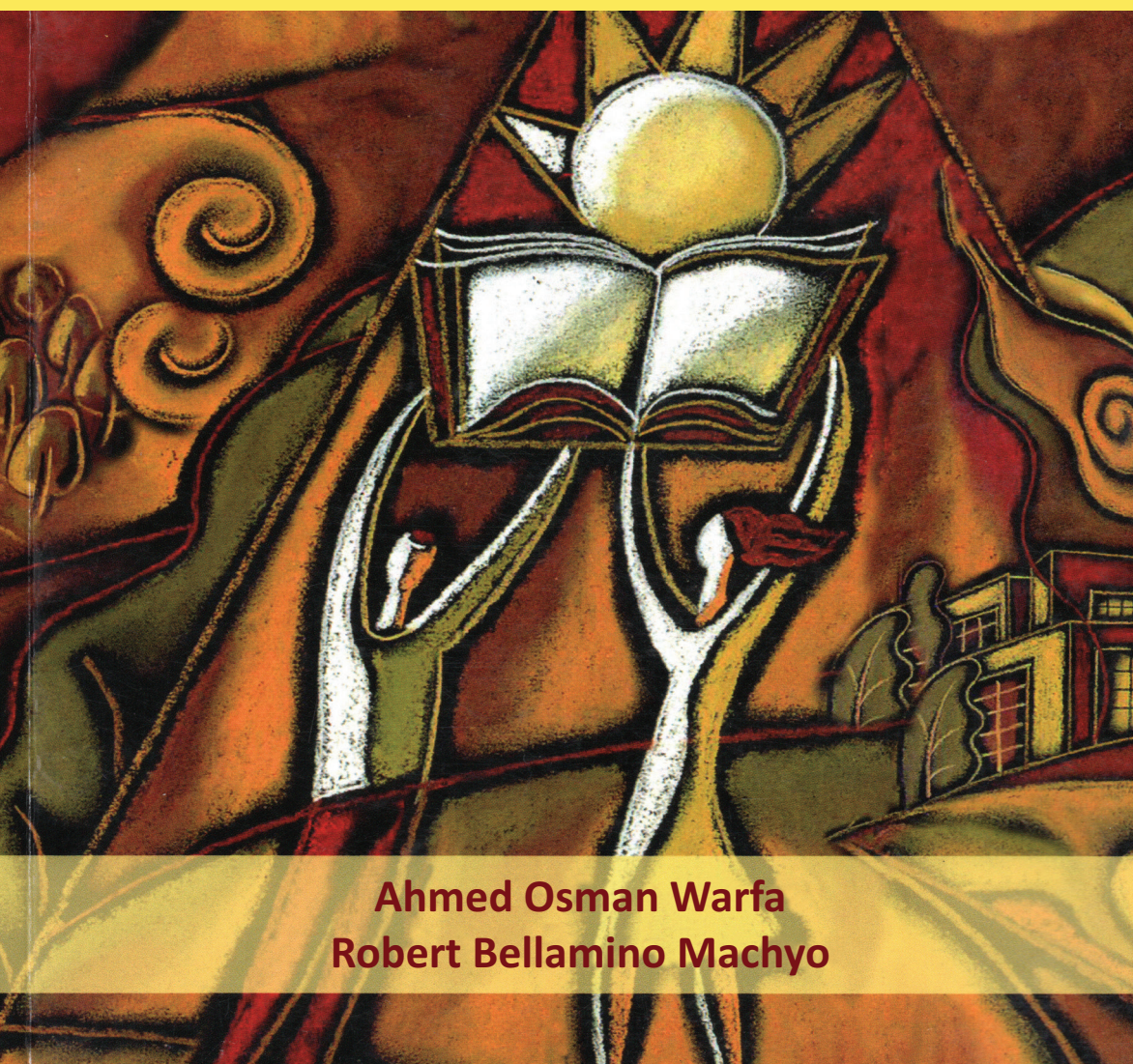


# PHILOSOPHY *of* EDUCATION

## A Handbook for Teachers



Ahmed Osman Warfa  
Robert Bellamino Machyo



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## **Prefatory Note**

This book is meant to be a trove of key ideas and intellectual pursuits on the subject of philosophy of education.

Unlike the conventional academic text that follows a strict conceptual development model, this handbook seeks a succinct mention of key notions in contemporary philosophy as applied to educational management while leaving the enunciation of cited concepts to past literature as opined in all well respected publications.

As a handbook, this publication is supposed to provide an encyclopedic reference without the more common implication of a very large and voluminous text. Our aim is to redirect academic energy to emergent issues in philosophy of education, more so as a guide for teachers in training. Furthermore, we hope to enable postgraduate research and insight based on a library of past thinking.

# **Contents**

## **Chapter One**

What is Philosophy?	1
---------------------	---

## **Chapter Two**

Philosophy and Education - the link?	17
2.1 Components of Education	19
2.1.1 The Knowledge Component	19
2.1.2 The Narrative Component	20
2.1.3 The Creative Component	20
2.1.4 The Discourse Component	22
2.2 The Significance and Functions of Education	23

## **Chapter Three**

Philosophy of Education - the dialectics	25
3.1 Educational Philosophies	25
3.1.1 Perennialism	26
3.1.2 Essentialism	27
3.1.3 Existentialism	30
3.1.4 progressivism	34
3.1.5 behaviourism	38
3.1.6 Linguistic Philosophy	40
3.1.7 Constructivism	40
3.1.8 Social Reconstructionism	45
3.2 Movements of Education Philosophy	48
3.2.1 Classical Education	48
3.2.2 Contemplative Education	49
3.2.3 Humanistic Education	49
3.2.4 Critical Pedagogy	61

3.2.5 Critical Thinking	61
3.2.6 Democratic Education	64
3.2.7 Unschooling	65

## **Chapter Four**

Non-African Philosophy of Education	67
4.1 Socrates	67
4.2 Plato	77
4.3 Aristotle	82
4.4 Abu Ali al-Husayn (Avicenna)	86
4.5 John Locke	88
4.6 Jean-Jacques Rousseau	89
4.7 Johann Friedrich Herbart	98
4.8 Charlotte Mason	100
4.9 John Dewey	103
4.10 Rudolf Steiner	106
4.11 Maria Montessori	107
4.12 Jean Piaget	109
4.13 Paulo Freire	114
4.14 Nel Noddings	120
4.15 Sarah Maxine Greene art	123
4.16 Bell Hooks	126

## **Chapter Five**

Philosophy of Education in Africa	131
Bibliography	143

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## CHAPTER 1

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### WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

**T**he word “Philosophy” originates from two Greek words *philo* and *sophia* which mean love for wisdom. We can ergo say that philosophy is the love of wisdom. But this definition of philosophy only captures the term’s popular strict meaning.

More essentially, a claim to the custody of wisdom imposes on one the need to flawlessly use whatever is known or understood for the realization of a definite goal, a pursuit akin to the French dogma *la fin justifie les moyens*.



Socrates (470-399 BC), the great Greek philosopher who is considered the architect of Western philosophy. He proposed the dialectic method of inquiry as the most valuable way of discerning the unknown. In this case, an intellectual inquest is broken down into a series of questions which interrogate the depths of possibilities, and finally a proximate understanding arises. This is the hypothesis paradigm of contemporary scientific “adventure”. Socrates is the mentor of Aristotle and Plato, great philosophers who have influenced the conceptualization of what philosophy of education ought to be.

To love on the other hand, is to accept entities as they are, without any afterthought. It is, perhaps as the *la fin* proposition implies, the end justification travail-an enviable and seemingly relentless effort whose goal is simply to love.

But a dialectic arises in this purview because the concept of knowledge invariably presupposes a firm understanding of a phenomenon, which understanding cannot be limited to an end is simply to love what is afore stated! Shouldn’t the end not be unknown, to be discovered gradually through a systematic understanding of the nature and the structure of the unknown.



Indeed, definitions of philosophy abound: the investigation of nature; the comprehension of *cause*, and the principles of Reality; the search for Knowledge and Truth based on the perception and interaction with the Real, and so on. Nonetheless, we can talk of commonplace and professional definitions of philosophy.

Commonplace philosophy is the world of philosophy occupied by all those who earnestly and truly to come to terms with Reality while defining the process by which understanding and wisdom are achieved. It is characterized by a genuine human response to life and it is taught in most cultures and societies. It also refers to sets of beliefs, assumptions, traditions, customs or principles which individuals or societies have defined and set as informal ways to regulate *common* thinking, habits and conduct of life, and include traditional habits, 2modes of character and intellectual inclinations of a general kind. This philosophy also covers cultural traditions, attitudes, values and peer-driven norms of conduct which individual or societies have set and use to respond to tribulations and other mundane issues.

