

---

*Philosophical*

---

*and*

---

*Ideological*

*Perspectives*

---

*on*

---

*Education*

---

*Gerald L. Gutek*

---

# ***Philosophical and Ideological Perspectives on Education***

---

**GERALD L. GUTEK**

*Loyola University of Chicago*



Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Gutek, Gerald Lee.

Philosophical and ideological perspectives on education.

Bibliography:

Includes index.

1. Education—Philosophy.  
LB 1025.2.G92 1988

ISBN 0-13-662594-0

2. Philosophy.  
370.1

I. Title.  
87-32692

Editorial/production supervision and  
interior design: Barbara DeVries  
Cover design: George Cornell  
Manufacturing buyer: Margaret Rizzi



1988 by Prentice-Hall, Inc.  
A Division of Simon & Schuster  
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be  
reproduced, in any form or by any means,  
without permission in writing from the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3

ISBN 0-13-662594-0

Prentice-Hall International (UK) Limited, *London*  
Prentice-Hall of Australia Pty. Limited, *Sydney*  
Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., *Toronto*  
Prentice-Hall Hispanoamericana, S.A., *Mexico*  
Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited, *New Delhi*  
Prentice-Hall of Japan, Inc., *Tokyo*  
Simon & Schuster Asia Pte. Ltd., *Singapore*  
Editora Prentice-Hall do Brasil, Ltda., *Rio de Janeiro*

This book is dedicated to the memory of my uncle,  
Ralph Joseph Novotney, a man who was excellent in  
all things.

## ***PREFACE***

---

*Philosophical and Ideological Perspectives on Education* is a result of my teaching and research in Foundations of Education courses. As a teacher of such courses in teacher education programs, I have sought to understand and work with ideas that relate to education from the aspect of history, philosophy, and ideology. I have looked for contexts, or have attempted to create them, so that ideas about education can be examined in terms of their origins, development, meaning, and relevance to teaching and learning. I believe that teacher education should be rooted in the cultural foundations which are part of its origins and which should sustain and nurture it in a time when cultural foundations are often put aside or neglected. I hope that my colleagues in the fields of history, philosophy, and social theory of education who share my interest in educational ideas will find my approach to be congenial and useful.

Although focusing on the philosophy of education, this book provides a three dimensional introduction to educational ideas. First, it examines the major philosophical systems and ideologies that have shaped educational thought and practice. Second, it outlines certain ideas from philosophy and ideology to illustrate how these disciplines contribute to educational theory. Third, in seeking to provide a context

for educational philosophy, ideology, and theory, it includes short biographical sketches of principal originators or contributors of leading ideas about education. Since the book is intended primarily for use in Philosophy of Education or Cultural Foundations of Education courses in teacher education programs, it also provides discussion questions and inquiry projects that may lead students to do further reading, research, and field study.

Gerald L. Gutek  
*Loyola University of Chicago*  
Chicago, Illinois

# CONTENTS

---

<i>Preface</i>	<i>xi</i>
----------------	-----------

## 1

<b>PHILOSOPHY AND EDUCATION</b>	<b>1</b>
---------------------------------	----------

Areas of Philosophy 2

Education 4

Philosophies of Education 9

Conclusion 10

*Discussion Questions* 11

*Inquiry Projects* 11

*Further Readings* 12

## 2

<b>IDEALISM AND EDUCATION</b>	<b>13</b>
-------------------------------	-----------

Plato: Founder of Western Idealism 14

Idealism As a Systematic Philosophy 19

The Educational Implications of Idealism 24

Conclusion 30

*Discussion Questions* 31

*Inquiry Projects* 31

*Further Readings* 31

**3**

✓ **REALISM AND EDUCATION**

**33**

Aristotle: The Founder of Realism 34  
Realism As a Systematic Philosophy 41  
The Educational Implications of Realism 46  
Conclusion 50  
*Discussion Questions* 50  
*Inquiry Projects* 51  
*Further Readings* 51

**4**

**THEISTIC REALISM AND EDUCATION**

**52**

Thomas Aquinas: A Founder of Theistic Realism 54  
Educational Implications of Theistic Realism 56  
Conclusion 65  
*Discussion Questions* 65  
*Inquiry Projects* 66  
*Further Readings* 66

**5**

✓ **NATURALISM AND EDUCATION**

**68**

Rousseau: Proponent of Naturalism 70  
Naturalist Themes in Education 74  
Conclusion 80  
*Discussion Questions* 80  
*Inquiry Projects* 81  
*Further Readings* 81

