



TEACHING IN A DISTANT CLASSROOM

Crossing Borders for Global Transformation



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Philosophy of Education 101



Once when Mike was teaching educational philosophy in an undergraduate class in the U.S., a student piped up and said, "I'm not sure why I need to know about philosophy and all this stuff. I just want to be a teacher and help kids." Mike was about to blow a gasket and intensely challenge this remark when he realized that this perspective was not far from what some of his own university colleagues believed. In fact, the student voiced what many teachers around the world think: "Philosophy of education isn't really relevant to me or my teaching." But they're wrong.

A philosophy of education plays a tremendous role in what happens in the classroom. A teacher's philosophy of education, whether she realizes it or not, is her guiding compass. It is the plumb line for all she does. It steers her when she is designing a course syllabus, setting goals and objectives; it directs her as she designs examinations and homework assignments. She may not even be aware that she has a philosophy of education, but it's influencing the way she teaches, *what* she teaches and *how* she responds to students. Even Mike's student was stating his true philosophy of education when he said "I just want to help kids." That is a part of educational phi-

losophy; it deals with education's purposes—to help children. That student's desire to help children is a guiding belief that will impact his classroom teaching.

For those teaching crossculturally there are two main reasons for having a well-formed philosophy of education. First, a philosophy of education helps us discern clear goals, what materials are vital and what topics need to be covered. It guides us in teaching, lesson plans, relationships with students, grading, curriculum and textbook choices. Second, all teachers, no matter how experienced, will face new and unfamiliar challenges in another culture, and some of their presuppositions and approaches to teaching simply will not work. By having a clearly stated philosophy of education, a teacher in a cross-cultural classroom can more easily discern what conflicts and/or what fits with the host culture and make necessary adjustments.

This chapter addresses the questions "What is a philosophy of education?" and "How do I form one?" Our goal is to help you understand and develop a philosophy of education from a distinctly Christian perspective.

THINKING ABOUT PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Knowing educational philosophy stimulates a reflective attitude that enables teachers to learn from experiences and theory. North American culture is not very reflective. We are more concerned with pragmatic actions and results than with theory. Our concern is for the *how* and not the *why*. We often fail to realize that everything we do in the classroom has a philosophical dimension. When teachers discuss what should be included in the curriculum for a course of study or how to best teach particular information, their responses and ideas grow out of their underlying philosophical beliefs.

Teachers who grasp the importance of educational philosophy and who then reflect systematically about their practices are better equipped to improve students' learning. Their awareness enables them to better understand themselves, their teaching, their beliefs and values, and their students. They become deliberate about what

Philosophy of education is the study of questions about education and its purpose(s), the process of education, the nature of knowing and the nature of human beings. It deals with the relationship between education and society, education and culture, and education and government. A teacher's philosophy of education answers questions about the ideals of education, the teacher's role, what should be taught and by what methods.

must be able to think intelligently about issues that underlie educational practices and how their responses impact their teaching and students. Teachers must daily consider questions regarding their educational philosophy, in both words and actions, as they present knowledge and interact with students.

In the final analysis, no educational practice can proceed without a philosophy of education. Every policy or procedure is laden with assumptions of what education should be and how the goals of education should be carried out. If teachers become more aware of this, they can better assess their teaching. Thus teachers must

they teach and how they present information. Understanding educational philosophy enables teachers to think more clearly and decisively about a wide range of issues. Without an understanding of educational philosophy and theory, teachers' responses are more likely to be arbitrary and short-sighted. Teachers must have a coherent theory that guides their thinking about education. Philosophy sets up the aims of education and projects ways in which teachers can meet these ends. The bottom line is that philosophy gives direction to educational practices and decisions.

In addition, educational philosophy teaches how and what to question. Philosophy enables teachers to raise critical questions. Professional educators

maintain a close relationship between educational philosophy and their teaching.