In essence, commonplace philosophy can be used in making decisions on traditional events like marriage and divorce, matters inheritance, and the assignment of social status. It may also be used to “explain” an event: a climatic pattern of the occurrence of trauma.

Commonplace or, more aptly put, universal philosophy is general in scope and subjective in nature. It may not strictly be the outcome of serious or formal deliberation and thought. Rather, it is informal in nature and often it is neither written nor structurally codified in any formal manner. The body of commonplace philosophy is built over some prolonged and arduous experience. Critics emphasise the “instability” of its body of thought: that its components may be abandoned as they become out dated, or, aptly put, as reality, opinions and beliefs change.

According to Njoroge and bennaars, what makes a response philosophical is not the way it is expressed in simple or sophisticated language, in oral or written form or whether it is an “edict” or proclamation from a learner, a political leader, a peasant farmer or a learned scholar. What matters is the social authenticity or acceptability of the thought. Commonplace may thus be described as general philosophy.

An example of commonplace philosophy is invariably described by critics as formal philosophy. Therefore, a professional philosopher should study and understand the history and the dynamics of centuries old European philosophy and be conversant with influential and celebrated Greek philosophers.

Professional philosophy is therefore *that* philosophy that is tested and structured around a body of “verified” beliefs and assumptions. It is instructive that professional philosophy is grown of the wide world of “commonplace philosophy”. This development form commonplace philosophy has occurred due to three factors formalization, westernization and specialization.

- **Formalization:** The term “form” refers to the presence of a system, pattern or structure. Thus formalization is the process whereby human activity are given a specific kind of structure or system. This leads to the implication that when we talk about formal education we mean a well defined system of education. Hundreds of years ago, the technique of writing developed within humanity and notable ideas came to be expressed in a more systematic manner or form. The formalization of ideas through writing encouraged the development of formal philosophy. The initial philosophical adventurisms captured in structured and well elaborated writings mark the beginnings of a professional philosophy tradition within human societies. *Ipso facto*, Indian formal philosophy goes

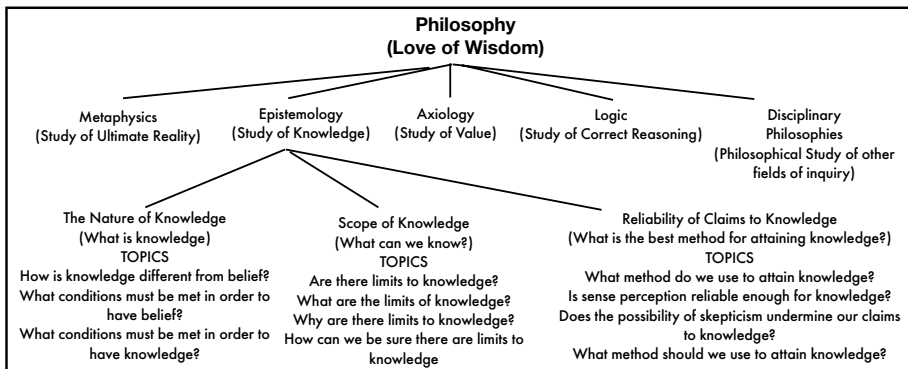
back to The Vedas: the collection of subtle hymns and rhythms based on dominant liturgical traditions and mythical “corroborations” and composed between 1500 and 1000 BC. Similarly, the origins of Chinese formal philosophy date around the era of the glamorous and engaging works of notables alike Confucius and Lao Tzu. And in Western Europe, the beginnings are found in the dialectical and edifying philosophical writings of the great Greek philosophers of the remarkable period of 600 BC and 300 AD wherein Heraclitus, Pythagoras and Empedocles are cited in long depth. In the modern world professional philosophy comprises books, formal and codified language and symbols, scholarly writings and systematic thought.

- **Westernization:** Due to the dominant position of Western civilization which resulted in centuries of global imperialism, formal philosophy came to be dominated by Western thought tradition and philosophy came to be regarded as a predominantly Western engagement. Accordingly, the formal philosopher must be familiar with the various schools of Western Philosophy such as Realism, Idealism and Pragmatism and must understand the terminology inherent in this philosophy. Western philosophy is increasingly internationally accepted and appreciated in contemporary scholarship.
- **Specialization:** Specialization in the process whereby people acquire exceptional knowledge of a particular subject as a result of intensive and constant study. In the case of professional philosophy, specialization occurs at different times in history and in different parts of the world: the Western European nations, the Middle East caliphates and larger Asian nations of China, India and Japan. Even

though specialization has taken place at different times and in different areas, Western influence has permeated many a society right from the days of early social contacts exemplified by trade into the age of colonial domination and into the modern world. This influence is based on methodology, terminology, and analogy.

In relation to subject matter, philosophy as to do with four distinct areas of study or branches of philosophy. These are Metaphysics, Epistemology, Logic and Axiology.

The first branch of philosophy that we discuss is metaphysics. Metaphysics is the combination of two words. Physics is the branch of science dealing with matter and its motion, while Greek word meta means beyond. Metaphysics implies all that knowledge that is beyond the understanding of physics.



*Courtesy: Stanford University. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy organizes scholars from around the world in philosophy and related disciplines to create and maintain an up-to-date reference work.*

Metaphysics seeks answers to fundamental questions related to existence and identity, to being and becoming, to the abyss of space ad infinitum. Metaphysics interrogates science of existence. Thus a plethora of questions: What is Life? What is Being? Who created Life and why? is there any outside world beyond the

human mind? What is Free will? Who created Universe and why? Does God or the First Cause exist?

Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy which analyses universal objects, be they human, supernatural, divine, cosmic, or the holy numbers.

- **Existence and Identity:** Ontology is the part of metaphysics that studies existence and the Supernatural, and how Life is related to the Supernatural. Identity is the relation that every being has with itself.
- **Change and Causality:** Change means the alternation of events or identities. For change to happen there has to be cause. The change resultant of cause is effect. This relationship between the two dynamics cause and effect is called causality.
- **Free will:** Free will is the ability to choose between options and to be completely responsible for any decision. Free will includes self importance, transgression, honour, duty and culpability.

In relation to education, metaphysics takes the self-conscious turn of examining the powers and processes of intellect by which humans have become conscious of the things that they know and not upon in their daily lives. From the point of view of philosophy, all of this effort aims at arriving at some basic concepts, or the First Principle, which provide the substance upon which the Being is grounded. Thus, metaphysics explains the nature of reality - what, in the epistemological sense, humans know that they know.

Thus, metaphysics searches for the truth and supports what human beings assert to be the truth.

Before Socrates, philosophers did not pay much attention to man and his destiny, what he can become and the purpose of his life in this world. It was Socrates who first recognized that more than the stars, moon, sun, trees and other inanimate objects worthy of study, is man. Since then, man has become the centre of philosophical studies. Equally, metaphysical issues raised make meaning only to man. It is man who speculates about the problem of being, of substance, of essence, of reality, of appearance, of unity, and of diversity, all with the purpose of building a coherent picture of the world and his place in it. In essence, education gains eminence over time and man's conceptualization of the universe is what he translates into the body of knowledge that navigates around this education.

Educational policy, curriculum of study and teaching methodology, all have their manifestations in metaphysical beliefs. The metaphysical nature of man makes him the only creature that requires some form of education for survival. This explains why man lives more by certainty and other lower animals live by more by chance. There has never been any society that failed to develop some form of education for its survival.

The second branch of philosophy is epistemology. the term epistemology dates back to Ancient Greece. It is derived from two Greek words *episteme*, meaning knowledge and *logia*, meaning study. Thus epistemology is the systematic inquiry into the nature and ground of order discipline that is concerned with the how and the why rather than the what. It is a systematic reflection of knowledge itself. It aims at

#### Epistemology

*What you know and  
how you know it*



exploring scientifically what we can know, how we can know and how reliable that knowledge is.

One key conclusion from the short discussion of epistemology is that many of the things we claim to know - from the sciences to the humanities, and mathematics - would not count as knowledge if we were to apply rigorous epistemic yardsticks to them. This is because most of our claims to knowledge are established on opinions and uncorroborated evidence.