**6**

✓ **PRAGMATISM AND EDUCATION**

**82**

John Dewey: A Founder of Pragmatism 84  
Experimentalism's Philosophical Bases 89  
Experimentalism's Educational Implications 98  
Conclusion 108  
*Discussion Questions* 108  
*Inquiry Projects* 109  
*Further Readings* 109

**7**

✓ **EXISTENTIALISM AND EDUCATION**

**111**

Existentialist Philosophers 112



The Crisis of Mass Society	115
Rejection of Systems	117
Existentialist Philosophizing	119
Existentialism's Educational Implications	121
Conclusion	133
<i>Discussion Questions</i>	133
<i>Inquiry Projects</i>	134
<i>Further Readings</i>	134

## 8

### **PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS AND EDUCATION** 136

Origins of Analytical Philosophy	137
Classifications of Propositions	139
Search for Order and Clarity	140
Conclusion	143
<i>Discussion Questions</i>	143
<i>Inquiry Projects</i>	144
<i>Further Readings</i>	144

## 9

### **IDEOLOGY AND EDUCATION** 145

Historical Origins and Development of the Concept of Ideology	148
A Stipulated Definition of Ideology	152
The Use of Ideology To Create Consensus	157
Ideology, Education, and Schooling	160
Ideology and Philosophy	162
Conclusion	163
<i>Discussion Questions</i>	163
<i>Inquiry Projects</i>	164
<i>Further Readings</i>	164

## 10

### **LIBERALISM AND EDUCATION** 165

John Locke: A Founder of Liberalism	166
Key Elements in Liberal Ideology	173
Educational Implications of Liberalism	182
Conclusion	189
<i>Discussion Questions</i>	189
<i>Inquiry Projects</i>	189
<i>Further Readings</i>	190

## **11**

### **CONSERVATISM AND EDUCATION**

**191**

Edmund Burke: Proponent of Cultural Civility 191

Conservatism's Basic Themes 194

Conservatism and Schooling 198

Conclusion 200

*Discussion Questions* 200

*Inquiry Projects* 200

*Further Readings* 201

## **12**

### **UTOPIANISM AND EDUCATION**

**202**

Robert Owen: Utopian Educator 203

Utopian Principles 209

The Utopian Critique of Liberalism 212

Human Nature and Utopian Socialism 214

Utopianism at Work 214

The Family and Women in Utopia 216

Utopians and Education 217

Conclusion 220

*Discussion Questions* 220

*Inquiry Projects* 221

*Further Readings* 221

## **13**

### **MARXISM AND EDUCATION**

**222**

Karl Marx: Revolutionary Educator 222

Marxist Ideology 226

Marxist Educational Theory 230

Neo-Marxism's Educational Implications 231

Conclusion 233

*Discussion Questions* 233

*Inquiry Projects* 234

*Further Readings* 234

## **14**

### **TOTALITARIANISM AND EDUCATION**

**235**

Totalitarianism's Theoretical Features 236

Hitler and Totalitarian Education 240

Conclusion 247

*Discussion Questions* 248

*Inquiry Projects* 248

*Further Readings* 248

## 15

**THEORY AND EDUCATION** 250

- Theory as Derivation 251
- Theory as Reaction 252
- Theory Arising from Practice 253
- Conclusion 254
- Discussion Questions* 254
- Inquiry Projects* 255
- Further Readings* 255

## 16

**ESSENTIALISM AND EDUCATION** 256

- The Essentialist Position 257
- Bestor's Curriculum of Intellectual Disciplines 259
- Basic Education and the Essentialist Revival 264
- Essentialism's Philosophical and Ideological Relationships 267
- Conclusion 269
- Discussion Questions* 269
- Inquiry Projects* 269
- Further Readings* 270

## 17

**PERENNIALISM AND EDUCATION** 271

- Robert M. Hutchins 273
- Religious Perennialism 276
- The Paideia Proposal: A Revival of Perennialism 279
- Perennialism's Philosophical and Ideological Relationships 282
- Conclusion 283
- Discussion Questions* 283
- Inquiry Projects* 284
- Further Readings* 284

## 18

**PROGRESSIVISM AND EDUCATION** 285

- Sources of Progressivism 286
- William Kilpatrick and the Project Method 290
- Progressivism's Philosophical and Ideological Relationships 294
- Conclusion 297
- Discussion Questions* 297
- Inquiry Projects* 297
- Further Readings* 298

