity
2. Courage
3. Exploration
4. Experimentation
5. Imagination
6. Discipline
7. Sociability
8. Thoughtfulness



PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

- What are the issues affecting social life in 21st century?
- What do you think should be the main priorities for schools and teachers in the modern era?
- What skills, qualities and knowledge should young people possess now when they leave education?
- How would you change schooling within the UK to help try and develop these qualities?
- What role (if any) do you think philosophy should have in the 21st century curriculum?

REFERENCES

- Carr, W. (2005) *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in the Philosophy of Education*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Curtis, W. & Dufour, B. (2011) *Studying Education: An Introduction to the Key Disciplines in Education Studies*. Maidenhead: Open University Press
- Claxton, G. (2008) Character Curriculum for a Learning Age. Available at <http://www.teachingexpertise.com/articles/guy-claxtons-character-curriculum-for-the-learning-age-2793>
- Nicholson, D. (2016) *Philosophy of Education in Action: An Inquiry-Based Approach*. London: Routledge.