The implication for instructors is that the knowledge we endeavor to pass on to learners can never be predetermined: It must always be reviewed, evaluated, refined and revised. It also means that students should learn how to execute their own surveys, analyse their findings, and refine or revise them. The main objective of education should therefore include the following:

- ☞ To teach students how to decide whether a particular piece of information counts as genuine knowledge or whether it is no more than the best guess we can come up with at the moment.
- ☞ To train students how to determine whether information has been acquired in the right manner, whether there are good reasons to determine correctness or falsehood of any information.
- ☞ To teach learners how to determine what the goal of inquiry is in a given situation and to evaluate whether a particular piece of information or knowledge is worth having.

The question “What are the things that we know?” is not unimportant. It is obvious that, if we are trying to get something done, we should figure out what we know about the situation before proceeding.

The third branch of philosophy is logic. Logic is formal reasoning that is based upon a predetermined set of principles of validation. Thus, it is the branch of philosophy that studies the nature and types of reasoning.

Logic comes from the Greek word *logos*. The variety of senses that *logos* implies may suggest the difficulties to be encountered in characterizing the nature and the scope of logic. Logic is thought of as the laws of thought. The unequivocal rules of right reasoning. And, in a more Aristotelian tradition, logic comes across as the embodiment of the principles of *valid* argumentation.

Logic aims at establishing the truth or the falsehood of assertions. It also helps to establish the validity and soundness of arguments.

Essentially, logic can be divided into three major groups: deductive logic, inductive logic and symbolic logic.

Deduction is the process of reasoning whereby a particular conclusion is inferred or deduced from a general premise. Deductive reasoning is a logical process in which a conclusion is based on the concordance of multiple premises that are generally assumed to be true. Deductive reasoning is sometimes referred to as top-down logic.

### Logical Reasoning

#### LOGIC

It is a branch of philosophy that concerns analysis of inferences and arguments.

It is the use and study of valid reasoning.

A proper or reasonable way of thinking about understanding something.

An *inference* involves forming a conclusion that is based on some evidence

An *argument* consists of a conclusion and its supportive

Example 1: All birds have two legs and wings.

A pigeon is a bird.

A pigeon has two legs and wings.

Example 2: All dogs have four legs.

Simba is a dog.

Simba has four legs.

Example 3: This channel only plays shows for kids.

"Tom and Jerry" shows on this channel.

"Tom and Jerry" is a show for kids.

As demonstrated in the examples above, such reasoning is often expressed in the form of a syllogism, in which case the first two statements need to be stated before the third statement is introduced.

Induction is the process of reasoning that proceeds from the particular to the general. It is the mental process involved in creating generalizations from the observed phenomenon or principle. Inductive reasoning is often described as bottom-up logic.

Induction is a process where by general law or conclusion is inferred from particular instance. It starts from the particular and reasons to the general idea. If an event or a process is repeated several times and consistently, then conclusions are drawn. For example, it has been established that for an object to float in water, its density should be less than one gram per cubic centimetre. Therefore all objects with such density must float in water. This law has been held without further inquiry.

Symbolic logic is the method of representing logical expressions through the use of symbols and variables, rather than in ordinary language. This has the benefit of removing the ambiguity that normally accompanies ordinary languages such as English and allows easier operation.

There are many systems of symbolic systems of symbolic logic, such as classical propositional logic, first-order logic and modal logic. Each may have separate symbols, or exclude the use of certain symbols.

The term symbolic logic sounds terrifying, and the presence of even a small amount of symbolism may deter many readers from an otherwise perfectly intelligible text. The following explanation introduces the symbolism used in this work, and lists some of the variations that may be encountered in other words.

Logical operation	Logical symbol	Macro
There is	$\exists$	(isE)
There is exactly	$\exists !$	(isE!)
if, then	$\supset$	ifthen
inclus. or	$\vee$	vr*
exclus. or xor	$\oplus$	vr**
and	$\wedge$	a*d
logical. equiv.	$\equiv$	lgeq
material. equiv.	$\leftrightarrow$	mteq
Because	$\because$	b/c*
For all	$\forall$	fral*
proport. to	$\propto$	prpto*
intersection	$\cap$	nxn
union	$\cup$	uni*
tilde	$\sim$	tld*
asymptot. equal	$\approx$	aeql*
is true	$\models$	isT*
is not true	$\models$	isnT*
necessarily	$\Box$	ncsry
element of	$\in$	lmnt
inferred from	$\vdash$	infr*

A table of logical symbols

Lower-case italic letters from this part of the alphabet: *p, q, r...*, are used as *propositional variables*. This means that they stand for propositions or statements. However, some logicians dislike these categories, and prefer to call them sentence letters, or sentential variables. In either event, or sentential variables. In either event, they occur where a sentence can be substituted, just as the *x* and *y* of algebra stand where an expression for a number can be substituted.

Lower-case italic letters from the end of the alphabet: *x, y, z...*, are used as *object variables*. This means that they stand where reference to a person, or a thing, or a number might take place. Using such a variable, then “if *x* believes that *p* and *q* ... then *x*

believes that  $p \dots$ ," (where  $x$  stands for any person). This annotation is virtually universal, although the typographical appearance of the variables varies.

As with common mathematical usage, lower case Roman letters, especially  $n, k, j$  are used in a context to refer to specific numbers. From the beginning of the alphabet,  $a, b, c \dots$ , are also individual constants or terms used in a context to refer to specific things or people.  $Fa$  means that some specific thing,  $a$ , is  $F$ , and is therefore a self-standing sentence, true or false as the case may be.  $Fx$  by contrast not, because nothing is picked out by the variable  $x$ .

Capital Roman letters  $F, G$ , and  $R$  stand for predicates and relational expressions. Particular instances of these are standard: for instance, identity ( $=$ ), non-identity ( $\neq$ ), greater than and less than ( $>, <$ ), and other mathematical relations. The convention is for predicate letters to stand before the terms to which they apply.  $Fn$  means that  $n$  is  $F$ ;  $Rab$  means that  $a$  bears the relation  $R$  to  $b$ . In some works this would be written  $aRb$ .

The simplest relations between propositions studied in logic are the truth functions. These include:

**Not.** Not- $p$  is the negation of  $p$ . Typically, it is the proposition that is false when  $p$  is true, and vice versa. In this work it is written not- $p$  where the context is informal, and  $\neg p$  in more formal contexts. These mean exactly the same. Variations encountered include  $\neg p$  and  $\sim p$ .

**And.**  $P$  and  $q$  is the conjunction of the two propositions. It is true if and only if they are both true. In this work it is written  $p$  and  $q$ . Variations encountered include  $p.q$ , and, more commonly,  $p \wedge q$ .

**Or.**  $P$  or  $q$  is the disjunction of the two propositions. It is true if and only if at least one of them is true. In this work it is written  $p \vee q$ , and this is standard. Exclusive disjunction, meaning that one of  $p, q$  is true, but not both, is sometimes encountered, written  $p \underline{\vee} q$ .

*Implication*: logic studies various kinds of implication. The most simple is called material implication. Here it is written  $p \rightarrow q$ . The most common variation is  $p \supset q$ .

*Equivalence*: if  $p \rightarrow q$  and  $q \rightarrow p$  then  $p$  and  $q$  are said to be equivalent (they have the same truth value). Informally this is often expressed as  $p$  if  $q$ . It is written  $p \leftrightarrow q$ . the most common alternative is  $p \equiv q$ .

This is the basic set of truth functions, in terms of which others are usually defined. In the predicate calculus, the internal structure of propositions, as well as relations between them, is studied.

### **The key notions are the two quantifiers:**

- The universal quantifier: In this work this is written  $\forall$ .  $(\forall x) Fx$  means that everything is  $F$ . Variations that may be met include  $(Ax) Fx$  and  $(x) Fx$ .
- The existential quantifier: in this work this is written  $\exists$ .  $(\exists x) Fx$  means that something is  $F$ . The principal variation that may be met is  $(Ex) Fx$ .

In the predicate calculus numerical quantifiers can be defined, for example  $(\exists_n x) Fx$  means that there are  $n$   $x$  s such that  $Fx$ . The principal variation is  $\exists! x Fx$  (called *E-shriek x*) meaning that there is exactly one  $x$  such that  $x$  is  $F$ .

Terms may be defined from definite descriptions. The main examples encountered are  $(1x) Fx$  (the unique  $x$  such that  $x$  is  $F$ ) and  $(\iota x) Fx$  the least  $x$  such that  $x$  is  $F$ .

Modal logic studies the notion of propositions being necessary or possible. The basic notation is:

*Necessarily p*, written  $\Box p$ , and the main variation is  $Np$ .

