

The Codification of APE: A Three-Fold Research Model in Philosophy of Education

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Abstract: This work is motivated by two challenges in doing research in philosophy of education. The first is the pedagogical problem that philosophers are not so much taught but are made, and the second is the paradigmatic challenge of maintaining philosophical fidelity in a field dominated by social science. If philosophy of education is to maintain its philosophical fidelity in a field dominated by social science, it must have its distinctive approach toward educational matters. Thus, the current effort addresses the methodological deficiency within philosophy of education by proposing and codifying ‘analytic philosophy of education’ (hereinafter APE) as a rigorous, three-fold educational-philosophical research model: Philosophical Reconstruction, Conceptual Analysis, and Philosophical Justification. By making APE explicit and teachable, it is aimed that researchers, practitioners, and teachers are encouraged to engage in replicable research in philosophy of education.

Keywords: conceptual analysis, methodology, philosophical reconstruction, research model

THE CHALLENGE OF METHOD IN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The difficulty of pinpointing the step-by-step procedures of doing analytic philosophy of education (hereinafter referred to as APE) has long been a predicament for practitioners, particularly here in the Philippines. Practitioners have been employing different approaches and/or that there are very few published words articulating how APE is done. This work formalizes APE as a rigorous and replicable research methodology in philosophy of education.

The field of education falls within the domain of the social sciences, and since the latter have concrete methodologies, research done within education tends to follow the methodologies coming from the social sciences. Thus, research actuated in the name of education usually entails the methodologies stipulated by the dominant sphere. This methodological dominance creates two persistent challenges for philosophy of education. But these methods are different from what is done within philosophy. First, philosophy of education, regarded as ‘philosophy as research’ within education, is typically disparaged and relegated by non-philosophical researchers within education as mere opinion. Furthermore, it is often accused of a second flaw: “lexicographical triviality,”¹ which means this type of educational research only deals with the meanings of words. The philosopher of education’s main task is, in other words, similar to that of a dictionary compiler, thereby making it a trivial pursuit. This is obviously a misunderstanding and a stereotype.

The *American Philosophical Association*, one of the largest and most influential philosophical associations in the world, published its statement on research in philosophy last 1996, hereby proclaiming that philosophizing is research. It says:

¹ John White and Patricia White, “An Analytic Perspective on Education and Children’s Rights,” in *Methods in Philosophy of Education*, ed. by F. Heyting, D. Lenzen and J. White (New York, NY: Routledge, 2001), 16.

Research has come to be employed in contemporary academic life as a generic term referring to forms of inquiry pursued in all the many disciplines, from the natural sciences to the humanities. In this broad sense of the term philosophers have been engaged in research throughout the entire history of philosophy, and continue to be so engaged today, together with their scientific and humanistic colleagues in the many other disciplines.²

However, to echo Claudia Ruitenberg's question in the book she edited entitled *What Do Philosophers of Education Do? (And How Do They Do It?)*, she astutely asks, "if the idea of philosophy as research is palatable, what about the method."³ Making it palatable to the critics of philosophy as research involves making explicit the philosophical research methods done in education. It is the core objective of this work to formally articulate the APE methodology in response to Ruitenberg's demand.

There are two challenges that the author of this work must grapple with in articulating the details of this APE: the pedagogical and the paradigmatic. The current work proposes a three-fold procedure—Philosophical Reconstruction, Conceptual Analysis, and Philosophical Justification—to address these fundamental concerns. First is the challenge put forward by John Wisdom in his book *Problems of Mind and Matter*, where he argues for the necessity of the precept method. He says:

In a sense, philosophy cannot be taught—any more than one can teach riding or dancing or musical appreciation. However, philosophers can be made. They can be made in

² American Philosophical Association, "APA Statement on Research in Philosophy," in *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, 70:2 (1996), 119.

