



Philosophy and Dialogue between Educational Theory and Practice

Karim J. Gherab-Martín

Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Spain

KEYWORDS

Education
Educational Theory
Educational Practice
History of Philosophy
Philosophy
Philosophy of Education

ABSTRACT

Education requires decisions about what is worth learning, the aims of education and the reasons that justify teachers' interventions. This article examines these questions through a historical and conceptual reconstruction of the philosophy of education and an analysis of its relationships with educational theories and practices. Bringing classical texts into dialogue with contemporary approaches makes it possible to distinguish the effectiveness of procedures from the justification of the aims they serve. The article argues that philosophical plurality does not remove the need to clarify concepts, debate values and reconsider the assumptions of teaching. From this perspective, it proposes a definition of the discipline that combines its critical dimension with its capacity to guide educational practice.

RECEIVED: 07/13/2026

ACCEPTED: 09/16/2026

How to cite this article (APA 7):

Gherab-Martín, Karim J. (2026). Philosophy and Dialogue between Educational Theory and Practice. *Prisma Social revista de ciencias sociales*, 55, 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.65598/rps.6253>

1. The role of philosophy in education

Philosophy may be understood, as a first approximation, as a rational search for truth. If we extend this characterisation to the educational sphere, the Philosophy of Education would be the rational investigation of the truth of education. This second formulation, however, presents a difficulty. Whereas part of philosophy inquires into a reality whose existence does not depend on our decisions, education is a social activity permeated by values, purposes and interests. It is therefore not enough to describe what happens when we educate: we must also justify what deserves to be taught and what kind of education we consider desirable. Our first attempt at a definition leaves this normative dimension unclear. The Platonic image of education as the orientation of the soul helps to specify this difficulty. The *Republic* states: "The task is not to give it the faculty of sight, since it already possesses it; rather, its organ is misdirected and does not look where it ought to look, and this is precisely what must be corrected" (Platón, 1872, Book VII, p. 57). The metaphor requires us to distinguish between possessing a capacity and learning to exercise it appropriately. It also introduces a problem that cannot be solved by accumulating knowledge: who determines where the student's gaze should be directed, and on what grounds? We can take up this question without fully accepting Platonic metaphysics. If education changes what we pay attention to and how we judge it, its assessment requires an examination both of the content transmitted and of the orientation acquired by our faculties. The aim of this article is precisely to delimit the philosophy of education in order to propose, at the end of this inquiry, a sufficiently broad and reasoned characterisation. Dewey (1916) conceived it as a general theory of education, intended to guide its organisation and development. This proposal acknowledges the relationship between philosophical thought and the social and political choices that guide educational activity. Nevertheless, we shall see that it is insufficient to encompass all the tasks the discipline can perform.

For long periods of its history, philosophy accorded metaphysics a central place (Kneller, 1971, pp. 7-25). Its inquiries addressed the ultimate constitution of reality, the existence of God, human nature and the soul, or the origin and destiny of the universe. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the expansion of modern science and the increasing attention paid to experience and the foundations of knowledge helped to call into question forms of speculation that dispensed with empirical testing. In the twentieth century, logical positivism directed a particularly forceful critique against metaphysics, including the tradition of German idealism: some of its problems, its proponents maintained, arose from uses of language that lacked a sufficiently determinate meaning. In response, they proposed a philosophy closely connected to scientific knowledge and supported by the resources of formal logic. The importance acquired by the examination of language was captured in the expression *linguistic turn*, popularised by Rorty (1967). Philosophical work then became largely directed towards clarifying concepts in science, mathematics, history, law or religion, checking the consistency of arguments and identifying apparent problems. Without reconstructing this entire process here, we are interested in its repercussions for education. We shall distinguish three related domains: the *philosophy of education*¹, *educational theories*² and *educational practices*³. Theories develop a reflection on practices, while philosophy, in turn, examines the concepts and foundations of those theories. In this sense, the philosophy of education performs a metatheoretical function: it reflects on the theories that seek to guide educational action.

Educational problems, however, cannot be reduced to conceptual difficulties or to the limits of knowledge. Many arise from practical decisions and from political, social and economic circumstances. Clarifying the meaning of an expression may help us to understand them, but it is not enough to resolve, for example, a conflict between the teacher's authority and the student's autonomy. For this reason, many philosophers of education have turned their attention to praxeological questions, that is, questions concerning action and its justification. Conceptual analysis acquires a specific purpose here: to make explicit the reasons for supporting or questioning particular educational theories and practices. Examining an educational proposal

¹ In this article, the expressions "philosophy of education" and "educational philosophy" are used with the same meaning.

² We use the expressions "educational theories" and "theories of education" interchangeably.

³ The terms "educational practices" and "practices of education" are treated here as equivalent.

requires us to establish both what its claims mean and what actions it authorises, as well as the consequences that may be expected from them. The philosophy of education is therefore concerned with the language through which we think about education and with the actions that this language helps to guide.

To understand the current concerns of the philosophy of education, it is useful to consider its historical trajectory. The responses offered to educational problems have been as diverse as the conceptions of knowledge, the person and society that underpin them. A systematic review would require a much more extensive study; here we shall present only some relevant figures and transformations. After tracing its antecedents, we shall examine the process of institutionalisation that gained particular momentum during the twentieth century and, especially, in the 1960s. In Great Britain, the United States and Australia, the designation “philosophy of education” acquired a considerable academic presence. In other contexts, including much of continental Europe, these inquiries often developed under the names “theory of education” or “pedagogical science” (Burbules, 2000). Differences in terminology and university organisation help to explain the diversity of the field, but should not be confused with an absence of philosophical reflection on education.

2. Origins and evolution of the philosophy of education

In ancient Greece, questions concerning human formation occupied a prominent place in philosophical thought. The philosophical views of education held by the leading historical figures were integrated into their broader metaphysical, epistemological, ethical and political theories. With Socrates, *Socratic dialogue*, based on questions and the examination of answers, made the rational justification of beliefs and actions a fundamental educational task. This confidence in reason ran through much of the subsequent tradition, although it acquired different meanings within each philosophical system. Plato continued the Socratic approach and placed a higher value on wisdom than on pleasure, prestige and other goods. In the early fourth century BC, he founded the Academy in Athens, an institution devoted to study that became a point of reference in the history of teaching. In the *Republic*, he linked education to the organisation of the city: students were to receive differentiated education according to their dispositions and the functions they would eventually perform. Access to the highest knowledge and to government was reserved for those who met the necessary conditions. Aristotle, his pupil and the founder of the *Lyceum*, retained the importance of cultivating reason but placed greater emphasis on learning through sensory experience, the acquisition of habits and the formation of character. In explaining the formation of the virtues, Aristotle maintained that “nature has made us capable of acquiring them, and habit develops and perfects them in us” (1873a, Book II, ch. I, p. 34). The initial disposition opens up a possibility that needs to be realised through activity. Hence moral education cannot be assessed solely by the maxims it communicates: the forms of action that are practised and become habitual also matter. In this respect, the everyday organisation of the classroom offers opportunities to learn to wait, fulfil commitments or recognise what is due to others. These situations are not mere supplements to a lesson on virtue, but part of the conditions in which character is formed. Nor does every kind of repetition produce a good disposition. Philosophical examination must ask which habits are consolidated, whom they benefit and how they contribute to a form of living together that can be justified. Aristotle's defence of a common education for citizens extended the public role of education within the limits of ancient citizenship. Both Plato and Aristotle thus raised central questions for the philosophy of education: who should be educated, what knowledge deserves to be taught and how individual development relates to the life of the community. The contemporary reception of this legacy can be seen in Lea (2024), who connects the German tradition of *Bildung* with flourishing of Aristotelian inspiration⁴. From this perspective, the aims of the school require

⁴ *Bildung* is a concept that understands education as the development of the whole person through their relationship with culture, knowledge and social life. It consists not only in acquiring knowledge or skills, but also in cultivating independent judgement and autonomy. Its connection with Plato and Aristotle lies in the idea that educating involves forming the person and guiding their participation in the community; in particular, the Aristotelian cultivation of reason, habits and character.

attention to the meaning of education and to the conditions for belonging that students encounter there.

In addition to who educates, the forms of life for which people are educated also matter. In the *Politics*, Aristotle wrote: “If work and leisure are both necessary, the latter is unquestionably preferable, but the greatest care must be taken to use it properly” (1873b, Book V, ch. II, p. 167). His analysis of musical education shows that free time requires capacities for enjoying and appreciating activities whose value does not depend on producing something useful. Without importing the social hierarchy of the ancient city into the present, this question allows us to examine the frequent reduction of school aims to preparation for employment. Preparing people for work is an educational responsibility, but so too is expanding the possibilities for cultural participation, contemplation and enjoyment. The choice of curriculum requires deliberation about both dimensions. Otherwise, education might increase our productive skills while leaving uncultivated the capacities needed to give meaning to the time at our disposal.

In late antiquity, Augustine of Hippo situated the problem of teaching within the Christian framework of interiority. In *On the Teacher*, he distinguished words from knowledge of what they signify: signs can prompt inquiry, but they do not replace the pupil's understanding (Agustín de Hipona, ca. 389/2003, chs. XI–XIV). The true teacher is Christ, whose truth inwardly illuminates the intellect; the aim, therefore, is not to make individual opinion the ultimate criterion. The educator's intervention encounters both a limit and a task here: to guide, through questions and explanations, an activity that the student must carry out independently. This distinction allows us to recognise that correctly repeating a discourse does not yet amount to understanding it.

