

The defence of teaching philosophy as the noble discipline to the teachers

¹Mohammed Xolile Ntshangase, ²Ephraim Lengwadi

Affiliation: University of Limpopo
University of Limpopo, Polokwane, South Africa

Abstract: As students of philosophy there has always been a wonder about what the work of philosophers is and what do they teach their students. The wonder of this nature becomes manifest when one has to become one of the philosophers himself. Having heard it as a saying that “to err is human”, it then becomes inevitable to wonder humans are really what they perceive themselves as or something else. One of the crucial things to note is that if humans get deceived in the perception of themselves then all what they engage in will not be authentically of service to humanity. This speaks to the issue of the way in which human interactions are guided by their will or, if true, something in a form of a supernatural being outside themselves. Exploring such mindboggling issues around human existence might guide a philosopher of education to understand what really makes a person be, and at what point do philosophical teachings make guided students. In most cases students want to receive fair and just education. But without teachings of critical thinking that philosophers of education emphasize, teachers will always delve into matters of morality and forget the thought aspect that forms the basis of teaching itself. Although morality in any form of education is paramount, but it is most important to at least know the fundamental underpinnings of that morality. When teachers do not study philosophy their understanding of the applied curriculum remains shallow and proper application of it might be hindered. Without saying that morality education and curriculum knowledge is non-profiting, the argument here is that it is always most beneficial to know the foundations of those things from their philosophical beginnings. It is in that backdrop that usage of analytic theoretical framework will be employed in this paper to explore errors and other accurate uncertainties that make life and its experiences almost certain

Keywords: Education, Uncertainties, Perceptions, critical thinking, existence.

1. INTRODUCTION

From the first person to exist in this natural world it is undoubtedly the case that suffering already existed to test him/ her strength and endurance. That in short is to say that it seems truer than in any way, than being false, that mankind always had, and in fact still have to, endure difficulties that make it apparent that there are ‘existential errors. Existential errors in this case are such faults that exist in life or existence regardless of whether humans cause them or doing nothing that can be rationally perceived as a cause of those mishaps. As Cohen and Gooch (1990) argues, it is those misfortunes that just happen in life simply because mankind exists, not necessarily because mankind has done anything to deserve such experiences. Mentioning these existential errors Tillich (1959) as a religious thinker started by a regret or lament over the fact that he ever existed. He then went on to enumerating instances of such suffering as; disability, poverty, natural disasters, and so on. But the clear thing to be acknowledged or considered at this point is that besides human errors, in which case it rationally makes more sense for humans to suffer the consequences of, there are those existential errors that humans end up finding themselves at the receiving end of their consequences. Reading (2009) after having gone through some writings of thinkers like Nostradamus developed an argument that those existential errors seem to be side effects of existence itself because even when predicted, but they still cannot be prevented while existence itself is continues. These errors affect the basic core of a philosopher in education because they do more harm as they commonly affect the which is

supposed to be engaged in progressive thoughts. Anything that brings a negative impact to the mind troubles a philosopher because philosophers are people who have deemed it better to be concerned about humans' and existential thoughts at a deeper level than ordinary others. So, this study seeks to critically establish the importance of philosophy in education and what the work of a philosopher in education should, among other things, be.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is committed to the analytical school of thought. According to McGinn (2002) analytical philosophy emphasizes clarity and argument, that is commonly attained through logical and linguistic analysis. Gottlob Frege (1906) is considered as the father of analytical philosophy, a tradition that emphasizes on clarity of argument through the logical use of language in presenting thoughts. Within this framework Bertrand Russell found a space to argue for logicism and logical atomism (Soames, 2003). According to Soames (2003) Logicism and logical atomism refers to the practice of breaking the argument into basic propositions in order to understand how coherent are those components that comprise the whole. Similarly, Barry Hallen and John O Sodipo (1997) argue for the analytical breakdown of issues to the simpler and logical thoughts through the use of logic in a simple ordinary language. Soames (2003) seems to hold a view that philosophical problems arise from misunderstanding of language and all necessary truths are a priori, analytic and true in virtue if meaning of words depend upon how the world truly is. Analytic theory helps in producing philosophy that is not ideologically motivated, but thought that is analytic and reflective (Hallen, 2005). Under Wittgenstein's (1937) inspiration, Rudolf Carnap (1961) sought to embed his analysis in logical positivism as a development to this tradition. Logical positivism holds that there are no specific philosophical truths and that the object of philosophy is logical clarification of thoughts (Soames, 2003). Carnap (1937) and other scholars contributed to this tradition by rejecting the doctrines of their predecessors of constructing artificial language to resolve philosophical problems. According to Glock (2008: 44) those philosophers like Carnap collectively argued that the Vienna Circle was erroneous because the "quest for systemic theories of language worked as a misleading intrusion of scientific methods into philosophy" (Glock, 2008: 44).