³ Claudia Ruitenberg, "Introduction: The Question of Method in Philosophy of Education," in *What Do Philosophers Do? (And How Do they Do It?)*, ed. by C. Ruitenberg (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 2.

two ways, namely by practice and by percept. The first method is the one usually adopted by lecturers in philosophy or performing philosophers. They themselves perform philosophical antics in front of their students, interlarded with anecdotes about the antics of contemporary performers. This is called giving a course in modern philosophy. Or, they tell stories about performers of the past: then they are giving a course in the history of philosophy. The second method of making philosophers, namely, the precept method, has not been much used. This is because even good philosophers have been confused about what it is they are trying to do, and have been, like many good riders, unable to say what it is about their methods which makes them good.⁴

Analytic philosopher John Wisdom here is claiming that philosophers are not really taught, but made. He has this idea that budding philosophers become experts in the craft by observing the performed philosophical antics of expert philosophers in class. He adds that there is another way of making philosophers, which is the precept method. But this method is not much used because, as Wisdom claims, even expert philosophers are at a lost in providing details to the very methodologies they utilize in philosophizing. It is this failure of articulation that this work seeks to remedy by codifying the APE methodology.

The second challenge is from Claudia Ruitenberg in her essay *The Question of Method in Philosophy* in which she states:

Education is commonly seen as a social science, rather than as a field of theories, policies and practices that can be approached in a variety of ways, with perspectives from the

⁴ John Wisdom, *Problems of Mind and Matter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), 2.

natural and social sciences as well as the humanities. One of the consequences is that philosophers of education are expected to be able to answer questions about their methods just as their social science colleagues do. The challenge is for philosophers of education to talk about their research methods without submitting to the paradigms and expectations of the social sciences—especially the emphasis on ‘data,’ technique and the tripartite breakdown of method into data gathering, data analysis and data representation.⁵

For Ruitenberg, philosophers of education are similarly expected to be capable of stating and justifying the manner of addressing the problems that they want to answer, that is, to be able to articulate clearly the methods that are used in philosophy of education. This expectation arises from the generally accepted idea that education is a social science, and that in the social sciences, the methods of research are clearly stated. The codification of the APE methodology—comprising Philosophical Reconstruction, Conceptual Analysis, and Philosophical Justification—is a direct attempt to provide this rigorous, philosophical tripartite structure that does not rely on the empirical collection of ‘data.’

THE SPECIFICS OF APE: A THREE-FOLD PROCEDURE

It will now be proposed that APE is comprised of three inter-connected procedures (as culled from various practitioners). Each of which will be explained in the succeeding paragraphs.

⁵ Ruitenberg, “Introduction,” 2.

Philosophical Reconstruction (PR): Unpacking Arguments and Assumptions

First, with regard to PR, what needs to be understood at the onset is that no philosopher or educational theorist reflects in isolation from other thinkers' works. Hence, it is important to be able to assess, from the vantage point of validity, the argumentation provided by others. For a specific position, a theory, or a knowledge-claim, reasons and justifications are provided to support the main contention. It is not clear, however, in many writings what the purported evidentiary supports are given. Thus, there is a need to engage in a more explicit kind of uncovering the reasons and assumptions in place.

We turn to Israel Scheffler, a paradigmatic analytic philosopher of education, who understands philosophical analysis (or APE, as called in this work) as “fundamentally the clarification of basic notions and modes of argument ... Such philosophy strives for general perspective through a study of the root ideas and arguments of various domains, applying and refining, for this purpose, a wide range of logical, linguistic and semantic tools.”⁶ This is because Scheffler says that “philosophy may be said to seek [a] general perspective on a rational basis. The philosopher wants to see things in perspective and he wants to see things sharp and clear. He strives for a maximum of vision and a minimum of mystery.”⁷

The enterprise of uncovering these roots is manifested in an “analysis of the roots” of this domain, focusing on its “basic concepts, assumptions, arguments, and inferences characteristic [of it].”⁸ This constitutes an “examination of ideas from the standpoint of clarity and the examination of arguments from the standpoint of validity.”⁹

⁶ Israel Scheffler, *The Language of Education* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1960), 7.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

Katariina Holma, in her essay *The Strict Analysis and the Open Discussion*, provides a clear articulation of what occurs. She says:

In methodological terms, the crucial feature of [this] approach is an emphasis on the role of a thoroughgoing process of analysis and synthesis. I stress the significance of a deep understanding of the concepts, arguments, and ideas of the explored topic before entering into the dialogical, critical or supplementary part of the research. The process of disassembling and reassembling (i.e., philosophical reconstruction) is the way of gaining access to a new, more profound understanding of the issue, and it thus creates possibilities for achieving the researcher's own philosophical perspectives and insights on the topic under consideration.¹⁰