*Possibly p*, written,  $\Diamond p$  while the main variation is  $Mp$ .

In metatheory or the theory of logical systems, formulae and their relations become the topic. Thus, capital Roman  $A, B$  are variables



for formulae, with  $A_1 \dots A_n$  referring to a sequence of formulae. In other books, Greek in various forms ( $\alpha, \beta \dots$ ) may be encountered. The principal relations that matter are that there is a proof of  $B$  from  $A$ . This is standardly written  $A \vdash B$ .  $B$  is true in all interpretations in which  $A$  is true. This is standardly written  $A \models B$ .

In the traditional or Aristotelian logic, there is not the same array of notions. Sentences are thought of as made up from terms, such as a subject and predicate, or the middle term of a syllogism. Capital Roman letters  $S, P$  and  $M$  are used. Set theory introduces a small new range of fundamental terms:

- $\{x: Fx\}$  refers to the set of things,  $x$ , that meet a condition  $F$ . This is now standard. A set may also be referred to by listing its members "extensionally".  $\{a, b, c\}$  is the set whose members are  $a, b$ , and  $c$ .
- The set with no members, or null set, is written  $\emptyset$ . An older variation is  $\wedge$ . Sets themselves are denoted by capital Roman  $S, T$ , and so on. Indeed, there are numerous possible typographical variations.
- Thus,  $\in$  denotes a typical set-membership. Consequently,  $x \in S$  means that  $x$  is a member of the set  $S$ .
- Meanwhile,  $x \in \{y: Gy\}$  means that  $x$  is a member of the set of things that is  $G$ .
- Equally important,  $\langle \dots \rangle$  refers to an ordered  $n$ -tuple (a tuple is finite ordered list or sequence of elements).

The main notions used to construct sets include the following relationships or argumentations:

- **Intersection:**  $S \cap R$  is the set of things that belong either to  $S$  or  $R$ . This too is standard.
- **Complement:**  $\bar{S}$  is the set of things that do not belong to  $S$ .
- **Cartesian product:**  $S \times R$  is the set of ordered pairs whose first member belong to  $S$ , and second belongs to  $R$ .

Meanwhile, relations between sets include:

- **Subset:**  $S \subseteq R$  means that all members of  $S$  are members of  $R$  (notice that  $S \subset S$  ).
- **Proper subset:**  $S \subset R$  means that  $S$  is included in  $R$  (it is a subset, but not identical with  $R$ ).

Logic may be applied to the act of teaching whereby teaching is defined as a special way of making things known to others. Teaching is considered as a system of actions varied in form of content but directed towards learning. It is the performance of these actions and the subtle interactions of the teacher with the student that learning takes place.

These actions and interactions are of course personal but they are also logical because they have a certain innate structure, a certain order, such that no matter where in the world teaching takes place, it does so in accordance with operations that reflect the very nature of the teaching-learning situation.

What then are the logical operations and how can they be analysed? The action of teaching involves three variables: the teacher's behaviour (the independent variable), the learner's behaviour (the dependent variable) and the various postulated entities such as memories, beliefs, needs and inferences (the intervening variables). The integration of these variables brings about teaching and effective learning.

*Axiology* is the philosophical study of the nature and the dynamics of value and valuation. *Axiology* derives from the Greek words *axia* (value) and *logia* (study). *Axiology* is a very broad area of study with several sub-branches, each dealing with a different set of values. The main sub-branches of *axiology* are ethics and aesthetics.

Still, axiology is concerned with social, cultural, and political values. In this context, we speak of social philosophy, political philosophy, and cultural philosophy.

Ethics, also known as moral philosophy, enquires after the meaning of what is right or wrong, thereby distinguishing between the good and the bad, the acceptable and the unacceptable. At the level of the individual person, ethics focuses on behaviour.

Aesthetics is the theory of beauty as applied in the field of the fine arts, architecture, and classical music.

How does axiology apply to education? The concept of *value* is abundant in education. Teachers evaluate learners and learners evaluate teachers. On the other hand, society evaluates courses of study, school programmes and teaching competence. The society itself is evaluated by educators. When we pass judgment on an educational practice, when we estimate the worth of an education policy, we are making value judgment.

Ethics views education as a moral enterprise. Teachers are always drawing attention to what ought to be said and done and how learners ought to behave. They are concerned with imparting moral values and improving individual and social behaviour.

On the other hand, aesthetics is the study of values in the realm of beauty. Nonetheless, aesthetic values are difficult to access because they are more personal and subjective. However, aesthetics can be applied to the process of teaching and learning: in so far as aesthetics is concerned, the teacher should select materials that are attractive to the general class. The teacher himself should not look clumsy. And an unattractive environment makes the learning difficult.

---

## CHAPTER 2

### PHILOSOPHY AND EDUCATION: THE LINK?

In its wider sense, education is any act or experience which positively alters or forms the intellect, character, or physical ability of an individual. In its more technical and practical sense, education is the process by which society consciously and knowingly passes on its accumulated knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another through institutions.

Educators see it as the best tool available for social and economic advancement, hence immense efforts are to be made to construct, equip and staff schools and colleges.

The etymological understanding of the term education - from both its Latin *educatum* and *educere* roots - is the systemic nourishment of good qualities in man.

By educating individuals, the human society attempts to impart desirable and utilitarian knowledge, understanding, skills, interests, and attitudes, all based on some minimal level of critical thinking.

Education inculcates in the learner an understanding of complex concepts of life. The learner acquires skills in writing, speaking, calculating, drawing or handling technical equipment. Education also shapes up human interest and attitude towards greater social integration, appreciation of social values



Martin Luther King (1929-1968). The civil rights champion and moral philosopher states that education should lead to critical thinking and moral aptitude: these two define the intelligent person. Was the US education system rational in the light of unending brute racism and injustice to generations of African-Americans?

and norms, comprehension of hierarchical social relations, and the conceptualization of life and the supernaturals.

Accordingly, the educated person is expected to be “rational” he has to think critically about life and social relationships, while being more and more capable of making decisions that have less bias and more “logic”: meaning a remarkable departure from prejudices, dogmas, superstition, and blind beliefs.

In Ancient Greece, Socrates argues that education is all about drawing out what is already within the learner, and the teacher should help the learner realise his potential through the teaching method known as intellectual midwifery.

Meanwhile, notable definitions of education abound. According to Plato education is the capacity to feel pleasure and pain at the right moment. It develops in the body and in the soul of the learner all the beauty and all the perfection which he is capable of.

In Aristotle, education is the creation of a sound mind in a sound body. It develops man’s faculty, especially his mind so that he can enjoy the contemplation of supreme truth, goodness and beauty of which perfect bliss and harmony essentially consist.

Rousseau observes that education commences at birth, long before the human person can speak. And in Froebel, education is the unwrapping of what is already folded in the germ.

Increasingly education is defined as the process of forming fundamental dispositions: those intellectual and emotional attitudes towards nature and fellow human beings. Education may also be defined as a process of awakening in the individual’s mind the seeds for peace, justice and equality.

We propose that education be considered as a guided recapitulation of the process of inquiry which gives rise to the fruitful bodies of organized knowledge comprising the established disciplines.

From these definitions education implies the development of the all-round person. Indeed, education can be defined in terms of training, skill acquisition and formal school attendance.

## **2.1 Components of education**

We argue that education is a multi-faceted concept. That we can identify four components of education.

the knowledge component

The narrative component

The creative component

the discourse component

### **2.1.1 The knowledge component of education**

This aspect defines education in terms of erudition and schooling. There are two main types of learning processes: correlational (or associative) education and cognitive education.

Correlational learning is the process by which someone learns the relationship between two stimuli, or a behaviour and a stimulus. The two forms of correlational learning are classical and operant conditioning.

Cognitive learning takes place both deliberately and reflexively, meaning information is acquired and processed at all times. Individuals differ when conscious learning occurs. Some people are visually cognitive, while others learn best from hearing the



information. An example of this is watching a video tutorial on how to use a tool, as opposed to reading the instruction manual. For individuals with challenges in learning, changes in how information is received can increase retention.

Since cognitive learning results in cognition or knowing, the cognitive component of education focuses on this angle of knowledge by ensuring that the learner's mental process of knowing, together with heightened levels of awareness, perception, reasoning, and judgment are developed. This done through the inclusion into the curriculum of learning experiences that are relevant to the purpose.

### **2.1.2 The normative component of education**

Education should inculcate into learners the norms of the society. Each and every society has patterns of conduct that are universally acceptable. These norms must be incorporated into learners through education.

