Philosophical Foundations of Education
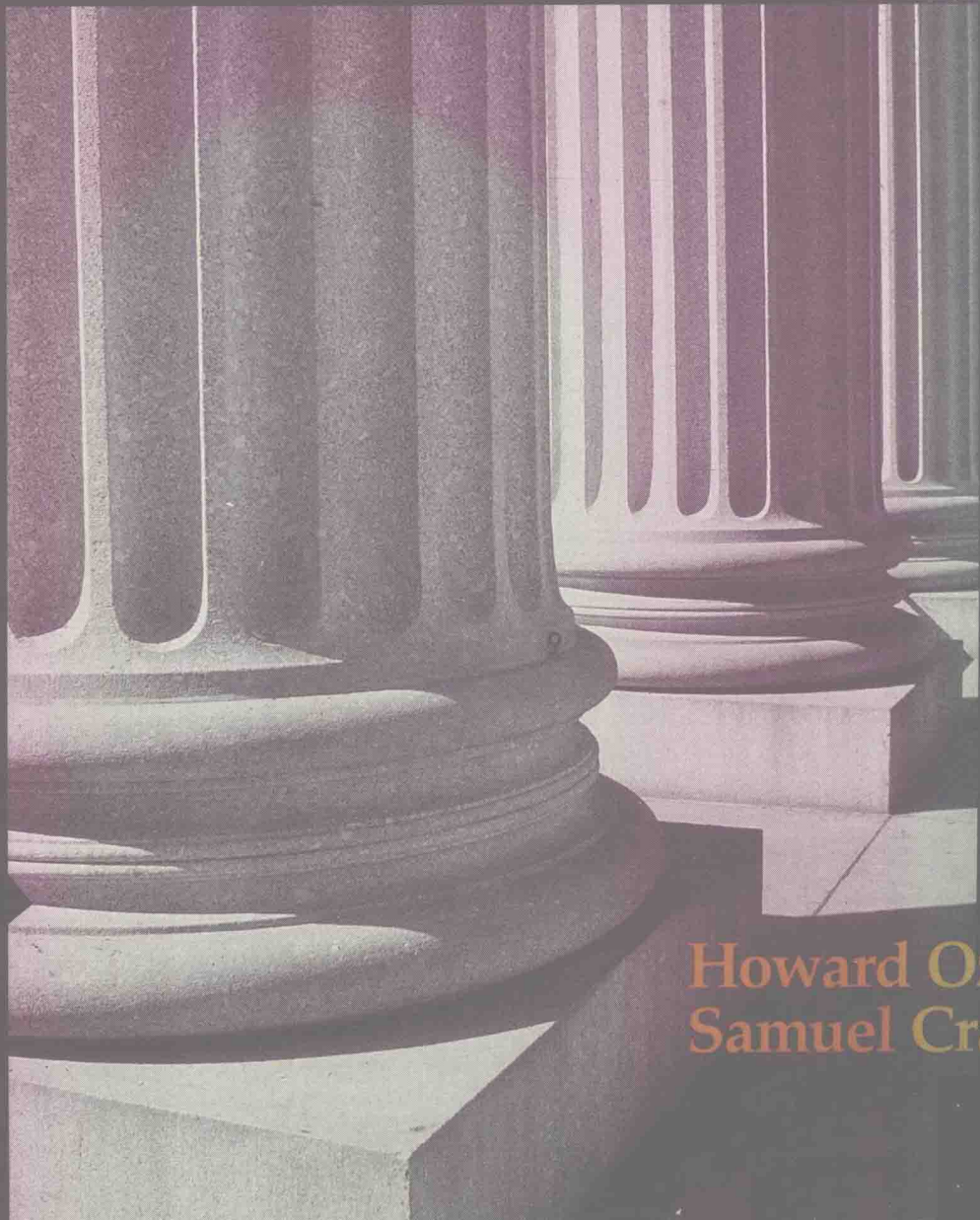
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Preface

Throughout the centuries, philosophers have sought to discover many things, such as truth, meaning, coherence, clarity, or usefulness. They have also endeavored to transfer their knowledge and techniques to others. Philosophers, like thinkers in other fields, have often stood on the shoulders of those who came before them, and it is useful to see this kind of progression in thought and to understand the times and forces that influenced how philosophers developed their beliefs. Our purpose in this volume has been to show how philosophical ideas about education developed over a considerable period but with due regard to historical influences and settings and with emphasis on how these ideas continue to have relevance for education and life at present.