The analytic framework in this research study helps in acquiring a profound or adequate understanding of the research problem prior to forwarding my own views. Since it is the framework which guides me in my methodology, it also helps in the application of critical analysis that cannot be accusable of any biasness. This theoretical framework enables a researcher to be reflective and at the same time be within guards of rationality while being critical of his thoughts. With the guide of logical positivism and criticality of thought, I have been able to deal with incoherencies and ideological speculations around the issue of human existence and teaching of philosophy while operating as a neutral being that is interested on learning more about philosophy and education. As Soames (2003) argued that logical positivism holds that there are no absolute philosophical truths but the object of philosophy is to clarify thoughts, this has helped me to simplify my thoughts. In this paper I committed to the use of ordinary language in producing my critical thoughts while at the same time analyzing the common thoughts that are currently existing in the world. Analytic framework is adequately relevant when dealing with the critical issues like this one of philosophy in education because many people talk about these issues at a peripheral level and never get deeper into rationality and core of what links philosophy and education.

3. ANALYSIS

Although some philosophers become detestably devotees to thought to the ignorance of the body as Thomas Aquinas was accused of such (Bains, 2018), but in general, philosophical works and teachings are commonly meant to improve humanity as well as to advance the correct understanding of existence at large. This is highly important to understand because at some point within this study there will be a defense of why philosophy and education of humanity can never be separated. What makes a philosopher of education pay serious attention to existential errors is the fact that; (a) firstly, they are too much dire to ignore, (b) secondly, they affect human existence which is the main subject of a philosopher to understand and improve, (c) thirdly, since these existential errors affect the mind, the teacher of any subject gets affected. The effect of those errors spare no existent, even students of a philosopher get affected at an equal scale with all others. I therefore argue that the whole issue of existential errors ends up disturbing the work of a philosopher even in cases where she/ he did not directly experience that particular occurrence. In the same way non-success of students trouble the teacher, a philosopher gets much troubled by her students' lack of criticality and proper logic in their studying. The main aim of teaching philosophy to the upcoming teachers is to make it a point that they come to the guidance of why it is important to learn and teach humanity using those curricular methods are designed by academics. On that point, (Schiro, 2013) argued that knowing the name of the curriculum and be a part of its implementation without knowing its philosophical

underpinnings might be more destructive than in any way being beneficial. So, it is one of the paramount requirements that a philosopher of education be involved in the making of a critical teacher. Upon noticing this need of philosophy to education students, Ellis (2013) vividly argued that an involvement of a technical philosopher will not be much useful than the involvement of a philosopher who will be a full life expertise to the benefit of students. Although this paper has no comment on his classification of philosophers as technical philosophers and practical philosophers, but I argue that philosophy and education go hand in hand with each other. Once this is so, it then becomes easier to understand that existential errors affect both of them.

