

THE PARADOX OF DOING AND WRITING PHILOSOPHICALLY IN EDUCATION:

AN EXPLORATION OF THE TENSION AND IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

The hallmark of philosophy of education is generally centered on the clarification of concepts, logical connections between ideas, and critical analysis of arguments. This study explores the paradox of doing and writing philosophically in education, examining how critical pedagogy can help resolve this paradox. The paradox raises important questions about the nature of philosophical inquiry in education, which are addressed through a critical analysis of philosophical pedagogical approaches and their implications. This study enables stakeholders to understand the role of philosophy in teacher education programs, highlighting the need for a more balanced understanding of the complex relationship between philosophical thinking, methodological approaches, and educational practice globally. By exploring the paradox of doing and writing philosophically in education, this paper aims to inform and revitalize philosophical approaches that foster critical thinking, creativity, and intellectual growth. Philosophical reasoning is closely related to scientific experimentation, both involving hypothesis testing and evidence-based truth-seeking. Philosophy and science share common ground, starting with facts



and seeking broad, compatible explanations. This paper argues that education programs should

emphasize philosophical approaches to cultivate rationality in all areas of educational endeavours.

Keywords: Paradox, Education, Doing philosophy, Writing philosophy, and Philosophical inquiry.

Introduction

Understanding the nature of a discipline sheds light on its methodology of approach. The paradox

of doing and writing philosophically in education significantly influences teaching and learning,

challenging educators to reconcile the seemingly contradictory demands of practical and theoretical philosophical inquiry. This creates a pressing need for reflection on how philosophy

undergirds or upholds its methodology, helping us understand what philosophy means.

Philosophy, as a discipline, deals with genuine problems of nature and society, exploring fundamental questions about reality (metaphysics), values (axiology), and knowledge (epistemology). Our approaches in philosophy of education and philosophy are geared towards

logical connections. Logic is the system of reasons or standards required for systematic and

accurate reasoning. Lawrence (2008) states that philosophy is rigorous disciplined and guided

analysis of some most difficult problems that man has ever faced. Philosophy examines, synthesizes, criticizes, evaluates, and analyzes various assumptions and beliefs to find logical

relationships between concepts and words. Philosophy is characterized by logical, consistent, and

systematic thinking to reach sound, coherent, and consistent conclusions. Logical reasoning is the

characteristic element of general philosophy, examining evidence from an impartial point of view,



exposing prejudices, and giving evidence its due weight (Akinpelu, 1981). Based on the above,

one can opine that philosophy is based on persistent attempt to give insight and illuminate into the

nature of realities through system reflection since its aims at knowledge, hence....Philosophy

seeks truth for its own sake and promotes intelligent inquiry, liberating us from prejudice and selfdeception (Pojman, 2012). Philosophy differs from other subjects and sciences in its facts,

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methodology, and conclusions. This paper explores the paradox of doing and writing philosophically in education by examining its pedagogical approaches, nature of analysis, methodology, and modes of doing philosophy, such as prescriptive and speculative approaches.

The objectives of this paper are to examine and justify the nature of philosophical inquiry, investigate its fundamental characteristics and influence on education, clarify the structural

framework for philosophical clarifications in education, and develop a philosophical framework

addressing the paradox. The methodology used is phenomenological analysis and hermeneutic

interpretation, examining the lived experience of philosophical method and interpreting the meaning and significance of the paradox within the educational philosophy framework. This

paper sheds light on the complex nature of philosophical thinking and improves educational approaches that cultivate critical thinking, creativity, and intellectual growth to address the tension

and resolve the paradox.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the factual nature of science and the abstract nature of philosophy of education, it is



commonly observed that one of the most disturbing aspects of this situation is that we are in a

world of constant change. This calls for logical reasoning to develop versatile solutions to educational problems. Equally, it is commonly observed that philosophy of education, unlike science, does not have a common method for finding solutions to problems. This is probably

because philosophy is a profoundly theoretical activity that requires high intellectual capabilities

to excel in its formulation. Based on the fact that philosophical inquiry is essential in education,

the paradox of doing philosophy (practical application or approach) and writing philosophy (theoretical approach) or written representation is necessary to address the tension that hinders

effective teaching and learning. Hence, the disconnect between the embodied, experiential nature

of inquiry in education and the abstract written representation of philosophical ideas poses significant challenges for educators and learners.

About Doing and Writing Philosophically in Education

The logic of doing and writing philosophically in education represents two interrelated and interconnected approaches to philosophy of education discourse. These two approaches are

interdependent and involve careful examination of several related issues, consolidating philosophical discourse. Philosophical methods are two ends of a straight line that can never be

separated. Doing philosophy and writing philosophically are distinct aspects of philosophical inquiry or discourse. Doing philosophy is an active process of thinking, reasoning, analyzing, and

evaluating ideas. Writing philosophy, on the other hand, refines, clarifies, and verifies the reasoning that occurs in the process of doing philosophy.