A few centuries later, the set of seven liberal arts that would structure much of medieval teaching gradually took shape. Grammar, rhetoric and dialectic would make up the *trivium*; arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music, the *quadrivium*. Boethius played a prominent role in transmitting this legacy. Ancient *paideia* had connected education with an ideal of life and participation in the city, although opportunities to access that education were unequal according to social position (Marrou, 1985). In the medieval West, this horizon was transformed under the predominance of Christianity: knowledge and education were directed towards understanding and transmitting religious truth. Monasteries, together with other ecclesiastical institutions, acquired a decisive role in preserving and teaching texts. At the same time, the Islamic world undertook important work in translating, studying and developing ancient knowledge, with Baghdad as one of its leading centres. Charlemagne's initiatives encouraged the recovery of the liberal arts and the spread of reading and writing. Later, medieval universities and the renewed circulation of classical works broadened the spaces of knowledge and helped to prepare the Renaissance. This trajectory shows that curricular changes also respond to transformations in the aims attributed to human formation.

During the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas returned to the question raised by Augustine of Hippo through the articulation of Aristotelian thought with Christian theology. In *On the Teacher*, the eleventh question of the *Disputed Questions on Truth*, he explained that knowledge can be acquired through one's own discovery or with another person's help (Tomás de Aquino, 1256–1259/1970, question 11, art. 1). The teacher leads the pupil from known principles towards new conclusions, but this mediation presupposes the activity of the learner's reason. Although God is the ultimate foundation of intellectual capacity, human teaching has genuine efficacy. The comparison with the physician, who assists nature without replacing it, clarifies this cooperation. Educating thus requires explanations to be ordered so that the student can reconstruct the reasoning, rather than merely accept the conclusion on the authority of the teacher.

At the beginning of modernity, René Descartes directed attention towards the methodical guidance of judgement. The *Discourse on Method* offered a critical assessment of his education and questioned whether the accumulation of knowledge guaranteed certainty (Descartes, 1637, Parts I–II). His rules of evidence, analysis, order and review expressed the need to learn to distinguish what is justified from what is merely accepted. Descartes did not intend to establish a school

program, but presented his own path as the account of a personal search, not as a recipe that everyone should follow.

In the same century, Thomas Hobbes connected education with the conditions of civil peace. In *Leviathan*, he maintained that reason requires learning and an orderly use of language; he also assigned the sovereign responsibility for instructing the people in the foundations of political obligation (Hobbes, 1651, chs. V and XXX). The stability of the community was not to rest solely on coercion, but also on the opinions that guide conduct. He therefore attached particular importance to universities, from which doctrines spread among those who teach others. His proposal made the political dimension of education visible and raised a tension that recurs in other traditions: how the formation of judgement relates to teaching whose content is subordinated to the preservation of civil order.

John Locke, for his part, once again connected education with a particular conception of social life. In *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), he emphasised the formation of judgement and character in those who must act for themselves. His liberal approach attached importance to the capacity to decide rationally, while his empiricism emphasised the role of experience and practical exercise in acquiring knowledge. Shortly afterwards, David Hume, also working within empiricism, introduced a caution concerning the formative power of teaching. In *A Treatise of Human Nature*, he examined how repetition and custom entrench opinions received during childhood, even when they lack sufficient support in reason or experience (Hume, 1739, Book I, Part III, section IX, §§ 16–19). The strength of a conviction does not, therefore, guarantee its truth. Hume did not develop a systematic pedagogical theory, but an account of the formation of beliefs with educational implications.

The *philosophe* Jean-Jacques Rousseau subsequently shifted attention towards the effects that society and its institutions could have on individual development. In *Emile, or On Education* (1762), he criticised the conventions that distort children's natural dispositions and defended an education attentive to their pace of growth and their freedom. This perspective influenced later pedagogies and brought an enduring philosophical question to the fore: how to educate without turning adult intervention into an imposition that prevents personal development. To address this problem, Rousseau distinguished different sources of education: education results from nature, from men or from things. This distinction prevents us from attributing complete control over the process to the educator. Human intervention encounters capacities that mature and experiences that do not always conform to its purposes. Philosophy has the task of examining the coherence among these influences, in addition to describing each separately. The reference to nature invites us to recognise limits to intervention and to justify its conditions more adequately, without turning spontaneity into a guarantee of good education. Unlike Plato, Rousseau prescribed separate education for boys and girls and, in doing so, raised gender-related questions that are of philosophical interest today.

Immanuel Kant's Enlightenment reflection connected education with the development of human dispositions and the possibility of a better future society. In *On Pedagogy*, he distinguished discipline, the cultivation of capacities, preparation for social life and moralisation (Kant, 1803). Acquiring skills or learning to behave appropriately is not enough: moral education requires acting according to maxims that can be recognised as good, not merely out of fear of punishment or expectation of reward. Hence the difficulty of reconciling adult guidance with learning to be free. Educational authority must prepare the exercise of independent judgement, while adaptation to existing customs does not exhaust the aims of education.

During the nineteenth century, the German educator Friedrich Fröbel helped to bring some of these concerns into the pedagogical sphere. In *The Education of Man* (1826), he attached particular importance to each child's capacities and needs. He devised materials for learning through play, known as Fröbel's *gifts*, and developed the nursery school, for which he coined the term *kindergarten* in 1840. The educational value of play and the recognition of children's individuality point to an underlying philosophical question: which activities encourage development that has value for the child? From another perspective, Mill defended the extension of education and the

public responsibility to guarantee it in *On Liberty* (1859). His liberalism called for educational opportunities for women and for those who remained excluded, as a condition of personal autonomy and social participation. At the same time, he warned that teaching monopolised by the state could produce uniformity and weaken the diversity of forms of life. In his liberal and utilitarian approach, education should contribute to citizens' freedom, the cultivation of their faculties and collective well-being. The tension between public provision and educational plurality remains a genuinely philosophical problem today.

Also in the nineteenth century, Karl Marx examined educational possibilities in terms of the material conditions of work and social life. In the first volume of *Capital*, in his analysis of factory legislation, he highlighted the combination of teaching, physical exercise and productive labour as a route towards the all-round development of capacities (Marx, 1867). His proposal opposed a division of labour that reduced the individual to the performance of a partial function. The aim was not to legitimise child exploitation, which he himself denounces in the book, but to transform the relationship between education and productive activity. From this philosophical perspective, educational aims cannot be discussed apart from the conditions that enable their realisation: the social conditions that make education possible are as relevant as what is learnt.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Émile Durkheim situated education within the domain of sociological inquiry. In *Education and Sociology*, a posthumous collection of his writings, he characterised it as a methodical socialisation through which adult generations form in the young the physical, intellectual and moral dispositions required by collective life (Durkheim, 1922, chs. I–II). Educational ideals vary historically and cannot be explained solely in terms of individual capacities. Durkheim also distinguished the science that studies educational facts from pedagogy understood as a practical theory that guides action.

In the early twentieth century, John Dewey placed education at the centre of his philosophical reflection. He understood learning as a social process of interaction and assigned the school responsibility for offering all children opportunities to develop their capacities. In *Democracy and Education* (1916), he connected the education of future citizens with the conditions that sustain democratic life. Democracy required habits of cooperation, communication and revision of one's own judgements that also had to be cultivated through school experience. In *Experience and Education* (1938), he examined the role of experience in learning and the need to organise it in ways that opened up new possibilities for development. Children's interests provided a starting point for educational activity, which explains his association with child-centred education; this did not remove the educator's responsibility to guide that activity. In dialogue with the pragmatism of Charles S. Peirce and William James, Dewey attended to the consequences of ideas and actions. His educational philosophy thus brought together inquiry into knowledge, experience and democratic life in a reflection closely connected to practice.

Meanwhile, also in the early twentieth century, Bertrand Russell brought together character formation and intellectual education in a proposal aimed at developing people capable of judging for themselves. In *Education and the good life*, he highlighted vitality, courage, sensitivity and intelligence as educational qualities, connecting the last of these with curiosity and a willingness to learn (Russell, 1926, chs. II and XIV). Fear and the imposition of beliefs can obstruct these capacities; an interest in knowing must therefore take precedence over the aim of securing allegiance. This orientation does not eliminate effort or the educator's responsibility, but requires them to be distinguished from intimidation.

The preceding proposals offer some of the interpretations that have most influenced the history of the philosophy of education, although they are far from exhausting its contributions. Many other philosophers have examined questions concerning human formation within their respective frameworks of thought. Despite their differences, much of this philosophical tradition concerned with education accorded rationality, both theoretical and practical, a prominent place among the capacities that education should develop. This broad agreement did not imply a single conception of reason or of its relations with authority, experience or social life. With this qualification, we may

speak of a rationalist consensus⁵. Later, we shall see how various currents that emerged or became established in the second half of the twentieth century questioned the assumptions of this rationalist consensus and its educational consequences.

3. The disciplinary development of the philosophy of education

Determining “What counts as Philosophy of Education and why?” (Kohli, 1995, p. xiv) presents an initial difficulty: for much of the Western tradition, educational thought did not constitute a separate professional domain. Philosophers approached education as an extension of their epistemological, ethical and political inquiries (Burbules, 1997b). The subsequent organisation of a specific academic field followed different rhythms and took different forms across countries. In the United States, it acquired a recognisable presence in the preparation of educators and in discussions of educational decisions, whereas in other traditions its professional boundaries were less clear (Phillips, 1994). The scope attributed to the term “education” also varied. Some European perspectives insisted on distinguishing it from schooling and included matters such as upbringing and education outside teaching institutions (Smeyers, 1994; Smeyers & Marshall, 1995). These differences remind us that the object of the philosophy of education is not determined solely by its university affiliation: it encompasses questions about the meaning and justification of educating wherever that activity takes place.

The antecedents of this academic specialisation can be traced to English-speaking countries and, especially, to educational developments in the nineteenth-century United States (Chambliss, 1996). The Enlightenment's confidence in reason and in the systematic organisation of knowledge encouraged the search for foundations for expanding educational institutions. Justifying teaching, preparing teachers professionally and establishing criteria to guide their activity became increasingly connected tasks. In this context, the expressions “theory of education” and “philosophy of education” acquired a more definite use. The aim was to offer reasons concerning the meaning, purposes and conditions of educational action. The relationship between the two domains, however, was not one-way: problems arising in practice also prompted revisions of philosophical thought (Burbules, 1997b). Dewey's work illustrates this reciprocity well (Phillips, 1985). His engagement with concrete educational situations contributed to the development of a philosophy in which learning and social formation played a constitutive role.