For the Christian educator, philosophy of education is essential because Christianity and the philosophy of education address the same basic questions: the meaning of life, morality and the value of knowledge. How you answer these questions forms a distinct point of view and influences education.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Philosophy of education deals with three tiers of questions. The first tier tries to answer big-picture questions such as the meaning of life, the human condition, the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong, and even the existence of God. The second tier responds to the first by looking at issues such as the role of government in education, political influences, social and economic structures, and beliefs about gender and human rights. When those questions are dealt with and definitive answers are formulated, the third tier moves to pragmatic aspects of teaching. It asks questions such as "What should be

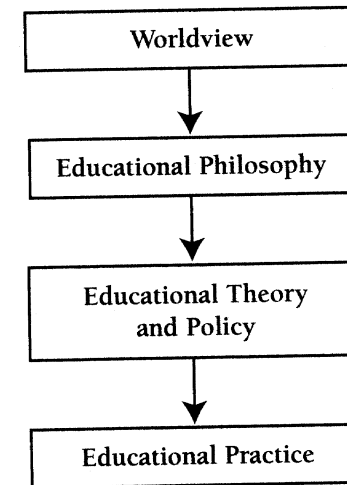


Figure 2. (Adapted from Peterson, 1986.)

taught?" and "What is the role of the teacher?" and deals with approaches to learning, assessment and overall goals of education.

This may sound overly theoretical, but worlds can clash in an overseas classroom when a teacher enters from another culture and worldview and tries to apply his own teaching techniques. A society's philosophy of education is birthed out of that culture's worldview and what it values most. Then from that educational philosophy come policy and ultimately classroom practice. Figure 2 diagrams the progression from worldview to educational practice.

Let's look at some examples of how philosophy of education is influenced by governments' ideology and culture.

The former Soviet Union's worldview was based on socialist ideals. One of the primary aspects of this worldview was that peasants (farmers) were the backbone of a workers' proletarian society. As a result, a month of potato picking on communal farms was incorporated into the sophomore college curriculum. Every sophomore in every university across the Soviet Union knew that the month of October was devoted to picking potatoes. Classes were cancelled, and they were not allowed to go home for that month. They packed a small bag of belongings and off they went to live with "Farmer Cherkovsky." The purpose of this exercise was to reinforce into every privileged university sophomore the realization that farm work was hard and noble. Citizens of a great communist country should never lose sight of that fact. The government's worldview influenced the philosophy of education which then influenced classroom practice. Worldview: Peasantry is the backbone of a socialist system. Philosophy of education: Peasantry should not be forgotten by students. Classroom practice: Students pick potatoes to reconnect with the peasantry.

One communist nation in Asia executed criminals every six months in the public square. The government required all high school and university students to attend these public executions in cities and towns across the nation. The communist regime wanted to reinforce to its citizenry that crime was not tolerated. Part of their world-

view as a communist totalitarian government was to impart fear to their citizens—fear of breaking any law or going against the government. This worldview of governing shaped the nation's philosophy of education, which in turn showed up in classroom practice. So young impressionable college and high school students were required to view an execution as a part of the national curriculum, reminding them that the government was in control. Although public executions were done away with by 1985, this principle is still a vital part of this nation's philosophy of education today. Worldview: Society needs a totalitarian system to survive. Philosophy of education: Students must be taught that government is always to be obeyed. Classroom practice: Expose students to the consequences of disobeying the government.

Students in the Islamic nation of Afghanistan are raised to have respect for their elders and those in authority. Because of this, students wholeheartedly believe that teachers are their superiors. As a result, students in Afghanistan must stand in class when asking or answering a question to show respect for their teachers. Worldview: One's elders are to be treated with the utmost respect. Philosophy of education: Part of education is to teach students to respect their elders. Classroom practice: A student must always stand when asking or answering a question of the teacher.