Among other uncertainties that mankind faces around the issues and challenges of life are; (a) natural disasters, no one can be sure of what will happen and when it will happen, (b) health challenges and disabilities, Tengland (2001) argued that some people happen to face health challenges that even hinder their thinking capabilities without their knowledge. Disabilities that impose a negative impact to thinking generally bring a serious challenge to teaching and learning of philosophy because its core aim is to develop and sharpen thought presentation. With all things considered in that perspective it becomes clear that philosophers face a bigger challenge because philosophy as a discipline encompasses all other fields of study, and it cannot be studied or taught in isolation. According to Chand (2017) philosophy is a multifaceted discourse that encourages deep critical thinking among the myriad of growing academics. It is within that ambit that a philosopher talks about having a strong will and determination in order to produce thoughtful teachers. A teacher who has undergone a philosophy course in the university level, and became serious about it, will not only be a mere teacher but also a critical thinker about issues that affect humanity even beyond the school premises. In that case, a teacher will not just be a school asset or property but will also be a useful component of the community. According to Debbie (2019) there is no school that can exist without the community and any teacher should be able to think critically when reflecting on those life challenges that create uncertainties in life and existence. Another thing to make mention of, albeit tersely, is that a philosopher must be the last person to be despondent and end up believing or leaving things to the discretion of the supernature. Teaching of philosophy to the student teachers sharpen critical thinking skills which help upcoming teachers to teach with a critical mind that takes into account those errors and uncertainties of life/ in life. The reason for this stance of compulsory teaching of philosophy to student teachers is the fact that natural errors and those uncertainties are some of the things that confirm life and existence itself. In other words, it is evident that those occurrences can never be ignored by any living person who claims seriousness about human life and existence. With many teachers who have the capability to critically engage in existential thoughts, there will be more useful teachers with useful knowledge to pass on to students. They will offer beneficial knowledge while delivering content of their subject in the classroom. In addition, those teachers will be able to flourish in deeper understanding of what they do with their students. Chand (2017) supports this view when he argues that for a teacher there must not only be a concern about what is the right answer to the question, but his/ her thought must go deeper into understanding why that answer came out and what other thoughts does it arouse.

Hitherto all what man knows is that which man has learnt, or perhaps innate. From Pyrrhon of Elis to Friedrich Nietzsche, the German philosopher, skepticism has essentially guided the philosophy and the perspective from which most scholars secure their standpoints in relation to their quest for wisdom and enlightenment. Through all the ages of learning, individuals have always wondered if what they were learning is what the instructor intends for them to learn, or if they merely make connections of the intended lessons in order to create their own meanings of what is intended for them to learn, which may potentially be either in alignment with the intended curriculum, or completely in contrast. This may well be further explained through the schema theory.

Rumelhart (1980), states that schema theory is an explanation of how readers use prior knowledge to comprehend and learn. This denotes that individuals are more likely to make connections of what they come across with what they already came across before. In learning, individuals may make connections of the new knowledge they learn, with what they already have learned. Several types of schemata are known and have been directly linked with how individuals connect the concepts they already know; with what they are learning. This basically implies that understanding is sometimes, if at all not always, dependant on what we already know. This potentially may have an impact on how we receive and store new knowledge as, and might lead to two individuals learning the same concept, explained by the same instructor, but still interpret it differently, as a result of connecting with different prior knowledge and ultimately learning the unintended "knowledge". This then will probably lead to more individuals having various, differing understandings on same subjects, which will then lead to a lot of misconceptions or just permanent errors.

Based on the explanation of the schema theory by Rumelhart (1980), one would go on and ask oneself about how other creatures such as animals, for instance, make connections to understand new knowledge through schemata. It is clearly apparent that animals too learn, think and probably wonder, and most definitely perceive. The main wonder is if whether what one individual perceives with their own senses and interprets with their own mind, is exactly identical to what the next individual might perceive as well. This goes with no exception of all other creatures that are able to perceive. The matter becomes virtually subjective, for instance, when an individual encounters what he interprets as a green apple, would all those other individuals and/or all those creatures that are able to observe that very same object, “the green apple”, perceive it exactly as the first observer perceives it?

The existence of anything, and the form with which anything exists, is undoubtedly dependant on the interpretation of the perceiver. This goes for anything that the perceiver observes at any given time. In learning, all what is learnt has to be interpreted, and through these interpretations, it becomes much apparent how errors can potentially be learned as knowledge and essentially form a part of an individual’s knowledge, and progressively the basis of their reason. As quoted by McDonald (2013) that the mind is the standard of the man, words originally uttered by Isaac Watt, it can then logically follow that man is actually his own mind. Since man learns everything with his own mind, that would mean that whatever an erratic knowledge he might consume, he himself shall remain erratic in all his deeds, whether he is conscious about it or not.

