

Teaching Philosophy of Education for Heutagogical Ends

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Abstract: This article examines the *modus operandi* in the teaching and learning of Philosophy of Education. It is premised on the perspective that a lot more can be done in the process of training teachers. It points out the different areas that a tutor of Philosophy of Education needs to explore before stepping into a lecture hall, and what the student teacher should expect. The highest expectation is that the student teacher should by the end of his/her training be a *Heutagogue* and somehow a *Philosopher Teacher*.

I. INTRODUCTION

When students join Universities to train as Teachers, the society anticipates persons who after University Education will become not only professionals but also mature, creative, critical, independent, practical, flexible and holistic thinkers. Maturity, creativity, criticality, independence and holistic thinking are indicators of *Heutagogy* or in lay terms, 'Self Determined learning' which is an extension of Self-directed learning or *Andragogy*. Some of the Educational courses at the University level professionalize students without paying much attention to the high order thinking. The professionalization of student teachers is indeed desired, but if it lacks a framework of high cognition it can easily lead to Professional Lethargy and stunted growth in learning, yet, a teacher by nature is a Lifelong Learner.

II. LIMITING PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION TO PEDAGOGY

Proper formation best facilitates high order learning and cognition among student-teachers in Critical thinking, Philosophy of Education and Philosophy of Teaching & Learning. There is no doubt that Universities and teacher training colleges offer these courses. Unfortunately, the emphasis seems to be laid on meeting the legalese of graduation and professionalization rather than on formation. A perusal of some of the resources used by Teacher Educators, such as course outlines, Lecture-Notes, Syllabus, Lecture progress reports and even Examination papers point towards challenges facing high order teaching and learning. The sacredness of Philosophy cannot, for instance, be taught using rote memorization and regurgitation of classroom facts. Philosophy of Education, just like pure Philosophy is an intrusive, extensive and intensive discipline that pervades simple pedagogy and regurgitation. Philosophy of Education oscillates between the ground and the sky, with most of the time, like an eagle, flying over the sky with the intention of

getting a better vintage at what is happening on the ground. Therefore it is supposed to stretch the mind of the teacher trainee beyond simple *pedagogy* and *Freirian banking Education* to *Heutagogy*.

Some of the lecture materials seem to be limited to definitions and shallow treatment of what should be an intense affair. For instance, in some lecture notes despite Philosophy of Education being defined as '*The use of Philosophical Principles and methods in solving Educational issues*', there is no mention of Metaphysical, Axiological, Epistemological and Logical Principles. Philosophical methods are also scantily mentioned or avoided. The question is, how then can the student teachers tackle educational issues philosophically if they do not immerse themselves in Philosophical principles and Methods? Furthermore, when the teaching of Philosophy of Education is limited to the dictation of notes and simple distribution of lecture handouts for cramming, when will the students raise questions? When will they reflect, contemplate?

III. FROM PEDAGOGY TO HEUTAGOGY

3.1 Transition

Freshers at the Universities are expected to encounter a transition from high school pedagogy to University *Andragogy* and *Heutagogy*. The high school Mentality should be resolved in their first year through proper immersion into Critical thinking, not as a combined course but as an independent course. Critical thinking has the effect of arousing curiosity and what is known in Socratic language as *Aporia* or the state of *perplexio*. *Perplexio* should be maintained through constant arousal of the spirit of inquisition such that when they start learning Philosophy of Education, *they become* investigators and not 'Regurgitating machines'. Philosophy of Education is an investigative course, and it is self-directed and intrinsically motivated. An investigative student seeks information from whichever source-including the University Library. Student teachers who are not heutagogues tend to rely heavily on the dictates of the teacher and can be said to have internalized the victim mentality, a mentality that cannot be easily erased.