Some of the ideas included here are more than two thousand years old, yet they often appear today in the panoply of ideas that constantly surrounds and influences us. Old ideas as well as new ones are useful tools for evaluating our present world. Idealism, while not a particularly influential philosophy today, may be a useful counterpoint by which to compare and evaluate today's materialist culture. Marxism and existentialism, while declining in popularity, may still be useful frames of reference or "paradigms" for examining a person's intricate relationship with other persons and the larger society. Whereas certain philosophies may be more relevant to particular times and places than others, ideas often develop in relationship to a given time, and ever-changing conditions necessitate the development of different and newer ideas. Still, past ideas are useful tools in lighting the way because they almost always have a bearing on the present. Thus, we are concerned about the historical context in which ideas appear—not only because we think that people today may avoid the errors of the past, but also because old ideas often become useful again.

This book was conceived as an introductory text in the philosophy of education. We recognize that there are many variables to be considered in

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selecting ideas, philosophers, and format, but our guiding rule has been to select those we believe have had the most relevance for education. We examine a general philosophy, such as realism, and show its applications in aims, curriculum, and methods. We also provide a critical analysis of each philosophy, frequently including what other philosophers have said about them.

The philosophies of education presented here are essentially arranged in chronological order. We have tried to avoid unnecessary jargon, both in philosophical and educational ideas, but there is some terminology one needs to know in order to talk about ideas in philosophic fashion. However, we have tried to keep technical expression and jargon to a minimum. With regard to format, we realize that not all philosophers agree with a "systems" or "schools" approach, and that there are serious pros and cons to this issue. However, we feel that for beginning students, often those who may be encountering philosophy for the first time, the benefits of this organizational approach outweigh its disadvantages because it provides a useful way of synthesizing ideas.

We believe that the study of philosophy of education should help sharpen student ideas about education and also give them some tools to think about education in a very general sense. Not only do we think that the study of philosophy assists students in developing necessary analytical skills and encourages critical perspectives, but it also provides perspective or vision as to the importance of education. Although it is impossible to include in a volume of this size every philosopher or every leading philosophical idea that has had educational importance, we hope that the material presented will serve as a catalyst for students to explore further the interesting and important activity of education, and possibly even serve as a stimulus for students to be creative with ideas that can influence their future education and life.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Introduction

It can be said that the philosophy of education began when people first became conscious of education as a distinct human activity. Although preliterate societies did not have the long-range goals and complex social systems we find in modern times, and while they did not have the analytical tools that modern philosophers have, even preliterate education involved a philosophical attitude about life. Humanity had a "philosophy" of education long before we knew what it was or what it could mean in terms of educational development.

In earlier times, education was primarily for survival. Children were taught the skills necessary for living. Gradually, however, people came to use education for a variety of purposes. Today, education may be used not only for survival (though recent ecological studies show that it may still be used for such purposes) but also for better use of leisure time and refinements in social and cultural life. As the practice of education has developed, so also have philosophies about education; however, it has become easy for us to overlook the connection between theory and practice and to deal with practice apart from theory. We may be in a dilemma because we seem to be more involved with the "practical" aspects of education than we are with an analysis of educational theory and its connection with practice. What we need is not only better theorizing about education and better methods but also a concerted effort to join the two. Thinking about education without consideration for the "practical" world means that philosophers of education become web spinners of thought engaged in mere academic exercises. On the other hand, tinkering with educational methods without serious thought results in practices that have little substance or meaning.

THE NEED FOR A PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

A study of philosophy of education seems imperative today, for we are in a critical era of transition. There has always been change but seldom at our present accelerated rate, creating in many individuals what Alvin Toffler called *future shock*. At a time when many observers say we are entering a "postmodern" era, it is easy for people either to embrace more and more change with little thought to eventual consequences or to resist change and keep old values no matter what. Educational philosophers, regardless of their particular theory, suggest that the solutions to our problems can best be achieved through critical and reflective thought.

We can say that philosophy of education is the application of philosophical ideas to educational problems. The practice of education, however, may lead to a refinement of philosophical ideas. Thus, educational philosophy is not only a way of looking at ideas but of learning how to use ideas in the best way. No intelligent philosophy of education is involved when educators do things simply because they were done in the past. A philosophy of education becomes significant when educators recognize the need to think clearly about what they are doing and to see what they are doing in the larger context of individual and social development.