I think, therefore I am, uttered in Latin as “Cogito, ergo sum” by a French philosopher Rene Descartes, are the words initially phrased in French as “je pense, donc je suis” in his Discourse on the Method. According to Hertogh(2016) on deep analysis, the Cogito appears as a universal instantiation(or modus ponens with implicit major “whatever has the property of thinking, exist”).

This is in no doubt, a claim that cannot be accurately proven, but can only be inferred. It appears very vividly that any being that can think, does actually exist, and the existence thereof can only be verified through the fact that the being in question actually exists. The “Cogito” can directly be utilized as a metaphysical tool in the delivery of philosophical education. This can be successfully achieved through questioning what individuals “think” about the concepts they learn as they learn new concepts. That is where it will be apparent that all students think, but differently, thus proving different interpretations of a matter intended to be commonly learned.

One thing for sure, that is being overlooked in Cogito, is the fact that though we can agree that that which thinks exists, the reverse to that cannot always be the case, that is; it cannot be verified if what seems to exist, depending on the characteristics of its existence, can always be thought to be a ‘thinking thing’. This still raises skeptical views on the accuracy of the famous statement by the French philosopher because there cannot be a way to verify the thought process of any being, for instance, it cannot be verified if non-living beings such as rocks can actually think. What cannot be overlooked on the other hand, is the possibility that somehow the non-living beings may also be having the ability to “think”, just not in the manner which living thinkers may speculate.

In his Thought Experiment Analyses of Rene Descartes’ Cogito, Hertogh (2016), goes on and maintains that based on Descartes’ methodology of doubt, it can be concluded that, for example, on a Wittgensteinian interpretation, the Cogito is a logical thought experiment rather than a psychological one. Although this sounds like a paradox, and can potentially distort the focus on whether to perceive is a reality or an illusion, it is still worth suffering the confusion for. This puts the reality of our existence into question, thereby instilling skepticism on the views and the nature of what everything that exists exist as. There are various ways of comprehension which all creatures possess, and every being that can actually perceive anything, will do so based upon the nature of their intellectual abilities, sense of existence and experience, interpretations and connections of existential events. Therefore, it becomes paramount that teachers have a sufficient knowledge of particular philosophies of teaching and learning methodologies in different kinds of people based on their capabilities.

As implied in Plato’s “Allegory of the cave”, there is a sense in which perspective is important when dealing with matters of interpretations in existence, for, all the knowledge we have, may be limited based on our methods of inquiry, thus leading to us taking uninformed decisions and conclusions on matters that need critical insight prior to conclusions. This shows how errors, either in our curricula (whether intended or unintended), theoretical framework, methods of inquiry or the methodology of content delivery can greatly affect the profoundness of knowledge, comprehension and progressively the whole meaning of human nature as viewed by humans themselves. The natural errors committed through our methods

of inquiry ultimately, though outside our consciousness, play a major role in shaping our subjectivity towards our very conceptualization of life, and the implications thereto.

A glimpse at evolution of human advancement

In Language, Arts and Discipline, Fischer (2001), shows that the earth's earliest organisms evolved primitive mechanisms of exchange capable of informing of species, gender and intent. Language has long been a means through which both humans and animals' interactions have been "accurately" perfected. It is through intentions communicated among a community of beings that makes the individuals comprehend exactly the intentions of the other. Conveyance of a message though, at other times, may not be interpreted by the receiver on the other end exactly as conveyed by the transmitter on the other end. What remains though, is the fact that the message is delivered, and because of erratic misinterpretation, effective communication can be distorted. This transpires in all spheres of the human and animal life, which lead to errors being almost a natural and innate character of all living beings. Thus, it is inevitable for existence to comprise of errors at any point of its time. This means that to some extent the utilization of a commonly comprehensible language does not guarantee an accurate and meaningful exchange of thoughts and ideas.

