

# Primer for Philosophies of Education, pt. 1

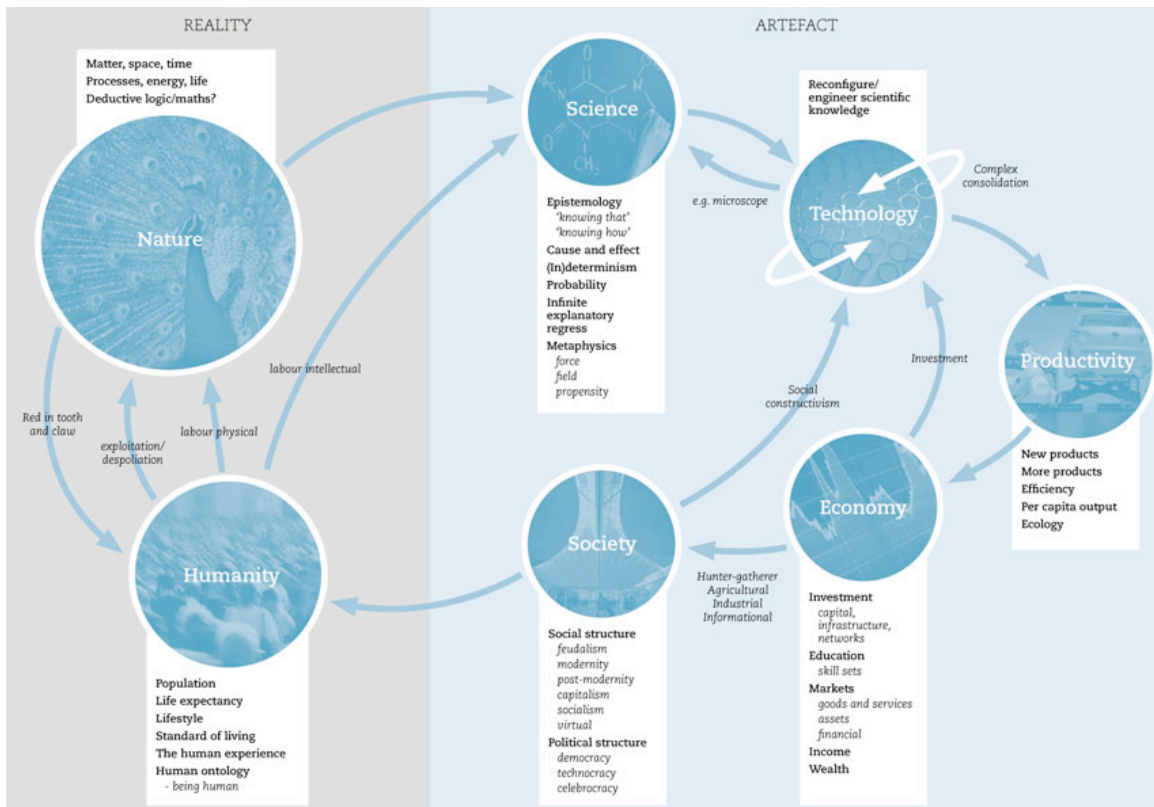
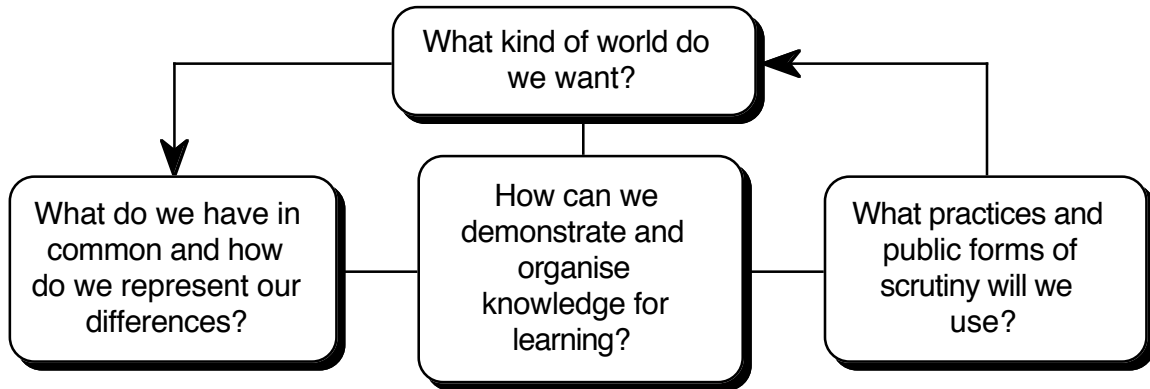