Further, she says that “before one's own criticism and argumentation is implemented, it is important to sympathetically explore and understand the philosopher under study.”¹¹ To apply this mandate to philosophy of education, Scheffler states: “It falls to educational philosophy to assume a second-order attitude with respect to the whole of education, to take the whole structure as an object realm, striving to raise to critical consciousness its assumptions, orientations, and modes of thought, and to deal with these using the resources of philosophical tradition.”¹²

Although Holma's approach is already clearly laid down, a more specific set of procedures will be borrowed from Alec Fisher's *The Logic of*

¹⁰ Katariina Holma, “The Strict Analysis and the Open Discussion,” in *What Do Philosophers of Education Do? (And How Do They Do It?)*, ed. by C. Ruitenberg (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 11.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Israel Scheffler, *Reason and Teaching* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1973), 20.

Real Arguments. Hereunder are the procedures taken verbatim from Fisher's book.

The following method will help determine its conclusion(s), premise(s) and the structure of its argument(s). Read through the text to get its sense, circling all the inference indicators as you go. Underline any clearly indicated conclusions, and bracket any clearly indicated reasons. It helps at this stage if one tries to summarize the argument.

Identify what you take to be the main conclusion and mark it C. (There may be more than one.)

Starting with C, ask 'What immediate reasons are presented in the text for accepting C?' or 'Why (in the text) am I asked to believe C?'

Use inference indicators to help answer the question. If the question is hard to answer because the author's intentions are not transparent (i.e., they are neither explicitly shown by argument indicators nor obvious from the context), then ask the Assertibility Question,

What argument or evidence would justify me in asserting the conclusion C? (What would I have to know or believe to be justified in accepting C?)

Having done this, look to see if the author asserts or clearly assumes these same claims (reasons). If he does, it is reasonable (and accords with the Principle of Charity) to construe him as having intended the same argument. If he doesn't, you have no rational way of reconstructing his

argument (on the basis of the text alone). For each reason already identified, repeat the process described in step (4) above. Do this until you are left with only basic reasons and then display the argument(s) in a clear way (say, by means of a diagram or in linear form).¹³

The linear form that Fisher is characterizing above in displaying the unpacked reasons is similar to what Michael C. Rea regards as one of the prescriptions in any work of analytic philosophy: “Write as if philosophical positions and conclusions can be adequately formulated in sentences that can be formalized and logically manipulated.”¹⁴ With these articulated, PR is not yet the entirety of APE, but it is a necessary component of it.

Furthermore, since an engagement in PR is concerned with the unearthing of the reasons and justifications, which are usually implicit or not straightforward, for the given positions or conclusions, it can be interpreted as well as an ‘unearthing of the presuppositions’ embedded within the educative domain. This makes philosophy of education a meta-philosophical inquiry as argued by George Pollack. He states:

Educational practice ... represents an underlying web of philosophical commitments, summarizing the social, ideological, and philosophical assumptions dominant in a society. Education is an outgrowth of deeply and pervasively held political, theological, metaphysical, epistemological, aesthetic, and more beliefs. As such, it is susceptible to probing through the instrumentality of all the philosophical genius at its (and our) disposal. A philosophy of education can, thus, be constructed around the purpose of laying bare

¹³ Alec Fisher, *The Logic of Real Arguments* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 21-22.

¹⁴ Michael C. Rea, “Introduction,” in *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology*, ed. by O.D. Crisp and M.C. Rea (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), 5.

the socio-philosophical assumptions underlying educational practice as it is actually observed to exist.¹⁵

Conceptual Analysis (CA): Clarifying Concepts through Reductive and Connective Analysis

Second, with regard to CA, it is undeniable that education is fraught with fundamental concepts the understanding of which is a result of an uncritical acceptance, or what the forebears just left to its posterity. Examples of which are teaching, education, learning, indoctrination, critical thinking, knowledge, moral education, science education, etc. Furthermore, there are first-order questions in education that warrant the need for such an analysis of concepts, e.g., How should I teach this topic natural moral law in Values Education Grade 7? This question, before it can even be adequately answered, must give attention to the concept ‘natural moral law.’ Hence, the need to undertake CA. Although the previous question is not philosophical yet, there are questions in education that are philosophical in their structure, thereby demand an engagement in CA, e.g., Should I punish my student for being a consistent late-comer? The concept that needs analysis here (or a second-order kind of reflection) is punishment.

