

An Adventure in Publishing Revisited: Fifty Years of Studies in Philosophy and Education

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In 1960 a new journal saw the light. The journal was called *Studies in Philosophy and Education*.¹ In the first issue its editors—Archibald W. Anderson (University of Illinois), Marc Belth (Queens College), Joe R. Burnett (University of Illinois), Hobert W. Burns (Syracuse University), Maxine Greene (New York University), James McClellan (Columbia University) and Francis T. Villemain (University of Toledo)—characterised the birth of the new journal as “an adventure in publishing” (Editors 1960, p. 3).² The editors had a clear idea about why the journal was needed. While they started their editorial introduction in an apologetic manner by stating that they were offering “yet another journal to our colleagues in education, in philosophy, and in the growing discipline that stands in between” (ibid.), the “major justification” they gave for starting up *Studies in Philosophy and Education* rested in their belief “that the philosophic problems and issues of education are of sufficient importance to warrant a publication exclusively devoted to technical philosophic inquiries that are carried out in depth” (ibid.). In order to achieve this, the editors not only proposed “to make STUDIES a place where the primary materials are sustained analyses, somewhat longer than most journal articles,” but also emphasises the need for “debates and exchanges” on the belief that “(c)ontroversy seems to provoke and sustain growth in philosophical thought” (ibid.). The editors concluded their introductory statement by stating that “(u)ntil such time as the members of the Editorial Board adjudicate their conflicting truths, STUDIES will be without an official philosophic position.” (ibid.)

¹ All volumes of *Studies in Philosophy and Education* are now available in electronic form on the journal’s website: <http://www.springerlink.com/content/102999/>.

² In the second issue of the journal the following institutions were listed as “sustaining institutions and societies:” Middle Atlantic States Philosophy of Education Society; Midwestern Philosophy of Education Society; Ohio Region Philosophy of Education Society; Queens College, Flushing, New York; Rutgers—The State University; New Brunswick, NJ; School of Education, New York University, NY, NY; School of Education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY; University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.

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Fifty years on *Studies in Philosophy and Education* is still there and it is clearly in good shape. Although the journal has managed to publish only 30 volumes so far—partly due to some gaps in the publishing schedule in the earlier decades of its existence—*Studies in Philosophy and Education* has been appearing annually for the past 20 years, moving to 6 issues per year in 2000 and being included in the Social Science Citation Index and Arts and Humanities Citation Index in 2008. Moreover, while as a paper-only publication it reached a fairly large number of individuals and libraries in a range of different countries, the advance of electronic publishing, means that the journal is now available through a very large number of libraries all over the world. A year on year increase in the number of downloaded papers indicates that the work being published in what perhaps even a decade ago was still very much a ‘niche’ journal, is now reaching a very large international audience. In this regard the adventure in publishing that was started in 1960 has certainly come to fruition.

One interesting question is how we should understand the particular ‘intervention’ *Studies in Philosophy and Education* sought to make in the field as it was developing at the time in the English-speaking world, particularly in North America and in the UK. Waks, in his brief history of the development of philosophy of education in North America and the UK characterises what was going on around the time *Studies in Philosophy and Education* was established as the ‘analytical revolution’ in philosophy of education (Waks 2008). Retrospectively Waks identifies Israel Scheffler’s 1954 article “Toward an analytical philosophy of education” (Scheffler 1954) as the starting point of this revolution and describes how from the mid 1950s onwards the analytical approach established itself on both sides of the Atlantic in such places as Harvard and the University of Illinois in the US and Oxford University and Birkbeck College and the Institute of Education, University of London (see Waks 2008, pp. 1–2). The ‘revolutionaries’—as Waks calls them—“were fully self-conscious about their insurgency” in that while previous teaching in the field “had pitted various philosophical schools against each other” they rejected all this prior work “as philosophically incompetent and intellectually empty” (ibid., p. 2). Waks quotes Kenneth Strike who describes the situation in the US at the time as follows:

At the time philosophy of education was organized into clubs with names like ‘pragmatism’ and ‘realism.’ It seemed like half the papers in *Educational Theory* had (or could have had) titles like ‘The implications of the philosophy of Philosopher P for education’ and at least half the members of the profession seemed to think that the writings of John Dewey were divinely inspired. (Strike, quoted in Waks 2008, p. 2)

These observations not only help to understand what kind of intervention *Studies in Philosophy and Education* sought to make in the field—that is, an intervention that aimed to create a platform for the analytical revolution in philosophy of education—but also shed light on the editors’ insistence that “STUDIES will be without an official philosophic position.”