A nation's worldview has a tremendous impact on what takes place in the classroom. When we teach in a distant classroom, our effectiveness depends on knowing as much as possible about the host nation's philosophy of education and having a well-formed one of our own. When Teri taught in China she initially believed that as a teacher she needed to walk around the classroom, moving among the students to make connections and to hold their attention. She had always been taught that way. In fact, her favorite teachers were those who didn't stay behind a desk but were hands-on and interacted physically with the students. (Her philosophy of education was informing her beliefs about the role of the teacher and how students learn.) Little did she know that her students were completely unable

William W., Ph.D., Christianity and Comparative Religions, Asia

I team taught Judaism and Christianity with a Chinese professor who occasionally translated technical terms or unfamiliar concepts for me in class. He is a member of the Communist Party and admits that he does not embrace my worldview. I was shocked when he suggested that I tell my Western friends, "If they want to see the effects of sin, tell them to come here. Everyone here does as he pleases with no thought for others. I wish everyone would become a real Christian." Despite his atheistic ideological background, he enthusiastically supports my work.

to learn because they were so uncomfortable with their teacher roaming around the classroom.

When she realized she wasn't connecting with the students and saw the frightened looks on their faces, she asked if she might observe a Chinese colleague's class. There she learned that the teacher never leaves the lectern or moves from behind the desk and doesn't make physical contact with students. What Teri believed to be a good teaching practice was actually hindering students' learning. Her underlying American philosophy of education didn't work in her Chinese classroom experience.

The Chinese philosophy of education is based on examinations. Students are taught by rote and memorization in order to pass a series of exams throughout their educational careers. This focus on the teacher's giving students information and knowledge to memorize for the exam is called "duck stuffing" by Chinese educators. The practice fills students with all the necessary facts and figures so that at the national examinations they can regurgitate the information and pass the exam. Duck-stuffing philosophy doesn't leave room for creative thinking or problem-solving skills. But Teri's internal philosophy of education cried out that students need critical thinking skills for the twenty-first-century global community. She had to reformulate her

purposes and goals and teach in a way that students could receive it.

So she gradually weaned her students from duck stuffing by explaining to them that classroom practices were going to look a little different in her classroom. Carefully, and always with clear explanations, Teri brought her students into a less teacher-centered classroom, into a more student-centered environment. In order to do this, she had to know what her purposes were, where she was going, and what she wanted the students to be able to do when the class was over. All of this is philosophy of education in practice.

DEVELOPING A PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Developing a philosophy of education allows teachers to become familiar with the major questions of education. It helps them think through these questions and begin to steer their thinking toward the classroom. When a teacher considers these questions and is able to answer them, the task is to take the "theoretical" answers and move them into classroom practices. This is what Teri had to work through in China. These are the questions she and all teachers need to ask to form a philosophy of education:

1. What is the basis of knowledge and truth?
2. What are the purposes, aims and goals of education?
3. How should teachers view their students?
4. What should make up the curriculum content, and how should it be organized?
5. What role should academics and spiritual/moral growth of the student play in education?
6. What is the nature and role of the teacher?
7. What approaches to teaching should be used?
8. What are the roles of government in education?
9. What are the roles of parents in education?
10. What are the roles of students in education?

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that studies the nature and scope of knowledge. It is the theory of knowing and knowledge. It centers on notions of truth and belief. Epistemologists examine the justifications for knowledge claims. Epistemology asks, "Do you really know what you think you know?" and if so, "How do you know what you know?"

These seemingly theoretical questions actually force us to articulate and plan for the basic outcomes of education. When a philosophy of education is intentionally defined, educators can then select the aims of education and effectively choose course content as well as teaching methods (or techniques) to promote them. Every educational philosophy has to encounter the hard realities of the classroom—it stands or falls according to the human experience. That's true for all classrooms around the world.

KNOWLEDGE AND TEACHING

Education by its very nature is intended to develop "knowing" of some kind. The foundation of education is an understanding of the nature and scope of knowledge. Because of this, epistemology is of pressing interest to educators and plays a major role in developing an educational philosophy. Epistemology attempts to answer the questions of knowledge.

- What is truth?
- What are the sources of knowledge?
- How is knowledge determined?
- What does it mean to know?
- How may knowing be promoted?
- How are knowledge claims derived? From divine revelation, logic, intuition, empirical evidence or subjective personal experience?