This is because philosophical analysis is “fundamentally the clarification of basic notions and modes of argument.”¹⁶ APE’s role is thus defined as “the rigorous logical analysis of key concepts related to the practice of education.”¹⁷ A rhetorical question such as this is pointed out to emphasize the place of CA in APE: “For what is the point of conceptual analysis unless it is connected with further questions that require

¹⁵ George Pollack, “Philosophy of Education as Philosophy: A Metaphilosophical Inquiry,” in *Educational Theory*, 57:3 (2007), 257.

¹⁶ Scheffler, *The Language of Education*, 7.

¹⁷ Scheffler, *Reason and Teaching*, 9.

answers?”¹⁸ Moreover, the upshot of a CA of a concept is recommendatory or even prescriptive, i.e., this ought to be the manner by which this concept is used.¹⁹

APE’s methodological strength lies in its second-order nature. Paul H. Hirst and R.S. Peters give an illuminating explication of the distinction in their classic book *The Logic of Education*: “Philosophy, in brief, is concerned with questions about the analysis of concepts and with questions about the grounds of knowledge, belief, actions and activities.”²⁰ This is because APE’s being a second-order discourse is not something invented by contemporary philosophers of education. It finds heritage in the works of philosophers who produced insights on education, and it can even be traced to Socrates himself.²¹ Penny Enslin states here that philosophy of education’s being a distinctive form of educational inquiry lies in the said distinction. A first-order discourse constitutes the “everyday talk” inside the classrooms such as practices, policies, subject matters, etc. This discourse shifts to a second-order, a philosophical kind of reflection, once the focus, for example, is given on the very concept of ‘inclusivity.’ The inquiry becomes philosophical once it starts reflecting on “the concept of inclusion and similarly complex, related concepts—to scrutinize assumptions and arguments concerning them, and to develop sound arguments about the issues they raise.”²²

¹⁸ Richard Stanley Peters, “Introduction,” in *The Philosophy of Education*, ed. by R.S. Peters (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 4.

¹⁹ Nicholas C. Burbules and Bryan R. Warnick, “Philosophical Inquiry,” in *Handbook of Complementary Methods in Education Research*, ed. by J.L. Green, G. Camilli, and P.B. Elmore (Washington, D.C.: American Educational research Association, 2006).

²⁰ Paul H. Hirst and Richard Stanley Peters, *The Logic of Education* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1970), 2-3.

²¹ Plato, *Meno and Other Dialogues*, trans. by Robin Waterfield (New York: Oxford University Press), 99. Socrates, being the mouthpiece of Plato, says: “So far from knowing whether or not [excellence] is teachable, I don’t even have the faintest idea what excellence is.”

²² Penny Enslin, “Philosophy of Education: Overview,” in *International Encyclopedia of Education*, 3rd edition, ed. by P. Peterson, E. Baker, and B. McGaw, vol. 6 (Oxford: Elsevier Ltd., 2010), 4.

There are two kinds of CA: reductive and connective. For the former, Jonas Soltis' clear procedures will be borrowed. These are found in his book *An Introduction to the Analysis of Educational Concepts*. He states that the prior question is "What features must x have to be an X?" He itemizes these four steps: "(1) Select standard or model cases and clear contrary cases of X. (2) Draw potentially necessary features from clear standard cases. (3) Test: Use examples and counterexamples (contrary cases) to test for necessity and sufficiency. (4) Keep, modify, or reject the feature(s) on the basis of the test(s)." ²³ In connection to the 1st step suggested by Soltis above, Michael Scriven suggests to "clarify a notion by giving paradigmatic examples; examples which illustrate the core meaning, the most typical use of the term, and examples which illustrate what it is not, when it should not be applied." ²⁴ And in connection to the 3rd step suggested by Soltis, Scriven views this as the rigorous search for "loopholes or counter-examples in [the] generalizations that have been proposed." ²⁵