**19**

***SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTIONISM AND EDUCATION*      299**

Cultural Crisis    300

The Pioneering Work of George S. Counts    301

Development Theory and Futurism    309

Reconstructionism's Philosophical and Ideological Relationships    311

Conclusion    312

*Discussion Questions*    312

*Inquiry Projects*    312

*Further Readings*    313

***Index***

**315**

## ***PHILOSOPHY AND EDUCATION***

---

During a person's first experience as a teacher, little time exists to examine the general or theoretical implications that result from his or her presence in a school. All too frequently, teaching is a hurried and often frustrating series of episodes in which the teacher reacts to the immediate demands of students, parents, administrators, colleagues, and community and school organizations. In the first years of a teaching career, the teacher must meet the day-to-day demands of lesson planning, conducting classes, and attending conferences both in and out of school. Little time is available for reflection on the enterprise of education. For the teacher who wishes to become a genuine professional, exclusive attention to daily routine and detail is insufficient. Every teacher knows that education is a powerful instrument for the shaping of individual lives and of society. When the teacher begins to reflect upon his or her role, that person is beginning to pass from preoccupation with the immediately practical to an examination of the theory that underlies and sustains practice. Because it is a moral enterprise, teaching requires the careful blending of theory and practice. Theory without practice is insufficient; practice unguided by theory is aimless.

Blending theory and practice, teaching has both a reflective and an active dimension. It has effects that transcend the immediate instructional episodes of the classroom. The way in which teachers relate to

their students depends upon their conception of human nature. Instruction is about something; it is about a skill or about knowledge. One's view of reality shapes the perception of knowledge. When the teacher begins to reflect upon the conception of reality, of human nature, and of society, he or she is involved in philosophizing about education. To provide a framework for such philosophizing, the sections that follow examine areas of both philosophy and education and also provide an introduction to philosophies of education.

## **AREAS OF PHILOSOPHY**

In its most general terms, philosophy is the human being's attempt to think most speculatively, reflectively, and systematically about the universe and the human relationship to that universe. *Metaphysics*, the study of the nature of ultimate reality, involves speculation about the nature of existence. It asks the question, "After all the nonessentials of life have been stripped away, what is it that is genuinely real?" In their speculations into the nature of reality, metaphysicians have drawn varying conclusions. Whereas an Idealist defines reality in spiritual or non-materials terms, a Realist sees reality as an order of objects that exist independently of human beings. Conversely, a Pragmatist holds that the human conception of reality is determined by experience.

Metaphysics relates to educational theorizing and practice in many ways. The subjects, experiences, and skills that are included in the curriculum reflect the conception of reality that is held by the society that supports the school enterprise. Much of formal schooling represents the attempt of curriculum-makers, teachers, and textbook authors to describe certain aspects of reality to students. For example, subjects such as history, geography, chemistry, and so on, describe certain phases of reality to students.

*Epistemology*, the theory of knowing and of knowledge, is of crucial importance for educators. Dealing with the most general and basic conceptions of knowing, epistemology is closely related to methods of teaching and of learning. For example, an Idealist may hold that knowing, or the cognitive process, is really the recall of ideas that are present latently in the mind. The appropriate educational method would be that of the Socratic dialogue in which the teacher attempts to stimulate or to bring latent ideas to the student's consciousness by asking leading questions. Realists hold that knowledge originates in the sensations that we have of the objects that are part of our environment. It is from these sensations that we arrive at concepts. Through abstraction upon sensory data, we build concepts that correspond to these objects in reality. A teacher who wishes to structure a method of instruction based

upon the Realist sensation-abstraction formula might develop a set of classroom demonstrations to explain natural phenomenon to students. The Pragmatist, in contrast, holds that we create knowledge by acting and interacting with our environment in a series of problem-solving episodes. Thus, problem solving is the appropriate method of instruction for those who accept the Pragmatist's view of knowledge.

*Axiology* is concerned with value theory and attempts to prescribe what is good and right conduct. The subdivisions of axiology are ethics and aesthetics. *Ethics* refers to the philosophic study of moral values and conduct. *Aesthetics* is concerned with the study of values in the realm of beauty and art. Whereas metaphysics is concerned with attempts to describe the nature of ultimate reality, axiology refers to prescriptions of moral behavior and beauty. Educators have always been concerned with the formation of values in the young and with the encouragement of certain kinds of preferred behavior.

In a general way, each person is influenced by those who seek to shape his or her behavior along certain lines. Children are continually told that they should or should not do certain things. Statements such as "you should wash your hands before eating," "you should not break the school's windows," or "you should love your country" are all obvious value statements. In the process of growing to maturity, an individual encounters countless attempts to mold behavior along preferred modes of action. In a very direct way, parents, teachers, and society reward or punish behavior as it conforms to or deviates from their conceptions of correctness, goodness, or beauty.

In a very real way, modern men and women live in a world of clashing values. Internationally, the nationalistic value patterns of the various nation-states have led to conflict and to war. Within nations, there are clashes of values on class or group lines. Sociologists of education have written volumes on the dilemma that faces public schools in the wake of the clash between middle and lower socioeconomic values. Traditionally, value systems have been codified and ritualized in the ethical principles of the various world religions. In the United States, where one finds racial, religious, social, and economic pluralism, the school is a place of value tensions.