3.2. Philosophy of Education

3.2.1. First things first

When Teaching Philosophy of Education, of course, the first thing to be done should not be the definition of the term

Philosophy. The student teacher must first have the course outline which he/she should read, apprehend concepts, comprehend Propositions therein and Use critical thinking skills to reason over it. The course outline is the launching pad of any university academic pursuit, and without it, learning becomes a matter of random guesses in the mind of the student. The lecturer may know where he is going with the course, but he is not the one who is supposed 'to go', it is the learner. So the first Lecture of a Philosophy of Education Teacher is availing the map that gives the learner the route to their intellectual destination. Given that first impression lasts, the lecturer needs to communicate to the student teachers beforehand that he/she is a fellow investigator, a teacher and facilitator- not an answer-manufacturing machine. In any case, Philosophers do not have an affinity for self-grandiose. They may have PhDs from the best Universities in the world, but that does not puff them up in front of the already scared students. They easily and respectfully mingle with students without appealing to their authority. The same should apply to the Philosophy of Education Teacher whose first lecture is a bonding exercise. In the subsequent lectures, the content should be introduced gradually with a lot of emphasis on the inquisitive nature of Philosophy. Every Section of the lecture is punctuated with brainstorming questions and discussions or debates.

3.2.2. Content

a. The Concept of Education: Although the study of Philosophy of education tends to begin with expositions on Philosophy, it is more reasonable, to begin with, concise analysis of the concept of Education. Two reasons inform this view: First, the principle of learning from Known to unknown and Secondly, Variability and Predication. At the moment a student teacher is studying Philosophy of Education, it is expected that he/she already knows several concepts in Education, principles of education, aims of education, theories of Education, History of Education- normally covered in their first year of studies. Given that Philosophy of Education involves aspects of education, a review and analysis of the concept of Education becomes a good point of recall of the already familiar, with the only addition being, critical analysis. This saves the learner from the shock of going through an almost tormenting debut full of Philosophical jargons. Secondly, the concept of variability points to the fact that there are two variables in the study of Philosophy of Education, namely: Independent variable (Philosophy) and Dependent variable (Education), or using logic, we have the Subject being Education and Philosophy being the predicate. If the dependent variable is clear from the outset, the manipulation of the independent variable becomes effective and its implications can then be located meaningfully. Once the concept of Education is clarified from the beginning, the subsequent discussions on Philosophy can be applied to Education right from the definitions of Philosophy instead of waiting until every aspect of Philosophy is discussed and

Education treated. This would not be *Philosophy of Education*, but *Philosophy and Education*.

b. History of Philosophy: After Education has been critically discussed, the Philosophy of Education Lecturer should introduce not just the etymological definition of Philosophy but more so the Substantive definitions, with final room for learner's own definition. This should be followed by categorization of Philosophy into General and Technical, and an outline of the local history of Philosophy, if any, then the history of formal Philosophy, with Educational referents. The individual Philosophers should only be mentioned in passing at this stage in *attemt* for deeper Scrutiny towards the end of the course.

c. Branches of Philosophy and their implications on Education: After the history of Philosophy, the student should be exposed to the four classical branches of Philosophy starting with Logic, then Epistemology, followed by Metaphysics and finally Axiology. This order, is most convenient in that starting with logic is building upon what was partially learnt in critical thinking. Logic is not only part of critical thinking but also the skeleton upon which the flesh of Philosophy is cast. Without it, philosophical ordering becomes a nightmare. While teaching Logic, a dozen of Philosophy of Education lecturers define logic and list two types of arguments: Deductive and Inductive while ignoring a host of other arguments like Dialectics, Abductive arguments, Reductive arguments... They also ignore fallacies and the application of Logic on the different aspects of education (Aims of Education, curriculum, teaching methods, roles of the teacher and the learner, Evaluation and Learning environment). While Philosophy of Education is both an Educational course and a Philosophical course, Departments of Educational foundations cannot water down the *substantiveness* of Philosophy without corrupting the whole concept of Philosophy of Education, especially in regards to its Logical tenets. After proper immersion in logic, Epistemology, -the flesh of Philosophy must be cast upon the skeleton. The students should be able to unfold the connection between Logic and Epistemology, and, Epistemology and the Elements of Education. The connection between logic and Epistemology requires logic itself while the connection between epistemology and Education is achieved through the amalgamation of logic and critical thinking. The minimum coverage of epistemology should go beyond definitions to the investigation of Knowledge, theories of truth, nature of knowledge, sources of knowledge and criteria of knowledge, and of course their relevance to Education.