Another way of looking at this reductive CA is that the sub-concepts are being unpacked. Suppose that X is the concept to be analyzed. This X is called the *analysandum*. After the analysis, Y₁, Y₂, and Y₃ will be the primitive concepts unpacked. They are called the *analysans*. This 'unpacking' or the act of 'de-conflation' is done so by determining whether Y₁, Y₂, and Y₃ are individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for X. Neil Tennant gives a very illuminating understanding of what occurs in a reductive CA. He says:

Philosophers who engage in conceptual analysis are concerned with the modal features of relationships among concepts. Thus, we find them considering such questions as

²³ Jonas F. Soltis, *An Introduction to the Analysis of Educational Concepts*, 2nd ed. (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1978), 108.

²⁴ Michael Scriven, "Philosophical Inquiry Methods in Education," in *Complementary Methods for Research in Education*, ed. by R.M. Jaeger (Washington, D.C.: American Educational Research Association, 1988), 145.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 146.

whether it is necessary to have a language in order to have thoughts; or whether it is necessary to be embodied in order to be a locus of consciousness; or whether it is possible that there be a true proposition that is in principle unknowable. An epistemologist might inquire whether there could be justified true belief that does not amount to knowledge. In all these examples, the modal element is crucial. Words like ‘necessary,’ ‘possible,’ and ‘essential’ are clues to the philosophical nature of the concern.²⁶

From the foregoing, to ask ‘What is X?’ is to engender questions such as: ‘Is Y1 necessary for X?’, ‘Is it possible that X be the case in the absence of Y2?’, or ‘Are Y2 and Y3 essential for X?’ Much of contemporary analytic philosophy, which is evident in most journal articles, is about demonstrating that a prior analysis of X done by philosopher S is insufficient, that is, either Y1 is not necessary for X, or Y1, Y2, and Y3 are not sufficient for X, or that Y2 is concluded to be a contingent or inessential property of X. Many contemporary analytic philosophers have gained popularity just by demonstrating that a prior analysis is inadequate. A good example is that of Edmund Gettier. Since Plato, knowledge (K) was construed as justified true belief (JTB), but in 1963, Gettier published a three-page essay providing two (2) counter-examples or thought-experiments demonstrating that there is at least one instance of a justified true belief that is not considered as K.²⁷ Hence, the JTB conditions are not sufficient for K. Gettier did so by examining the modal relationship between JTB and K.

The other form of CA is called connective analysis. In any form of discourse or field, some of the philosophical concepts used are fecund or replete with sub-concepts that the process of reduction is possible. Once

²⁶ Neil Tennant, *Introducing Philosophy: God, Mind, World, and Logic* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 126.

²⁷ Edmund Gettier, “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?,” in *Analysis*, 23:6 (1963), 121.

these sub-concepts are made explicit, the assumption is that there will be a more concrete understanding of the main concept in question. There are, however, some concepts that are too simple, basic already, that a reduction to simpler concepts is virtually impossible. Hence, analytic philosophers suggested of another way of doing CA for these concepts in mind. John White and Patricia White propose that this exactly is APE's job: "Philosophy is an exploration of conceptual schemes embedded in the language we know and use. The analysis in which it engages is not reductive, but 'connective': it investigates how one concept is connected—often in complex and ragged-ended ways—in a web of other concepts with which it is logically related."²⁸

Connective analysis need not be construed as contrary to a reductive kind. Both methodologies can be employed for the mutual aim of enriching the understanding of the concepts being scrutinized. A very good example of connective analysis is the ground-breaking work of Israel Scheffler *Conditions of Knowledge: An Introduction to Epistemology and Education*.²⁹ In this work, he traces the logical connections between learning and teaching with those of knowledge and belief. In other words, he argues that there is a strict logical/conceptual connection between educational concepts and epistemological concepts. Thus, instead of viewing learning merely from a behavioristic perspective as a change in behavior, a more nuanced view has been achieved, by connecting these fundamental concepts to epistemic ones.

A possible objection to connective analysis is that a concept can be associated with any other concept, thereby dispensing with the normative and prescriptive elements. In other words, a concept could be just construed 'in any way possible.' Hence, where is the line drawn in doing connective analysis? The author of this work highly agrees with Robin Barrow that truth or falsity is never a category for testing the concepts used.