Many major philosophers have written about education, probably because education is such an integral part of life that it is difficult to think about not having it. Humans are tool-making beings but can also be considered education-making beings because education has been closely connected with the development of civilization. Thinking about life in general has often been related to education in particular, and education has often been viewed as a way of bringing a better life into existence. This is as true today as it has ever been.

The study of philosophy does not guarantee that individuals will be better thinkers or educators, but it does provide valuable perspectives to help us think more clearly. The word *philosophy* literally means the love of wisdom and has traditionally implied the pursuit of wisdom. This is not to imply that philosophy provides no answers; rather, it offers an avenue for serious inquiry into ideas, traditions, and ways of thinking. Philosophers have been acute observers of human conditions and have articulated their observations in ways that can be instructive. Educators are not only aided by a careful and systematic approach to ideas that philosophers have fostered, but they also can gain ideas from philosophy that may help develop new insights into educational problems. While educators may choose to disregard the philosophical approach to problems, in doing so they ignore a vital and important body of thought.

One of the roles of philosophy in any era has been to examine critically the intellectual disputes of the time and to suggest alternative arguments or ways of viewing things. Another role has been to develop sensitivity to the logic and language used in constructing solutions to problems, whether in

education or the larger society. It is possible to trace the history of ideas by tracing the development of philosophical thought, and the history of philosophy reflects some of humanity's best thinking—our collective wisdom, so to speak. It can be said that to think philosophically is to reflect upon who we are, what we are doing, why we are doing it, and how we justify all these things.

Education is involved with the world of ideas and the world of practical activity—good ideas can lead to good practices, and good practices can lead to good ideas. In order to behave intelligently in the educational process, the educator needs the things philosophy can provide—that is, an understanding of thinking processes and the nature of ideas, the language we use to describe education, criticism of cultural and social traditions, and perspective on how these may interact with practical affairs. For educators, philosophy is not simply a professional tool but a way of improving the quality and enjoyment of life because it helps us gain a wider and deeper perspective on human existence and the world around us.

Despite the depth of thought it provides, philosophy does not appeal to some people because it provides no clear-cut answers to pressing problems. Of course, philosophers disagree on practically every issue, but it is often from disagreements (including the philosophical sort) that the search for new social, political, economic, religious, and educational systems have developed. Those who avoid disagreement and prefer clear-cut answers may overlook important concerns about the development of civilization, but if there had been no disagreement about ideas, purposes, and methods, we probably would still be in the Stone Age. Disagreement has often brought about change, and it continues to do so.

Many differences in educational viewpoints have arisen because of changes in society. Social conditions often necessitate changes of viewpoint and behavior. This will probably always go on, but it would be gratifying if educational change resulted from people reflectively examining issues and clarifying direction. Many past events that affected social and cultural development, such as urbanization, were largely beyond human control. Although some people tried to study the changes, they had little influence over the direction events would take. Even more to the point, many social and cultural changes that could have been controlled with sufficient thought and foresight have wreaked havoc in history. Consequently, much philosophizing throughout history has been after the fact—and events ran their own capricious course.

As people sought to develop more control over social forces through education, however, they were faced with the problem of dealing with the direction of control. This problem has led to questions of whether the controls do more harm than good. For example, individuals and groups can be systematically controlled through psychological conditioning in the educational process, but whether such control is good is subject to argument and debate. Thus, the need arises for philosophical thought to examine the value

of controls, to uncover the basic assumptions behind those controls, and to study the implications for human life and freedom.

People often approach philosophy looking for *the* answer to debatable issues—when they fail to find it, they reject philosophy, complaining that it is difficult to understand. Some question the value of studying philosophy at all, saying it has no relevance for practical life, but many of the problems philosophers have dealt with—the relation of individual freedom to social responsibility, the purposes of education, the meanings of terms and concepts, and so on—are relevant today.

Practically everything done in education reflects some point of view that may not be readily apparent to the pupil, the parent, or the educator. Perhaps the viewpoint itself is unclear or is a loose collection of ideas all lumped together without much logic or coherence, or it may be kept purposefully vague for hidden reasons. What is needed in such cases is a clarification and sorting out, but because many educators lack the understandings and skills that promote such clarification, they continue to drift in a sea of rhetoric and patchwork panaceas. Indeed, there is much dissatisfaction with education today, and much that goes on in contemporary schools attests to the drift. Attempts to solve such problems often result in a chaotic jumble of programs and superficial bickering among ideological camps.