Philosophy begins breathing when the flesh of epistemology is infused with the breath of Metaphysical principles, and the related speculative methods. When teaching, Metaphysics, it is not enough to list the four branches of metaphysics. The tutor should expose selected Key principles and theories of Ontology, cosmology, Theodicy and Rational Psychology, and their relevance to Education. Philosophy begins to fly towards the sky of *Heutagogy* through the wings of Axiology.

Axiology is the most practical part of Philosophy and should be taught after the first three branches. The bare minimum in Axiology should be the exposition of Deontology, Teleology, Relativity and Objectivity of moral and aesthetical values. All along Logic and critical thinking must still play the role of ordering and synthesising.

d. The implications of the Schools of Philosophy to Education: After the branches of Philosophy, the Schools of Philosophy should be tackled starting with *the most avoided* Analytic School, followed by Realism and Idealism which should be tackled in one lecture for comparative purposes, and finally, Existentialism. Again the ordering is purposeful. The analytic school has a close connection with logic which was covered first in the branches of Philosophy and which has roots in Critical thinking. Realism corresponds well with the epistemology of empiricism while Idealism has a stronger Metaphysical connection. Existentialism and Phenomenology have to do with choices, and it rhymes well with Axiology. When teaching these schools, their logical, epistemological, metaphysical and Axiological basis must be illuminated, followed by their implications on Aims of Education, Curriculum, Teaching Methods, the Role of Learner, The Role of Teacher, Learning Environment and Assessment (acronym summary is ACM LATE - to be read as 'accumulate').

e. Educational Philosophies: There are several Educational Philosophies that a student teacher at the undergraduate level should assimilate. These Philosophies are either Teacher centered (Expository), Learner-centered (Heuristic) or Society Centered (Socio-Centric). Expository Educational Philosophies are Essentialism and Perennialism. Essentialism involves the teaching of foundational skills that are essential in and to the society. Perennialism lays emphasis on the teaching of the great works (*Opus Magnus*) of the society. Heuristic Philosophies of Education are three: Progressivism which pinpoints the process of developing the student's moral compass and general upward development. Humanism is about fostering each student to his or her fullest potential. Constructivism focuses on using education to shape a student's worldview. Traditionally, Socio-centric Philosophies have been limited to Re-constructionism and Behaviourism. Re-constructionism has the objective of solving social problems while Behaviourism focuses on cultivating behaviours that are beneficial to society. However, this list should extend to include non-western Socio-centric Philosophies like Confucianism, Ubuntuism (or African Philosophies) among others.

f. Educational Philosophers: Right from the beginning, the discussion of different Philosophers has been menial. At this point, Selected Philosophers should be introduced by the tutor and built on by the learner who should be expected to research on each Philosopher, and possibly do a review. The following Philosophers are a mixture from different eras and schools of Philosophy: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, John Dewey, Jean Jacques Rousseau, John Locke A. S. Neill, Maria Montessori,

William Chandler Bagley, Allan Bloom, Thomas Aquinas, Richard Stanley Peters, William James, Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich.

g. Methods of Philosophy in Education and Educational Issues: Sometimes Departments of Educational foundations and even University Research Boards get mixed up when distinguishing between Philosophical research and Scientific research, and in some cases, Postgraduate students of Philosophy are turned away by these boards during thesis defenses because the students have not used '*the right method or format of research*'. The right method is normally construed to mean the scientific method, the Baconian method, the quantitative method' or simply 'the-going-out-to-the-field method'. This overemphasis is restrictive and closed, yet Philosophy is not just Francis Bacon, it is elastic, mostly qualitative, abstractive and critical. The most important tool of research for a Philosopher is his head and Logic. Nevertheless, this restriction is understandable, partly because the manner in which Philosophy of Education is taught even to educational researchers is limited, with minimal Qualitative and Philosophical research practices. Secondly, Philosophers themselves could also be blamed for their little passion for communicating Philosophy research methods. To solve this impasse, the student teacher should finally be exposed to Philosophy research and use it to solve selected Educational issues. This should possibly be done in the last 'quota' of the semester, to distinguish it from other areas that are less controversial but also to act as an introduction (In anticipation) to Masters level research. The following areas should be covered:

