

Institute **JOURNAL** of Studies in **EDUCATION**



Vol. 3, NOS. 3 & 4
SEPTEMBER, 2011 / SEPTEMBER, 2012

Published by
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

ISSN 0795-2199

**INSTITUTE JOURNAL OF STUDIES
IN EDUCATION**

PUBLISHED BY

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN
ILORIN, NIGERIA

VOL . 3, NO. 3

SEPTEMBER, 2011

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AND ITS RELEVANCE TO TEACHING LEARNING PROCESS

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Abstract

The essence of education is imparting the right type of knowledge; skills and attitude that will be useful to the recipient and those around him can not be over emphasized. The relevance of philosophy of education to man in the area of teaching and learning process has a cyclic impact on the learner, his immediate environment and the society at large. Hence, the paper examines philosophy of education as a course and its epistemological relevance to teaching and learning. Recommendations are made and conclusion drawn.

Keywords: Philosophy, Education, Philosophy of Education, Epistemology, Teaching, Learning

Introduction

The essence of Education is imparting the right type of knowledge, skills and attitudes that will be useful to the recipient and those around him. These include his immediate family, community and the society at large (Akinpelu, 1981). Socrates says "Knowledge is virtue" He maintains that knowledge leads to virtue while ignorance leads to vice. It is ignorance, he say that makes people to do evil. No man does evil knowingly. To eliminate evil, ignorance must be eliminated through education (Omogbe, 2007). Consequently, the relevance of philosophy, the origin of knowledge itself can never be over emphasized in teaching and learning process. It is pertinent to highlight various issues which this paper intends to examine.

The paper examine the concept of Philosophy; Education, Philosophy of Education; Epistemology; Philosophy; of Education and Epistemology; Philosophy of Education and its relevance to teaching and learning process, suggestions are also proffered and conclusion drawn.

What is Philosophy?

Apart from having its sources form the two Greek words Philo and Sophia love of wisdom or love of knowledge, various meanings have been used to describe the concept philosophy. It has been described as an academic discipline characterized

by logical consistent and systematic thinking so as to reach conclusions that are sound, coherent and consistent in all their parts (Akinpelu, 1984). Another philosopher sees philosophy as a process of meaningful, critical and systematic thinking that has to be logical i.e the different parts of the thought process is meaningfully related to one another. It is crystal from the two descriptions that the common tool used by philosophy is logic reasoning. It is also clear that philosophical considerations are devoid of partiality, biases, sentiments and emotional instinct of man. In addition, philosophical thinking deeper and more thought provoking than ordinary thinking. In essence, it is not all thinking and utterances that qualify to be tagged philosophical thinking transcend man activities and his environment. It covers man's origin, existence, nature and his ultimate end. In short, philosophy goes beyond the physical environment of man. It includes all cosmic settings.

Philosophy has various branches. These include metaphysics, epistemology, axiology and logic. Metaphysics is the aspect of philosophy that deals with nature of man, his soul, and everything around him, Epistemology is the theory of knowledge. It also includes right, and bad attitude; good and bad. Logic is another component of philosophy that is important in the examination of meaningful consistent and coherent thinking. "Logic is the veritable instrument of philosophical thinking (Akinpelu, 2003). It could therefore be said that other components of philosophy adopts logic as a tool. Another concept to be examined in education.

Moreover, critical thinking in philosophy according to Oladipo (2008) involves careful examination of claims or beliefs with a view to determining whether they are sustainable or not. Its primary aims to drag hidden assumptions into the limelight and scrutinize them with a view to assessing their consistency and coherence with the established body of human knowledge. Thus, critical thinking has no other authority than the authority of reason belief. Therefore, it is skeptical, in the sense that it is concerned with a rigorous examination of our ideas and values.

Education is such a dynamic term that does not subscribe itself to a definition that commands general acceptability. Therefore, it may not be necessary belabouring ourselves seeking an all embracing definition. Education according to Iduh (2011), is the bedrock of any society, that wants to leap into future greatness; this is because education breeds enlightened citizenry with intelligent ideas and initiatives to develop the country, run the future government and create self employment. Lawal as quoted by Samuel (2002) is the tool for the integration of the individual effectively into a society so that the individual can achieve self realization, develop national consciousness, promote unity and strive for social, economic, cultural and technological process. to him, what ever process that makes individual relevant to the society economically, technologically, socially and son on, can be regarded as education.

Olatunde (2005) equally asserted that, education is seen as the process of developing human potentials and qualities, so as to grow as humans and achieve his optimum limits. No one develop all his potentialities, but education draws the best of these through the avenues of learning. The growth of human child into adult does not happen automatically, it is aided; it is a process of acquisition of cognitive skills needed for problem solving. From the various analysis of the definition of education by the authors cited above, education is seen as a process of transmission of what is valuable and beneficial to the individual learner and the society they find themselves. Another point of agreement is that knowledge, skills and attitudes are developed. It could therefore be concluded that education is basically the process of certain skills and attitudes that are in consonance with expected behaviours and values of that society.

