N O D D I N G S , Philosophy of Education

- Analyzing the philosophy of education
- What should be the aims or purpose of education?
- Who should be educated?
- Should education differ according to natural interests and abilities?
- What role should the state play in education?

Who should be educated and how
He was interested in the who should be educated and how
Analyze needs and various talent of society
Who should have the control parents, situation, financial standing.
How much power should be given
Plato was a follower of Socrates. They spoke as one.

Socratic method; simple questioning method that continues until the subject was taken as far as it could go

He dominates the dialogue and leads the listener

The method seemed to be like critical thinking
SOCRATES

- He was interested in individuals in an intellectual level
- “Those who know the right will do the right” “Know Thyself”
- Schools today would see this method as therapy, such as a way of finding oneself
- “Self knowledge is the basis of all knowledge”
- This could lead to sensitive discussions if practiced in a classroom
• There is educational differences to assume all children can learn
• Justice is not satisfied by equal opportunity
• The “good life”
• Ignored the reproductive task of his society, no attachment of family or property.
IDEALISM & EDUCATION
What is Idealism?

- Idealism is thought to be the oldest systematic philosophy in Western culture, dating back to Plato in ancient Greece.

- From ancient times until the modern era, idealism has been a dominant philosophical influence, and is still a major philosophy that stands as an alternative to our contemporary materialist culture.

- Idealists believe that ideas are the only true reality.

- Idealists hold that the material world is characterized by change, instability, and uncertainty, whereas some ideas are enduring.
Plato (427–347 B.C.E.) was a Greek philosopher who believed that people do not create knowledge, but rather, they discover it. He suggested that the state must take an active role in educational concerns and offer a curriculum that leads intelligent students from concrete data toward abstract thinking.

- Those who showed little ability for abstractions would go into pursuits that would assist in practical aspects of running a society.

Plato also thought that girls and boys should be given an equal opportunity to develop themselves to the fullest.
Idealism as a Philosophy of Education

- Idealists have shown a great concern for education, and many have written extensively about it.
  - Plato made education the core of his utopian state in *The Republic*.
  - Augustine (345-430), an early Christian philosopher, also gave extensive attention to the need for Christians to become aware of the importance of education.
  - German philosophers, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), referred to education a great deal in their writings, and both made their living as teachers.
  - More recent idealists such as A. Bronson Alcott, William Torrey Harris, Herman Horne, William Hocking, Giovanni Gentile, and J. Donald Butler have tried systematically to apply idealist principles to the theory and practice of education.
AIMS OF EDUCATION

- Idealists generally agree that education should not only stress development of the mind, but also encourage students to focus on all things of lasting value.
- Along with Plato, they believe that the aim of education should be directed toward the search for true ideas.
- An important idealist aim is character development, because the search for truth demands personal discipline and steadfast character.
- What Idealists want in society is not just the literate, knowledgeable person, but the good person as well.
Some Idealists have maintained that there might be levels of truth.
  ○ Kant explored the truths of both pure reason and practical reason.
  ○ Hegel believed that truth is something in development, moving from simple to richer and more complex ideas.
    ■ The impact of these ideas on education is readily apparent in the writings of Horne, Gentile, and Harris, all of whom have influenced modern education.

For Horne, education should encourage the “will to perfection” for the student and is an activity whereby one shapes oneself into the likeness of God—a task that requires eternal life for its fulfillment.
METHODS AND CURRICULUM

- Although not under emphasizing the development of a curriculum, idealists stress that the most important factor in education at any level is to teach students to think.
- Idealists lean toward studies that provide depth, and they would strongly suggest a modification of the modern view that things should be studied simply because they are new or meet occupational needs.
- One cardinal objective of idealism and idealistic education is the ancient Greek directive to “know thyself.”
Idealists do not favor specialized learning as much as learning that is holistic.

- They ask us to see the whole rather than a disjointed collection of parts, and they believe that a holistic approach leads to a more liberal and scholarly attitude toward learning.

Although most idealists claim that they are opposed to the use of reading material for indoctrination, they don’t see why reading material cannot, while they are helping a child learn how to read, encourage thinking about ideas involving humaneness, truth, and fair play.

- Idealists find that much of the great literature of the past has more pertinence to contemporary problems than what is considered new and relevant.

“To ignore what great minds of the past have to say about life and society is to ignore the most relevant writings and thinking the world has produced”.
ROLE OF THE TEACHER

- The teacher should not only understand the various stages of learning, but also maintain constant concern about the ultimate purposes of learning.
- The teacher’s duty is to encourage students to ask questions and to provide a suitable environment for learning.
- The teacher exercises judgment about the kinds of materials that are most important and encourages diligent study of material that is of more ultimate worth.
Some idealists stress the importance of emulation in learning, because they believe that the teacher should be the kind of person we want our children to become.

- Idealists have often used Socrates as a prototype of learning and as a model for emulation.

In this idealist view, teaching is a high moral calling, and teachers should serve as exemplary models—persons after whom students can pattern their lives.

If you had to implement idealist strategies in a lesson, how would you construct the lesson?

Back when you were in grade school would you say that your teachers followed the ways of Plato/Socrates?
CRITIQUE OF IDEALISM IN EDUCATION

- Idealism is considered a conservative or even antiquated philosophy of education because much of its thrust is to preserve lasting truths or cultural traditions.
- Opponents of idealism react strongly against what they feel to be the unduly conservative nature of idealism.
  - For example, they think that the idealist notion of a finished and absolute universe waiting to be discovered has hindered progress in science and the creation of new ideas and processes.
Another cause of the weakening of idealism is the historical decline of the influence of traditional religion in contemporary affairs. Because idealism has been linked intimately with traditional religion, the weakening of the one has led to the weakening of the other. In recent years several factors have contributed to the weakening of idealist philosophy. Industrialization and technological advancements have made abstract thinking reachable with the use of online search tools.