The two approaches can be categorized and analyzed:

- a. Mode of doing philosophy
- b. Mode of writing philosophically in education.

Modes of Doing Philosophy

There are three modes of doing philosophy in education, and these are:

- a. Speculative Mode
- b. Prescriptive Mode
- c. Analytic Mode

Speculative Mode of Doing Philosophy of Education

In this mode, our mind is essential for speculation as an instrument in philosophy of education.

With our mind, we can speculate on things that we cannot see or imagine things that are possible

or impossible through pure reasoning. Our mind allows the philosophers to generate new ideas,

valuable concept and creates innovation in education. Hence, the power of mind is to translate

and relate. The speculation is energized with the power of the mind within context. The speculation

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is done within the context of our social or cultural environment or political system. Hassan (2004)

states that philosophy of education is speculative when it seeks to establish theories about the

nature of man, society, and the world by which to order and interpret the conflicting data of

educational research and the behavioral sciences. Speculative philosophy of education deals with

the search for order, wholeness, linkages, and consistency in the realm of experience. It is

interested in both the real and the abstract, hence it is sub-divided into metaphysics and

epistemology. Ayeni (2016) states that the speculative method deals with the application of

reasoning to build a coherent and consistent worldview or the ideal world ought to be... integrates



various ideas that generate from dimensions to establish/conclude. One can therefore deduce that:

this approach involves exploring possibilities and ideas about education, often considering hypothetical scenarios and their potential implications.

Prescriptive Modes of Doing Philosophy of Education

The prescriptive mode of philosophy of education focuses on specifying values, means, and ends

that education should follow. It seeks to establish standards, grounds, or criteria for judging

values, conduct, and concepts like good and bad, right and wrong, and beautiful and ugly (NTI

2018). This approach helps explore whether these qualities exist in things we presume or are

merely projections of the mind. Prescriptive philosophers believe that behaviors are either positive

or negative, not neutral, and seek to establish standards or criteria for actions as good or bad. In

addition this approach involves making recommendations and setting standards for education,

often based on established principles and values.

The logical deductions from this are:

a. Prescriptive philosophy of education aims to establish fundamental levels or standards for

judging whether actions are worthwhile or not.

b. It specifies the ends of education, what education ought to do or follow, and the general means of attaining them, thereby solving problems of ends and means in education.

c. The prescriptive mode of philosophy of education is a reasoning attempt that gives direction

to educational thought and practice by considering the nature of man, knowledge, and value

systems.

Analytics Mode of Doing Philosophy in Education



Analysis is a method of philosophy that dates back to the origins of philosophy itself. It aims to

clarify issues and concepts that arise from our daily discourse by examining the semantic properties of words and the logical organization of thought. Akinpelu (1981) attributes the development of analysis as a method of doing philosophy of education to rapid progress in the

field of science and its empirical method of discovering truth and reality. Analytic philosophy has

a broad scope and technique, which can be claimed as the analytic method, shared by most

philosophers. It is considered the scientific approach to philosophy. The analytic mode of doing

philosophy of education focuses on using words, and concepts to communicate, seeking clarity of

thought through examination of meaning and logical connections between words, concepts, or

ideas. Ayeni (2014) claims that the analytical method of philosophy of education is characterized

by logical, consistent, and systematic thinking to reach sound, coherent, and consistent conclusions. It examines how concepts, words, and issues are framed and organized to form a

unified and reasonable thought.

Logical deductions from analysis as a mode of doing philosophy of education

include:

- a. Preliminary diagnosis of issues and problems to prepare for solution-finding
- b. Clear thinking and precise expression, applicable to one's ideas and statements or those of others
- c. Need to clarify words and expressions through examination of meaning to determine the real sense of propositions
- d. Identification of inconsistencies in logical and consistent presentations of ideas

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e. Examination of educational issues and problems necessary for sustainable curriculum development

Analysis in the philosophy of education involves breaking down complex arguments or ideas into their constituent parts for a deeper understanding of their structural meaning or implications. Analysis can be categorized into:

a. Conceptual analysis

b. Logical analysis

c. Linguistic analysis

Conceptual Analysis

Conceptual analysis is the structural framework or the format into which philosophical arguments

are fitted for proper clarification or presentation. Philosophy of education is analytic when it

clarifies speculative and prescriptive statements, which involves explaining the meaning of the

discourse, as well as clarifying its relevance, implication, and consequence for education as

deemed fit. Wiredu (2016) states that philosophy proceeds by concept analysis, generalization,

and synthesis... it is important to realize from this onset that the elements that the philosopher

deals with are concepts, and one (but please note only one) of his most pressing tasks is to

elucidate them. One may submit that Conceptual analysis is a technique that treats concepts as