²⁸ White and White, "An Analytic Perspective," 14.

²⁹ Israel Scheffler, *Conditions of Knowledge: An Introduction to Epistemology and Education* (Glenview, Il: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1965).

It is philosophically impossible to state that 'concept X is concept Y' is true or false. There are no true or false concepts. He says:

The question of whether ... a given conception is true or false... is meaningless. [But] the previous point does not entail the further point that you can entertain any concept or that there are no rules to govern the forming of concepts. It does not follow from the observation that it is meaningless to ask whether a concept is true or false, that one's conceptual armory is entirely arbitrary ... In short, the issue of the quality of a concept arises even though the issue of its truth does not.³⁰

Barrow suggests that there are four (4) criteria in checking for the quality of a conception: clarity, completeness, coherence, and compatibility.³¹ Clarity is couched in terms of avoidance of ambiguity and vagueness. Coherence refers to the absence of inconsistency, that is, in the very articulation of it, all the elements must cohere with one another. Compatibility is manifested in the concept's external coherence with how other fields of knowledge or discourses view the said concept. If X is Y from the perspective of philosophy, and if X is Y is also viewed from psychology, then there is compatibility. In other words, coherence refers to its internal consistency, whereas compatibility, to its external consistency. Lastly, completeness conveys the idea that nothing mentioned about the concept is left unclear or without grounds. Everything must be accounted for.

³⁰ Robin Barrow, "The Need for Philosophical Analysis in a Postmodern Era," in *Interchange*, 30:4 (1999), 426-427.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 427.

Philosophical Justification (PJ): Constructing and Defending the Philosophical Thesis

Finally, the PJ method comes after the CA. Once the concepts embedded in a philosophical statement or a philosophical question are made clear and concrete, the task of justification shall now ensue. As mentioned, CA is engaged not really for its sake alone, but for questions that warrant answers, or “questions of analysis in other words are often linked with questions of justification.”³²

PJ is the culmination of PR and CA. An activity will never be considered philosophy without the provision of rational justification. As Jonas F. Soltis says: “When philosophers [of education] perform ... there is more emphasis on ascertaining the logical soundness of arguments, explicating the meaning of ideas, justifying value claims, constructing reasonable arguments and providing ways to think about educational tasks and problems.”³³ Whereas in PR another’s position is scrutinized according to its validity, in PJ, the practitioner of APE shall now articulate her own position. It is possible to engage in PR yet not in PJ; conversely, it is possible to engage in PJ but not in PR. But in APE, these two go hand-in-hand. Both are used by philosophers in general, and philosophers of education in particular.

To go back to PJ, this articulation is coupled with reasons and justifications. Without such, the pronouncement or knowledge-claim is a mere opinion. As Soltis has mentioned, the task now falls on justification and the construction of reasonable arguments.

Scheffler articulates that,

philosophy is theory based upon argument, as elaborate and as detailed as may be, required to ascertain the truth of the

³² Hirst and Peters, *Logic of Education*, 9.

³³ Jonas F. Soltis, “Perspectives on Philosophy of Education,” in *Journal of Thought*, 18:2 (1983), 17.

matter, argument which follows no external lead but which itself leads those engaged in the quest for understanding. The whole concept of argument, moreover, rests upon the ideal of rationality—of discussion not in order to move or persuade, but rather to test assumptions critically by a review of reasons logically pertinent to them.³⁴

The outcome will either be that the theory is tenable because adequate evidential supports and arguments are provided, or the theory is untenable because the putative evidential supports and argument fail to provide what they aim to give. In either case, “the quest of understanding” is achieved. To be able to state that the theory in question is tenable or not by virtue of a “critical review of reasons” that purport to support it is a product already of understanding. In other words, understanding is extended.

This methodology is seconded by Curren, Robertson, and Hager in their essay on the analytical approach to education: “What is essential to analytical practices is clear, defensible arguments, rational modes of persuasion that are appropriate to the kind of conclusion to be established.”³⁵

Another clear characterization of PJ is articulated by Dagfinn Føllesdal. In his essay, he argues that the alleged distinction between analytic philosophy and continental philosophy is not clear-cut. Analytic philosophy, he argues, is not a distinct philosophical approach the way phenomenology, existentialism, hermeneutics, structuralism, neo-Marxism, and deconstructionism are dissimilar from one another. He construes it as the ethos of philosophy itself. His categories of distinction are that one can be a more analytic Marxist and a less analytic Marxist, or

³⁴ Scheffler, *Reason and Teaching*, 22.