Nature of the philosophical method: The following aspects of Philosophy should be exposed to and discussed with the student teacher with references to Educational issues: *First*, that the Philosophical method determines the meaning of ideas and of clarifying them *Secondly*, Philosophical methods are methods of rational inquiry and contemplation. *Third*, that the Philosophical method is a method of settling philosophical disputes. *Fourth*, Philosophical method is a method of philosophizing or achieving sound knowledge, and *finally*, the Philosophical method is a method of rightly conducting the reason and seeking truth in the sciences.

Rules of the Philosophical Method: There are several rules that guide the Philosophical method of research. *First*, the rule of 'pre-suppositionlessness' which posits that any philosophical enquiry should be free from presuppositions. Freedom from presuppositions means that there is no determination concerning the particular subject matter of a branch of knowledge. *Secondly*, the rule of Self-correction demands that every philosophical method should be self-corrective. *Thirdly*, the rule of *Progression and regression* opines that reason admits both progressive and regressive directions and that philosophical way of thinking can be either progressive or regressive. However, it is not possible that the same method can both be progressive and regressive *simultaneously*. Philosophical Methods also uphold *Comprehensiveness* so as

not to exclude anything arbitrarily. It is also *Practical and evaluative* because it is concerned with purposes and values. As evaluative thinking, philosophy has to weigh facts, theories, alternatives and ideas. Besides, Philosophy hinges itself on *Speculation and criticism*: Speculation is needed in philosophy because it is that aspect of human thought, which strives to extend the boundaries of understanding beyond its previously established limits. Philosophy proceeds by criticizing received opinions. *Finally*, Philosophy is a *Meta inquiry* because it is an inquiry about some inquiry.

Versions of the Philosophical method: Include Dialectics, Analysis, Logico-Mathematical method, Intuitive method, Pragmatic method, Critical or Transcendental method and Phenomenological method, Explanatory, Synthetic and Analytical, Enigmatic, Aphoristic, Mystical, Etymological, Analogical, Poetical. The most commonly used method in Philosophy is Philosophical Analysis which takes several forms like Speculative or Reflective Analysis, Directional Analysis, Formal Analysis, Destructive Analysis, Constructive Analysis, Conceptual Analysis and Verbal Analysis, Definitional Analysis, and Linguistic Analysis. An analysis in a Philosophical Research is not a just section, as it is in the Sciences but runs through from the beginning of the research to the end.

Besides, Critical analysis involves the following activities: Confirming a particular *point de vu*, Proposing a new point of view, Conceding that an existing point of view has specific merits, but that it needs to be proved in certain respects, Reformulating the existing viewpoints or statement of it so that the new version makes a better explanation. It also involves dismissing a point of view on the grounds of its inadequacy, irrelevance, incoherence among others. It also

involves Rejecting, rebutting or refuting another's arguments on various reasoned grounds, and finally, Reconciling two positions which may seem at variance by appeal to some higher or deeper principle.

Tool of Research: Lastly the student teacher should be reminded that the most crucial tool in Philosophical research is the human intellect. Mind is the principal tool for philosophical research. Curiosity, sensitivity, passion, ability to think and reason, and arguing are the virtues of the researcher concerned with this type of research. It is therefore essential for him or her to be holistic and impartial in approach.

IV. CONCLUSION

Philosophy of Education is primarily a High-order thinking educational activity. The outcome of this activity should relate to excellent intellectual training of the teacher, which involves independent thinking, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. The central aim is to convert the student teacher into a *Heutagogue* or a self-determined learner. As such towards the end of the course in Philosophy of Education, the student teacher should be able to attempt plausible and respectable solutions to Educational issues like Democracy and Education, Teenage Pregnancy, Discipline among others, and to develop a personal Philosophy of Education. These two can either done in Summative exams, in course project or both.

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR FURTHER READING

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