classes of objects, events, properties, or relationships, involving defining the meaning of a given

concept by identifying and specifying the conditions under which any entity or phenomenon is or

could be clarified under the concept in question. We can notice here that conceptual



analysis

examines the use, misuse, and abuse of words; it involves classification, examination of meaning,

and the interrelationship of concepts in discourse. This is for the provision of an explicit understanding of the concepts under investigation. Conceptual analysis can be used as application,

identification, and to explore the implications of different conceptual frameworks. For example,

starting with questions like "What is knowledge?" or "What do we ought to know?" may start

with conceptual clarification of the meaning of knowledge as well as critical examination of the

issues relating to knowing. The various principal uses to which the word 'know' can be put would

be considered. The conceptual analysis mode of the philosophy of education seems to rely on

some sort of definitional structure of concepts so that one can give necessary and sufficient

conditions for the application of the concept. For example, the concept of knowledge can be

analyzed as having the concepts of belief, truth, and justification or the 'known' and the knowers

as its components. Thus, the concept of knowledge can be thought to mean a true belief that can

be justified. Sharma, A. P. & Highland (1991) states that the philosopher wants to know, not

how the process of knowledge development takes place (though he will obviously have an interest

in these areas of knowledge) but rather seeks to answer the process questions of what knowledge

is and how education develops knowledge, is to proceed. In conclusion, that particular form of

knowledge can be justified at a particular time. It is here that philosophers of education will need,



in addition to their conceptual equipment, to draw upon the centuries of tradition, in which sort

have been examined and discussed. Such philosophers may then turn to Plato's conception of

knowledge and examine its condition and relevance to education. In this wise, the nature, purpose,

and scope of such knowledge can be examined and analyzed. All these are possible because

humans have the ability to abstract ideas from sense experience, with capacity being controlled

by natural laws of nature.

Logical Analysis

Logical analysis focuses on arguments and their logical structure. An argument occurs when one

statement is inferred from another group or set of statements, which are said to provide grounds

for the inferred statement. According to Adeniyi (2004), an argument can be defined as a group of

propositions or statements where one is claimed to follow from the others, which are alleged to

provide grounds for the truth of that one. Logical analysis examines how arguments are structured

and identifies inconsistencies in the presentation of ideas through the use and discourse of certain

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concepts. It shows how inconsistent arguments can be made consistent through logical presentation. Logical thinking involves explaining why and how a result is obtained, how to conclude from available premises, and how to draw conclusions based on specific inference rules

(Fitrus & Malik, 2022). This includes analyzing arguments, identifying patterns of reasoning, and

evaluating the strength of conclusions based on the evidence provided.



One can affirm that an argument exists when a statement is inferred from another set of statements

that provide grounds for the inferred statement. The validity of logical arguments depends on the

affirmation of their premises, which must provide absolute conclusion grounds for the conclusion

to be true. Therefore, logical analysis premises on the validity of arguments within the discourse.

The premises of arguments must equally provide supporting grounds to affirm the conclusion, as

the logical connection between words is coherently connected and clarified. According to Towoju

(2016), logical analysis shows where appropriate how inconsistencies may come into logical

presentation of ideas through the use of certain words. Logical analysis is not always about the

truth or falsehood of an argument but with its meaning in logical sequences.

Linguistic Analysis

In philosophical analysis, language is used to discover new grounds of knowledge and reconstruct

existing knowledge, thereby adding to our store of knowledge. Through linguistic analysis, the

logical connections between words, concepts, and ideas are clarified. Wittgenstein argues that

language, for instance, the word "know", can be used in various purposes and indefinite numbers

of ways. He claims that the meaning of a word is determined by its use, meaning that in each case,

the meaning of "know" is determined by its use in context. The word can mean different things

across different contexts of usage.

However, there may be cases where the meaning of a word cannot be essentially defined in terms

of "truth", belief, or justification, which could constitute counterexamples to the linguistic



analytical method. Fayzuilayera (2022) states that linguistic analysis of words involves the study

of the use of language tools in speech, examining methodological meanings, semantic capabilities, grammar, and syntactic capabilities of each morphological unit. Additionally, linguistic analysis can be used to study the language of literary works, which may have relative

meaning at a particular period, in order to interpret linguistic and linguopoetic derivations.

Mode of Writing Philosophically in Education

Writing philosophically in education requires clear conscience, logical presentation of ideas, and

critical thinking. According to Owan Enol (2008), philosophical writing in education aims to highlight the distinctive nature of philosophical inquiry, which involves critical, analytical, logical, and integrative thinking. Philosophical writing in education employs various methods, including dialectical, speculative, prescriptive, scientific, historical, phenomenological, hermeneutical, and analytic approaches. The combination of these methods depends on the nature

of the philosophical research. To write philosophically in education, one must be critical, which

involves systematic and reflective evaluation, examination, and commentary on educational

beliefs, practices, and theories. This requires analyzing and questioning assumptions, arguments,

logical relations, and values. Additionally, philosophical writing in education involves integrating

different elements, ideas, and concepts to form a meaningful whole. This integration fosters a

comprehensive understanding of education, encourages critical and logical thinking, and recognizes education as an interconnected system of values.