The axiological aspect of education thus is paramount in conceptualizing education. Education is aimed at imparting necessary values to enable individuals in the society to fully understand their conduct.

Indeed, the judgment of the individual person on material objects such as money, paintings and music, and human states such as happiness, love, pain, knowledge and freedom are a necessary aspect of education. Through such perception of values in terms of aesthetics and ethics, education in its entirety aims at producing an individual who is mindful of other people's interests, with the outcome of increased social harmony.

### **2.1.3 The creative component of education**

Education should help the individual person to be creative and to think of alternatives when faced with challenges. Thus an

individual is required to be authentic in ideas. This metaphysical value of education should be fully acknowledged during the educational process.

Furthermore, there should be room for critical inquiry into issues, thus dialogue and critiquing should be tolerated at all times by the person undertaking or practicing education. This in effect implies that the learner should not be obliged to conform to established societal dogmas but should increasingly be allowed to express himself through an exerted libertarian effort at establishing truth and ultimate reality.

According to the renowned American educationalists John Dewey, education should take into account child-centred and method-centred pedagogical approaches. This should be on the basis of experience and growth, active inquiry and creativity being the key concepts of educational philosophy. In offering education, therefore, one should consider the intellectual and the physical development of the learner because these factors determine the requisite level of creativity.

It follows then that critical points should be mastered in seeking to develop this creative aspect of education.

Firstly, the physical growth: one's mind, emotions, morality and social state determine the level of creativity. As such, education should take into consideration psychological factors.

Secondly, education should proceed on a "natural" path. This means that, when imparting skills, knowledge, values and attitudes, the learner should be allowed to develop in a natural way, not only physically but also mentally, morally, emotionally and socially.

Thirdly, education is a subset of learning which takes into consideration relatively permanent change in behaviour as a consequence of experience, inquiry and creativity. Education should therefore allow the child to grow and develop according to his personal needs and interests. More importantly, the child should be allowed to experiment and express himself. Accordingly, education should encourage creativity and self-expression as a method of learning because education is a creative experience. This desirable state of creativity should not be interfered with but rather left at the ubiquitous whims and the undefined direction of nature.

Finally, natural growth accompanies variation and diversity. Therefore, education should take into account the learners' individual differences in terms of needs and interests in order to promote creativity.

In reality, education should impart creative skills into the individual to enable him cope with challenges and solve problems besides coming up with new ideas and skills of resolving issues and solving problems.

#### **2.1.4 The discourse component of education**

Education is considered as a form of dialogue. Consequently, it is believed that any problem in education should be solved through dialogue. Education is all about solving problems and resolving issues through discourse. Through constructive dialogue, individuals are able to see sense and get proper education. Through thesis and antithesis, individuals are able to reach a synthesis which of course is not ultimate. This way, individuals invent new ways of solving issues through the use of proper structures of reasoning.

The role of education ought to be that of initiating learners into public forms or modes of experience which are basically forms of knowledge seen in the form of public or social experience and character. Through this component, individuals who are educated should use dialogue to freely and constructively interact with fellow human beings in a socially responsible manner.

We can identify six forms of public experience as logic and mathematics, the physical sciences, ethics, religion and philosophy which the learner needs to acquire through education.

## **2.2 The significance and functions of education**

In any inquiry into educational purpose, it is important to make a clear distinction between education and schooling. Education is a lifelong process. It begins at birth, continues throughout life and ends when one dies. Much of education is informal. Schooling, on the other hand, is a process of acquiring knowledge, attitudes, values, skills in an institution. It is characterised by the syllabus to be covered, the textbooks to be used, the teachers to be assigned subject areas which are to be taught at particular times, and the examination to be undertaken at the end of the term of the year.

### **We point out various purposes of education as follows:**

- Education for self-control: that education should aim principally at forming and strengthening the mental faculties, therefore enabling the person to meet and master the exigencies of life when school days are over.
- Education for character: using any means at its disposal including discipline and knowledge, education should seek to form morally responsible and socially sensitive human beings.

- Education for knowledge: education should concern itself mainly with the teaching of useful knowledge and skill, which are essential to life in society.
- Education for proficiency: civility and utility are essential conditions for personal and social decency and success. Education should therefore concern itself with the teaching of relevant competencies.
- Education for individual advancement: education should supply opportunity for personal growth. It should always aspire to cultivate rather than arrest growth.
- Education for self-actualization: happiness in life is the ultimate objective so education should contain the means to promote personal autonomy, an essential condition for happiness.
- Education for aesthetic elegance: education should train individuals to cherish beauty in all its diverse forms and provide principles for determining its presence or non-presence.

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## CHAPTER 3

# PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION: THE DIALECTICS?

**P**hilosophy of education is a branch of applied philosophy which analyses the aims, forms, methods, and results of education as both a process and a field of study. It is influenced by developments within philosophy, especially questions of ethics and epistemology, and by concerns arising from instructional practice.

Philosophy of education is often taught within a subject rather than within the department of philosophy as an area of study in itself. Philosophical applications on education date as far back as Socrates but the field of inquiry only began to be recognized as a formal sub-discipline in the nineteenth century. Though the field often seems to lack the cohesion of other areas of philosophy, it is generally, and perhaps therefore, more open to new approaches.

Philosophy of education may also refer to a comprehensive value theory of education that is informed both by philosophical perspectives in ethics, epistemology, and the human condition, as well as by psychological perspectives on human learning and development.

### 3.1 Educational philosophies

A philosophy of education as a value theory expounds views about what education should be, what dispositions it should cultivate, why it ought to cultivate them, how and in whom it should do so, and what forms it should take. The major philosophies of education are cited as essentialism, perennialism, progressivism, social reconstructionism, critical theory, and existentialism.

Notably, these schools of thought are informed by philosophical perspectives of idealism, realism, pragmatism, existentialism, and postmodernism; political ideologies of liberalism, conservatism, and Marxism; as well as by the perspectives of behaviourism, cognitivism, humanism, and constructivism from both psychology and education.

### 3.1.1 Perennialism

Perennialism is considered to be the oldest and most conservative educational philosophy. Robert Hutchins and Mortimer Adler are its key proponents. It is rooted in realism and relies on the past and stresses traditional values. The aim of education is to ensure that learners acquire understanding of the great ideas of Western civilization. The focus is to teach ideas that are everlasting, to seek enduring truths which are constant and non-mutant.

The demanding curriculum focuses on attaining cultural literacy, while stressing the learner's growth in enduring disciplines. The perennialist's curriculum is subject-centred and constant. It emphasizes the great works of literature and art, and the exciting laws and principles of science.

The curriculum for this philosophical school of education aims to develop the learner's rational and moral powers and to let him use reason to whet the appetite and passion for knowledge. The perennialist way of teaching is centred on the teacher. It utilizes the Socratic method of teaching.



Robert M. Hutchins (1899-1977). In his treatise *The University of Utopia*, he states: "The object of the educational system, taken as a whole, is not to produce hands for industry or to teach the young how to make a living. It is to produce responsible citizens".

### 3.1.2 Essentialism

Essentialism is traditional and conservative philosophy based on idealism and realism. The approach emerges as a reaction to progressivist approaches. Essentialists believe that there is a common core of knowledge that needs to be transmitted to learners in a systematic and disciplined manner. The core of the curriculum is essential knowledge and skills, and academic rigour.

Essentialism in education is a movement started by William C. Bagley in the 1930s. It is a protest against the “falling” standards of education.

Proponents of essentialism argue that this thinking enables the learner to benefit from a revisionist education system and that this is necessary for a prosperous nation. The central theme in essentialism is that the purpose of attending school is to make the learner contribute meaningfully to society. Essentialists argue that regardless of the nature of the subject, whether interesting or bland, the learner should be made to study it because the end justifies the means that is the essentialist system.

Essentialism rests upon the philosophical ideas of realism and idealism and proposes that the school not attempt to reshape the educational foundation of society, thereby belying a more traditionalist approach to education.

This traditionalist approach is indeed conservative. In the typical traditional African society, a similar ideology emphasises virtues such as respect for authority and fidelity to predefined norms as indispensable.

However, essentialists agree that core curriculum is mutable- but only within the confines of a predefined purpose for learning. Typically, the essentialist learning environment should be practical, preparing the learner to become a valuable member of society. Meanwhile, the teacher should help the learner to keep his non-



productive instincts - such as aggression and mindlessness - in check. All in all the learner should be taught hard work, respect for authority, and discipline.