Knowledge is usually based on some type of authority, research or concepts of reality. For instance, in many Islamic nations, the Qur'an (along with the Hadith) is the authority for all knowledge. Therefore their epistemology comes from what they believe to be Qur'anic truth. The Qur'an teaches that women are deficient in intelligence (Hadith 1:181-82) and that two women are equal in value to one man. This is evidenced in their courts by the fact that a woman's testimony is worth only half that of a man's (Parshall, 1994, p. 179). Because women are not considered as intelligent as men, education for women is viewed as an inappropriate use of time and resources. Education is available to

Scott (and Christy) G., J.D., Law Professor, Romania

Being a missionary is like most endeavors; you have good days, bad days, and in-between days. There can be times when you wonder, "Is any of this getting through?" As in American law schools, we use the Socratic method as much as possible here. Instead of simply downloading information into the student's head through lecturing, we try to draw out understanding through questioning. We attempt to lead students to logical conclusions through a series of questions, so they learn how to actually think for themselves. This is *not* the Romanian way, and it can be challenging at times.

However, in a class one Monday, the Socratic method was working almost too well. We were covering the concept of free will (i.e., our ability to choose good or evil) and trying to make the connection between free will and humanity's created purpose of having a "genuine love relationship with God." Scott was acknowledging the pain and suffering associated with humanity's freewill choices and expressing mock confusion as to why a sovereign God would have given us this ability. At this point, with great sincerity a student named Teodora said, "Don't you see, Scott? We could never *truly* love God if we didn't also have the ability to choose *not* to love God." It was a priceless and perfect Socratic/professor/missionary moment.

women in more moderate Muslim nations, but does not have the same priority as educating men. Their philosophy of education, based on their epistemology, marginalizes the education of girls.

The epistemological assumptions held by an educator and an educational system will shape pedagogical aims and methodologies because the methods of teaching and learning are closely related to "how we know." Thus if one's epistemological assumption is that knowledge and ideas are innately present in the mind, the Socratic method, based on the Greek philosopher and educator Socrates, of asking provocative questions would be the teaching strategy used to bring knowledge to consciousness. If the belief is that learning is transactional between the person and the environment, as the American educator John Dewey asserted, then the most effective teaching method is problem-solving and experience-based education (this is a hands-on approach to education). If knowledge is located in a more wise and intelligent individual (the expert), such as the belief of China based on Con-

Table 3

Western	compared to	Eastern
Linear		Cyclical
Aristotle/Socrates		Brahman monks/Confucius
Problem solving		Rote memorization
Student-centered		Teacher-centered
Task-based		Exam-based
Mentoring		Hierarchical
Pragmatic		Classical
Vocational		Historical
Discussion (dialogue/debate)		Unquestioned (accepted)
Students perceive		Students receive
Individualistic		Communal
A constant changing body of knowledge		An unchanged core body of knowledge
Sensory		Aesthetic

fucius's teaching, where the teacher dispenses this knowledge to students, then lectures only would be the method of choice.

In the West, we have been influenced by a variety of factors that have shaped our epistemological assumptions, philosophy and teaching methods. Table 3 compares and contrasts Western to Eastern approaches to knowledge and learning and illustrates how cultural factors impact teaching and learning.

Teachers in a distant classroom must not underestimate these differences. Overseas educators must know the culture in which they are teaching. They need to be aware that students bring into the classroom their own ways of knowing. Understanding students' ways of knowing will enable the educator to better teach, influence and sometimes challenge students' thinking and learning. It also helps reduce conflicts and misunderstandings both between school administrators and teacher and between student and teacher. It helps close the cultural gap between the Christian educator overseas and the students he has come to serve.