Dialectical reasoning is another aspect of philosophical writing in education, which involves intellectual conversation, thesis, antithesis, synthesis, and critical thinking. This approach emphasizes the dynamics and relational nature of knowledge, creating a learning environment that



values critical thinking and intellectual growth. Dialectic is the study of pure abstraction by pure

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thought on reasoning, a reasons of attaining intellectual excellence and hence a general method

of philosophical inquiry which occur at the discovery of a single ultimate principle of the universe.

The logical deductions from the above are:

- a. It emphasizes written reflection and analysis of discourse.
- b. Encourages clear and concise communication of philosophical ideas in a logical, systematic, and consistent manner.
- c. Focuses on developing well-supported arguments and critique.
- d. Involves exploring philosophical concepts through written texts and scholarship.
- e. Prioritizes clarity, coherence, and logical reasoning.

Steps for Doing and Writing Philosophically in Education:

With these few explanations, one may proceed to the steps of doing and writing philosophically in education majorly stipulation as:

- a. Choose a philosophical issue or concept relevant to education such as the essence of man

and education, the purpose of education, knowledge for educational reform, materialism and corruption in teaching and learning, ethics of teaching, and many more.

- b. Analyse the existing philosophical underpinning of educational research related to the topic

of your choice.

- c. Relate your findings to the present needs in the field of education to determine its suitability to the present situation and continuity.

- d. Define the philosophical terms relevant to your topics. Determine all the key concepts and define statement of the problems inherent in the researchable topic by analyzing the



issue involved in the problem and synthesizes the critical point into a statement of the problem.

e. Construct logical arguments using a critical analysis, addressing your topic by using evidence and reasoning to support all your claims, this can be done through synthesizes of theme into thesis and antithesis.

f. Consider all your view from multiple and diverse perspective or (diverse philosophical perspective), through the application of relevant philosophical theories.

g. Using proper citation, write clearly and concisely in the presentation of your philosophical arguments and analysis.

h. Illustrate philosophical arguments/concepts with education theories.

i. Carefully address the potential criticism and conclude with implications for educational practices and present a base for future research.

Implications of Doing and Writing Philosophically in Education

Philosophy is intertwined with everyday life, and philosophical thinking promotes critical thinking, creativity, and innovation in educational approaches and problem-solving. Philosophical

thinking informs writing, which enables clear and concise communication of essential ideas, leading to effective learning and teaching. The process of doing and writing philosophically in

education has several implications:

a. It promotes informed and reflective educational practices

b. It fosters creativity and innovation in educational approaches

c. It informs ethical decision-making in education

d. It reveals the connection between education and other disciplines, encouraging a deeper

understanding of complex issues

e. It ensures that educational practices are just and equitable

f. It has the potential to transform education by promoting social change through the examination of dominant narratives that hinder educational development Through doing

and writing philosophically in education, we can discover and resolve paradoxes and tensions, ultimately revealing the value and significance of philosophical inquiry in education.

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Conclusion

To develop a more comprehensive and effective philosophy of education, it's essential to understand the principles of doing and writing philosophically in education. The act of doing philosophy is closely tied to reasoning, which involves thinking, analyzing, and evaluating ideas.

This reasoning process is the nucleus of doing philosophy and inherently informs and shapes

writing philosophically in education. By recognizing the connection between reasoning and writing philosophically, we can work towards more effective philosophy of education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- a. Embrace uncertainty and skepticism: Philosophers should acknowledge the complexity and ambiguity of educational issues, embrace intellectual inquiry, and recognize that doubt is a crucial aspect of philosophical exploration.
- b. Foster a spirit of wonder: Philosophers should cultivate curiosity and seek diverse perspectives, engaging with various philosophical traditions in educational contexts.
- c. Write reflectively and explore multiple genres: Philosophers should explore their thoughts and assumptions through reflective writing, using dialogue, poetry, or other forms of expression to convey philosophical ideas and discourse.
- d. Love, collect, and construct: Philosophers should allow practical conclusions from philosophical reflections on moral life to inform and marshal their actions, building coherent arguments and theories from the component parts of their thoughts.
- e. Embrace vulnerability and truth: Philosophers should be willing to appropriate their ideas



personally, recognizing that objective truth corresponds to the world in general. They should take risks to explore uncertain terrain in philosophical discourse and writing. These recommendations serve as practical guides for researchers seeking to engage in philosophical inquiry and writing in philosophy and education.

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