



PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF HEALTH EDUCATION

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FOREWORD BY VALERIE A. UBBES

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Published by Jossey-Bass

A Wiley Imprint

989 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94103-1741—www.josseybass.com

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Philosophical foundations of health education / Jill M. Black . . . [et al.], editors ; foreword by Valerie A. Ubbes.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-978-0-470-43678-3 (pbk.)

1. Health education. I. Black, Jill M., 1959-
RA440.P485 2010
613—dc22

2009027722

Printed in the United States of America

FIRST EDITION

PB Printing

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF HEALTH EDUCATION

Dedicated posthumously to the following members of the
American Association for Health Education and
leaders in the profession:

William Carlyon
Peter Cortese
William H. Creswell Jr.
William M. Kane
Robert D. Russell
Elena M. Sliepceovich

And in particular to Ann Nolte whose love of history and
philosophy provided the impetus and motivation
for this book.

FOREWORD

Of the many human activities that derive pleasure, our caring choice of words in human communication can culminate in tactful thoughts and actions. Tact refers to a sense of touch [L. *tactus*, to touch] and also includes a delicate perception of saying and doing the right thing without offending. Tact also implies skill in dealing with persons or challenging situations with a poised composure and adroit diplomacy. Historically and today as dignitaries travel from place to place to represent a national or domestic perspective, ambassadors interact responsibly with personal and social graces favorable for each situation. Usually an ambassador carries a written document to establish the objective goals and expectations for the exchange. Gifts and concrete objects are also shared to transition and bridge a conversation toward the hopeful outcome of the main message. In musical communication, a segue is used to imply how a tone or melody moves without a break into the next section or piece, much like this preface does for this book.

With the compilation of this book, it seems reasonable to reflect on the historical action of our professional ambassadors who have transitioned health education from the twentieth to the twenty-first century. An integration of their personal and professional philosophies is found in this first-time collection of published works.

Each one of us shares our personal and professional stories when we interact in real time at professional conferences, meetings, and symposia. Are we not all ambassadors of our own storied lives as we share our tales of who we are and what we do? In doctoral seminars with professor emeritus Dr. Mary K. Beyrer, I learned that “people make history” and thus people ultimately become the subject of our profession. This text brings together the messengers and their messages in order to educate for health in individual, community, and global contexts. We are fortunate to have this collection of philosophical works that have been written by respected professionals from their place and time in history. As these ambassadors profess the importance of health education for a community of learners both now and beyond, the editors of this book “re-present” both past and current thinking since 1953.

As professionals come together to share their ideas in spoken and written narratives, we continue to synthesize and refine our messages for health education. With diplomacy, we can all learn to leave a space in history to honor our subjective stories and more objective theories while negotiating and interrogating ideas for our collective futures. This book affords us a scholarly discourse for engaging philosophical ideas across time from four major perspectives. For the first time, we will be able to compare and contrast a body of published works in a more in-depth way. By making

these papers available in one place, the editors of this volume help to open new pathways to our storytelling and theoretical musing.

As we investigate the crossroad between story and theory in our professional community, may we honor and respect the sophisticated thinking of our ambassadors [L. ambactus, helpers] who have brought into view different vistas for health education while bearing their gifts for philosophical discourse.

Valerie A. Ubbes, PhD, CHES
Miami University

INTRODUCTION

Philosophy has been defined as (1) a love and pursuit of wisdom by intellectual means and moral self-discipline, (2) an investigation of the nature, causes, or principles of reality, knowledge, or values, based on logical reasoning rather than empirical methods, (3) a system of thought based on or involving critical inquiry, or according to William James, “philosophy is the unusually stubborn attempt to think clearly.” Thinking critically about different philosophical beliefs and perspectives involves intellectual strategies to probe the basic nature of a problem or a situation. This means that the reader will need to make observations, assumptions, and comparisons and contrasts to try to uncover the relationships between the parts and the whole (Sloane, MacHale, & DiSpezio, 2002). Philosophy provides a foundation for all academic disciplines. It seeks to shed light on questions such as Who am I? What is real? What and how do I learn or teach? How should people live? What is it to be healthy? It deals with issues and problems that cannot be addressed adequately by appealing to experience and scientific study alone. Philosophical inquiry requires that we question our assumptions, our beliefs, and our reasons for believing them.

Over the past thirty years, health educators have been calling for a professional philosophy for the health education profession (Oberteuffer, 1977; Landwer, 1981; Balog, 1982; Rash, 1985; Timmreck, Cole, James, & Butterworth, 1987, 1988; Shirreffs, 1988; AAHE, 1992; Welle, Russell, & Kittleson, 1995; Coalition of National Health Education Organizations, 1999; AAHE, 2005 [see Appendix B]; Gambescia, 2007). Welle and her colleagues (1995) stated that “health educators perform a multiplicity of roles in a variety of settings, a single philosophy does not seem possible or even particularly desirable. Rather, what the health education profession needs is a clear delineation of the major existing philosophies and an analysis of the current trends in health education philosophies.”

