

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-64784-8 - Truth and Fallacy in Educational Theory

Charles D. Hardie

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TRUTH AND FALLACY  
IN  
EDUCATIONAL THEORY

by

CHARLES D. HARDIE

*Assistant to the Professor of Education, University of Edinburgh  
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## PREFACE

I wish to express my warmest thanks to Professor Godfrey H. Thomson, who has not only read most of the book in manuscript but has also been a continual source of encouragement to me. My obligations to my former teachers, Professor C. D. Broad and Dr I. A. Richards, will be obvious to anyone who knows their work, and I make grateful acknowledgment to them here. My thanks are also due to the staff of the Cambridge University Press for their care and courtesy, and to Messrs Macmillan and Company, Limited, for permission to use a number of quotations from the works of John Dewey.

C. D. H.

*August 1941*

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## INTRODUCTION

The present state of educational theory, with its numerous conflicting doctrines, can hardly be regarded as satisfactory, and the present book is an attempt to resolve some of the disagreements. It has been customary to consider that disagreement in such a subject is quite respectable, just as it has long been considered to be respectable in philosophical theory. But recent years have seen a change in the attitude of some professional philosophers. The Cambridge analytical school, led by Moore, Broad and Wittgenstein, has attempted so to analyse propositions that it will always be apparent whether the disagreement between philosophers is one concerning matters of fact, or is one concerning the use of words, or is, as is frequently the case, a purely emotive one.

It is time, I think, that a similar attitude became common in the field of educational theory. That is, if two educational theorists disagree I think it should be made clear whether the disagreement is factual or verbal or due to some emotional conflict. If this is to be done it is necessary always to state each theory in the clearest possible way so that no ambiguity may be allowed to flourish undiscovered.

In the succeeding pages I have attempted to do this for what are perhaps the three most typical theories of educa-

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tion that have so far been proposed—the ‘nature’ theory of education, the theory of the development of character by means of instruction, and the theory of education by means of the practical situations of life. Each of these is examined, and in the fourth chapter an attempt is made to analyse the foundations on which any educational theory must be built. It is then possible to see to what extent disagreements may legitimately be allowed. Finally, in Chapter v an account is given of the logical assumptions involved in recent work on educational measurement.