Figure 1. Crocker, G. (2014). A multivariate systems model of technology. <http://www.philosophyoftechnology.com>

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## Philosophy

### What is Philosophy?

#### What ought Philosophy be?

- Active search for and love of wisdom; knowledge for its own sake
- Worldview or “Weltanschauung”
- Conceptual framework or series of formal statements
- Efforts in thinking, clearly and logically, about our deepest and broadest questions
- Attempt to give meaning to human experience
- Constructive (normative) and/or analytical

#### What kind of world do we live in? What kind of world do we want?

#### What does it mean to be human?

#### How do we know?

#### What ought to be?

#### What ought we to do? How ought we be?

#### Fields of Philosophical Inquiry:

**Metaphysics**— (deals with ultimate origins and causes) What is real? What is the nature of ultimate reality? Is reality ultimately reducible to a single underlying substance? If so, is it essentially spiritual or material? What is its ultimate cause (etiology)? Does the universe have an origin and rational design or is it meaningless (cosmology)? Is the universe intelligible and orderly or incomprehensible and chaotic? Is it moving toward some ultimate end (teleology)?

**Ontology**—(deals with being) What is real? Are the objects we perceive real or illusory? Does the external world exist apart from our consciousness of it? What is the nature of existence? What is the nature of being? Is the behavior of all organisms causally

determined or is there a measure of freedom? What counts as evidence? What is nature? What is culture?

**Epistemology**—(deals with origin, nature and construction of knowledge) How do we know? How do we come to know? What is the nature of knowledge? Can anything be known beyond what is understood through the senses? How can we show that knowledge is "true"? What is the relation between the act of knowing and what is known concerning an object/subject? Are there different types of knowledge? What role do values play in understanding?

**Axiology**—(deals with ends and normative values) Are values personal or impersonal? Do they change? What is of value? What is good? What role do values play in our lives? How do we evaluate between what is of value? What is the difference between what is (and what ought to be) known-unknown, right-wrong? What knowledge is of most worth/value? How can people disagree so murderously on right and wrong?

**Aesthetics**—(deals with preferences) What is pleasant? What is tasteful? What is distasteful? What is pleasing?

**Ethics**—(deals with human conduct and morality) What is right? What is good? How ought we behave? Providing values for action

**Logic**—(deals with rules and techniques of reasoning) Are causal links possible between bits of information?

**Politics**—(deals with governance of individuals, communities and societies)

**Teleology**— (deals with questions of purpose) What is law-like? What is the purpose of education?

# Philosophy

## Systems of Philosophy:

Idealism—

Realism—

Pragmatism—

Existentialism—

Eastern Philosophies (Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam)—

Aristotelian—

Thomist—

Marxist—

Analytic Philosophies—

Continental Philosophies (Existentialism, Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, Critical Theory, Post-modernism)—

## Philosophical Tools: Language

- Clarification (Concept Analysis, Definition):
- Grammar and Semantics
  - Logic
  - Justification:
- Dispute and Argument
- Dialectics- Setting up & recognizing oppositional forces and bringing through which contradictions in reasoning can be teased out
  - Claims
  - Grounds
  - Warrants
  - Backing
  - Conclusion
- Rhetoric
- Logic



# **Philosophy of "Specialties" in Education**

**What is Philosophy of Education?**

**What is education?**

**Ought there be philosophies of educational specialties?**

—Education for work? What is work?

—What is the nature of the student?

—What is the nature of (the specialized) knowledge?

—What is the nature of society?

    What is the purpose of the school?

—Toward what and whose end ought these be committed?

What ought the Philosophy of Education be?