Philosophy of Education

Philosophy of education is the use of philosophical instruments, the application of philosophical methods, to questions of education, as well as the relationship to education of the relevant results of philosophical thinking (Reid, 1972). It is believed that while other courses give veritable facts supported by empirical evidence about educational issues, such methods, leadership, and environmental influences on learning and so on, philosophy of education does not. Philosopher of education is like an arbiter to all other because he stands in a distance from them and critically examines what they do-their assumptions, methods and may in the end inform us of their adequacy or otherwise (Enoh, 1995). From the above it is pertinent to the state that philosopher of education employs the tools of philosophy to answer educational questions, solves educational problems and examines consistencies and logicity of some educational theories.

What is Epistemology?

Epistemology is from the Greek word *episteme*, meaning Knowledge and *Logos* theory. This means the study of knowledge which is concerned with the nature and validity of human knowledge. It answers questions such as what is it to know? What are the dimension of knowing? What amount to knowledge and how does it differ from opinion or belief? These are areas of interest of epistemology. It focuses on the examination of the kinds of knowledge, their various sources and theories used to authenticate our claims that we know. It bothers on theories that used to justify the truth of knowledge claims. There are various forms of knowledge. These are *a priori* knowledge which depends largely on reasoning and *a posteriori* knowledge which depend on experimentation and observation. *A priori* is theoretical in nature, while a *posteriori* knowledge is observed and tested. It depends solely on our sense experience. *A priori* knowledge is deductive knowledge while a *posteriori* is inductive knowledge. *A priori* knowledge challenges us to think beyond the surface meaning of things as they are presented and to create new possibilities inherent in such ideas that we encounter before thinking or deducing new ones from them (Bamisaye, 1989). This type of knowledge is referred to as deductive reasoning. In essence, a *a priori* knowledge involves ability to deduce direct or indirect connections between one event and another, or between ideas that may appear unconnected, while, on the other hand, a *posteriori* knowledge is usually based on a false premise, as the validity of the knowledge can not be established to be true. Be that as it may, an induction knowledge can constitute an object knowledge if the conclusions drawn are based on tested and verified by a consensus of respectable opinions on certain issues of scholarly importance.

Knowledge can also be subjective or objective. Knowledge is subjective when the theory is the sole source of the knowledge. This may later become objective if it is tested and found valid. Objective knowledge is more of a consensus than the subjective. This is because; it is independent of its scope. Scientific and mathematical theories fall within these categories. From this discussion, it is clear that knowledge could come from an individual or from a group of people. consequently, knowledge could be obtained through revealed or intuition, empirical, rational and authority. The most reliable sources of knowledge are those accepted as true and valid by consensus of respectable opinions as scholars,

educational institutions and other avenues of knowledge. These institutions are reservoirs of knowledge and they provide avenues for learning in the most systematic ways possible. Hence, knowledge from these sources are respected, valid and less fallible.

Philosophy of Education and Epistemology Juxtaposed

Having discussed the concepts Philosophy of Education and Epistemology separately in the previous discussions, the main focus of this aspect of the paper is basically to bring to fore the link between philosophy of education and epistemology. It is seen from our earlier discussions that, philosophy of education is a discipline in education. It is an aspect of education that adopts philosophy as a tool to solve educational problems, either those that have been accepted or those that are still posing problems to educational theories and practice, while, along the line, epistemology is seen as a branch of philosophy, which education has used to provide answers to teaching and learning process and other pedagogical problems.

Philosophy of education is that discipline which is concerned with critically examines problems and issues, as well as setting goals for education as these relate ultimately to promoting our understanding of the nature of man, society and knowledge (Bamisaye, 1989).

Philosophy of education is in itself knowledge based. This because; it involves meaningful critical thinking through sound, consistent and coherent reasoning. It could be deduced here that philosophy of education used on the unearthing some theories of education and their implications on learning and teaching process. On the other hand, Epistemology, the theory of knowledge asks questions on what is to know, how do we establish the claim we have made on the knowledge all these are inherent in philosophy of education. Meaningful and critical thinking involve trying to know about something. Knowing is interpreted as ability to recognize what we have come across before. Knowing means being able to recall what we have seen before. Knowing is an encounter by a learner with an object of learning, and internalization of such an encounter (Bamisaye, 2003). the process of promoting knowledge in the school system is conscious, systematic, and purposeful. This is the hall mark of philosophy of education. Philosophy of education is a conscious and systematic procedure adopted by philosophers to analyze the content of the curriculum the needs of the society and how far the philosophy of education of a country has satisfied the needs and aspirations of its citizens. This invariable means philosophy of education and epistemology work hand in hand to enable a teacher accomplish his aims and purposes of teaching a particular subject and a particular topic at a particular period of time in the teaching and learning process. why is it that certain subjects and topics are restricted to the basic or junior section of a school? Even if such topics or subjects are taught at these lower levels, the scope and presentation of concept differs considerably in terms of the vocabularies, analysis and the context in which the teacher treats this level of the country's education.

Knowledge can not be disseminated or presented in a vacuum. The teacher has to conversant with the rudiments of teaching, understand the curriculum, knowing the appropriate instructional facilities to be used and the methodology to be adopted so that the process of teaching will be comfortable and the assimilation of the contents of the lesson will be easy.