*Ipsa facto*, the essentialist teacher should focus on the mastery of subject matter and the dissemination of basic and practical skills through the use of prescribed curriculum and teaching methodology.

The focus of coursework in essentialist is to teach the essentials of life. It teaches how to survive, how to be productive, and how to live as a member of society. It includes subjects such as the study of the naturals and the surrounding environment, with the objective that the learner should lead a productive and happy life in conformity to the immutable norms of society. The essentialist curriculum also *instills* patriotism while using age-old styles of learning to shape up the learner in both character and attitude. Furthermore, basic and relevant subjects should be taught while “impractical” subjects and ideas should be avoided. Themes such as technological expertise and democracy are commonplace in essentialism, while subject matter may increasingly be contained within the following subjects:

- natural sciences
- history
- foreign language
- literature

In the authoritative book, *The Essential Child*, Susan Gelman identifies key features of the ideal essentialist classroom as follows:

- most basic academic skills and knowledge are imparted to all learners;
- the elementary learner is taught skills such as reading, writing, computers and measurement;

- subjects focus on creativity, apart from art and music;
- the learner is provided with a bundle of information and techniques to enable him to transition from less to more complex knowledge and skills;
- the teacher is the key figure since essentialism is focused more on the role of instruction;
- the teacher is supposed to be the intellectual and ethical role model for the learner.

The assessments conducted under essentialism serve a number of purposes. These enable teachers to determine whether goals of education are being met or not. They also help teachers to evaluate whether learners are paying attention and whether they comprehend the course material.

The following points should be noted about the characteristics of the essentialist teaching methodology:

- spellbinding and enduring interests frequently grow out of initial learning efforts that are not intrinsically appealing or attractive. Main is the only animal that can sustain effort in the face of immediate desire. To deny to the young the benefits that may be theirs by the exercise of this unique human prerogative would be a gross injustice.
- the control, direction and guidance of the immature by the mature are of the utmost importance in the prolonged period of infancy;
- while the capacity for self-discipline should be the goal, imposed discipline is a necessary means to this end. Among individuals, as among nations, true freedom is always a conquest, never a gift;
- the freedom of the immature learner to choose what he shall learn is not at all to be compared with his later freedom from want, fraud, fear, superstition, error, and oppression-and the price of this latter freedom is

the effortful and systematic mastery of what has been winnowed and refined through the long struggle of mankind upward from the savage.

- essentialism provides a strong theory of education while its critics offer nothing more than a weak body of theories. If there has been a question in the past as to the kind of educational theory that the few remaining democracies of the world need there can be no question today about the fortitude of essentialism.

Meanwhile, the learner in the essentialist classroom is provided with strong academic foundations through which he can develop basic skills such as reading, writing, analysing history, understanding the purpose of mathematical inquisition and justifying the relevance of the sciences to daily life. Likewise, the essentialism teacher discourages unproductive behaviours or unmotivated attitude. Increasingly, therefore, the learners should be goal-oriented since discipline is a key component of the essentialist classroom.

Learners within an essentialist classroom are not so free as to explore, question and test academic propositions in the manner that the other approaches permit. The essentialist classroom downplays the importance of extra-curricular or non-academic subjects such as the fine arts, classical music, drama and sports. This means that the learner may not be formed in these important and intriguing “electives”.

### **3.1.3 Existentialism**

Existentialism is a school of thought that emphasizes individual existence, freedom and choice. It holds the view that human beings define their own meaning in life and try to make rational decisions despite living in a somewhat “irrational” and “irreverent” world.

This school of philosophy deals with the development of the learner as a whole person and not just the development of the mind. It does this by helping the learner to understand and to appreciate himself as a unique individual who should accept complete responsibility for his unending thoughts, feelings and actions in society.

The teaching-learning process in an existentialist classroom is self-paced and self-directed. It encourages an open and honest individual relationship between the learner and the teacher. The teacher uses a value clarification strategy.

Accordingly, these subject are a key element of the existentialism curriculum.

- The Humanities
- The Vocational Education
- History
- The Fine Arts
- Drama
- Creative Expression
- Literature
- Philosophy

Existentialism is a European philosophy that was developed around the early parts of the twentieth century, gaining mileage in the post-World War II period.

Existentialism is a protest to the eighteenth century philosophy movements that give Reason and Nature greater importance by arguing that objectivity is primal and absolute scientificism should be the soul of all intellectual engagement. In this tradition, man is but an object of study: the phenomenon.

The term “existentialism” is coined by the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel and adopted by Jean-Paul Sartre ((1948) who later presents his own existentialist position in a lecture to the

*Club Maintenant* in Paris. This lecture popularizes this stream of philosophy. It begins with the necessity of essence through existence. The idea that existence precedes essence means that human nature is determined by the course of life rather than life by nature.

Sartre argues that reason is necessary in order to understand the importance of human life. Elsewhere, the German existentialist Martin Heidegger states that human knowledge is not really the result of the interaction between mind and object. More importantly, human knowledge is obtained through the inner vision which gets manifested from the self itself. This knowledge from insight gives expression to the relationship between self and object. Self-realization is the beginning through which one confirms and trims his essence. Then the individual person achieves self-realization and begins to *pursue* existence.

existentialist philosophy begins from the human essence: it is by existing in this absurd universe that one encounters the essence. Thus, existence comes before man encounters values. This encounter defines the self in its own subjectivity. Meanwhile, the aim of education is to enable the learner to get equipped with the necessary aids in this essence-seeking understanding. It transcends all the supposed antecedent laws of nature.

The existentialist approach to education gives importance to the total development of the human person while stating that subjective knowledge is notably paramount. Nonetheless, this subjectivity should only be realized by the person if he is part of this world.

By these precepts, the existentialist education should make man subjective and conscious of his individuality or self for the knowledge of self is a prerequisite for the comprehension of being and existence.

However, existentialism involves some criticism. Industrialization and urbanization are the result of the development of science and technology. Nowadays the goals of education are decided by computer or statistical laws and data. Thus, science has shown ignorance to human values. It is not possible to measure value with an objective scale, thence the existentialism opposition to brute scientific culture for the sheer reasoning that there is much more important and surreal than simple empiricism.

Existentialism believes that education becomes complete only when the teacher-learner-society tripolar process has taken place. It is the duty of the teacher to pull out the learner from abysmal intellectual reluctance into new fields of knowledge in order to realize the essence. Invariably so, existentialism includes subjects which contain moral and religious contents in its curriculum because education should lead one to realize his essence and make him alive to the realized essence. Education is for the whole man. Therefore an existential educational process is necessary to cultivate the ability in man to realize who he really is.

In existentialism the goal of education is to help the mind of the educated person to realize and appreciate moral and intellectual values. Accordingly, existentialism defines education as the harmonious and balanced amalgamation of knowledge aim, character aim, vocational aim, spiritual aim, and social aim. When any of these aims are not sought after - in the classroom or in society - then education is said to have failed. The purpose of education should to help the growing of clueless and vulnerable youngsters into happy, moral and resourceful human beings, the real end being the enviable achievement of self-realization.

Remarkably, teacher-oriented education is shifting to the learner-oriented one. Modern education predetermines certain goals and gives guarantee that one who completes the education process

in a good manner is able to achieve a good career. It is the duty of the modern teacher to realize the needs of the learner and to guide him to realize his goal: the achievement of self-essence.

### **3.1.4 Progressivism**

The great American pedagogue William Heard Kilpatrick, often described as the father of progressivism, argues that the education curriculum should be based on actual living.

According to Kilpatrick, the philosophy of progressivism is founded on the following precepts. Firstly, that the nexus of what is advocated is that we start with the child as a growing and developing person and help her live and grow best; live now as a child, live richly, live well. and thus living to increase her effective participation in surrounding social life so as to grow steadily into an ever more adequate member of the social whole.

Secondly, among the signs that this desirable living and consequent growth are being achieved, two seem especially significant. One is child happiness - for best work is interested work, and to be enthusiastically interested and reasonably successful is to be happy. The other, less obvious, but highly desirable is that what is done now shall of itself continually sprout more of life, deeper insights bringing new suggestions with new suggestions with new desires to pursue them.

Thirdly, the main point has to do with learning and how this best goes on so as most surely to come back helpfully into life. For the test of learning is whether it so builds mind and character as to enhance life.

He states that two types of learning should be rejected. In the first instance, the learner faces a situation of his own, such that he himself feels inwardly called upon to face it; his own interests

are inherently at stake. And his response thereto is also his own; it comes out of his own mind and heart, out of his own very self. He may, to be sure, have had help from teacher or book, but the response when it comes is his.