**What is Philosophy of Art Education?**

**What is Philosophy of Business Education?**

**What is Philosophy of Environmental Education?**

**What is Philosophy of Home Economics Education?**

**What is Philosophy of Language Arts Education?**

**What is Philosophy of Math Education?**

**What is Philosophy of Music Education?**

**What is Philosophy of Physical Education?**

**What is Philosophy of Social Studies Education?**

**What is Philosophy of Science Education?**

**What is Philosophy of Spiritual or Religious Education?**

**What is Philosophy of STEM? STEAM?**

**What is Philosophy of (Information) Design and Technology Education?**

## Ancient Greece

- Philosophy was understood to be knowledge valued for its own sake.
- Study of nature, humans, morals, the state, the arts, rules for correct thinking, and knowledge
- Combined theories of the world with theories on living the good life (ie, natural and moral philosophy)

Sophists-(500-400 BC) intellectual and rhetorical skills

- grammar, logic and rhetoric
- techniques to acquire wealth, political power and social prestige
- truth was relative and personal

Socrates— (469-399 BC) universal principles of truth, beauty and goodness

- raised political, moral and aesthetic issues
- social critic
- probing questions about the meaning of life, truth and justice
  - Socratic dialogue (unconscious ignorance to conscious ignorance to truth) (ironic or destructive to constructive questions)
  - Dialectic (affirmation, refutation, union)
- person ought to seek a life of moral excellence
- principles of Ethics are universal
- wise and rational living
- "Know thyself"—self-examination

Plato—(429-346 BC) continued and refined Socrates' ideas and teachings

- unchanging world of perfect ideas
- universe possesses meaning and purpose
- world of ideas vs. world of matter (material)
- mind vs body, reason vs sense perception, theory vs practice
- truth exists in world of ideas and is universal, unchanging
- real world exists independent of material world
- knowledge is not created, but rather discovered

—theory of reminiscence (person is coaxed to recall truths or ideas that are in the mind but latent)

—soul resides in spiritual world of ideas

—dialogue and dialectic

—search for ultimate cause of existence

—condemned democracy and fashioned a plan for a perfect state ruled by an intellectual elite of philosopher-kings

—3 classes (philosopher-kings, military defenders, workers)

—Education played a selective role



## Idealism & Essentialism

"The specific object of human knowledge is the real world of ideas, of which the senses are but the shadow or the copy" (Thonnard, 1948, pp. 51-52)

### Metaphysics and ontology

- —Mental or spiritual is ultimately real
- —Spiritual contrasts with material significantly
- —reality is purposeful, permanent, regular, orderly
- —World depends on mind
- —macrocosm (universal mind, God, whole of existence)
- —microcosm (of same spiritual substance)
- —self (or soul) is immortal
- —human nature is the same everywhere
- —progress exists in the realm of mind or God; progress consists of self-reasoning and following a pre-established pattern or design toward externally fixed ends

### Epistemology

- coherence theory of truth (knowledge is true as it coheres within totality or whole)
- method: reason through dialectic
- knowledge is truth, but it's the search that's important
- knowledge is absolute and universal
- knowledge resides in spiritual world, not in nature
- knowledge is brought forth through introspection, reflection, theory of reminiscence, reason, etc)
- knowledge is product of reason
- knowledge has order
- reasoning through Hegelian Dialectic (thesis, antithesis, synthesis)

### Axiology

- Source of values is spiritual world
- Values are a part of the macrocosm
- Values are absolute and eternal
- Good, true, beautiful are unchanging
- Moral world-order

## Education

- preservation of cultural, spiritual and social excellence
- promotion of intellectual pursuits
- development of ideal people and ideal society
- self-realization
- character development
- curriculum of math, literature, grammar and rhetoric, logic, and music/art
- Class distinctions from intellectual to working endeavors

## Realism & Perennialism

"I am in the world, and the world is not in me"

"Change is Real, but it takes place in accordance with permanent laws of nature, which give the universe a continuing structure"

- —there is a world of real existence which humans have not made
- —knowledge of this real world is the only reliable guide to human conduct
- —Unique Western Tradition
  