³⁵ Randal Curren, Emily Robertson, and Paul Hager, “The Analytical Movement,” in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Education*, ed. by R. Curren (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 188.

one can be a more analytic phenomenologist or a less analytic phenomenologist. Føllesdal states:

Analytic philosophy is very strongly concerned with argument and justification. An analytic philosopher who presents and assesses a philosophical position asks: what reasons are there for accepting or rejecting this position? This question necessitates an investigation of what follows from the position at issue, and from what other positions it can be derived. How can one strengthen or invalidate this position?³⁶

The succeeding logical question is: How do arguments and reasons confer justificatory status to a conclusion or to a knowledge-claim in a philosophical manner? To understand this question, it is necessary to dispense with the idea that PJ is done in a deductive manner. A conclusion deductively follows from the given premises if the former necessarily follows from the latter, i.e., it is impossible for the conclusion to be false if all the premises are true. Most philosophical positions or conclusions are not products of a deductive approach. But as Føllesdal says: “The types of argument which we encounter in philosophy and other areas are usually variants of non-monotonic arguments, that is, arguments in which adding new premises may cast doubt on a conclusion that would follow without these premises.”³⁷

The above characterization of the non-monotonic constituent of philosophical arguments is pertinent to an understanding of the entire APE methodology. The provision of justification to X does not make it infallibly true, i.e., there will never be a time that it will be false or incorrect. The

³⁶ Dagfinn Føllesdal, “Analytic Philosophy: What Is It and Why Should One Engage in It?” in *The Rise of Analytic Philosophy*, ed. by H.J. Glock (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 7.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

justificatory status of X, upon the provision of reasons and arguments, is that it is more likely to be true than not to be true; or better yet, it is more likely to be rational than not. In philosophy, there is always a possibility that a conclusion is disproven or refuted. The nature of a conclusion derived via philosophy is one of reasons that there is much disagreement within the field. The American Philosophical Association (APA) acknowledges this one: “Disagreement and criticism are among the hallmarks of philosophical life; and it is rare to find two philosophers working in the same area who are in complete agreement with each other.”³⁸ This, however, should not be a cause of dismay among practitioners. All the more, it is a mark of strength. To continue with what APA stipulates: “The very best research in philosophy serves more often to generate disputes and differences than to resolve them. It is precisely through such ongoing argument and debate that sophistication with respect to the issues at hand increases, comprehension of them deepens, and understanding concerning them is enhanced.”³⁹

To resume, for a position to be proven to be more likely to be true than not to be true (or to be more like to be rational than not) not only means that justifications be provided, the proponent also (i.e., the practitioner of APE) needs to refute or disprove positions that contradict the held position. What happens is that if X is the stance held, then Y and Z are not only added as justifications, A and B (such that A and B entail $\sim X$) must also be disproven. Hence the importance of responding to objections, whether possible or actual. Given the manner by which a position or a conclusion is philosophically justified (PJ), philosopher of language A.P. Martinich suggests that a philosophical work must always include the raising of objections. There are two ways of raising an objection to one’s philosophical conclusion. First is to “raise objections that have been raised

³⁸ American Philosophical Association, “APA Statement,” 119.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

against your position.”⁴⁰ This can be done by raising “objections that historically significant philosophers have already raise to that problem.”⁴¹ Second is to “raise objections that no one else has raised and which, when answered, further explicate and shore up your thesis.”⁴² Refuting raised objections is a way to bolster the evidentiary status of one’s philosophical thesis.

If philosophy requires argumentations and justifications, the next logical question to ask is: What serves as a philosophical justification? To put it in scientific parlance, what is the data of philosophizing?