"Practical" educators assume that we should throw out philosophical theory and get on with the "real" tasks at hand. The problem with this "practical" outlook is that its advocates approach educational problems with the same old attitudes and remedies. They assume that they can read the face of an intelligible universe unencumbered by "ivory tower" intellectual schemes. That outlook itself is a "theory," a set of assumptions for which the last word has yet to be said. It seems that educators, like everyone else, are caught up in their own humanity. There is no certainty with regard to all facets of life in *any* known approach to education, for the perfect approach has not yet been invented. We are left with the necessity to *think* about what we do, to attempt to reason out and justify our actions so that they are coherent, meaningful, and directed toward desirable educational ends.

Some maintain that no logical connections can be made between philosophical thought and the practical world of education; that is, philosophical reflection has no necessary logical connection with what ought to be done in a practical educational context. This may be true, but it has not kept philosophers and educators from attempting to make such connections. There may well be no logical connection between, for example, Plato's view of the good society and his construction of educational means to achieve this society. Many people have made such connections (whether logical or otherwise), however, and educational programs have been developed and instituted, drawing heavily upon Plato and other philosophers in the process.

This debt can be seen in recommendations put forward concerning the aims and purposes of education, curriculum content, teaching methods, and many other areas of educational endeavor. Although Plato lived over two

thousand years ago, what he and his contemporaries said and thought about life and education still influence us—even if we are unaware of it. Part of the task of the student of education, then, is to become familiar with leading philosophical ideas about education and to understand the impact they have had and continue to have on our thinking.

Certain ideas and recommendations about education have a great deal of influence today, particularly in shaping public attitudes about "back to the basics" and "moral values" education. People who advocate such things may lack any philosophical sophistication or knowledge of the origin of these notions, but philosophers have often recommended certain "basics" and "values" that figure in educational recommendations. Philosophical traditions and recommendations are part of the working ideas and traditions of our society today. Many of us assume these things to be true and obvious without any clear idea of why. Thus, we may blindly accept many educational recommendations without knowing whether they are justified. The student who seeks to become an educator needs to be informed about these ideas and traditions in order to sift through rhetoric and argument and to reach a more intelligent understanding of the current scene.

THEORY AND PRACTICE IN EDUCATION

Some philosophers of education make little distinction between philosophy of education and educational theory. In 1942, for example, John S. Brubacher wrote that "several theories or philosophies" could be used as guides to solutions of educational problems. In this view, philosophy of education is a discipline "peculiarly competent to tell what should be done both now and later on." Philosophy of education, then, has much to offer in the way of theory, even though there may be a great deal of disagreement among philosophers as to what theory or theories to carry out. In Brubacher's view, the need for philosophy becomes apparent when the educator, parent, or learner confronts questions about the proper aims and means of education.

If we try to select content or choose a method, we must decide what we are trying to do and what aims or objectives are actually being proposed in the process. The development of educational aims, however, is complicated and gives rise to numerous philosophical questions: Are there "true" aims? Does the nature of life and the universe itself demand certain aims? Can we know what the "proper" aims of education are? Do aims flow from the practical activities of life and the problems confronting human beings in the everyday world?

In deciding what the aims should be, one is also confronted with determining what kinds of curricula and techniques will be most suitable for achieving those aims. Many new questions must then be confronted—philosophical questions concerning the nature of knowledge, learning, teaching,

and so on. Brubacher felt that few educators could pursue such questions or give adequate responses about why schools should be operated in particular ways. He maintained that the study of philosophy of education would help educators build more adequate theoretical bases and hence more adequate education.

By 1955, Brubacher was attempting to get educators to focus their attention on pressing problems and use philosophical theory to deal with them. He identified six popular assumptions about education that philosophy of education could address: (1) anxiety that education is adrift; (2) concern that educational aims are vague, conflicting, and not conducive to loyalty; (3) beliefs that standards have been seriously relaxed; (4) uncertainty about the role of education in a democratic society; (5) concern that schools give students too much freedom and do not foster respect for authority and control; and (6) fears that schools have become too secular and neglect religion. These problems sound familiar because they are perhaps as significant today as they were when Brubacher wrote about them. His point that philosophy of education could help solve them may not be accepted on a much wider scale today than it was in 1955, but his insistence that these and other pressing issues cannot be treated satisfactorily without an understanding of philosophical theories that deal with the underlying assumptions about education in our culture still seems valid.