In his 2007 SOPHE presidential address, Stephen Gambescia asked, “Do we have a philosophy of health education?” He suggests that we should think critically about three major questions: (1) How do I know what I know (epistemology)? (2) What should I do; how shall I behave (ethics [see Appendix D] and morality)? And (3) How do I interact with others; and what is my relationship to them (governance)? He goes on to emphasize the importance that we, as a profession, should “discover our own philosophy of health education” (Gambescia, 2007).

This publication offers just such an opportunity. The readings are organized into parts for your critical review: personal philosophies of selected health educators (Part 1), commentaries on philosophical perspectives in health education (Part 2), and

discussions of a range of philosophical issues that are relevant to the practice of health education (Parts 3 to 6). These last four parts are organized around four philosophical perspectives found repeatedly in the health education literature and identified by Welle and her colleagues (1995), including cognitive approaches (Part 3), behavior change (Part 4), freeing/functioning (Part 5), and social change (Part 6). (For a brief comparison of these perspectives, see Appendix A, Philosophy of Health Education Grid.)

We encourage you to read each selection carefully, analyze the points raised, and consider the values identified and discussed by each of the authors. The essay beginning each part includes an overview of the articles and highlights their challenges to the reader.

After reading each selection, consider the following questions.

1. Summarize the key points of the article.
Discuss the key ideas from the article with a classmate. (What?)
2. Compare the concepts discussed in the selection to your philosophical beliefs.
What are the relationships, if any, between what you believe about practicing health education and what the author states about health education? (So What?)
3. What are the implications? (Now What?)
How does this material inform your practice of health education?
4. Relationships
What themes emerged as you read this material?
5. Applications
How can you utilize this material?

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THE EDITORS

Jill M. Black, PhD, CHES, FAAHE is a Fellow of the American Association for Health Education, a former member of the AAHE Board of Directors, and current chair of the AAHE History and Philosophy Committee. She is an associate professor of Health Education at Cleveland State University, where she is the coordinator of Cleveland State's Community Health Education Graduate Program. She holds a BA in Mass Communications, a BS in Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, and a master's degree in Health Promotion from the University of Oklahoma. She received her PhD in Community Health Education from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. She has published more than 30 articles and presented more than 60 professional presentations at local, state, regional, and national meetings. Her specific areas of specialization include the history and philosophy of health education, professional preparation of health educators, program planning and evaluation, health promotion and wellness, foundations and methods of community health, aging and gerontology issues, stress management, and other related issues.

Steven R. Furney, EdD is a professor at Texas State University in San Marcos, where he has been on the faculty since 1980. He serves as the director of health education and teaches in the areas of health education and health promotion. His teaching has been recognized with the Texas State University Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching, the Texas AAHPERD College Health Educator of the Year Award, the Southern District AAHPERD College/University Health Educator of the Year Award, and the National AAHE College Health Educator of the Year Award. Dr. Furney has filled many professional leadership roles at the state, district, and national levels. In Texas, he served as president for the 75th anniversary diamond jubilee celebration year in 1998. In Southern District AAHPERD, he was president in 2001. He has served the Alliance as a member of the AAHE Board of Directors from 2003 to 2006 and through work on various committees including the AAHPERD Strategic Planning Committee and the AAHE Scholarship, Fellows, Nominations, Ethics and History and Philosophy Committees. The professional bodies for which he has served have recognized him with the AAHPERD Honor Award, the AAHE Professional Service Award, the AAHE Health Education Professional of the Year Award for Administration, the AAHE Fellow, the Southern District AAHPERD Health Professional of the Year for Administration, the Southern District Honor Award, the Texas AAHPERD David K. Brace Award, the Texas AAHPERD Honor Award, and the Texas AAHPERD Scholar Award.

Helen M. Graf, PhD, is an associate professor at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro. She serves as the program director for all undergraduate programs in the

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Ann E. Nolte, PhD, CHES, FAAHE, was a Distinguished Professor, Illinois State University. She was also a Fellow of the American Association for Health Education, a Distinguished Fellow of the Society for Public Health Education, and a Fellow of the American School Health Association. Her career in health education spanned more than 40 years and included teaching positions from high school to university settings and numerous achievements, honors, and awards. Dr. Nolte's research interests were numerous. She officially retired from Illinois State University in 1990, but remained very active in her profession. She is most appreciated for her extensive work on the philosophical foundations and historical perspectives of health education, a movement she both chronicled and shaped for modern higher education. Dr. Nolte served as president of the American Association for Health Education, 1980 through 1982, and was named the AAHE Scholar in 1983. Her scholar address was titled, "In Relationship: Freedom and Health." Dr. Nolte was a founding member of the AAHE History and Philosophy Committee and served the AAHE as historian from 1974 until her death in 2009.

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