The *Cyclopedia of Education*, edited by Paul Monroe⁶ and published in five volumes between 1911 and 1913, helped to give visibility to the philosophy of education as an explicit and systematic reflection on educational aims (Chambliss, 1996). This intellectual production was accompanied by the creation of associations that provided stable spaces for discussion. The John Dewey Society (JDS) took shape at meetings of educators held in 1934 and 1935 and adopted Dewey's name in 1936. Its interest in the relations between school and society shows that the delimitation of the field was connected from the outset to problems of social transformation. Professional associations therefore played an important role in the consolidation of the discipline. As Kaminsky (1993), Nelson (1996) and Smeyers and Marshall (1995) suggest, understanding this history requires attention to the communities that organised and sustained inquiry, as well as to the works that became part of its literature.

In the JDS, as in other American humanities and social science associations of the period, the extent of public engagement provoked intense discussions. Its members shared an interest in connecting Dewey's work with education and social change, but disagreed about the forms of intervention that followed from that purpose. The diversity of political positions made it difficult to translate a common intellectual orientation into a shared programme of activism. The texts published in *The*

⁵ The importance this tradition attributed to the cultivation of reason finds continuity in contemporary proposals such as Meyer's (2024), which emphasises ethical reasoning as part of moral education. Learning to examine one's own convictions and compare them with the reasons of others allows the autonomy of judgement to be connected with shared life. This confidence in the educational value of reason does not, however, imply that the ability to argue is sufficient for moral action.

⁶ Paul Monroe, a professor at Teachers College, Columbia University, participated in educational exchange between China and the United States and conducted research and travelled to China during the 1920s and 1930s.

Social Frontier allow us to trace these disagreements and the importance they acquired within the association (Kaminsky, 1993, 1996; Giarelli & Chambliss, 1991). The debate also affected the very conception of the philosophy of education: whether it should offer a particular public orientation, maintain a critical distance from political choices or combine both tasks, and according to what criteria.

The creation in 1941 of the *Philosophy of Education Society* (PES), independent of the JDS, gave these tensions a new expression. The association reinforced the project of establishing the philosophy of education as a professional domain with its own criteria for inquiry. To this end, it assigned mastery of philosophical methods a central role in identifying and legitimising disciplinary work. Its programme sought to limit the influence of activism and partisan allegiances, base membership of the association on professional criteria and find a principle of cohesion in method. The question was what made the study of education philosophical, beyond sharing particular educational or political preferences. In 1954, the PES created a committee charged with clarifying the definition of the field and examining the philosophical procedures that could underpin its academic development (Maloney, 1985).

In Great Britain, the founding of the *Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain* (PESGB) in 1964 accompanied a similar process of consolidation. Dearden (1982, p. 60) connected this transformation with a more precise awareness of the procedures and contributions of philosophy as a university discipline. Although Kaminsky (1993, p. 191) emphasised the association's conservatism, one of its most clearly defined intellectual features was the importance it attached to philosophical analysis. The philosophy of education was expected to examine concepts, principles and practices, introduce relevant distinctions and clarify the scope of educational claims. This included exploring conceptual possibilities, distinguishing the necessary from the contingent, identifying contradictions and making implications explicit. It also required the review of assumptions and the assessment of the validity of the reasons offered to justify a proposal (Dearden, 1982, pp. 66-67). The discipline thus found a way to intervene in educational debates without confining itself to general recommendations. This analytic orientation became considerably influential on both sides of the Atlantic and found another forum for dissemination and discussion in the PES.

Specialist journals also helped to establish a stable framework for academic exchange. *Educational Theory*, published since 1951 and associated with the JDS and the PES, offered a forum for the philosophy of education and other forms of theoretical inquiry into its foundations. Its development expresses the professionalisation of the field examined by Kaminsky (1993). In Britain, the proceedings of the PESGB gave way to the *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, whose publication archive begins in 1967. These publications allowed the discipline's questions and methods to be expanded and subjected to discussion. In reviewing seventy-five years of *Educational Theory*, Taylor (2026) has emphasised the continuity of debates about educational aims, democracy, the curriculum and values, alongside the incorporation of new perspectives and problems. Institutionalisation thus appears as the support for a philosophical inquiry that must be renewed in response to transformations in education.

In France, institutionalisation followed a different path, connected to the organisation of pedagogical knowledge. In the 1880s, the Third Republic promoted a science of education whose teaching was entrusted mainly to professors of philosophy; moral reflection and republican commitment were part of this university undertaking. After many of these chairs disappeared, the creation of the educational sciences in 1967 opened a plural space in which philosophy shared the study of education with psychology, sociology and history (Robert, 2023). The disciplinary question thus acquired a particular meaning: how to preserve inquiry into aims and values within a field that also aspired to produce empirical knowledge. This trajectory helps us to understand that the academic presence of the philosophy of education does not depend solely on its establishment as a separate specialism. It can also assert itself through the critical examination of the assumptions of other inquiries and of the practices they help to guide.

In Spain, the university presence of the philosophy of education was linked to the institutionalisation of pedagogy and the discontinuities of political history. The courses taught by Juan Zaragüeta in the Pedagogy Section of the University of Madrid during the 1930s constitute a significant antecedent. Its subsequent articulation as fundamental pedagogy shows that changes of name also affected the way the unity of educational knowledge was conceived (Jover Olmeda *et al.*, 2014). Later, the restoration of democracy gave particular importance to the education of citizens and the justification of educational values. According to Jover (2001), the reception of philosophical analysis did not eliminate this normative orientation, which found support in a practical philosophy of Aristotelian inspiration. From the 1990s onwards, narrative perspectives and the postmodern debate broadened the discussions. The consolidation of the Spanish field therefore brought together the delimitation of an academic domain and the search for criteria through which educators could judge their decisions and account for them.

This concern with the aims and values of education can also be examined in the light of studies of the Spanish Krausist tradition. In her analysis of Concepción Arenal, Manzanero (2020) recalls that “the social question depended to a large extent on first resolving the pedagogical question” (p. 538). Women’s education thus acquired a scope that went beyond instruction: it was linked to their autonomy and the possibility of making legal equality effective. Philosophical reflection on educating formed part of a proposal for social transformation. In her study of Manuel Bartolomé Cossío, this same author likewise highlights a conception of education as personal creation in which “the principal agent is the learner” (Manzanero, 2021, p. 477). This perspective, developed in the milieu of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza, attended to experience, sensitivity and the student’s participation in their own education. Its recovery in a university experience of inclusive education shows how a philosophical legacy can guide present-day practices without being reduced to a historical reference. From this angle, the development of Spanish educational thought also includes discussion of who can access education and what conditions favor the exercise of their freedom. More recent studies analyze the influence of philosophy on education: Santos Pérez and Valencia Olivero (2025) link social epistemology to educational inclusion and cultural diversity, while Gallego Vicente, Carbaño Nieto, and García-Sánchez (2025) reflect on an early childhood education experience to raise issues regarding social and political epistemology, as well as the relationship between pedagogical methodologies, the transfer of humanistic knowledge, and collaboration between school and society.

4. The analytic orientation in the philosophy of education

The analytic orientation in the philosophy of education acquired particular importance in the Anglo-American sphere, from its development in Britain to its spread in the United States. An important precedent was the book that Charles D. Hardie published in 1941 and that was reissued in 1962. His purpose was to bring to educational discussions a demand for clarity that had already yielded results in other philosophical domains.

The Cambridge analytical school, led by Moore, Broad and Wittgenstein, has attempted so to analyse propositions that it will always be apparent whether the disagreement between philosophers is one concerning matters of fact, or is one concerning the use of words, or is, as is frequently the case, a purely emotive one. It is time, I think, that a similar attitude became common in the field of educational theory. (Hardie 1941/1962, p. xix)

Richard S. Peters (1966) was one of the decisive figures in the application of the traditional methods of analytic philosophy to education. He examined notions such as “equality”, “freedom” and “democracy”, whose meanings shape both educational theories and practices, and helped to revive the tradition of liberal education. One of his collaborators, the fellow British analytic philosopher Paul Hirst (1965), defended a general education organised around distinct *forms of knowledge*⁷. Hirst’s proposal connected conceptual analysis with a liberal conception of education⁸

⁷ In reviewing this proposal, Smith (2023) has emphasised that recognising the value of the sciences does not require making them the exclusive standard of all knowledge. For the philosophy of education, this distinction remains relevant in justifying the curriculum and deciding which forms of understanding schools should cultivate.