Brubacher, of course, did not originate the notion that philosophy and educational theory are connected. This connection has a long tradition, but perhaps the most thoroughgoing link between the two was made by John Dewey in *Democracy and Education*, first published in 1916. According to Dewey, the theory of education is a set of "generalizations" and "abstractions" about education. Most people probably think abstraction is useless in practical matters, but Dewey maintained that it can serve a useful purpose as "an indispensable trait in the reflective direction of activity." In this sense, theoretical abstractions or generalized meanings have a connection with actual, practical affairs. Things are generalized so that they may have broader application. A theory of education contains generalizations that are applicable to many situations. Theory becomes abstract in the remote sense when it ignores practical application. In the sense of useful theory, however, abstraction broadens meanings to include any person or situation in like circumstances.

For example, Dewey observed that a person may know many things that she cannot express. Such knowledge remains merely personal and cannot be shared unless it is abstracted or, to put it another way, expressed in some public language; then it can be shared and critically analyzed for improvement. In other words, for a person to share her thoughts and experiences she must consider the experience of others and put her ideas in language they can understand. Not only must experience be shared, it must be taken back

into practice for testing. In this way, practice serves to expand theory and direct it toward new possibilities.

Practically everyone has had at least some experience with this because all of us have shared our experience of a particular thing or process with others. We may question friends or acquaintances about how they accomplished something, or we will tell them how we did it and recommend our way to them. Experienced teachers do this quite often. They exchange ideas and methods that they have found fruitful in achieving certain educational goals. In this sense, they are theorizing or building theory, even though it may not be very sophisticated. One person tries another's approach and afterward discusses it. They find ways to redefine goals and vary, expand, or redirect the approaches for future use.

The very "practical" matter of approaches and goals has been generalized, or abstracted. These approaches and goals have been tested and found successful, or they have been altered, improved, or found wanting. In this way, theory and practice may build upon each other. Look, for example, at Darwin's theory of the origin of species. Most of the central ideas of his theory had been enunciated by others. Even his investigations of flora and fauna during the famous voyage of the *Beagle*, while contributing to biological discoveries, did not add much to the theory itself. What was of major significance for theory was the manner in which Darwin connected the many disparate elements into a coherent, comprehensive, and logical system. Thus, the world gained a renowned theory that has influenced us all.

In the more sophisticated meaning of *theory*, the role of philosophy becomes crucial. In Dewey's view, philosophy deals with aims, ideas, and processes in a certain totality, generality, or ultimateness. It involves an attempt to comprehend varied details of life and the world and to organize them into an inclusive whole. It also involves a philosophical attitude, indicated by endeavors to achieve unified, consistent, and comprehensive outlooks on human experience. This is often what is meant by the "love of wisdom." Complete finality and certainty of knowledge are always lacking, however, because philosophy may also be characterized as "the pursuit of wisdom"; that is, it involves a continual search. Thus, terms like *totality* and *ultimateness* refer more to a consistency of attitude than to any final certainty of knowledge. Philosophy, then, is connected with thinking about and seeking what is possible, not arriving at complete knowledge. It does not furnish solutions so much as it defines difficulties and suggests methods for dealing with solutions or clarifying them.

The philosophical demand for a total attitude, Dewey held, arises out of the need to integrate activities among the conflicting interests of life. It is an effort to develop a comprehensive point of view with which to resolve conflicts and to restore some consistency in life. This is shown in philosophers' efforts to attack the puzzles of life and bring clarity to confused situations.

This kind of effort may also involve the struggles of individuals to bring continuity to their own lives, but philosophy at its most comprehensive level seeks to deal with discrepancies and puzzles that affect the community as a whole.

When coupled with education, this aspect of philosophy becomes clearer because education is one of those human activities that concern the whole community. To Dewey, education offers a vantage ground "from which to penetrate to the human, as distinct from the technical, significance of philosophic discussion." When philosophy is viewed from the standpoint of education, the life situations it studies are never far from view. As Dewey put it: "If we are willing to conceive education as the process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and our fellow men, philosophy may even be defined as *the general theory of education*."