With the other kind of learning, the situation is set by the school in examination or recitation demands. This accordingly seems to the typical learner as more or less artificial and arbitrary; it does not arise out of his own felt needs. Except for the school demands, there would be no situation to him. His response to this hardly felt situation is itself hardly felt, coming mainly out of words and ideas furnished by the textbook or, with older learners, by the professor's lectures.

He further states, verbatim, that this latter model, the formal school kind of learning, we all know. Most of us were brought up on it. Except for those more capable in abstract ideas, the learning thus got tends to be wordy and shallow. It does little for mind or heart, and possibly even less for character, for it hardly gets into life.

He continues to argue that the former model, the first one, has great possibilities and may be defined as life's kind. It furnishes the foundation for the type of school proposed by progressivism. Since what is learned is the learner's own response to a situation felt to be her own, it is at once both heartfelt and mind-created. It is learned as it is lived. In fact, it is learned because it is lived. And the more one's heart is in what she does, the more important it is to her, the more impelling will be the situation he faces. and the stronger accordingly will be her response and in consequence the stronger the learning. Such learning comes from deep down the soul and carries with it a wider range of connection both in its backward and in its forward look.



Thirdly - and, indeed, an interesting aspect of progressivism - that each learner should grow to be a worthy member of the social whole. To grow is to enter the realm, the world, of socially acceptable responsibility and thereby acquire further cultural traits.

Fourthly, the world in which we live is changing at so rapid a pace that past-founded knowledge no longer suffices. Intelligent thinking and not mere habit must from now on rule. Youth should learn better to think for themselves. They should understand the whys of societal institutions. They should understand legal rights and obligations, while affirming to morality. In light of this, progressivism hopes to transform the learner into a thoughtful and responsible citizen.

Progressivists criticize other schools of thought in philosophy of education for caring little about contemporary living and societal change because they focus more on study by the book and the sharing of formalized information and thereby ignore the mind and character requisite of the challenging universe.

Fifthly, that the curriculum, where learner and teacher meet, is of necessity the vital focus of all educational theory. The older curriculum was made in advance and given to the teacher who in turn assigned it as lessons to the learners. It was a bookish content divided into separate subjects, in result remote from life. The learners in their turn "learned" the lessons thus assigned and gave them back to the teacher in recitation or examination, the test being (in the main) whether what was given back was the same as what had been given out. Even the few who "succeeded" on this basis tended to get at best a pedantic learning. The many suffered, being denied the favourable opportunity for living outlined above. The lowest third suffered worst; such a curriculum clearly did not fit them, as becomes now more obvious with each advance of school leaving age.

Kilpatrick states further that the curriculum proposed by progressivism is *sui generis* actual living - all the living of the child for which the school accepts responsibility. That in progressivism, the child learns what he actually *lives* and this he builds at once into *character*. The quality of this living becomes then of supreme importance.

It follows then that the school, in the progressivist ideology, should be ultimate centre for fostering good living in the learner for the express purpose of developing "socially-inspiring" character.

Meanwhile, the teacher's task is to help develop and steer this desirable living. This kind of curriculum, being real child living, cannot be made in advance and handed down either to teachers or to learners. Living at the external command of another ceases by that much to be living for the person himself and so fails to meet desirable learning conditions.

The fundamental aspect of progressivism is that the curriculum is constructed by both the teacher and the learner, while the teacher takes charge of the implementation of the contents. Essentially, the teacher helps by guiding the process so as to get as much rich living as possible.

Still, it is instructive to better understand progressivism. One likely question is whether we are losing anything. Does the child learn well here? Yes. The "tool subjects" are learned at least as well, while the others depending on initiative and creative thinking are learned better.

Does the new plan mean the learner does not use books? No. In progressivism the use of the book is highly emphasised. While the textbook as such will be less visible, the use of other books will be a remarkable feature of progressivism.

And will the child be “spoilt” by the new progressivist regime? Not really. Modern psychology states that one cannot really learn what one does not practice or live.

### **3.1.5 Behaviourism**

Behaviourism is a movement in psychology and philosophy that emphasizes the outward behavioral aspects of thought. It is a philosophical school that may be traced to the theoretical proposals of John B. Watson (1913). Other famous behaviourists include Ivan Pavlov, Edward Thorndike and Burrhus Frederic Skinner.

Behaviourism seeks to develop a favourable learning environment for the learner to develop desirable behaviour in society. Instructors under this school of philosophy use the behaviourist method of teaching in which the educator controls physical variables to elicit the desired responses from the learners.

Behaviourism is a philosophy and psychology approach which, when applied to a classroom setting, focuses on conditioning learner behaviour with various types of behaviour reinforcements and consequences called operant conditioning. There are four types of reinforcement: positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, presentation punishment and removal reinforcement, and each can be applied effectively to get the learner to behave in the classroom.

The simplest way in which to apply positive reinforcement is to praise a learner when she behaves well or successfully completes a task. You could employ a system of giving gold stars that result in a small prize when enough has been earned. Take advantage of the effectiveness of simple statements of praise. When offering praise, however, opt for a specific statement such as “You really showed mature insight right there!” as opposed to a vague statement such as “Nice work!” The fact is that learners can sense

when praise is generic or disingenuous. Reserve comments for times when you really mean them so that the learner does not equate them to empty words.

Saying nice things to the learner will work fine for a while but they might stop believing you unless you can show them exactly why their behaviour warrants praise in the first place. Whenever possible, show the proof: point out the specific act and explain why it was so important. Another way to provide concrete example of good behaviour is to have the pupil keep their work in portfolios for regular review. The routine of reviewing keeps you from appearing as though you have gone out of your way to issue some praise, and having their work right in front of you gives you the opportunity to cite specific, concrete examples of accomplishments.

Negative reinforcement is not punishment. Rather, it is when you reward good behaviour by taking away something the learner perceives as negative. By removing something perceived as negative, the teacher reinforces a separate, positive behaviour.

Sometimes punishment is necessary to discourage undesirable behaviour, but the teacher should be careful not to go too far and embarrass the learner. And just as there are positive and negative reinforcements for good behaviour, two methods are appropriate for applying punishment. Presentation punishment is the type we are most familiar with: the learner misbehaves and the punishment is probably detention or time-out. Removal punishment is similar to negative reinforcement: you remove something the learners see as good because they have behaved badly.

### 3.1.6 Linguistic Philosophy

Championed by hermeneutists Jurgen Habermas and Hans-Georg Gadamer, linguistic philosophy is a unique approach towards understanding languages and philosophy. Peter Cooper, in an article published in 1993 in *Educational Technology*, adds that linguistic philosophy is a methodical and analytical study of a language to understand it better, and includes the analyses of its structure, meaning, development and evolution through times and its varied interpretation accordingly.

Linguistic educational philosophy, a derivative of linguistic philosophy, works towards the development of the learner's communication skills so as to achieve an adequate level of communication of ideas.

### 3.1.7 Constructivism

Constructivism is based on the collection of research and writings of the Swiss psychologist and epistemologist Jean Piaget. It posits that learning is an active, constructive process. The learner is an information constructor. People actively construct or create their own subjective representations of objective reality. New information is linked to prior knowledge, thus mental representations are subjective.

A reaction to didactic approaches such as behaviourism and programmed instruction, constructivism states that learning is an active and contextualized process of constructing knowledge rather than acquiring it. Knowledge is constructed based on personal experiences and hypotheses of the environment. Learners continuously test these hypotheses through social negotiation. Each person has a different interpretation and construction of knowledge process.

Indeed, a common misunderstanding of constructivism is that the instructor should never tell the learner anything directly but

should always allow her to construct knowledge for herself. This is actually confusing a theory of pedagogy with a theory of knowing. Constructivism assumes that all knowledge is constructed from the learner's previous knowledge, regardless of how one is taught.

Constructivism is founded on the premise that by reflecting on our experiences we construct our own understanding of the world. That everyone generates "rules" and "mental models" which are used to make sense of experience. Learning, therefore, is simply the process of adjusting our mental models to accommodate new experiences.

### **Constructivism is based on the following points:**

- Learning is a search for meaning. Therefore, learning must start with the issues around which learners are actively trying to construct meaning.
- Meaning requires understanding wholes as well as parts. And parts must be understood in the context of wholes. Therefore, the learning process focuses on primary concepts, not isolated facts;
- In order to teach well, we must understand the mental models that learners use to perceive the world and the assumptions they make to support those models;
- The purpose of learning is for an individual to construct his or her own meaning, not just memorize the "right" answers and regurgitate someone else's meaning. Since education is inherently interdisciplinary, the only valuable way to measure learning is to make the assessment part of the learning process, ensuring it provides learners with information on the quality of their learning.