⁸ We may regard Hirst as one of the founders of what we can call the *liberal philosophy of education*.

oriented towards the development of *rational autonomy*. In contrast to progressive perspectives, Hirst revived the Aristotelian idea that knowledge alone has a value of its own: education is not justified solely by the external benefits it makes possible. The Americans Scheffler (1960) and Siegel (1988) also participated in this revival, alongside the British work of Hirst and Peters (1970). From the perspective of political philosophy, this current offered an alternative to the influence of educational progressivism in the 1960s. Freedom was understood here as the capacity to examine reasons and form independent judgements through access to knowledge. For the philosophy of education, this connection between knowledge and autonomy raises a fundamental question: what education deserves to be promoted for its educational value, rather than merely for its immediate usefulness? Autonomy also requires opportunities for its exercise. Mill (1859) expressed this in the idea that the human faculties of perception, judgement, discriminative feeling, mental activity and even moral preference are exercised only in making choices. From this perspective, an education can transmit correct conclusions yet leave little room for learning to decide. The difference becomes apparent when students must compare alternatives, explain their preference and review the consequences of their choice. It is not enough to offer them a range of options if the reasons for choosing remain unexamined. However, Mill restricted his principle of liberty to those whose faculties had reached maturity; its application to education requires attention to students' dependence and development. A gradual orientation can be drawn from this: providing support that enables increasing responsibility to be assumed. The teacher's intervention thus acquires a criterion for its assessment: whether the assistance provided prepares students to rely less and less on decisions made by others.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the consolidation of the philosophy of education was closely connected to the search for a recognisable *philosophical method*. The adoption of demanding criteria contributed to its academic legitimacy and reinforced its status as a distinct discipline. Philosophical analysis seemed particularly well suited to a domain marked by rival pedagogical orientations, political disagreements and frequent changes in teaching preferences. Teachers, educational leaders and researchers found in it resources for discussing matters more precisely and aspiring to judgements less dependent on particular allegiances. Its contribution became visible in the delimitation of terms such as theory, authority, indoctrination, punishment, teaching and education. These distinctions provided shared ground from which to examine problems. Scheffler (1960) also extended the study of educational language to definitions, symbols, metaphors and slogans. He showed that a philosophical thesis could circulate in practice as a brief formula, losing some of its conditions and qualifications along the way. This is the case with the well-known slogan associated with Dewey's progressivism: "We teach children, not subjects". For the philosophy of education, the interest of this example lies in examining what conception of the student, knowledge and the aims of teaching is condensed into an apparently simple expression.

Phenomenology, existentialism and other currents commonly grouped under the designation of *continental philosophy* offered different ways of thinking about education. Nevertheless, during the first phase of institutionalisation, the analytic approach attracted particularly broad support. Its success cannot be explained solely by the force of its arguments, but also by its suitability for the demands of a discipline seeking professional recognition. Maloney (1985) identified a characteristic tension: the philosophy of education wished to retain its connection with the philosophical tradition, with its theoretical inclination, while also gaining legitimacy in faculties of Education, which were more concerned with intervention and its results. Conceptual analysis seemed to build a rigorous bridge between these spaces and to connect *general philosophy* with the *philosophy of education* and with the *theory of education*. The analytic method thus provided a form of *academic respectability* intelligible to both interlocutors, without thereby resolving all the difficulties in their relationship.

In the United States, the analytic movement also allowed the philosophy of education to distance itself from its dependence on Dewey and the John Dewey Society. The scholarly journal *Nature* (1967) evoked⁹ this prolonged influence through the image of "John Dewey's ghost". The new

⁹ See also Burbules (1997b).

orientation also questioned the procedure of drawing educational consequences from major philosophical systems, such as *realism*, *idealism* or *pragmatism* (Chambliss, 1996; Phillips, 1994). *Analytic philosophers* considered it insufficient to derive pedagogical recommendations from general positions without clarifying the argumentative steps connecting them. Their aspiration was to construct a philosophy of education with standards of rigour close to those of a scientific philosophy. The trajectory of *Studies in Philosophy and Education* illustrates this concern: Nelson (1996, p. 474) has emphasised that its editorial revival reaffirmed the clarity and quality of philosophical argumentation. From this perspective, the legitimacy of an educational proposal had to rest on reasons open to examination, rather than on its mere affiliation with a school of thought.

Over time, researchers and postgraduate students expanded their reading beyond textbooks of logic, epistemology and analytic philosophy. Direct engagement with other philosophical texts changed their questions and points of reference (Burbules, 1997b). Among English-speaking philosophers of education, interest grew once again in authors as diverse as the Presocratics, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger and Simone de Beauvoir, while *critical theory*, *feminism* and *postmodernism* gained prominence. The incorporation of these perspectives shifted some attention towards problems that could not be addressed solely by defining terms: power relations, inequalities in schooling and the social assumptions of education. The philosophy of education thus began to ask more insistently not only what its concepts meant, but also whom their uses benefited and what experiences were excluded from them.

The predominance of the analytic approach began to be openly challenged in the 1970s. Shortly after the influential characterisation of the discipline offered by Soltis (1971), Edel (1972) published *Analytic Philosophy of Education at the Crossroads*, whose title already announced a change of climate. The objections came from diverse traditions, not exclusively from critical theory or feminism. Critics questioned whether analysis could be neutral and value-free, and warned that its concentration on the logic of language, emphasised by Russ (1994), could yield results of little relevance to educational problems. These criticisms appear, with different emphases, in Barrow (1994), Ericson (1992), Phillips (1985, 1994), Maloney (1985, pp. 245-250) and Noddings (1995, pp. 41-57). Some defenders of the analytic approach also made observations in this regard. Barrow (1994) considered many objections to have little relevance and to be refutable; Phillips (1994), by contrast, acknowledged that technical specialisation had directed too many debates towards philosophers' own interests, distancing them from the concerns of other educators. Ericson (1992) connected these difficulties with the emergence of a second analytic generation, which renewed the study of critical thinking, forms of knowledge and other educational problems. By the end of that decade, identifying the entire discipline with a single orientation had become untenable (Burbules, 1997b). A post-analytic phase then opened, visible in journals and in meetings of the PES and the PESGB, where methodological diversity, interdisciplinary exchange and the reassessment of inherited conceptions increased.

5. Plurality, dialogue between traditions and the debate over disciplinary unity

Continental and Anglo-American philosophy of education share much of their background, but their subsequent developments did not follow the same path. Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Mill and Kant belong to a common heritage that gave rise to different readings and priorities. As we have seen, *pragmatism* carried particular weight in the United States, followed, from the 1960s onwards, by a turn towards the analytic method of British philosophy. In continental Europe, the German *phenomenology* of Husserl and Heidegger, the *critical theory* of the Frankfurt School and French *existentialism* became more prominent. These differences describe general tendencies rather than closed boundaries: exchanges between traditions have been constant. We shall now examine some of their principal contributions to educational discussion and conclude with two proposals that took the critique of schooling to particularly radical positions.

An important avenue of encounter between the two traditions was North American philosophers of education's reading of existentialism and critical theory. This interest subsequently encouraged the reception of Jacques Derrida and postmodern approaches. The development of feminist perspectives attentive to difference, otherness and relationships also contributed to this circulation:

these were matters addressed, with different orientations, by Derrida and Emmanuel Levinas. However, educational feminism should not be identified with a single philosophical school. Alongside the contributions of Susan Laird and Morwenna Griffiths, and the influence of authors such as Luce Irigaray and Judith Butler, we find careers associated with philosophical analysis. Jane Roland Martin and Ann Diller, for example, studied under Israel Scheffler. This diversity shows that the feminist reassessment of educational assumptions did not require the adoption of a single method, although it did require the expansion of questions about who educates, who is heard and which experiences are considered valuable.

Feminist, multiculturalist and postmodern critiques concern issues that cut across educational philosophy, theory and practice. Their breadth requires a selective presentation here. The *feminist philosophy of education* gained prominence from the 1970s onwards and consolidated its position in the following decades, incorporating poststructuralist developments among other orientations (Stone, 1994; St. Pierre, 2000). The entry of increasing numbers of women into associations that had previously been predominantly male helped to transform their intellectual agenda (Leach, 1991). Both the topics discussed and the conditions of debate itself were questioned. Some authors denounced argumentative styles that rewarded intimidating confrontation and reduced other voices' opportunities to participate. They also criticised the way in which isolating conceptual problems from concrete situations produced artificial discussions, especially in ethics, where personal relationships are part of the problem rather than merely incidental context (Noddings, 1995). Another contribution consisted in examining absences: when certain experiences do not enter academic debate, those who live through them do not participate fully in defining the relevant issues either. The reassessment of women's limited presence in associations and publications thus opened a broader question about the exclusion of other groups. From the perspective of the philosophy of education, this critique concerns the conditions under which the dialogue used to justify educational aims and practices is legitimate.

The feminist reassessment also broadened the range of aims deserving educational attention. Prominent among them are care for oneself and responsibility towards others, areas frequently marginalised by a tradition that privileged experiences associated with men. Noddings's (1984)¹⁰ *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* was a decisive work in this discussion. Alongside cognitive development, various women authors defended emotional education, intuition and sensitivity to the needs of others. The distinction between the public and the private was thus subjected to revision: a complete education should attend to reason, objectivity and impartiality as well as to affective relationships, compassion and attention to people's physical and psychological conditions. For the philosophy of education, this means examining what we understand by human formation and which capacities we leave out when we reduce it to a few dimensions. Feminist positions, however, do not agree on all these points. There are disagreements about the evaluation of roles traditionally attributed to each sex, about whether they should be preserved or transformed, and about the very association of reason and objectivity with masculinity. This plurality prevents the feminist philosophy of education from being presented as a uniform doctrine.

The multiculturalist perspective foregrounds students' diversity and questions the unequal responses of educational institutions to the interests of different cultural groups (McLaren, 1997). The relevant differences are not confined to language or customs, but include beliefs, values and ways of interpreting the world. However, the principle of not privileging one culture over another admits different interpretations. For some authors, it requires recognising an equivalent legitimacy for each group's traditions and convictions; for others, respecting people is compatible with judging certain beliefs to be false or criticising particular values. This difference is decisive for the philosophy of education, because the moral recognition of students does not by itself resolve what knowledge should be taught or how to justify its selection. In the science curriculum, for example, the controversy between biological evolution and intelligent design requires a distinction between

¹⁰ Nel Noddings's case is distinctive in combining a prolific intellectual career—she published thirteen books as a philosopher and theorist of education—with an intense family life. A mother of ten children, she said she enjoyed the company of children and pets, described herself as a homebody and expressed her fondness for welcoming visitors.

respect for a cultural identity and the validity of an explanation. A further difficulty concerns the multiculturalist argument itself: notions such as *justice* and *respect* have diverse cultural interpretations, so appealing to them requires a justification of why certain criteria should prevail. Two value systems may contain incompatible demands, as occurs with some religious practices. In the face of these tensions, some proposals lean towards forms of cultural relativism, while others attempt to reconcile diversity with principles of universal scope.