On the contrary, the use of non-mutually comprehensible means of communication does not necessarily advocate for a meaningless exchange of opinions or ideas. Both animals and humans have coexisted and effectively communicated without having to use a common means of communication. This outlines how effective effectiveness can be erratic, while hindrance can ultimately lead to errorless interactions at times. In its simplest definition, as defined by Fischer (2001), language signifies "medium of information exchange". It is explicitly explicated in this regard that many means of communication through language can be intertwined together for effective conveyance of intentions. This makes expressions an integral part of language. This being said, still cannot elucidate the loopholes through which students lose the meaning of the concepts during the very critical instance of learning in a philosophy class, or elsewhere.

Trial-and-error learning is a universal strategy for establishing which options are beneficial or harmful in new environment (Mohr et al., 2018). The vividness of this statement is apparent in the daily learning arenas where students can take control of their learning, thereby differentiating between which actions to partake in at a certain instance and which not to engage in at other instances. Even when facilitated by an experienced instructor, learning still has errors wherein students end up learning concepts which were never intended by the instructor. When the sole source of learning is the environment, the student is at galore of proneness to learning what may not be of benefit to their development in any way. This leads to the conclusive actions of putting some learnt concepts to valueless rankings. It is therefore necessary for students to actively participate in their learning so that they can effectively grasp the intended concepts.

As noted by (Mohr et al., 2018), it can now be understood that trial-and-error learning is more of a technique rather than an inherently influenced means of handling environmental interactions. This supports the view that learning is indeed a trial-and-error in its entirety. It would only follow on the basis of logic, then, that based upon the claim that trial-and-error is a universal learning strategy, then, all, if not almost all mental processes are innately defected, and are more likely to be erratic at any given point in existence as they search for truth through learning. This as a result, leads to a quest into truth, putting what is regarded as the truth, as well as the methods through which the truth was established, into scrutiny. It can only be as relevant and logical then, to assert that in "the truth" there is a degree to which the method of discovering the truth is also erratic. Therefore, leading to the uncertainties of all the known truths and knowledge at large.

May (2013) argues that "skeptics have failed to specify an adequate skeptical scenario". In this argument, he does not take into consideration the fact that skepticism can potentially be regarded as a method of inquiry which shapes most of the research questions that lead to knowledge revealed in various ways. A flashback at Galileo, for instance, has proven that what we know now as a fact, can be known from the next minute as just a mere, baseless claim. Riebeck (2009) explains how Copernicus proposed that earth was like Venus and all other planets that orbit the sun. This cleared a strongly held knowledge prior to Copernicus, that the universe is geocentric. That changed when the Italian scientist Galileo made revolutionary discoveries that the universe is actually heliocentric. At first, it seemed as though there were some errors attached to this, but, proof showed that the errors were actually attached to the earlier knowledge. This indeed shows that even the fact that the universe is heliocentric today, can change any time from now and be dubbed an error as well. This is deeply rooted in the methods of inquiry followed, they can critically be erratic, thereby leading to erratic discoveries which seem factual for some time, and irrelevant by the ongoing of time.

The saying that to err is human, was not only limited to the deeds leading to errors in the case where individuals partook on activities that needed accurate engagement. It potentially stretches to as far as the ways in which we question the very existence within which we find ourselves. Our questioning, researches, learning, teaching and all other methods of knowledge acquisition can in themselves contain more flaws, which make them questionable. This shows that indeed understanding and interpretations of the environment within which we find ourselves are typically erratic in nature, and thus a trial-and-error learning is the most useful means through which we can make meaningful connections into understanding how the world around us works. This becomes more important particularly at this age whereby many scholars talk about decolonising the curriculum and the whole process of education.

In his *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche (1886) argued that “to speak seriously, there are good grounds for hoping that all dogmatizing in philosophy, whatever solemn, whatever conclusive and decided airs it has assumed, may have been only a noble puerilism and tyronism”. This advocates for, and is substantially in support of the fact that the truth cannot actually be achieved by means of manipulation of events, by no means of any level of consensus. It would then follow that indeed, then, the truth is what it is when it is, regardless of whether a vast majority of the population genuinely attest to it or not. If it is the truth, so shall it stand, independently. This is in line with the elucidation of the trial-and-error means of discovering knowledge, as explained by (Mohr et al., 2018).