In addressing this, Scheffler suggests “to consider how analytic philosophy might be brought to bear on educational problems, as a legitimate and vital pursuit of philosophy of education ... I suggest that we conceive of analytic applications in roughly two directions: (a) the utilization of results already achieved in the autonomous development of research, and (b) the use of acknowledged methods directly in the study of educational problems.”⁴³ Given the non-monotonic nature of philosophy, it follows that what is being strived for is ‘rational coherence.’ Analytic philosopher Nicholas Rescher provides a clear stipulation of the ‘data’ of philosophy. He borrows William James idea of the “funded experience” of the world’s ways. It is precisely the world which constitutes the data of PJs. These are (as identified verbatim from Rescher’s essay):

- a. common-sense beliefs, common knowledge, and what have been ‘the ordinary convictions of the plain man’ since time immemorial;
- b. the facts (or purported facts) afforded by the science of the day; the views of well-informed ‘experts’ and ‘authorities’;

⁴⁰ Aloysius Patrick Martinich, *Philosophical Writing: An Introduction*, 4th ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 55.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Scheffler, *Reason and Teaching*, 13-14.

- c. the lessons we derive from our dealings with the world in everyday life;
- d. the received opinions that constitute the worldview of the day; views that accord with the ‘spirit of the times’ and the ambient convictions of one’s cultural context;
- e. tradition, inherited lore, and ancestral wisdom (including religious tradition);
- f. the ‘teachings of history’ as best we can discern them.⁴⁴

As Rescher explains, any of the aforesaid datum is a “respectable” source of PJ, but not all of them are “acceptable.” A philosophical thesis is supported by PJs culled from the plurality of sources. The more justifications are placed to support a thesis, the stronger it becomes. The task of the philosopher is to ensure that these data “rationally cohere” with one another such that the alleged inconsistencies are rationally dispensed with. Here Rescher echoes Scheffler’s view of philosophy as “maximum of vision and minimum of mystery” mentioned above: “the prime flaw of philosophizing is a narrowness of vision.”⁴⁵ In doing all of the above, PR, CA, and PJ are all present. This leads to the idea of reflective equilibrium as the primary source of APE: “The theory of the general connections must fit the details, and the details must find a place in the more general theory. It is through this ... that we arrive at justifications [to] our philosophical insights.”⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Nicholas Rescher, “Philosophy as rational Systematization,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Philosophical Methodology*, ed. by G. D’Oro and S. Overgaard (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 34.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁴⁶ Føllesdal, “Analytic Philosophy,” 10.

The above proposed three-fold account constitutes a way of doing analytic philosophy of education (APE), viz., philosophical reconstruction, conceptual analysis (reductive and connective), and philosophical justification.

THE UTILITY OF APE: RESOLVING THE METHODOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL CHALLENGES

By codifying these steps, the charge against philosophy in general, and against philosophy of education specifically, by non-philosophers is hoped to have been dispelled. Doing APE dissipates the mere opinion and lexicographical triviality charges. Furthermore, it is shown that doing philosophy of education is not methodologically deficient.

First, the proposed methodology is able to respond to the pedagogical challenge raised by John Wisdom. We can now state that future philosophers are not only made, but also taught through the precept method because the methodology, viz., APE, has been itemized already. The steps borrowed from the works of Scheffler, Holma, Fisher, Soltis, and others formalize the process, therefore enabling APE to move beyond mere observational ‘philosophical antics’ into a teachable and replicable philosophical research model by providing the necessary explicit precepts. Second, the APE also addresses the challenge stipulated by Claudia Ruitenberg. While education, following the social sciences, maintains its fidelity to data gathering, data analysis and data representation, the proposed APE offers a robust philosophical alternative philosophical reconstruction, conceptual analysis, and philosophical justification. This serves as a potent answer to Ruitenberg’s question ‘what about the method?’

Lastly, the systematization of this proposed methodology of doing philosophy of education not only aims to encourage philosophers of education to utilize it, but also hopes to galvanize Filipino teachers, especially those without philosophy background, to tap into the rich

heritage of philosophy by engaging in research through the APE. To echo Israel Scheffler, if we devote ourselves in the tripartite structure of the APE, we “cannot fail to deepen our understanding of what we do when we educate.”⁴⁷ Philosophy indeed maximizes our vision and minimizes mystery by providing clarity and rational justification.

⁴⁷ Scheffler, *Reason and Teaching*, 17.

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