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SYLLABUS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

WITH READING REFERENCES AND TOPICS FOR PAPERS

BY

WILLIAM HEARD KILPATRICK
PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION, TEACHERS COLLEGE

Teachers College Syllabi, No. 10

Revision of 1923

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Teachers College, Columbia University
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Designed for use in the Classes in the Philosophy
of Education (Education 241-42 and Education 441-42)
in Teachers College, Columbia University

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SYLLABUS IN THE PHILOSOPHY
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WILLIAM HEARD KILPATRICK

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Graduate College, Columbia University

1923

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

THE topics and questions herein presented have grown up in the actual class-room experience of the past twelve years. Until 1921 the questions were given to the class, topic at a time, on separate sheets, and each succeeding year underwent more or less modification. To retain the advantage of constant revision each printed edition is limited to enough copies to last for just one year.

The daily work of the classes where these questions are used consists of three parts: (1) individual reading and study of the topic; (2) a preliminary consideration of the questions in a voluntary "discussion group" of from five to ten class members; finally (3) the discussion of the questions in class by the students under the direction of the instructor. The procedure is designed to make the students think for themselves, to avoid giving to them ready-made opinions. The effort is to bring home to each student some of the more vital problems in the philosophy of education. In the class discussion each student is expected to be able and ready to present and maintain an intelligent position on each question. Opposing considerations are contrasted and discussed. All this to the end that the student may feel the grip of the problem under consideration and obtain at least a fair idea of the contending principles at issue. That the students may more certainly do their own thinking and more freely present their views, the instructor's view is reserved for the final summing up, and then if given is presented merely as a personal opinion which the students may be interested to hear.

The bibliographical references are for daily use and make no pretense at completeness. Rather do they refer to books available for the class in the Teachers College library. The references to the Source Book are to the author's *Source Book in the Philosophy of Education* (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1923). The quotations from this assigned to any topic are divided generally into sets (separated by semicolons) according as they group themselves by common pertinence to the several subordinate aspects of the topic under consideration. The order of the other items in each reading list is determined mainly by relative pertinence to the topic under consideration but partly from their practical availability in the library. Those ranking highest are put first.

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I. THE MEANING OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

1. What if any educational disputes do you think John Wesley and Voltaire would engage in if alive to-day?
2. If the different points of view of Thomas Jefferson and Napoleon Bonaparte were worked out in thoroughgoing consistency, in what details of education would they differ? In what agree?
3. Can you give any striking instance, ancient or modern, where any group has sought to introduce or maintain or spread any social or political regime by means of education? Was the reliance placed on curriculum or on method? Could democracy consistently approve the instances you cite?
4. What if any life interests outside of education make demands upon education? Do any of these demands conflict? If so, what then?
5. Name within the field of education some conflict which is related to a conflict outside.
6. Take two outstanding educational controversies of to-day. Do the opposed advocates differ as to fact or aim or interpretation? Do they differ in science or in philosophy?
7. Which precedes, experience or reflection? Always? How? Discuss the proportion-thesis, experience : reflection = philosophy : life = philosophy of education : education.
8. How many people have philosophies? Have you one?
9. What is meant by the philosophy of education? Would this question come better at the close of the course?

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2. THE ANALYSIS OF EXPERIENCE

1. Suppose a fierce dog is approaching, are the several things (experiences) that might happen equally acceptable? If the opposite answer held here (and generally of analogous situations), wherein would the world of affairs be different?
2. As regards the experience with the dog (now regarded as over and past) what if any part did causation play in your conduct? How did the past function? Was the future implicated? Necessarily? What part did meanings play?
3. Are the elements (things) in the situation of Q. 1 movable at your option? All? Equally? How important is this fact of movability? Is it related to any part of Q. 2?
4. What does it mean that a certain contemplated evil is *avoidable* (or contemplated good is *attainable*)? Is avoidability (or attainability) a fact? Always? Ever? When and how? In the light of these considerations (including questions 2 and 3) what is the meaning of inevitable, contingent, optional?
5. How much of life activity and experience proceeds on the principles assumed here in questions 1, 3 and 4? Must these principles be assumed?
6. Analyze a typical experience. What are the *most obvious* implications? Does education always enter?
7. What gives unity to *an* experience (i. e., to mark this experience off from the preceding and the succeeding)? What constitutes the focus? What the margin? How do the considerations of questions 1-4 enter here?
8. How inclusive is experience? Name some things that have in no wise affected your experience. What does it mean (*Source Book* No. 23) that "experience is the ultimate universe of discourse"? How does this apply here? What is the stream of experience?
9. What if any light is thrown by the foregoing on the meaning of: aim, value, effort, control, freedom (to effect), possibility, fatalism, causation, magic, thinking?
10. How does man's physical and psychologic make-up fit with the outlook on life implied above?
11. Why should the second topic in this course be what is here presented?

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3. THE NATURE OF SOCIETY

1. Do the chickens of a hen's brood cooperate with each other? With her? She with them? Do geese migrating cooperate? Wolves hunting? People riding in a trolley-car? The totality of the car company's men? Boys playing ball?
2. How many can cooperate to one end? How few? For how long a time? How short? With how little conscious intent? With how much? What besides conscious intent may similarly vary in connection? What is included in the term cooperation?
3. What constitutes a common purpose? Had Jacob and Esau a common purpose in seeking Isaac's blessing? David and Jonathan in seeking to thwart Saul? How many purposes (more or less active) are you now sharing with others? With how many others?
4. In the light of the foregoing how do you define association (i. e., a social organization)? In how many associations might one have simultaneous membership? In how few?
5. Name some instincts and other factors that most of all have brought people together in social relationships or now so hold them.
6. Show how interests (or purposes) shared in larger or smaller groupings link the people of a village together. How is it with the people of a nation? The people of the world in 1920? Was it the same in 1420?
7. Arrange on a scale of degree in (or of) society the following: a tribe of Indians, the works of a running watch, prisoners in "solitary" confinement, a number of neighboring hermits, a herd of buffaloes, the dwellers in a New York apartment house, the people of Holland, a hive of bees. What factors determine position on the scale?
8. Are the unborn to be included in society?
9. In the light of all the foregoing how do you define a society?

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4. THE SOCIAL INHERITANCE

1. Considering Topic 2 what are the practical conditions under which a problem typically arises? What if any function has the solution? Can a solution be used again? Can it be passed on to another?
2. In what senses may a problem or a solution be a social affair? May a social solution be made by a "trial and error" process? What has increasing civilization to do with this?
3. From the foregoing what are the relations of habit and custom? Which precedes? Always? What light is shed on grammatical forms? Moral codes? Common law? Statute law? Discriminate custom and institution.
4. Where do solutions abide when not in use and in what state?
5. What is the difference between the biological and the social inheritance? Are both peculiar to man?
6. Is an ax a part of the social inheritance? Is a sneeze? A wink? The Hudson River?
7. In what sense has the social inheritance been called "capitalized experience" or "the funded capital of civilization"?
8. What is the social process and what has the social inheritance to do with it?
9. In what two senses may we speak of the continuance of society? How is the social inheritance related?
10. What if any light is thrown by the foregoing on the nature and function of education? What if any suggestion emerges for method?

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