OTHER INFLUENCES ON EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Culture influences a nation's philosophy of education. Every educational system in the world has a philosophy of education that is based in the culture, the government system and in the value system (religious and nonreligious) of that country and society. It is also influenced by worldview, political agendas and socioeconomic factors. In general the U.S. philosophy of education might resemble something like this:

All people have the right to an education, regardless of their gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnic background, socioeconomic status, physical or mental challenges, that will empower them and give them tools for vocational, social, cultural, moral, economic, psychological and physiological well-being and will develop in them outcomes necessary for living and contributing to society at all levels, including familial, governmental,

economic, societal and cultural; outcomes which can be assessed and evidenced through some type of action or result by a professionally trained and certified teacher or educator.

Based on the above description of American educational philosophy, one can easily see how this influences the public school ethos, curriculum and teaching. The belief that all people are entitled to an education renders public school free of cost. Based on this concern for equality, schools ensure that special education is available for the mentally challenged and that issues such as inclusion¹ find their way into educational discourse. Schools provide government and civic courses in order to develop "good citizens." Programs on societal problems such as teenage pregnancy and drug use are implemented in order to improve society. The strong movement toward outcome-based education has created high-stakes testing at all grade levels. Although this is a simplistic description of American education, it illustrates the impact of cultural beliefs on philosophy of education.

A nation's theology also influences its philosophy of education. For example, much of African theology, both Christian and Muslim, focuses on the supernatural aspects of God. It has a strong sense of demonic activity, spiritual warfare and supernatural manifestations. God is a God one can feel and sometimes see. It is intuitive, kept alive by oral traditions and focuses on phenomena and experience. It believes in providence, and God is a strict disciplinarian (suffering is a part of religion). Learned men of the faith are considered to have supreme authority and are never to be questioned but are to be submitted to unconditionally.

Thus African nations traditionally often have a philosophy of education that reflects their theology. Students' comfort is of little importance to the teacher. Suffering is a part of learning—learning is never to be fun or recreational. Students see teachers as supreme authorities who are never to be questioned or doubted. Oral tradi-

¹Inclusion is the practice of mainstreaming kids with special needs, both physical and mental, into regular classrooms for the purpose of teaching tolerance and acceptance as well as challenging students.

tions and narratives play a major role in the classroom, in part due to the lack of textbooks, but also because of cultural norms. Bad grades can be seen as a result of laziness, which might be due to the influence of demons or other supernatural factors. God is a God one can feel; therefore education is not based exclusively on facts and scientific information, but also on intuition, personal experiences and folklore. The student/teacher relationship in most African nations is based on tribal traditions, and students often call their instructors Father or Mother.

Although culture and theology will impact our individual philosophies of education to varying degrees, as Christians we must consider the questions raised earlier in this chapter as we construct a Christian philosophy of education. Culture impacts national philosophy and worldview. It trickles down to shape the philosophy of education that operates in every classroom around the world. As an educator teaching overseas, you too have cultural priorities ingrained in you, some that you may not even be aware of. Your philosophy of education will manifest itself in your reactions to:

Life in the Classroom

- Cheating
- Turning papers in late
- Discussion in the classroom (Q&A exercises)
- The role of gender
- The teacher-student relationship
- Expectations of students
- Class and semester schedules
- Class rosters
- Classroom management
- Examinations

Life in the Department

- Relationships (the department chair, colleagues, administrative clerical workers)
- Departmental meetings
- Dealing with overworked, underpaid colleagues

Life in the Culture

- Your perception of history
- Your belief in absolutes
- Your understanding of human rights
- An individualistic approach versus a communal approach
- Belief that human beings should have control over their environment

These are all a part of one's philosophy of education and a vital part of a Christian philosophy of education. The key for the Christian educator is to develop sound responses to these various educational issues that reflect a biblical perspective.

A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AT THE BLACKBOARD

How does a Christian teacher develop a sound philosophy of education? As Christians we need to examine our presuppositions about teaching and learning from Scripture and Christ's example instead of drawing exclusively from contemporary philosophical thought. Not all secular educational philosophy should be cast aside by Christian educators. Rather, Christian educators must view these philosophies in light of a Scripture and determine which elements are compatible with the Christian mind and which are not. Philosophical analysis is required in order to filter each concept or idea to uncover its fundamental beliefs and assumptions. Then we must determine if the components are compatible with a Christian worldview.

