Jason Harmon

EDCI 633

Chapters 1-8

After reviewing the philosophies presented in Chapters 1-8, how do you use your knowledge of the various philosophical viewpoints to understand and positively address the conflicts embedded in today's public educational system?

Our current public education system isn’t broken, but is continual need of change. How can we positively address the conflict that our schools are facing? True and lasting change will only come about as we help students reach their full, divine potential. This will come about as we come to a consensus of what is real, how we got here, what truth is, how we know it, how we should behave, and what is beautiful. Although we will never all agree exactly, there are viewpoints that ring true to me that will help us overcome many of the educational conflicts of today.

First, with regards to Metaphysics, purpose comes to our lives when we know what is real, and where we came from. We can’t just ignore this as the pragmatists, philosophical analysts, and postmodernists would have us do. A big factor in the degradation of society and our schools are addictions. These addictions have many forms; drugs, alcohol, sex, pornography, tv, video games, internet, overeating, etc. These addictions take hold of peoples lives and lead to lack of sleep, lack of judgment, broken homes, sadness, grief, divorce, wasted time, and wasted talents. Without firm understanding of what is real and who they are students are less likely to stay away from these addictions. As a teacher I know that when students come to school high, tired, or emotionally hurt and or abused they can’t focus or learn. So what rings true to me is making sure students know that truth exists, and that it can be found as we search for it. Even if they don’t believe in God, they must know that there is truth, and we can find joy as we live in accordance to true principles.

Second, when dealing with epistemology and truth, our schools will benefit greatly by taking the good from each Philosophy. While to me truth is absolute and eternal, as the idealists believe, we can learn of truth with the help of our senses (as the realists believe). While divine revelation (Thomism) can guide a council of teachers and administrators to come up with a school/district philosophy and mission statement, we can’t put aside the fact that it is good and important to test theories until we find the best one for our situation. We aren’t always going to know what is true, or how to act. At times we need to be more pragmatic. Then, even though I don’t agree with the beliefs of existentialism, there is a time and a place where we must say, “ok, our school at this time is meant for this, and this is what we will stand for.” We can find our reason for existing.

With regards to Axiology my school has been using the Boys town model for teaching ethics. It is a great model that helps to solve problems of procrastination and teach good life skills. For the most part we need to let parents teach moral right and wrongs to their children. Our schools then, should uphold a high moral code of ethics that saves kids from being surrounded by swearing, immodest dress, and other bad influences during school. Students with their parents can choose what happens after school, but schools need to create safe environments of learning. This approach aligns with the realist approach of a shared system of ethics based on shared humanity.

The conflicts and viewpoints are many, and a consensus will not always be possible. We must look to the past though, and not forget what our nation was founded upon, a belief in God. Although postmodernism would most likely say the bible has an agenda, we must continue to search for what is true, real, and good. We can solve critical issues by using the good from each of these philosophical viewpoints, but just leaning on one would be erroneous.