If we examine the basic points thus far discussed, we will see that certain elements stand out. First, there is the assertion that philosophy can enable us to build more adequate educational theory. This assertion is based on several points, one of which is philosophy's role in clarifying aims and methods and critically analyzing cultural assumptions about education. More central, however, is the role of philosophy in providing overall perspective and comprehensiveness. This role is illustrated by the philosophical attitude of "thinking about what is possible"; this effort is largely dominated by concern for integration and continuity. Philosophy, in this sense, may be considered as educational theory in the most general sense.

Educational theory, however, may also include more than philosophy because it uses relevant contributions from many fields. Theory serves as a guide to organize thought about education, and it helps provide order and clarity to the process. Theory serves as a directive to educational practice by helping educators clarify and organize educational practice reflectively. A common element in all of these points is that central to philosophical and theoretical discourse on education is (1) the necessity for reflection and (2) the organization of ideas for eventual practical activity.

A common assumption many people make is that *good* theory can be directly applied to practical matters—that it can be "plugged" into ongoing practical situations and yield direct results. If the theory does not work, it is obviously not a good theory. This assumption may be the reason that many people show disdain for theory and call it impractical, for few if any educational theories can be applied directly to practical conditions in the sense that one applies aspirin to a headache. Those who attempt such applications of theory seldom fail to be disappointed.

Why this is so relates to the characteristics of both theory and practice. The point has been made that theory and practice must be connected and that each can inform and expand the other. To affirm a connection, however, is far from saying that there is a direct or one-to-one relationship between theory and practice. Dewey, who said that philosophy is the general theory of education, also said, "It is an idea of what is possible, not a record of accomplished fact. Hence, it is hypothetical, like all thinking." In *Contemporary*

Theories of Education (1971), Richard Pratte characterized educational theory as a directive for practice; but he also noted that "a theory is an instrument, a guide to thought, not necessarily a guide to direct practice."

Yet theory serves a practical function in many ways, and if the "plug-in" approach is usually doomed to failure, it is often not so much the fault of any given theory as it is its application. One practical feature of theory is its *general* nature. It contains ideas and propositions that allow for comparison, contrast, readjustment, and criticism from a variety of sources because they are stated in a public sense and are not locked into only the subjective thoughts of private individuals.

Theoretical discourse invites argument and counterargument, for otherwise it ceases to be theoretical and passes into dogma or accepted "fact." Theory is also an aid in providing us with a more comprehensive perspective. It helps us evaluate or place in perspective what it is we are doing or could be doing. It helps us locate ourselves in relation to an overall or larger perspective. In addition, theory invites an attitude of seeking out possibilities, an attitude that constantly seeks a new or better way. Finally, theory aids in defining difficulties, clarifying confusions in thought and language, and sorting out and organizing plans for action. It provides rationale and gives direction to practical activity.

Practice, on the other hand, provides both raw materials and testing grounds for theory. The value of a theory may well reside in what difference it makes in the practical world by helping us in our approach to everyday educational endeavor. William James was fond of quoting the biblical passage, "By their fruits shall ye know them"; it is the character of consequences or outcomes that helps determine the validity of any theory. If a theory does not help us communicate better, criticize our assumptions and actions, gain perspective, seek out new possibilities, and order and direct practice, then we had better let it go or revise it in new directions. It has lost its connection with practice, and the fruitful interchange has ceased.

These, then, are some of the practical aspects of theory. Prescription of detailed classroom activities, however, is seldom one of the practical applications. The reasons for this are obvious enough if we examine the characteristics of theory. A major characteristic is that theory suggests possibilities; however, this does not mean that any theory could foresee all the possible practical situations confronting an educator in the fluid world of ongoing activity. Conditions change, people come and go, and even individual persons change and develop; so it is virtually impossible to establish preexisting rubrics that will always be applicable. The suggestion of possibilities aids us in organizing and directing our thinking about educational activity: it does not dictate the activity.

What theory accomplishes is that it helps us organize specific practices or practical activities with a sense of direction, purpose, and coherence. It gives administration, curriculum, and our daily plans order and organization, and it aids us in constructing, for example, specific teaching and learning

objectives and accompanying methods and techniques. This is the practical connection of educational theory to educational practice; and in this sense, educational theory can be applied to educational practice.