The question that now surfaces is "What kinds of teaching will enable a Christian teacher to work with maximum continuity between her teaching and her faith, as one working before the face of God?" (Smith, 1993, p. 37). What are the probing questions that Christian educators must consider as they integrate their Christian faith at the blackboard? Adding to the basic list of questions given earlier, we must also ask:

1. From a biblical perspective, what basic skills should education cultivate in students?
2. How do Christian teachers nurture students in a Christ-honoring way?
3. What do biblical truths tell us about learning and teaching?
4. From a biblical perspective, what is the nature and role of the teacher?
5. What does the Bible say about educational methods such as discovery, demonstration and involvement of students?
6. Is there a biblical perspective of lectures, memorization, critical thinking, small group activities, visuals, question-and-answer—the very things that make up methodology?
7. Is there a biblical perspective on assessment (grading)? Should grading be subjective, objective, test-taking, group assessment, formative and/or summative?

In addition, we must look at the field we are teaching—our actual discipline and how it fits into a Christian worldview. Hasker (1992) provides four major dimensions of integration in the theoretical disciplines. First, Christians must ask questions regarding what fundamental insights and convictions, derivable from the Christian worldview, are relevant to the discipline.

Second, Christians must consider disciplinary foundations. These are foundational assumptions such as methodological and epistemological issues that are the very basis of the discipline. The Christian

must ask whether these are particularly significant or problematic from the standpoint of the Christian faith.

Third, disciplinary practice is concerned with issues that arise in the day-to-day practice of actually doing one's job as a historian, physicist or teacher. Within this dimension there are concerns about ethics, values and attitudes.

Finally, Hasker asks what specific contribution this discipline makes to the Christian vision of reality. Hasker challenges Christians to investigate how this discipline furthers the kingdom of God.

Based on the above discussion and listed questions, the following serves an example of how a teacher's faith in Christ informs both the theoretical and practical aspects of his or her pedagogy.

Question:

How should teachers view students?

Biblical responses:

- All human beings have value because they are made in the image of God.
- Because all human beings are valuable they should be treated with respect and dignity.
- Humans have an innate tendency to seek knowledge and understanding. Teachers must find and utilize this tendency, focusing on relevant and interesting lessons.
- God created human beings with different personalities and different approaches to learning.

Biblical responses put into educational practice:

- Students are treated with respect, and classroom management strategies must be based on respect. Students are never humiliated, never gossiped about to others, and all are treated fairly. Create positive teacher-students interaction.

- Educators must incorporate different teaching strategies in order to engage students with different learning styles.
- Teachers must respect students as individuals and set appropriate expectations.

These are just a few of the countless issues and questions that need to be asked by all Christian educators. We use these to illustrate how a Christian philosophy of education is developed and placed into practice. In particular, the question of the nature and role of the teacher has implications for modeling, creating classroom climate, knowledge of academic areas, communication skills, developing environments favorable for learning, issues of classroom management, the role of motivation and assessment techniques.

This is the beginning of the development of a Christian philosophy of education. There are many possible responses to educational issues that are solidly based on a biblical perspective. Our worldview and educational philosophy, just like our pedagogy, is always a work in progress—changing, adapting, growing stronger and more mature as we experience life, the classroom and our walk with the Lord. It is important for us as teachers to identify the underpinnings of our classroom practice because teaching directly and indirectly impacts the lives of our students. Maintaining consistency between theory and practice is the essence of good teaching. Therefore teachers must consciously understand what they believe and how that shapes pedagogical decisions.