- Rational Realism (Classical Realism)
- —Aristotle (384-342 BC)- Cultivation of rationality
  - realms of knowledge
  - —Theoretical or speculative (theoria-contemplation) sophia-theoretical wisdom)
  - —Practical (praxis-moral action) (phronesis-practical wisdom)
  - —Productive (poiesis-production) (techne-artistic wisdom)
- Religious Realism & Scholasticism
- —Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)
- Scientific Realism
- —Francis Bacon (1561-1626) "Nature, not man, must be the starting point of inquiry..."
  - —Science is a tool for exploiting nature
  - —inductive reasoning as scientific methods
- A priori reasoning vs. post hoc or a posteriori
- —John Locke (1632-1704)

### Metaphysics

—Matter is ultimate reality—-independent of the mind

—reality is ordered and can be known objectively

—human nature is the same everywhere

—progress exists in the realm of nature or God; progress consists of discovering and following a pre-established pattern or design toward externally fixed ends

## Epistemology

—correspondence theory of truth (knowledge is true when it accurately represents the reality it describes)

—Syllogism- method for testing the logic of statements (deductive)

Major Premise

Minor Premise

Conclusion

All men are mortal

Socrates is a men

therefore, Socrates is mortal.

—inductive & deductive reasoning; experimental methods; natural observation

—there is a world of real existence

—this real existence can be known by the human mind

—"spectator theory of knowledge"

—knowledge by senses and reason

—knowledge by acquaintance

—knowledge by reason

—truth exists in nature and laws of nature —basis for understanding lies in the material world (objects)

—mind knows independent things, not just ideas

—Rational humans are discoverers of truth

—truth of an idea is tested in its correspondence with nature

—knowledge is that which corresponds to the world as it is

## Axiology

—Values are permanent and found in universal moral laws

—knowledge of nature, especially human nature, can provide trustworthy principles for guiding individual and social action

—good accommodates us to nature

—moral standards are absolute and universal (what is good for me is good because it is good for all humans)

—Absolute values are in accord with natural, social and human laws

—Values simply are, and wait to be discovered

—Or, values are emotive and indefinable; hence, meaningless

## Education

- Education involves a search for understanding and truth
- truth can be found in the great works of civilization
- education is a liberal exercise that develops the intellect
- goal is transmission of universal truths
- cultural values and excellence
- scientific knowledge and disciplines
- specialization
- sense perception and object methods
- perennialism

## **Realism (Thomism)**

- Thomas Aquinas—reconciled Aristotelian Realism with Christian beliefs
- revelation is ultimate source of divinely-inspired truth; but,
- nature is created by God, so truth can come through nature
- truth through faith and reason
- The world is a vehicle for coming to know God

## Pragmatism & Experimentalism (functionalism, instrumentalism)

"Universe with the lid off"

"To find the meaning [read as truth] of an idea, we must examine [read as 'scientifically test'] the consequences to which it leads in action; otherwise dispute about it may be without end, and surely be without fruit." —Charles S. Pierce

- —American tradition based on British empiricism
  - Charles Sanders Pierce, William James, John Dewey
    - —James & "vulgar pragmatism"
    - —knowledge an individual holds is true when it has favorable consequences for that individual
    - —leveled criticisms against "spectator theories of knowledge"
  - Richard Rorty
- —No truths are absolute
- —Relativity of values and knowledge
- —critical intelligence

### Metaphysics & Ontology

—change is real; reality is constantly changing, in flux

—there are no universals

—human nature is plastic and changeable

—progress is contingent; one cannot be sure that the world is tending in any certain or pre-established direction

—"stream of Consciousness" (James)

no duality of consciousness and content, thought and thing

### Epistemology

—pragmatic theory of truth ("what works...experimentally, subjectively and/or socially

—experimental method

Deweyan problem solving

laying knowledge "open to the criticism of others" (Pierce)

- knowing is a transaction between individual and the environment
  - humans and environment are "coordinate"
  - humans adapt to and interact w/environment
  - use ideas as instruments or plans of action
  - retain ideas that work; discards those that don't
- knowledge is tentative (no universal truth)
- knowledge is based on empirical experience and social experience must be testable (ie, scientific methods, social democracy)
- rational and empirical knowledge is truth
- method of intelligence leads to "warranted assertions" (Dewey)
- meaning comes from reading meaning into the world
- truth is made to happen
- humans "engender truths upon the world" (James)
  - "behaviorist theory of thinking and knowing" (Dewey)
- knowledge is relative or instrumental rather than universal or representational

