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The Philosophy of Education

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Introduction

In my freshman year of college at UNC, I took an impactful Philosophical Figures course from Nancy Matchett on two prominent philosophers, Mary Midgley and Mary Warnock. In this class we read Warnock's *Honesty and Cynicism*, *Philosophy in Education*, and *Education for Pleasure*, among many other readings. This course inspired further research into a topic I became interested in while in high school, I reference these readings in particular because they helped inform my thoughts on how public education should include philosophy in its curriculum to create more engaged and well-rounded students.

Methodology

The Methodology I used was the reading and analyzing of essays from Mary Warnock and several other philosophers on the inclusion of philosophy in general education and how it can be beneficial to students. In essence I did a literature review of the work that is being done to push for philosophy in education.

Discussion

- Warnock promotes philosophy in education, and argues that it can lead to pleasure and that should be the main goal of educators
 - The pleasures of Power and Imagination (the "pleasures of freedom")
 - Power is the ability to control, understand, and act on our environment (something we all take pleasure in according to Warnock)
 - Imagination is concerned with what is not the case, this allows us to daydream, plan, and experiment to accomplish what we desire for our own futures. Pleasure of this kind has infinite possibilities (Warnock, *Education for Pleasure*)

Findings

Warnock has argued that adding philosophy to standard K-12 education will:

- Lead to more student engagement
- Provide students with a more holistic view of the various subjects they are studying and help them develop a predisposition to look deeper for the truth (Warnock)
- Prevent students from becoming bitter cynics and promote candor (openness and honesty)
- Summer philosophy courses for high schoolers will help them get a sense of campus life and encourage enrollment for disadvantaged students. This would obviously work the same for other college sponsored programs (Peterson)
- Other benefits from the study of philosophy include (the ability to decide and question the values one holds, what obligations do we have to others?, an open way of thinking that allows for new possibilities, and cognitive and non-cognitive skill development)

Mary Warnock Background

Mary Warnock,(1924-2019). was an Oxford trained philosopher, who focused on Morality, Mind, and Education. She is perhaps best known for her work to increase access to reproductive medicine, but her focus on increasing philosophy in education is also of importance. She was educated in Winchester and at Oxford, where she later taught. Warnock was also involved in public service, including membership of the IBA, chairmanship of government committees on special education, animal experimentation and human fertility and embryology, and authorship of *The Warnock Report* (Blackwell Publishers, 1986) . (*The Uses of Philosophy*)



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