Postmodern approaches question several assumptions of the philosophical tradition: the objectivity of judgement, the neutrality of reason, the stability of meanings and the possibility of separating knowledge from power relations (Lyotard, 1979; Peters, 1995; Blake *et al.*, 1998). From this perspective, major educational theories may function as narratives that present as universal beliefs and values that arose in specific historical circumstances and are associated with dominant groups. A recurring concern is therefore to reveal the political dimension of education and of the discourses that justify it. These approaches examine how power relations operate in educational theories and practices and attempt to incorporate interests and experiences usually excluded from Western thought. Their distrust of universal ideals leads, in some cases, to doubts about the legitimacy of a philosophy of education conceived as a unified discipline. The principal objection to this position points to a possible internal difficulty: if any general theory of education is rejected, the general claim that such theories are impossible also requires justification. The controversy is not a minor one, since it affects the capacity of the philosophy of education to ground shared judgements about what deserves to be taught and about the conditions of a desirable education.

Among the most radical critiques of the educational order are those of Paulo Freire (1970) and Ivan Illich (1971). Freire articulated a *critical pedagogy*¹¹ grounded in a humanist Marxism with existential components and oriented towards the emancipation of the oppressed. His denunciation of the banking conception of teaching challenged the model that treats the student as an empty vessel and the teacher as the person responsible for depositing content. Illich, for his part, directed the critique towards the institutional organisation of learning itself through his proposal for deschooling. Although both rejected fundamental aspects of established education, their projects had different scopes. Freire retained confidence in the transformative potential of education and in the possibility of organised public intervention. Illich questioned much more deeply the legitimacy of making mass schooling the obligatory route to education. Their approaches have circulated widely at different times: Freirean pedagogy had a broad influence in the final decades of the twentieth century, whereas Illich's proposals attracted renewed interest in later debates about educational institutions. For the latter, each person should recover responsibility for their own learning and overcome dependence on the consumption of schooling services.

From the perspective of the philosophy of education, both critiques require an examination of whether institutions foster the autonomy they claim to pursue or reproduce forms of subordination. This problem allows us to return to an observation by Charles Louis de Montesquieu about education under despotic government: "Blind obedience presupposes ignorance in the person who obeys: it also presupposes it in the person who commands, since there is no need to deliberate, doubt or reason; it is enough to will" (1748/1906, book IV, ch. III, p. 55). His analysis concerns a form of government; applied as a criterion for educational reflection, it reveals that the absence of discussion also impoverishes the judgement of those who exercise authority. Teachers who never have to explain a decision lose an opportunity to examine their own motives. The public dimension of education therefore concerns both access to teaching and the conditions under which its rules are established and revised. Demanding reasons, admitting an objection and having procedures for rectification are forms of institutional learning: they show how a rule can be binding without being exempt from examination. The critique of subordination thus leads to a specific task for the philosophy of education: distinguishing the authority needed to organise a shared activity from the particular will that imposes itself by taking advantage of a position of power.

¹¹ Critical pedagogy incorporates concepts from the Frankfurt School's critical theory into educational analysis and connects them with the possibility of transforming the social conditions of education.

In reviewing the British institutional context in *Leaders in Philosophy of Education*, Hirst (2008) expressed the expectation of a rapprochement between analytic philosophy and postmodernism. However, the transfer of ideas between the two traditions does not necessarily amount to agreement on their assumptions. The Anglo-American reception of continental thought has broadened dialogue, but disagreements persist concerning the validity of reasons, the function of critique and the scope of educational principles. Some authors consider overcoming this polarisation a condition for the development of the discipline and call for a more constructive exchange. Peters (2013) offers a more optimistic interpretation, maintaining that the distance between the two orientations has diminished to the point of being overcome. From our perspective, this conclusion is too strong. If we appeal, by analogy, to Kuhn's (1962) notion of competing paradigms, we can understand these disagreements as affecting the criteria by which each position recognises and evaluates problems. A full reconciliation therefore remains very difficult.

Dialogue can foster specific agreements in the philosophy of education without this entailing the disappearance of its fundamental differences. To assess that dialogue, we should also attend to how rival positions are presented. Mill (1859) required that the arguments of all sides be heard. This standpoint offers an educational criterion distinct from a mere exchange of opinions: understanding an objection means knowing the force it has for its defender. If teachers always present others' positions in easily refutable versions, they may produce allegiance without having developed understanding. An educational discussion requires the opposing argument to be reconstructed in such a way that those who hold it can recognise it, and the reasons that would allow one's own position to be revised to be specified. This demand can guide work between philosophical traditions even when they do not share all their criteria of validity. Identifying exactly where disagreement begins is already an intellectual achievement. Plurality thus acquires educational value when it requires responses to genuine difficulties and makes it possible to distinguish an examined conviction from doctrinal affiliation.

The expansion of the issues studied and the participation of groups previously underrepresented have given rise to an increasingly diverse discipline. Phillips (1994, p. 4456) assessed this process favorably in describing the situation in the 1990s: "The situation in the 1990s is complex and relatively healthy: philosophers work with a diversity of approaches, in a variety of fields, and the discipline is marked by a probably unprecedented eclecticism". Chambliss (1996, p. 472) acknowledged the same diversity of approaches¹², although he drew from it a more reserved assessment of the unity of purpose of the philosophy of education: "In the last decade of the twentieth century, philosophy of education scarcely resembles a discipline with a distinct purpose and a clearly established agenda. It is more accurately characterized as a field of study defined by the variety of its research and interpretive projects."

Feinberg (1995) and Phillips (1995) also noted how far the discipline remained from general agreement. Subsequent debates do not allow those differences to be regarded as resolved. The continuity of questions concerning educational aims coexists with disagreements about how to formulate and justify them. The philosophy of education can share problems without its different traditions necessarily sharing the answers or the criteria by which they assess them.

Professionalisation also had consequences that deserve examination. In their early stages, the PES and other associations restricted the participation of those who lacked accredited philosophical training. This generated a tension that was difficult to resolve: specialists were asked to address the problems of teaching, but the participation of many professionals who knew those problems first-hand was discouraged (Feinberg, 1995; Giarelli & Chambliss, 1991; Tozer, 1991). The demand for rigour could become a barrier between reflection and the experience that ought to inform it. It therefore remains pertinent to ask what philosophical education a teacher needs and what knowledge of teaching a philosopher of education needs.

¹² The plurality of traditions is accompanied by a diversity of research procedures. Among the methods shared with general philosophy, Reboul (1983) has identified five ways of proceeding: historical, reflective, logical analysis, a *contrario*, and dialectical.

The turn of the century expanded the spaces for exchange. Globalisation, international networks and encounters between researchers from different cultures encouraged the circulation of problems and perspectives. The *International Network of Philosophers of Education* (INPE), founded in 1988, exemplifies this openness. The Internet and digital technologies also contributed, changing access to knowledge and academic communication. The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the use of distance teaching and made the uncertainties of this transformation more visible. For the philosophy of education, these developments raise questions that cannot be resolved by technical means alone: what we understand by educational presence, how opportunities to participate are distributed and which relationships between teachers, students and knowledge should be preserved. Today's debate on artificial intelligence extends these questions about the means and aims of education. The PISA 2025 report observes that, across the OECD, those who do not use AI assistants for schoolwork tend to perform better than those who do, although the relationship varies according to the frequency and purpose of use. Hence its observation that "AI use is not a prerequisite for success" (OECD, 2026, p. 236). The analysis itself precludes straightforwardly attributing the differences in performance to a causal effect of these tools. The incorporation of digital resources should not be an end in itself; what matters is the educational use made of them. AI should be a complement to, rather than a substitute for, the learner's mind.

6. The relationships between educational philosophy, theory and practice

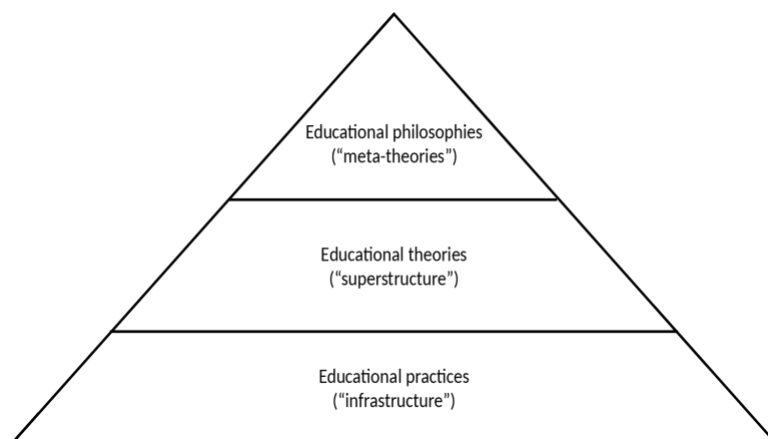
We can now clarify the place of the philosophy of education in relation to the discourses of those who teach and those who develop theories about teaching. Following Moore (1982, pp. 1-9), we shall distinguish several logical levels of activity, represented in Figure 1. At the basic level are *educational practices*: explaining, guiding, motivating, setting exercises, correcting and supporting learning. For these purposes, teachers draw on a professional vocabulary and concepts that give meaning to their decisions. When these activities become the object of systematic reflection, a second level appears: the development of *educational theories* (Moore, 1974). Their relationship with practice takes at least two forms. *Descriptive theories* seek to explain what happens, drawing on sociology among other disciplines. *Prescriptive theories* indicate how one ought to act and combine normative criteria with methodological guidance. Distinguishing the two helps to avoid a common error: believing that describing a practice is enough to justify it. The philosophical question begins precisely when we examine why a way of educating deserves to be chosen.