#### Axiology

- Ethical, aesthetic and moral canons are not permanent—must alter as cultures change (or from culture to culture)
- blending of individual thought and group sanction through "critical engagement" (Dewey)
- values and ends have instrumental qualities and no end or value is fixed
- values lie in relationships between people and object
- values and ends are subject to test and verification in experience (experimental and social)
- values reside in objects (like colors or temperatures) or reality
- values are "the relation of things as means to the ends, or consequences actually reached" (Dewey)



## Education

- schools are "Selective agencies in transmitting and reconstructing culture
- teachers "select" from range of cultural materials
- Education is life—not preparation for it
- no separation between doing and knowing (humans have to interact with and alter nature to know)
- empirical knowledge is most relevant
- "doctrine of interest"

## Existentialism

"Existence precedes essence"

I am

—Heidegger- the study of being; what it means to be

How do I live time, space, death, the other, choice, body, etc.?

### Metaphysics and Ontology

- —the world and life is purposeless; ordered, but indifferent to humans
  - —humans make a purpose for themselves and the world
- —humans are free and solely responsible to their own actions
- —what humans are is decided by humans as they act (momentarily)
- —"metaphysical need" dwindles as religion is dismissed
  - —Ie, Nietzsche's "God is dead".
- —humans are creatures of time, change, chance and body
- —there is homelessness; disquietude (restlessness)
- —world is revealed through experience and judgment
- —being is complex and whole
- —world is given meaning through free, intentional acts of consciousness
- —to be is to act
- —reality is a perspective created by human choice

### Epistemology

—truth does not have a label

—there is no way but through individual judgment

—knowledge is created through judgment

—knowledge is lived, contextual and relative (local)

—knowers are a part of and inseparable from their worlds

—knowledge is dependent on giving meaning to experience

—to seek the roots of subjectivity is to seek the roots of the objective world

—knowledge extends from humans as being-in-the-world and as intends-the-world

—phenomenology as method- phenomena as they reveal themselves to consciousness (original experience; primordial phenomena of consciousness)

—intersubjective truth/knowledge (resonates with experience)

—no objective proof of truth

## Axiology

- axiological relativism
- values are dependent on and relative to human experience
- values are created by humans through experience
- values are statements of feeling and custom

## Education

- Education is the unfolding of the individual in her or his time and place
- individuality
- Choice, predicament, consequence
- Personal Expression
- Freedom and responsibility
- teachers take risks for willingness to trust students
- careful choice in studies; range from despair to hope
- study perverted and ugly side of life as well as good and decent; irrational as well as rational
- study all facets of life

# Analytical Philosophy

Philosophy's business is to be purely descriptive!

Logical Positivism

Metaphysics and Ontology

—Metaphysical statements are nonsense

—Rejection of cosmic systems as purely speculative

—Rather than asking "What is being?", ask "What is an explanation of being?"

Epistemology

—Knowledge rests on that which is analytically or empirically true

—knowledge can be reduced to experience-empirical statements

—Knowledge must be verifiable

—Both "knowing how" and "knowing that" lead to truth

Axiology

—values are personal

—Value statements are meaningless

Education

—Teachers ought to be real clear about what they do and say

—Logic is at the base of learning

—Clarification is the root of the educational process

# Eastern Philosophies

Emphases on inner peace and struggles, intuition, mysticism, and tranquility  
Religious grounding

## Metaphysics and Ontology

- Spirit is real
- There is connection between earth and spiritual world

## Epistemology

- Knowledge is gained through living--realization of self , faith, and purification
- Knowledge rests in the soul

## Axiology

- universal moral justice
- Source of value is spiritual
- Values are gained through illumination and teaching
- Values are rooted in inner peace and balance
- Values are rooted in the fulfillment of internal obligations