CONCLUSION

All teachers must understand the role worldviews, educational philosophy and theory play in teaching. No teacher can escape these influences, so it is essential for all teachers to work out their worldviews and educational philosophies. It is imperative to reflect, rethink and reconsider the implications for their teaching and students. They need to be aware of what they believe about life and teaching. Also they must learn the skill of philosophical

Glen T., Ph.D., Comparative Religions, Central Asia

On my first day lecturing at the national university, I entered the office of the chair of the philosophy department a half hour before class was to start. After welcoming me warmly with greetings and smiles, he sat down with me for the customary cup of tea. The chair immediately became serious. Dropping his head a bit and lowering his voice he said, "Dr. T, you and I have serious work to do. We must find a bridge between East and West, between Christians and Muslims. We need to find a key in order to develop mutual understanding. The key is Abraham. He is the father of the three monotheistic religions." He broke off and rose from his chair. Turning to his bookcase he reached for a book. He brought it back to the desk and opened it. Turning to the beginning he found Genesis 12:3. Then he began, "Here in the book of Genesis it says that through Abraham all the families of the earth will be blessed. This is the key."

I couldn't believe my ears. I hardly knew this Muslim man, whose father had been a mullah. So quickly he hit the mark that I aim for with my Muslim friends but so often do not hit, or at least take so long to get to this point. He continued, "Dr. T, we must write a book together. You write from the Christian point of view and I will write from the Muslim point of view. We must explain fully the meaning of the blessing of Abraham for our people so that we can learn how to live in peace and mutual understanding."

With a mixture of joy and surprise I said, "I agree, and I think that a project like this will be a benefit to many people. You are right, the blessing of Abraham is the key." Since that time we have been working on different parts of the book, and have regular conversations about the transformation that Jesus brings to those who want to seek him.

analysis that questions basic assumptions, beliefs, values, theories, methods and knowledge. This forces teachers to begin to disassemble their own multifaceted understandings of education and educational jargon and begin to convert this new self-knowledge

into meaningful terms that can be articulated in consistent and effective classroom practice.

For Christian educators this is a challenging task. We must become experts in asking philosophical questions and develop sound answers from a biblical perspective. But it is a task well worth the effort. For the Christian educator teaching in a distant land, it is crucial to teach, live and relate to others decisively, consciously and purposefully in order to bring glory to Christ and to honor him in the place to which he has called you—the overseas classroom.

GOING DEEPER, GOING FURTHER

A Philosophy of Education Template

The purpose(s) of education should be to:

The values that should be taught through education are:

Students learn best when they are taught under certain conditions and in an environment that promotes learning. Developing these, teachers must:

The curriculum of any classroom should include certain "basics" that contribute to students' social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, moral and physical development. These basics are:

The outcomes of an educational system should be:

Upon graduation from a university a student should be able to:

These goals are accomplished through:

Qualities I think are important for teachers:

Questions to Consider

1. Based on the brief comparison and contrast of Western and Eastern approaches to knowledge and learning on page 66, list several practical ways that you can adapt your teaching to meet the needs of Eastern learners.
2. List five of your fundamental beliefs about teaching and learning. How are these currently played out in your teaching? How could you defend these as being based on a sound Christian philosophy of education?
3. What is the role of the Christian teacher?
4. List five "things" you want your students to learn while in your class. How can you best accomplish this?
5. How will your beliefs affect your teaching? Think in terms of these areas:
 - Classroom management
 - Instructional strategies
 - Teacher/student relationships
 - Assessment

Suggested Reading List

Christ and Culture, Richard Niebuhr

"A Christian Perspective on John Dewey," Werner Lumm, available at <http://www.bjupress.com/resources/articles/balance/a-christian-perspective-on-john-dewey.php>

A Christian Philosophy of Education, Gordon Clark

The Christian Philosophy of Education Explained, Stephen Perk (this is a heavy read with very technical vocabulary)

Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education, John Dewey (secular)

Philosophy of Education: Issues and Options, Michael Peterson

Philosophy of Education: Studies in Philosophies, Schooling, and Educational Policies, Edward Power (secular)

Questions That Matter: An Invitation to Philosophy, Ed Miller (secular)

What Is Education? E. C. Moore

With All Your Mind: A Christian Philosophy of Education, Michael Peterson

Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice and Mind, Mary Belenky et al. (secular)

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