Kant helps us to clarify what is lost when educational experience is transmitted solely as a repertoire of customary solutions. In *On Pedagogy*, Kant (1803) distinguished a mechanical education, arising from occasions, from one organised through judgement; he also insisted that each generation receives experiences and knowledge from its predecessor and must add something to them. Tradition thus retains an educational value, but that value depends on its being open to examination. Teachers who inherit an activity need to understand what problem it was intended to solve and what reasons justified its use. Otherwise, they may preserve the procedure after the conditions that gave it meaning have changed. This perspective makes it possible to distinguish the continuity of a practice from the continuity of its justification. A school may repeat its habits while having lost the educational reasons that sustained them. Philosophical reflection helps to recover those reasons, discuss them and decide what deserves to be retained.

Prescriptive proposals may encompass an entire educational project. We may ask how to develop students' capacities, how to prepare them for a profession in science, business or care, or how to foster their participation as democratic citizens. We then speak of *general theories of education*, since they guide the formation of a particular kind of person and, frequently, the construction of a particular society. This ambition runs through much of the philosophical tradition. In the *Republic*, Plato proposed an education suitable for those who were to govern the city; Durkheim (1922) attributed to education a function of integration and social cohesion; Dewey (1916) connected school experience with the continuity of democratic life. Locke, Rousseau, Fröbel and Mill also linked their recommendations to a broader conception of human life. In many of these projects, education appears as a means of realising political, social, economic or religious aims. Recognising this connection does not amount to reducing all educational value to external usefulness: it is for the philosophy of education to discuss when an aim guides education and when it ends up subordinating

it. The comparison between Athens and Sparta illustrates the question. With the differences and limitations particular to their contexts, both cities organised education in accordance with their ideals of citizenship and collective life, assigning different weight to deliberation and military discipline (Marrou, 1985, pp. 32-45, 58-69). The contrast shows that a practice may be consistent with a social project yet still require a philosophical evaluation of that very project. Its results should not be judged apart from the human capacities it seeks to cultivate.

Figure 1. Levels of educational activity and its philosophical examination.



Source: Author's own work.

Two clarifications should be added concerning general prescriptive theories. The first concerns their justification. As prescriptions, they do not confine themselves to describing facts in the manner of empirical inquiry, but assume a commitment to certain aims and values. For this reason, data on the results of an intervention are necessary but not sufficient for accepting it. Besides finding out whether a procedure works, we must discuss whether what it achieves deserves to be pursued and whether the means employed are admissible. The philosophy of education participates in this normative justification without dispensing with the knowledge supplied by the social sciences. The second clarification concerns authorship and scope. A philosopher may develop a general educational theory, but not every educational theory arises from philosophical inquiry, nor does every philosophical reflection lead to an educational programme. The proximity of the two fields does not warrant identifying them. Their connections are better understood if we attend to the questions each formulates and the function its answers perform.

The *philosophy of education* constitutes, in the sense outlined at the beginning, a second-order activity: it examines *educational theories* and, through them or directly, *educational practices*. The latter are never devoid of assumptions. Teachers who prepare a task, help students understand an explanation or decide how to assess act in accordance with some idea of what deserves to be learnt and of the appropriate means of achieving it. Even the simplest instructions contain this commitment. Asking for silence presupposes that certain conditions of attention favour listening; proposing a written activity requires materials to be available and an educational value to be attributed to writing; organising groups responds to some expectation about shared learning. The same applies when individual discovery is chosen. We can call this presence of aims, beliefs and criteria in practice the *theory-ladenness of educational action*. Teachers need not have formulated them in a treatise for them to guide what they do. The priority of theory is, in this sense, logical: action becomes intelligible in terms of the purposes and assumptions that sustain it (Moore, 1982, p. 6). This observation extends to an educator's general choices. Granting broad freedom of initiative, insisting on the teacher's direction or educating towards a democratic, religious or political ideal implies adopting some theoretical orientation. Experience may lead to its revision, but that revision also proceeds from criteria that allow a result to be recognised as satisfactory or problematic. We must therefore distinguish between testing a proposal for the first time and modifying one that has already been applied: in both cases, action is organised from a prior framework, although that framework may be transformed. This idea is related to the discussion of

the theory-ladenness of observation in the philosophy of science, associated with authors such as Popper, Hanson, Kuhn, Feyerabend and Putnam. In education, its consequence is particularly practical: making assumptions explicit facilitates their criticism and the assumption of responsibility for teaching decisions. To this responsibility we may add the demand for consistency between declared principles and the conduct that makes them visible. In his correspondence with Lucilius, Seneca maintained that philosophy requires each person to live according to their own rule, that life should neither disagree with discourse nor be inconsistent with itself (Séneca, n.d., epistle 20, § 2). His observation concerns the exercise of philosophy as a way of life; transferred to education, it invites us to consider the teacher's example as part of what is taught. A discourse favourable to critical examination loses credibility when the person delivering it punishes every objection; a defence of justice becomes problematic if assessment criteria change arbitrarily. In these cases, the contradiction compromises the pedagogical relationship because it makes it difficult for students to recognise the reasons underpinning authority. Examining practice therefore includes comparing what an institution claims to value with the opportunities it offers to exercise it.

To give concrete form to its proposals, educational theory draws on knowledge from other disciplines. Psychology helps to study the development of abstraction; sociology makes it possible to examine the effects of school organisation and the separation of students; politics intervenes in decisions on citizenship and the curriculum; management and organisation address resources, the size of schools and the functions of those responsible for them. However, this knowledge does not eliminate the differences between the frameworks through which it is interpreted. A liberal, community-oriented, socialist, anarchist, conservative, feminist or religious orientation may attribute different value to autonomy, cohesion, authority or equality. Idealist, empiricist, pragmatist, phenomenological, existentialist, Marxist and humanist traditions likewise offer different conceptions of knowledge and the person. The point is not to attach a philosophical label to every decision, but to recognise the horizon that makes a proposal reasonable. A single educational philosophy may accommodate several educational theories and diverse ways of putting them into practice. The inverse relationship does not perform the same function: a particular theory does not, by itself, constitute the general framework from which entire philosophies are justified. This difference in scope allows us to understand the mediating role of theory without artificially separating reflection from teaching.

The *philosophy of education* may draw on imaginary situations and ideal models to examine the consequences of a principle. Such exercises allow a question to be isolated without initially considering all the constraints on its application. *Educational theory*, when it seeks to guide intervention, must incorporate those constraints: available resources, institutional conditions, students' possibilities and foreseeable effects. Thus, alongside the effectiveness of a measure, understood as its capacity to achieve an objective, it considers its efficiency, that is, the relationship between results and the resources employed. *Educational practice* then provides a domain for testing and revision. However, a theory cannot anticipate every classroom situation or replace the judgement of the person teaching. Its function is to articulate criteria, give coherence to activities and guide the curriculum.

Dunne's (2025) recent discussion of the presence of philosophy in initial teacher education reinforces this idea: a conception of teaching competence confined to procedures leaves out the normative commitments of teaching. Educating teachers also requires preparing them to examine the reasons for their decisions and to answer for them in concrete situations. Attention to individual differences gives this need for judgement a precise content. At the conclusion of *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Locke observed that each person's mind has some peculiarity, like their face, that distinguishes it from all others (Locke, 1824, § 216). Locke was referring to the education of a young gentleman¹³, whose social horizon must be kept in view. With this qualification, the observation allows us to recognise a problem that also affects a common education: equal consideration does not require every intervention to be identical. The same correction may help

¹³ Although his intention was not to describe a specific pedagogical method, José Ortega y Gasset (2017) made a similar observation in 1933-1935, relating the ideals of life of various figures (the Spanish *hidalgo*, the French *gentilhomme*, the German *junker* and the English *gentleman*) to certain technical requirements concerning their education.

one student persevere and lead another to abandon a task. The teacher's decision requires interpreting the situation, listening to the student's reasons and assessing the effect of the help offered. This adaptation must be justifiable through shared educational criteria. Attending to individuality thus retains its educational meaning without turning the teacher's preferences into an unquestionable norm or leaving students subject to unpredictable decisions.

Philosophical influence can reach practice without passing through an explicitly formulated educational theory. Socratic dialogue provides a classic example. Attention to observation and measurement, characteristic of the positivist tradition and of authors such as Ernst Mach, offers another point of encounter, although measuring results does not yet amount to assessing their educational meaning. Philosophical choices become particularly visible in the curriculum (Siegel, Phillips & Callan, 2018): replacing the evolutionary explanation in biology with exclusively creationist teaching would imply adopting a particular relationship between knowledge, belief and authority. In turn, school experience raises questions for philosophy: why we teach in one way rather than another, what research on learning contributes and how cultural transmission changes when digital media intervene. Artificial intelligence brings this last problem into the present. Cassinadri (2024) analyses the tension between solving tasks with technological assistance and developing the student's intellectual character. From the perspective of the philosophy of education, it then matters whether the resource used encourages the exercise of the capacities to be developed or allows that exercise to be dispensed with. According to the PISA 2025 report, in science, almost daily use of AI for learning is associated with lower scores than those of non-users, whereas weekly use yields similar results after socioeconomic status is taken into account (OECD, 2026, pp. 238–239). In the foreword, Mathias Cormann, Secretary-General of the OECD, states that AI “should add to students' effortful learning rather than replace it” (OECD, 2026, p. 4), that is, AI should complement learning, not replace it. The philosophical criterion of assessment should focus not only on the result achieved by the student, but also on the relationship they maintain with knowledge in producing it.

Another avenue of connection consists in uncovering the assumptions that certain practices incorporate without making them explicit. Genealogies inspired by Michel Foucault (1971, pp. 145-172) and deconstructive readings associated with Jacques Derrida (1972, pp. 56-57) allow us to question the origins of categories, hierarchies and procedures that are usually taken as self-evident. In bringing these perspectives into education, it is important to ask how particular ways of examining, classifying or recognising authority came to be established. Their contribution does not consist in providing an immediate recipe for the classroom, but in showing the historical contingency of practices that appear natural. We may situate these works within a *social philosophy* or a *historical epistemology of education*. From this perspective too, it is confirmed that educational practice offers problems to philosophical reflection and that the latter can transform how the former is understood.