## Education

- Process not end
- Emphasis on moral character
- Necessary for salvation

# Marxist Philosophies

- Dialectical materialism
  - -Although humans are the product of historical circumstances, they can alter the world in the direction of explicitly humane goals
  - —Science of society
  - —History happens through human agency and intentionality; but, this is not to say that history happens as humans will it, only that history happens because humans will.
- Historical Materialism—History is made by humans, and not by the will of God or within a realm of abstract ideas. The source for historical understanding is material conditions of everyday life and NOT the development of the mind! Material "base" is the foundation on which the "superstructure" of society is built.
- Materialist conception of history— Dialectic between economic conditions and human action
- Alienation- (ie, distraction) Workers not at home with themselves as in their labor. In exploitive society, capitalists and workers (ie, all) are alienated from nature and ultimately from themselves. They are alienated from the objects of their labor. There is political, economic and religious alienation. Personal labor is viewed as securing a bare subsistence.

1847— Engels writes and publishes his "Credos" of the Communist League (formerly League of the Just)

1848 (London) —Marx and Engels publish their *Communist Manifesto*  
"Workers of the world unite" (Unions=Workers' Party)

## Metaphysics and Ontology

—To be human is to labor, and humans can fashion their own natural environment. The essence of being human is in the striving to achieve desires

—Ultimate reality is a dynamic process of natural and cultural change in which mind is an expression of class or group consciousness

—Materialist in essence-there is nothing beyond natural things

—There is change in the world, and changes (especially social) occur through dialectical processes

—Social order can be fashioned through will and power

## Epistemology

—Dialectic- the relation of opposites. Negation is the current of development. How can things as they are transform into things as they will be? Historical forces (not only abstract) are intrinsically in opposition.

—Truth is a product of social consciousness and historical timeliness

—Truth is not discovered or universal

—Truth and the power of knowledge lie in the creative act of knowing

—Realistic emphasis on facts placed by scientific process

—Knowledge is that which is guided by scientific methods

—Knowledge is distorted by inadequacy in the knower as much as by the elusiveness of objects to be known

—historical causality, but intrinsically creative

"The mode of production in material life determines the social, political, and intellectual life processes in general. It is not the consciousness of men [and women] that determine their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness."

## Axiology

—Values are governed through social consciousness and historical timeliness

—values are rooted in material and natural world, but are made, not given

## Education

—From the factory system budded. . . the germ of the education of the future, an education that will, in every child over a given age, combine productive labour with instruction and

—Critical analysis and praxis; formation of socialist consciousness

## **Critical Theory & Pedagogy**

### Critique and Transformation

### Experience

Functional versus critical empowerment

Collective experience

Work and workplace design

Social relations

Occupational Health and safety

Unionism

Time on and off the job

Self-Assessment and reflexivity

Speaking out

Teachers as cultural workers

Critical discourse

Pedagogy as Political practice

Theory

Beyond sexism and racism

Critical selection and materials



## Post-Conditions

Postmodernism  
Poststructuralism  
Postpositivism  
Postanalytic  
Postcritical  
Postetc.

1. Authorial style, frame, positionality and narrative
2. Text, textuality, (con)textuality, authority and inscription
3. Obliteration of Paradigms, Methods, Foundations, Selves, Subjectivities, etc.
4. Playful ironies
5. Sign versus significance

### Willinsky's 10 Laws of Postmodern Literacy

Willinsky, J. (1991). Postmodern literacy: A primer. *Interchange*, 22(4), 56-76.

1. Approach cultural movements with an eye toward opportunity and advantage inherent in their forms
2. The diffuse and unsteady realm of text works to define the world within us and without us
3. We participate in the circulation of meanings as readers first of all, and then as writers and critics
4. Appreciate that pop songs, literary works, billboards, TV news, and the law are means of cultural production situated, more than ever, at the busy intersection of commerce and state
5. You are made, and made over, by acts of expressions and assertion
6. You no longer need to take your story from that shelf of master narratives
7. What is at stake in the poetics of cultural forms is the packaging of power in a regime of truth that can, on occasion, be told otherwise
8. Ask after language in public forums: What is it up to? What does it make of us? Then try turning it to different purposes
9. Reach into the screen and appropriate the mechanisms that govern discourse, creator and consumer
10. The contest of sign and significance is the subject of a literacy that will be written in the future tense