THE QUEST IN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

An era of transition from an old order to a new one seems to be appearing. Some observers say that we are suffering so much from the impact of rapid technological development that we are stumbling blindly from "future shock," unable to deal with our problems. Others say that we are leaving the modern era and are entering a postmodern era, a time of experimentation when old values are being altered in various aspects of life, including education. Perhaps every era faces similar difficulties of transition. Whatever the case, there is a great deal of confusion at present; and as far as we can tell, no synthesis or coalescence has been achieved. It often seems that negativeness, even disillusionment, is the rule rather than the exception. It has led some social theorists to call for redefinition and renewal of communal life. For example, Robert Bellah and his associates, in *The Good Society* (1991), call for a restoration of community.

The postmodern attitude has definitely shaken philosophy. A recent collection entitled *After Philosophy: End or Transformation?* (1987) gives an indication of the contemporary philosophical temperament. In Europe, for example, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault have forcefully criticized established philosophical and cultural assumptions. Critical philosophers, such as Jurgen Habermas, have sought to go beyond Marxism and understand the bases of human communication. In the United States, Richard Rorty has criticized old ways of thinking and has attempted to develop a new perspective that may be called *postmodern neopragmatism*. Such developments, which often start on the unorthodox fringes, have a way of dislodging what once seemed to be secure philosophical modes of thought. In the final analysis, perhaps the only thing we can be sure about is that changing times demand new ways of thinking.

Thus, uncertainty seems to be a fact of life, and old ideas are being challenged. Perhaps what it truly shows is that the philosophical task, despite contemporary movements this way or that, is still a search for wisdom. We believe that it is an inclusive search requiring many voices. From Plato down through history, there have been attempts to see humanity's development in some understandable, coherent, and orderly fashion. Descartes believed that he was beginning anew to construct an orderly way of thinking that would be incontestable. This same attitude is found in Kant, Hegel, Marx, and some contemporary philosophers. More recently, the feeling for such philosophical order and categorization has either vanished or has been seriously modified. Dewey talked about facts and propositions but couched them in the rhetoric of "warranted assertibility." His philosophical descendant, Richard Rorty, has left the

analytic paradigm and has recommended a "conversation of culture" that includes many philosophical voices that may be admired or critiqued. Some observers say that we are in a postmodernist era when everything is subject to flux and change and old absolutes are deposed by new uncertainties.

The current mood in philosophy of education is generally toward understanding and dealing with problems and issues in context rather than a return to the idea that the individual, society, and education can be understood in an overriding system of thought. The conviction that a set of universal principles or a system of thought can explain the multitude of variables that pervade personal and social relations in education is gone. There is also an increased awareness of the danger that system-building itself can lead to circumstances in which we explain actions and events in terms of great and overriding principles (whether they be Kant's categorical imperatives or Descartes's "clear and distinct ideas") rather than in terms of the actual contexts of activities and events.

Thus, philosophical thinking in education has moved into a new arena. The emphasis is not on system development but rather on human predicaments in specific contexts. If philosophers no longer seek to provide general explanations and descriptions of the overriding scheme of things, a reasonable query may be "Who will?" Harry S. Broudy observed (in "Philosophy of Education Between Yearbooks" [1979]) that many people will continue to identify philosophy with the search for wisdom, and they will look to philosophy of education for more than "logical purity and wholesome skepticism." They are not and do not want educators and educational institutions to be neutral about their children's futures.

This expectation for philosophical guidance in education may be unwarranted, as recent developments in philosophy of education seem to declare; but as Broudy put it, "if the philosophy of education ignores or merely makes fun of this need, it will be satisfied by nonphilosophical sources." Broudy emphasized certain things that educators have a right to expect from philosophy of education, including attention to the problems of education in general and schooling in particular, clarification of educational concepts and issues, and rational discourse and freedom of inquiry. One direction educational discourse has been taking is represented by Stanley Aronowitz and Henry Giroux in *Postmodern Education: Politics, Culture, and Social Criticism* (1991); they advocate a radical reappraisal and change in our approaches to education.

Despite the uncertainties presented by the current state of philosophy of education, it is still evident that the philosophical task is one of constant probing and inquiry. It is participation in the questioning and challenging attitude of philosophy that this book hopes to encourage among educators. This inquisitive restlessness makes philosophy an enduring human enterprise, one that is never quite completed but is always in the making. In the final analysis, the search for wisdom may simply be an intensive search for better ways of thinking about human predicaments. This search involves