The examination of language remains a central task of the discipline. The concepts used by theorists and teachers are not inconsequential elements: they allow certain actions to be recognised as teaching, learning or education and justify some expectations concerning them. We may ask what distinguishes educating from training, when we can say that someone understands a subject matter and what reasons warrant attributing knowledge to them. Other questions concern *equality of opportunity*, the student's *freedom* and the scope of *democracy* within the school institution. Biesta (2022) shows the importance of this analysis by questioning whether describing the school simply as a learning environment allows its educational character to be understood. The expression leaves open questions about what is learnt, for what purpose and through which relationships. The philosophy of education helps to formulate them and prevents the familiarity of a word from being confused with the clarity of its meaning.

Peters (1966) devoted particular attention to equality, freedom and democracy, concepts whose educational value depends on how they relate to social life. Moore (1982, pp. 54-62) and Siegel, Phillips and Callan (2018) have also examined the tensions that arise when these ideals are turned into school decisions. Affirming that they are desirable does not resolve, for example, which

inequalities an institution should correct or how to reconcile the student's freedom with the teacher's responsibility. Kant (1803) formulated this difficulty from within the educational relationship: accustoming learners to enduring a restriction on their freedom while also guiding them to make good use of it. This tension requires us to question the meaning and duration of adult intervention. If the teacher's direction permanently prevents students from deliberating, the development of autonomy is postponed indefinitely. Yet the absence of guidance does not ensure that they can recognise the consequences of their actions or respect the freedom of others. We can draw from this problem a requirement for assessing pedagogical authority: its limits must be comprehensible and open up increasing opportunities for decision-making. Teaching students to justify a choice, review an error and take responsibility for a concrete task allows us to examine whether the assistance received expands their capacity to act. Freedom then functions as a criterion for judging educational means, as well as constituting one of its aims.

Analysis may address current problems or adopt a historical perspective. In the latter case, rereading Plato, Rousseau, Fröbel, Spencer, Mill or Dewey requires reconstructing their assumptions about human nature, knowledge, methods and the educated person. Later contributions from psychology or the philosophy of science allow these assumptions to be discussed, provided that reconstructing a theory is not confused with evaluating it from the present. Barrow's (1975) study of Plato provides an example of this examination of *freedom* and *equality* within a specific educational project. Understood in this way, the history of the philosophy of education provides resources for revising our own convictions.

The evaluation of educational theories brings together the preceding tasks. We must attend to the clarity of their concepts, their internal consistency, their relationship with other knowledge, the plausibility of their assumptions about people and the moral justification of their aims. It also matters that they can guide practice, allow learning from results and offer fruitful answers to the problems they face. Compatibility with prevailing convictions or institutions does not, by itself, amount to a guarantee of validity: those very convictions may require criticism. Biesta (2024) insists on the need to recognise what is specifically educational, rather than subordinating teaching to external agendas and measurable outcomes. We may establish the effectiveness of a procedure without yet having justified its educational value. Philosophy must therefore examine the selection of the curriculum and methods as well as the conceptions of *authority*, *freedom* and *equality* that accompany them. If practice incorporates theory, errors in the latter may carry over into students' experience and limit their educational possibilities. Philosophical scrutiny thus acquires a concrete social responsibility in addition to its interest as academic inquiry.

7. Conclusion

Throughout this account, we have distinguished two questions that should remain connected: how education actually develops and how it ought to be guided. The first requires knowledge of practices and their conditions; the second demands the justification of aims, criteria and decisions. We have also shown that, from a classroom activity to a curriculum policy, educational action rests on assumptions that can be subjected to philosophical examination. The *philosophy of education* therefore helps to guide *educational theories* and, through them, *educational practices*. Its public responsibility becomes particularly visible when institutions are exposed to changes dictated by partisan or economic interests. Shared philosophical deliberation can foster lasting agreements and prevent the education of children and young people from depending exclusively on these disputes. It does not guarantee the disappearance of conflict, but it helps to demand reasons for what is decided and for its consequences. This connection with people's lives allows the philosophy of education to be recognised as *applied philosophy*. Dewey (1916) expressed the social usefulness of philosophy as follows:

The fact that philosophic problems arise because of widespread and widely felt difficulties in social practice is disguised because philosophers become a specialized class which uses a technical language, unlike the vocabulary in which the direct difficulties are stated. But where a system [philosophical] becomes influential, its connection with a conflict of interests calling for some program of social adjustment may always be discovered. At this point, the intimate connection between

philosophy and education appears. In fact, education offers a vantage ground from which to penetrate to the human, as distinct from the technical, significance of philosophic discussions [...]. The educational point of view enables one to envisage the philosophic problems where they arise and thrive [...].

The characterisation of philosophy as a *general theory of education*, proposed by Dewey (1916), emphasises this continuity but does not exhaust the functions of the discipline. Postmodern objections have stressed analysis and critique rather than the elaboration of general systems. Nevertheless, an absolute separation between educational philosophy and theory is not convincing either. A philosopher may rationally justify a curriculum or defend an orientation in teaching and, in doing so, formulate an educational theory. Another may criticise that proposal and favour an alternative through their arguments. Plato's case alone is enough to remind us that constructing theories is not an activity foreign to philosophy. The distinction we have defended concerns, rather, their predominant functions: educational theory organises recommendations for action, while the philosophy of education examines their meaning, foundations and validity. The latter therefore retains a constructive dimension alongside its critical task, without the two being confused.

Figure 1 brings these relationships together. At the base are *educational practices*, encompassing activities as diverse as teaching, learning, training, demonstrating, playing, reciting and punishing. The intermediate level corresponds to *educational theories*, composed of principles and orientations that give meaning to those activities. At the upper level is the *philosophy of education*, responsible for clarifying the concepts and examining the justifications of the other two levels, as well as assessing the results of their relationship. The vertical arrangement expresses a logical difference between tasks without attributing greater professional dignity to some than to others. Theories need possible practices in relation to which to guide action; philosophy needs educational problems that allow its questions to be made concrete. In turn, examining aims and assumptions may modify *theory* and transform *practice*. Figure 1 should therefore be read in conjunction with this reciprocal dependence.

We have sought to characterise the philosophy of education without restricting its *extension* to the point of impoverishing its *intension*. The historical diversity of schools and methods makes a definition satisfying everyone difficult, but does not prevent us from proposing one that captures the functions examined. We shall understand the *philosophy of education* as the branch of philosophy that investigates and justifies the aims of education, clarifies the concepts used in *theories* and *educational practices*, addresses the philosophical problems both raise and critically assesses their assumptions and results. This definition recognises the plurality of approaches and preserves a common requirement: to offer reasons concerning what we do when we educate and the ways of life that this education helps to make possible.

References

- Agustín de Hipona. (2003). *El maestro o Sobre el lenguaje* (A. Domínguez, Trad.). Trotta. (Obra original escrita ca. 389).
- Aristóteles. (1873a). *Moral a Nicómaco* (P. de Azcárate, trad.; Obras de Aristóteles, vol. 1). Medina y Navarro.
- Aristóteles. (1873b). *Política* (P. de Azcárate, trad.; Obras de Aristóteles, vol. 3). Medina y Navarro.
- Barrow, R. (1975). *Plato, Utilitarianism and Education*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Barrow, R. (1994). Philosophy of Education: Analytic tradition. En T. Husen & T. N. Postlethwaite (Eds.) (1994), *The International Encyclopedia of Education* (pp. 4 442–4 447). Pergamon Press.

- Biesta, G. (2022). The school is not a learning environment: How language matters for the practical study of educational practices. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 44(2), 336–346. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2022.2046556>.
- Biesta, G. (2024). Taking Education Seriously: The Ongoing Challenge. *Educational Theory*, 74(3), 434–448. <https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12646>.
- Blake, N., Smeyers, P., Smith, R. & Standish, P. (1998). *Thinking Again: Education after Postmodernism*. Bergin & Garvey.
- Burbules, N. C. (1997a). Session plénière, conférence annuelle de PES. PES (Ed.), *Philosophy of Education*. Philosophy of Education Society.
- Burbules, N. C. (1997b). Philosophy of education. En M. Ben-Peretz (Ed.), *International Encyclopedic Dictionary of Education*. Routledge.
- Burbules, N. C. (2000). Philosophy of education. En B. Moon, M. Ben-Peretz & S. Brown (Eds.), *Routledge international companion to education*. Routledge.
- Cassinadri, G. (2024). ChatGPT and the Technology-Education Tension: Applying Contextual Virtue Epistemology to a Cognitive Artifact. *Philosophy & Technology*, 37(14). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-024-00701-7>.
- Chambliss, J. J. (1996). History of philosophy of education. En J. J. Chambliss (Ed.), *Philosophy of Education: An Encyclopedia* (pp. 461–472). Garland Publishing.
- Dearden, R. F. (1982). Philosophy of education, 1952–82. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 30(1), 57–71. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3121071>.
- Derrida, J. (1972). *Positions*. Les Éditions de Minuit.
- Descartes, R. (1637). *Discours de la méthode pour bien conduire sa raison, & chercher la vérité dans les sciences*. Ian Maire.
- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and Education*. Macmillan.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and Education*. Macmillan.
- Dunne, G. (2025). Deliberate Ignorance and Myopic Intellectualist Understandings of Expertise: Are Philosophers of Education Epistemic Trespassers in Initial Teacher Education Programmes? *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 44, 149–166. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-024-09939-2>.
- Durkheim, E. (1922). *Éducation et sociologie*. Félix Alcan.
- Edel, A. (1972). Analytic philosophy of education at the crossroads. *Educational Theory*, 22(2), 131–152. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5446.1972.tb01273.x>.
- Ericson, D. (1992). Philosophical issues in education. En M. Alvin (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Educational Research* (pp. 1 002–1 007). Macmillan.
- Feinberg, W. (1995). The discourse of philosophy of education. En W. Kohli (Ed.), *Critical Conversations in Philosophy of Education* (pp. 24–33). Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1971). *Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire*. En S. Bachelard, G. Canguilhem, F. Dagognet, M. Foucault, M. Gueroult, & J. Laplanche, *Hommage à Jean Hyppolite* (pp. 145–172). Presses Universitaires de France.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogía del oprimido*. Tierra Nueva.