Looking back we know that the analytical revolution was not the last word in philosophy of education. Other ‘revolutions’ followed, including a feminist revolution—perhaps marked most explicitly by Jane Roland Martin’s *Reclaiming a conversation: The idea of the educated woman* (Roland Martin 1985)—a (neo-)pragmatist revolution, a postmodern revolution, a praxis revolution, and perhaps even a Continental revolution, albeit that the latter has been mainly connected with French philosophy and only to a very limited extent with work from Germany. Over the years *Studies in Philosophy and Education* has played an important role in representing these different ‘revolutions,’ both through individual

papers and book reviews and rejoinders and through special issues, thus living up to the original intention of its editors to be “without an official philosophic position.”

After 50 years and thirty volumes I considered it time for a modest celebration. While I could have chosen to look backwards by identifying the ‘greatest hits’ of the last 50 years, and while I could also have chosen to look forward by inviting authors to shed their light on the future of our field, I decided, instead, to look around me in order to see what might be going on in our field right now. That is why, for this special anniversary issue, I invited contributions from scholars who, in a sense, I see as belonging to my generation. Doing so, as I explicitly acknowledged in the invitation letter, is fraught with difficulties because what counts as a generation is very much a matter of perception from a particular position—in this case my position—and thus mainly reflects my perceptions of who were already active in the field when I entered and who became active in the field after I entered. Nonetheless I used this vague and in a sense arbitrary criterion to invite a number of scholars from a range of different countries to contribute a piece to this anniversary issue. As I didn’t want to have total control over the selection of authors I invited an initial group and asked them to provide me with further suggestions. The result is still a fairly arbitrary selection—and I apologise beforehand to those readers who feel that they should have been included in this issue as well—but at least it is not a selection that was entirely made by me.

Rather than to ask for reflections on the field I invited the contributors to write a short piece outlining their own theory, philosophy, account or understanding of education. I asked the contributors not only to be as explicit as possible, but also encouraged them to be explicitly self-referential, that is, taking their own body of work as the main frame of reference. I invited them, in other words, to speak and also to speak as much as possible in their own voice—which is the reason why I asked for single-authored contributions.³ The reason why I asked for accounts of the authors’ theories or philosophies of education—which means that I asked them to start from educational issues rather than philosophical ones—partly has to do with my own academic history. I received my own academic formation in a tradition that does not see philosophy of education as a branch of applied philosophy firmly rooted—intellectually and institutionally—in philosophy, but rather as a form of educational scholarship that makes use of philosophical resources but which is ‘based’ in the academic discipline of education. This tradition, partly with distinctive roots in Dutch education but also strongly influenced by the way in which the field of education has developed in the German speaking world, puts educational questions and interests first and sees philosophy as one of the potential resources to enrich reflection on these issues. While there are clear points of connection between this more Continental approach and what in the English language is called ‘philosophy of education’—and it is important to bear in mind that this phrase cannot be simply and straightforwardly translated into other languages—it does provide a slightly different angle on the interconnections and encounters between philosophy and education. As *Studies in Philosophy and Education* sees itself as an *international* journal, I have always found it important to maintain an awareness of the different ways in which the encounter between education and philosophy

³ With this I am partly responding to a trend in our field towards co-authored publications. While real co-authorship should be encouraged I am concerned about a tendency, prevalent in some countries more than others, where, for example, doctoral students seem to be required to list their supervisors automatically as co-authors on everything they write. While I do consider it important to be generous in our acknowledgements—after all, an academic publication is always the outcome of many conversations and interactions with people and their writings—the question of authorship and who takes ultimate responsibility for what is put on paper is different from this, and I consider it important that the two are not conflated.

has taken shape in different contexts and traditions (see also Biesta 2010; in press). This is why I did not ask the contributors for a piece on ‘my favourite philosopher’ or ‘my favourite philosophy’ but rather invited them to *do* philosophy of education from the range of traditions they have grown up in and find themselves familiar with.

The contributions in this issue thus provide a fascinating collection of points of view, some clearly situated in the traditions of philosophy of education that have come to fruition in the English-speaking world; others clearly located in more Continental approaches. While there is still much absent—I am aware that the contributors only represent a small selection of the international field—there is also much present: a wide and interesting range of ideas and perspectives, a wide and interesting range of educational and political commitments; and perhaps most surprisingly, at least from where my expectations for this issue started, a wide and interesting range of different *forms* of writing and articulation. How future historians will look back upon the ‘adventure’ of this special anniversary issue is something we won’t know. But the contributions to this issue do show that at this particular juncture, at this particular moment ‘between past and future,’ there is definitely no lack of good and original ideas and exciting perspectives. We can, therefore, confidently look forward to the next 50 year of this adventure in publishing called *Studies in Philosophy and Education*.

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