In line with Fischer’s (2001) study on the evolution of language and its implications, as well as how primitive animals and humans have used language to convey intentions, it can be seen how uncertain the truth, if it is a truth at all, can be detected through communication. This is what Friedrich Nietzsche actually had uttered before, though in a vague manner such that it became even elusive if not put into scrutiny. It can follow, and be explicitly detected as a result that indeed all life cannot be traced to have a formula which is absolute and effective if followed at all times. What the case is that there is no, and has never been anything that has always been as it seemed in itself. This can sometimes be seen through some of the lessons whereby there is a difference in the quickness with which students learn concepts in a common class, presented by one instructor and presented for an equal amount of time on any student, given that the students have no prior knowledge on such a concept. This does not guarantee, neither does it dictate that the students will learn and interpret the lesson exactly the same way, at the same time, because they are all in a trial-and-error situation of conceptualising the lesson.

According to Soames (1999), a central goal of truth is to provide definitions, analyses, or explications that tell us what truth is by explaining what “true” means or should mean if it is to function in desired ways in logical, philosophical, mathematical and empirical theories. This means that for the truth to exist, a discussion must first be held wherein a consensus of what the truth is must be reached. This does not in any way guarantee a meaningful and comprehensible means of conveying any knowledge. If the truth is first defined, and the definition thereof is agreed on, then there is always a likelihood of finding the existence of errors within the truth, which will most possible be regarded as part and parcel of the truth, even if not. As a result of this mistakenly invented error, the whole actuality of the existence of truth becomes erroneous, therefore leading to a method of inquiry that aims to eradicate errors, while it is in itself an error. Now, what people perceive the world as, as a result, may not necessarily be what the world really is. That said, does not mean that whatever that man encounters is always not what it really is. This threatens to give birth to nihilism, which if strictly adhered to, nothing of any sort, anywhere at any time, would ever make sense.

All philosophers, be it from Socrates to Plato and then Aristotle, to all contemporary philosophers, skeptical nihilism has literally pinched all the arguments, theories, ideologies and all the writings only with a single question, namely: “On what is everything based?”. The nature of this question does not permit any further explanation, it literally bursts all knowledge into a mere senseless talk, which in turn puts the meaningfulness of any existence’s event into question, of which when answered, it will inevitably still mean nothing. As such, people exist as what they exist as, though it is not truly, and shall forever remain a conundrum what the existence of man really is to man. This goes to extent where man would not even reach out to the conclusion that he can lead a meaningful life in the sense of life itself. In trying to resolve these loopholes of existence, all individuals have to learn the practicality of every concept the learn. This can be easily be achieved in cases where instructors give their students enough hands-on participation, making it easier for them to effectively understand the intended concepts to be learned. As a result, this would show how effective teachers can be in ensuring conceptual understanding of concepts if the basically utilize both the pragmatic and schematic approach.

4. CONCLUSION

In all the arguments provided in this paper it is clear that philosophy is a subject that all teachers should learn and understand before they engage in their teaching profession. Some glimpse and perspectives of different philosophies of education have been discussed in this paper with the aim to spell out their impact in education. Education itself is one of the special means to both discover the self and to know the existential surrounding beings. Existence itself may not be well perceived without one asking those deeper questions of existence as a person and existence of one as a bearer of knowledge as well as the source of it. Philosophy in a person helps to unravel epistemological dynamics and the understanding of that fact advances the comprehension of human nature. It has been argued within this paper that the study of human wisdom makes one be able to delve into; (a) what a human is, (b) what a human can learn and understand, and (c) how to deal with the dire art of imparting knowledge from one person to others. Being a teacher without having understood these philosophical issues becomes a serious problem to both the teacher himself/ herself even prior to it becoming a problem to the students. Another additional factor with understanding philosophy is that the teacher will not only understand the subject of that particular field of specialization, but s/he will understand the human nature at large. Once the human nature is well understood in myriad of existential facets the teacher will get to be fit to convey knowledge and skills to all kinds of learners with ease

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