- Gallego Vicente, P., Carbaño Nieto, T., & García-Sánchez, F. (2025). Escuela Katiuskas. Un cambio de paradigma educativo y social. *Bajo Palabra*, 39, 45–66. <https://doi.org/10.15366/bp2025.39.002>.
- Giarelli, J. M. & Chambliss, J. J. (1991). The foundations of professionalism: Fifty years of the Philosophy of Education Society in retrospect. *Educational Theory*, 41(3), 265–274. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5446.1991.00265.x>.
- Hardie, C. D. (1941/1962). *Truth and Fallacy in Educational Theory*. Teachers College Bureau of Publications.
- Hirst, P. (1965). Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowledge. En R. D. Archambault (Ed.), *Philosophical Analysis and Education* (pp. 113–138). Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Hirst, P. (2008). Philosophy of education in the UK: The institutional context. En L. Waks (Ed.), *Leaders in philosophy of education* (pp. 305–311). Sense Publishers.
- Hirst, P. & Peters, R. S. (1970). *The Logic of Education. Students Library of Education*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Hobbes, T. (1651). *Leviathan, or, The matter, forme, & power of a common-wealth ecclesiasticall and civil*. Andrew Crooke.
- Hume, D. (1739). *A treatise of human nature: Being an attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects* (Vol. 1). John Noon.
- Illich, I. (1971). *Deschooling Society*. Harper & Row.
- Jover, G. (2001). Philosophy of education in Spain at the threshold of the 21st century – Origins, political contexts, and prospects. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 20(4), 361–385. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1011855312033>.
- Jover Olmeda, G., Laudo Castillo, X., & Vilanou Torrano, C. (2014). Juan Zaragüeta y los orígenes de la Filosofía de la Educación en España: Un pedagogo entre dos mundos. *Revista Española de Pedagogía*, 72(258), 327–344. <https://doi.org/10.22550/2174-0909.2597>.
- Kaminsky, J. S. (1993). *A New History of Educational Philosophy*. Greenwood Press.
- Kaminsky, J. S. (1996). Professional organizations in philosophy of education. En J. J. Chambliss (Ed.), *Philosophy of Education: An Encyclopedia* (pp. 475–481). Garland.
- Kant, I. (1803). *Über Pädagogik* (F. T. Rink, ed.). Friedrich Nicolovius.
- Kneller, G. F. (1971). *Introduction to the philosophy of education*. Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Kohli, W. (1995). Contextualizing the conversation. En W. Kohli (Ed.), *Critical Conversations in Philosophy of Education* (pp. xiii–xvi). Routledge.
- Kuhn, T. S. (1962). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. University of Chicago Press.
- Lea, K. E. (2024). School as a place for Bildung and flourishing. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 58(5), 808–828. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopedu/qhae070>.
- Leach M. S. (1991). Mothers of in(ter)vention: Women's writing in philosophy of education. *Educational Theory*, 41(3), 287–300. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5446.1991.00287.x>.

- Locke, J. (1824). *Some thoughts concerning education*. En *The works of John Locke* (12.^a ed., vol. 8). Rivington. (Obra original publicada en 1693).
- Lyotard, J. F. (1979). *La condition postmoderne*. Les Éditions de Minuit.
- Maloney, K. E. (1985). Philosophy of education: Definitions of the field, 1942–1982. *Educational Studies* 16(3), 235–258. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326993es1603_3.
- Manzanero, D. (2020). La modernización del sistema educativo y penitenciario de la mujer: El impacto de la herencia krausista en la obra de Concepción Arenal. *Araucaria. Revista Iberoamericana de Filosofía, Política, Humanidades y Relaciones Internacionales*, 22(43), 537–559. <https://doi.org/10.12795/araucaria.2020.i43.26>.
- Manzanero, D. (2021). La pedagogía del arte de M. B. Cossío: Un modelo de educación inclusiva en la universidad a través del video participativo y el ApS. *Cauriensia. Revista Anual de Ciencias Eclesiásticas*, 16, 475–500. <https://doi.org/10.17398/2340-4256.16.475>.
- Marrou, H.-I. (1985). *Historia de la educación en la Antigüedad*. Editorial Akal.
- Marx, K. (1867). *Das Kapital: Kritik der politischen Oekonomie* (Bd. 1). Otto Meissner.
- McLaren, P. (1997). *Revolutionary Multiculturalism: Pedagogies of Dissent for the New Millennium*. Routledge.
- Meyer, K. (2024). Moral Education Through the Fostering of Reasoning Skills. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 27, 41–55. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10677-023-10367-3>.
- Mill, J. S. (1859). *On liberty*. John W. Parker and Son.
- Montesquieu, C. L. S. (1906). *El espíritu de las leyes* (S. García del Mazo, trad.; t. I). Librería General de Victoriano Suárez. (Obra original publicada en 1748).
- Moore, T. W. (1974). *Educational Theory: An Introduction*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Moore, T. W. (1982). *Philosophy of Education: An Introduction*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Nature (1967). John Dewey's Ghost. *Nature*, 213, 113–114. <https://doi.org/10.1038/213113a0>.
- Nelson, T. W. (1996). Literature in philosophy of education. En J. J. Chambliss (Ed.), *Philosophy of Education: An Encyclopedia* (pp. 472–475). Garland Publishing.
- Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*. University of California Press.
- Noddings, N. (1995). *Philosophy of Education*. Westview Press.
- OECD (2026). *PISA 2025 results (Volume I): Future-ready students*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/73451bc5-en>.
- Ortega y Gasset, J. (2017). *Meditación de la técnica*. En *Obras Completas V*, pp. 553–605. Taurus / Revista de Occidente.
- Peters, M. A. (Ed.) (1995). *Education and the Postmodern Condition*. Bergin & Garvey.
- Peters, M. A. (2013). The last post? Post-postmodernism and the linguistic u-turn. *Linguistic and Philosophical Investigations*, 12(1), 34–46.
- Peters, R. S. (1966). *Ethics and Education*. Routledge.

- Phillips, D. C. (1985). Philosophy of education. En T. Husen & T. N. Postlethwaite (Eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Education* (pp. 3 859–3 877). Pergamon Press.
- Phillips, D. C. (1994). Philosophy of education: Historical overview. En T. Husen & T. N. Postlethwaite (Eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Education* (pp. 4 447–4 456). Pergamon Press.
- Phillips, D. C. (1995). Counting down to the millennium. En W. Kohli (Ed.), *Critical Conversations in Philosophy of Education* (pp. 34–42). Routledge.
- Platón. (1872). *La República o de lo justo* (P. de Azcárate, trad.; Obras completas de Platón, tomos 7–8). Medina y Navarro.
- Reboul, O. (1983). Les méthodes de la philosophie de l'éducation. *Enrahonar; Quaderns Defilosofia*, 5, 85–92.
- Robert, A. D. (2023). Educational sciences in France. History and current events. *Studi sulla Formazione/Open Journal of Education*, 26(2), 101–106. <https://doi.org/10.36253/ssf-14980>.
- Rorty, R. (Ed.) (1967). *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Rousseau, J.-J. (1817). *Emilio, o De la educación* (J. Marchena, trad.; tomo 1). Imprenta de Pedro Beaume.
- Russ, J. (1994). *La marche des idées contemporaines. Un panorama de la modernité*. Armand Colin.
- Russell, B. (1926). *Education and the good life*. Boni & Liveright.
- Santos Pérez, M. L., & Valencia Olivero, N. Y. (2025). Consideraciones preliminares sobre la injusticia epistémica en la educación superior. Estudio de caso. *Bajo Palabra*, 39, 87–102. <https://doi.org/10.15366/bp2025.39.004>.
- Scheffler, I. (1960). *The Language of Education*. Charles C Thomas Pub Ltd.
- Séneca, L. A. (s. f.). *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*. The Latin Library.
- Siegel, H. (1988). *Educating Reason: Rationality, Critical Thinking, and Education*. Routledge.
- Siegel, H., Phillips, D. C. & Callan, E. (2018). Philosophy of Education. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- Smeyers, P. (1994). Philosophy of education: Western European perspectives. En T. Husen & T. N. Postlethwaite (Eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Education*, 2nd edition (pp. 4 456–4 461). Pergamon Press.
- Smeyers P. & Marshall, J. D. (1995). The Wittgenstein frame of reference and philosophy of education at the end of the Twentieth century. En P. Smeyers & J. D. Marshall (Eds.), *Philosophy and Education Accepting Wittgenstein's Challenge*. Kluwer.
- Smith, R. (2023). Forms of knowledge and forms of philosophy. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 57(1), 65–76. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopedu/qhad007>.
- Soltis, J. (1971). *Philosophy and Education: Eightieth Yearbook of the National Society of the Study of Education*. Chicago: NSSE.
- Stone, L. (Ed.) (1994). *The Education Feminism Reader*. Routledge.

- St. Pierre, E. A. (2000). Poststructural Feminism in Education: An Overview. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 13(5), 477–515. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390050156422>.
- Taylor, R. M. (2026). Seventy-Five Years of Educational Theory: Foundations and Futures. *Educational Theory*, 76(1), 7–15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.70076>.
- Tomás de Aquino. (1970). *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate: Quaestiones 8–12* (A. Dondaine, Ed.; Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita, t. 22, vol. 2, fasc. 1). Ad Sanctae Sabinae. (Obra original escrita entre 1256 y 1259).
- Tozer S. (1991). PES and School Reform. *Educational Theory*, 41(3), 301–310. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5446.1991.00301.x>.