The classical conflict in values can be identified as that of *objective* versus *subjective* value theory. Those who subscribe to an objective value theory assert that what is good is rooted in the universe itself and is applicable everywhere for all time. In contrast, subjectivists assert that values are group or personal preferences—likes or dislikes—that depend on particular circumstances, times, and places. For them, values are not universally valid but are relative in that they depend on particular situations.

The aesthetic dimension of life has frequently been overlooked in

American education. In its broadest sense, aesthetic theory refers to the cultivation of taste and a feeling for that which is beautiful. Although aesthetic theory is concerned with the human attempt to objectify insights and feelings in various art forms, it is equally concerned with the cultivation of persons whose lives are harmonious, balanced, and beautiful. While aesthetic values have an obvious place in art, drama, music, and dancing classes, they are also relevant to the cultivation of the public taste and style of life that represents the perspectives of a people.

*Logic* is concerned with the rules or patterns of correct and valid thinking. It examines the rules of valid inference that enable us correctly to frame our propositions and our arguments. *Deductive logic* refers to that reasoning that moves from general statements or principles to particular instances and applications. *Inductive logic* is reasoning that moves from particular instances to generalizations.

## EDUCATION

*Education* refers very broadly to the total social processes that bring a person into cultural life. The human species reproduces biologically as do all other living organisms. Biological reproduction, however, is not cultural reproduction. By living and participating in a culture, the immature human being gradually becomes a recipient of and a participant in a culture. Many persons and social agencies are involved in the process of enculturation of the young. The family, the peer group, the community, the media, the church, and the state all have formative effects on the individual. By living with other persons, the immature child learns how to deal with them. He or she takes on their language, their manners, and their behavior. Educational theorists and philosophers have long recognized the educative role of interactions of human beings and society, and they have tried to indicate the outlines of the kind of social order that is based upon and fulfills human potentiality.

Education, in a more formal and deliberate sense, takes place in the school, a specialized social agency established to cultivate preferred skills, knowledge, and values in the learner. The school is staffed by teachers who are regarded to be experts in the learning processes. Informal, or milieu education, is related to schooling, or formal education. If the school is to succeed in its program of instruction, its curriculum and methods of instruction must be related to and viable in terms of society.

### Curriculum

As the focus and vital center of the school's educational efforts, the *curriculum* is the locus of the sharpest controversies. Decision making in



curricular matters involves considering, examining, and formulating the ends of education. Those concerned with curriculum planning and organization ask such questions as: What knowledge is of most worth? What knowledge should be introduced to the learner? What are the criteria for selecting knowledge? What is it that is valuable for the learner as a person and as a member of society? The answers to these questions not only determine what is included and what is excluded from the school's instructional program but also rest ultimately on assumptions about the nature of the universe, of human beings, of society, and of the good life.<sup>1</sup> In the philosophies that will be examined in this book, one will find a variety of basic and general assumptions that provide alternatives that are applicable to the making of the curriculum.

Curriculum has been defined in various ways. Throughout most of the history of education, the curriculum consisted of the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematical computation at the primary or elementary level and the arts and sciences at the secondary and higher levels. For many educators, the curriculum remains essentially a program of studies, skills, and subjects offered in a formal sequence to a learner. Since the appearance of the activity or experience approach in the twentieth century, many educators have moved to a more generalized and extensive conception of curriculum. For them, the curriculum includes all of the experiences of the learner for which the school assumes responsibility.

In the broadest sense, the curriculum can be defined as the organized experiences that a student has under the guidance and control of the school. In a more precise but restricted sense, the curriculum is the systematic sequence of courses or subjects that forms the school's formal instructional program. These two major definitions of curriculum, as well as the variations that lie between them, are based upon particular conceptions of knowledge and value. The philosophies of education examined in this book will be found to hold conceptions of the curriculum that range from the broad view that includes all of the learner's experiences to the more restricted view that sees it as simply intellectual subject matter.

There can be no <sup>helpful</sup> <sup>convincing</sup> question that curriculum designers, regardless of their philosophical convictions, attempt to seek that which is of the greatest worth to the learner. The problem lies in identifying and agreeing as to what is of the greatest truth, beauty, and goodness. This question has metaphysical, epistemological, and axiological dimensions. Philosophers and educational theorists, however, have responded to

<sup>1</sup> For an excellent discussion of the curriculum in relation to philosophy of education, see Tom C. Venable, *Philosophical Foundations of the Curriculum* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1967).