The essence of teaching and learning is to bring about a meaningful change on the learner. Considerable change is noticed on the learner when the contents of

the curriculum are logically and systematically arranged to suit the ages the needs and interest of the learner. Through this, a learner is able to grasp the basic knowledge of what is being presented by the teachers such a learner is able to know and understand the teacher and not only that her is able to establish in himself that lie actually knows what his teacher has taught him in the class. These are the concern of epistemology and philosophy of education. Learners do not just learn. They learn to be able to recognize, recall, identify and be able to relate the previous experience with the present and also ability to use the past experience to solve the immediate pressing issue in a different situation and environment entirely.

Critical and logical reasoning are important tool in philosophy. These are also essential impetus in knowledge dissemination and assimilation. Teacher, the handles of the subject matter must be versed, sound and logical in the presentation of his lesson, the essence of teaching is knowledge based therefore, the development of critical thinking another important duty of a teacher, the development of critical thinking is another important duty of a teacher, if the knowledge imparted is to be retained and understood by learner. Logical reasoning is essential in teaching and learning. Both the teacher and the learner need if for consistencies and coherence in the knowledge and skills presented. Teachers should encourage learners to develop this attitude through questioning techniques, debates, and symposia within and outside the school setting.

Philosophy of Education and its Relevance to Teaching and Learning Process

Judging from the heavy epistemological factor in matter of philosophy of education to teaching and learning process, certain issues need thrashing. These are personnel, the scope and method, and textual and the curriculum.

The dearth of qualified personnel's in the handling of the course calls for urgent attention by professionals. A familiar case needs to be used to illustrate the devastating effect of unqualified teachers, especially in our various teacher education programme (College of education) hindrance to the effective teaching of the course. Professionals in the discipline need be employed to take care of the course at this level. Students of Colleges of Education regard Philosophy of education as a dry and abstract course. The mind is focus in on the passing of the course only. The essence of including the course in the programme is not important to students; where as the inclusion of the course is in its beauty as a course that enlarges the mind of the learners on its epistemological relevance. these include the development of radical and critical minds this will enable students to know their reason for being in the school, through examination and clarification of issuers are developed through philosophy of education by the adoption of philosophical tools of analysis to unearth ambiguity inherent in certain pedagogical issues. These could only encourage and imbibed by a qualified teacher of philosophy. Coupled with this is the scope and method adopted in the teaching of the course. Restricting the area of coverage in the teaching of the course at NCE level will assist the student greatly. This is because the quality of what is being taught is better and more meaningful than its quantity. Confining the scope of philosophy of education to its meaning, some educational philosopher and their educational ideas will have a significant impact on teaching and learning than covering all the topics in the discipline. The relevance of the course will better be explained and clarified if this is adopted.

Methodology is another area of relevance of philosophy of education to teaching and learning. The process and method of imparting knowledge is important

in teaching and learning. This is because meaningful application of method goes along way to relieve the students of the burden and stress associated with philosophy as a course. Logical, consistent and systematic presentation of ideas and issue are relevant and useful to students than bundles of insignificant and lumped up subject matter. In a nutshell, concise, precise and coherence of thought are the hallmarks of philosophy of education.

The epistemological relevance of philosophy of education in the area of textual materials can never be over emphasized. Textual materials contain all what is to be known and learnt by the learner. The sequential arrangement of topics to be treated by the teacher, all these go a long way to enrich the knowledge of students.

The curriculum is another area of concern in philosophy of education. The link here is that, philosophy of any nation be it developing or developed determines to a great extent the content of the curriculum in any course. For example, Nigeria as a nation in her NPE has adopted education as tool for national development and integration consequently, the five aims of Nigeria and the purpose its expected to serve. The curriculum of any subject has to put into consideration the needs, interests and aspirations of that country living through the five aims of education in Nigeria that is:

- A free democratic society
- A just egalitarian society
- A united, strong and self reliant nation,
- A nation of dynamic economy.
- A land of bright and equal opportunities for all the citizens.

Going through these aims, it is crystally clear that the needs, interests and aspirations of the citizens that is the recipient of education and the society is adequately taken care of this vividly shows the relevance of philosophy of education in curriculum planning, development and implementation. Philosophy itself is its components that is metaphysics, epistemology, axiology and logic are basically on the nature of man and his relationship with the cosmic set-up. The knowledge he receives and how he receives this, the essence of this knowledge to his environment; his perception of life and how he relates with the people; his attitude whether good or bad all these are in the realm of ethnics, his love for arts, why he likes certain things and not others; his reasoning in relation to what happens around all these are considered in the planning, development and implementation of the curriculum. The age, level and interests of the pupils needs be put into consideration.

Conclusion

Going through the above submission, it is cry sally clear that place of philosophy of education in the educational system of any nation can never be over emphasized . Philosophy of education dictates to a great extent the contents of the knowledge to be delivered by the teacher. It assesses the needs and interests of the country and its people. Hence, it directs the type of education, the means and method of delivering knowledge and its benefits to the nation and its citizens.