## Typically, constructivism impacts learning in the following ways:

- *Curriculum:* constructivism calls for the elimination of a standardized curriculum. Instead, it promotes using curricula customized to the learner's prior knowledge. It also emphasizes hands-on problem solving;
- *Instruction:* in constructivism, educators focus on making connection between facts and fostering new understanding in learners. Instructors tailor their teaching strategies to learner responses and encourage learners to analyse, interpret, and predict information. Teachers also rely heavily on open-ended questions and promote extensive dialogue among learners;
- *Assessment:* constructivism calls for the elimination of grades and standardized testing. Instead, assessment becomes part of the learning process so that learners play a larger role in judging their own progress.

Constructivism as a philosophy of education aims to develop learners to become independent and inherently motivated so that they can construct new ideas with the help of proper learning skills.

A constructivist teacher provides the learners with adequate data and information and encourage them to interact with this data to form their own hypotheses, predict the outcome, investigate and invent new ideas and to research for further information.

Constructivism is an approach in education that claims humans are better able to understand the information they have constructed by themselves. According to constructivist theories, learning is a social advancement process that involves language,

real world situations, and interaction and collaboration among learners. The learners are considered to be central in the learning process. Learning is affected by our prejudices, experiences, the time in which we live, and both physical and mental maturity. When motivated, the learner exercises his will to gather selective information, convert it, formulate hypotheses, test these suppositions through interactions and experiences, and draws verifiable conclusions.

Constructivism transforms today's classrooms into a knowledge-construction site where information is absorbed and knowledge is built by the learner. In constructivist classrooms, unlike the conventional lecturer, the teacher is a facilitator and a guide, who plans, organizes, guides, and provides directions to the learner, who is accountable for his own learning. The teacher supports the learner by means of suggestions that arise out of ordinary activities, by challenges that inspire creativity, and with projects that allow that allow for independent thinking and new ways of learning information. Learners work in groups to approach problems and challenges in real world situations, this in turn leads to the creation of practical solutions and a diverse variety of learner products.

Constructivist theories have found more popularity with the advent of personal computers in classrooms and homes. Personal computers provide individual learners with tools to experiment and build their own learning at their own pace. With the use of the web, the learner can now conduct research, interact with diverse populations, share ideas, and work on group projects. the assessment tool in a constructivist classroom is not a test or a quiz, rather it is the learner product; most of the time this is in a portfolio format that has been designed by the learner.

Piaget explains the learning process by schemes (the organization of information on how things work), assimilation (the placing of new information into schemes) and accommodation (transforming



existing schemes or creating new ones). The motivation for learning is the predisposition of the learner to adapt to his environment, hence to institute equilibrium between schemes and the environment. Continuous interactions among existing schemes, assimilation, accommodation, and equilibrium create new learning.

Piaget explores four chronological stages of the psychological development of the young learner and believes teachers should be aware of these stages. During the sensory-motor stage (before the age of two years) sensory experiences and motor activities rule. Intelligence is intuitive in nature and knowledge; it is acquired through mental representation during the preoperational stage (from two to seven years of age). At the concrete operational stage (from seven to eleven years of age), intelligence is logical, conserved, and dependent on concrete references. The formal operational stage (after eleven years of age) is the stage when abstraction begins and the learner starts thinking about probabilities, associations, and analogies.

It appears that while on the one hand Piaget's developmental theory of learning and constructivism is based on discovery his constructivist theory, on the other hand, asserts that in order to provide an ideal learning environment, learners should be allowed to construct knowledge that is meaningful for them.

In Piaget's view, a constructivist classroom should provide a variety of activities to challenge the learner to accept individual differences, increase his readiness to learn, discover new ideas, and construct their own knowledge.

In the elementary Piagetian classroom, concrete learning experiences such as drawing, drama, model building and field trips that involve hands on opportunities to see, hear, touch,

taste and smell are essential. These early activities and the use of tangible manipulatives and visual aids serve as building blocks for more sophisticated tasks, such as reading comprehension.

### **3.1.8 Social reconstructionism**

This educational philosophy is based on socialistic ideas. Reconstructionist educators focus on a curriculum that highlights social reform as the aim of education. Since human society is ever changing, the formal classroom should be equally dynamic.

According to social Reconstructionists, curriculum focuses on learner experience and taking social action on real problems, such as violence, hunger, international terrorism and inflation.

Reconstructionism as philosophy of education is viewed by many writers as simply an extension of progressivism. Like progressivism, it is based on the “pure” philosophy of pragmatism. Therefore, its answers to basic questions are the same. In answer to the ontological question of what is real, reconstructionists agree that every day personal experience constitutes reality. For the reconstructionist, truth is what works and we arrive at truth through a process of trial and error.

As far as his educational views are concerned, the reconstructionists sees things in a fairly similar manner like the progressivist. For example, reconstructionists believe that the student learns more, remembers longer, and applies knowledge better if she learns through experience rather than through mere instruction. They see the teacher’s main role as that of a resource person or a research project director who guides the learner: the teacher is less of the dispenser of knowledge. The teacher carries on a dialogue with the learner, helping him to identify problems, frame hypotheses, find data, draw appropriate conclusions, and select efficacious courses of action.

Reconstructionists do not believe in a preset curriculum. They use the subject matter from any or all disciplines when needed to solve a problem. They may deal more, however, with the subject matter of social sciences in solving problems. The teaching methods preferred by reconstructionists are the learner-teacher dialogue and praxis. Praxis is “effective action”. In other words, reconstructionists favour applying the problem-solving or scientific method of progressivists to real life problems. After one has reached an “intellectual solution” to a problem, reconstructionists favour carefully thought-out social action to remedy a problem.

Reconstructionists, like progressivists, do not favour any type of ability grouping. They feel learners should be grouped only upon the basis of common interests. Reconstructionists also prefer flexible learner seating arrangements.

Reconstructionists share the progressivists’ view of learner discipline. Moreover, they feel that if learners are actively involved in bringing about change in areas that concern them, they will not become frustrated and, therefore, will not be likely to become discipline problems.

Nonetheless, reconstructionists differ significantly from progressivists on the matter of social policy. Progressivists acknowledge the rapidly changing conditions around us. But they are content to just teach learners how to cope with change. It has been said that progressivists seek to teach learners how to reach the “intellectual” solution to problems. This kind of education tends to mirror the contemporary society. On the other hand, reconstructionists believe that learners should learn through practical experience how to direct change and control. They believe strongly that our culture is in crisis. They believe that things will get uncontrollably bad unless we intervene to direct change and thereby reconstruct the social order.

reconstructionists believe that a Utopian future is a legitimate possibility for humanity if we learn how to mediate change. They

believe that the school should train learners to be social activists - perhaps in the tradition of the great American civil rights advocate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Reconstructionists believe that we should apply the reflective inquiry method method to life's problems. They feel, however, that we should be prepared to act upon our conclusions. This requires a sense of commitment and responsibility on the part of learners. This goal of initiating change is of course very controversial. For this reason, reconstructionism has never caught on fully in our schools. Questions have been raised concerning whether or not schools should become a tool for re-making society.

Advocates of social action contend that the more involvement we have, the better off we will be a society. They claim that as things stand now, a small percentage of people get involved in social issues because the majority does not know how to do so. Advocates of social action emphasize that it can be safely practiced if certain common-sense safeguards are applied. For instance:

- Young learners should be encouraged to act in a more limited setting than older learners, such as the classroom or school, rather than the larger community.
- Teachers should help learners weigh the probable outcomes of various lines of social action before anything is done. They should consider whether or not a given action will solve a problem. Moreover, they should consider the probable after effects of a given line of action, including how it will significantly impact others.
- Teachers should work with learners to get them to accept the consequences of their actions.

Having so far discussed the nature of perennialism, essentialism, existentialism, behaviourism, linguistic philosophy, constructivism

and social reconstructionism we conclude that philosophy of education is a field of study with its own methods, theories and ways of solving problems. We believe that no single philosophy - new or old - should guide decisions about schools and the learning experiences to be preferred. Educationnists need to help improve and design school activities in harmony with the philosophy of the school and community or nation.

### **3.2 Movements of Educational Philosophy**

The application of ideas and concepts around the subject of philosophy of education brings to the fore the notion of codification. Indeed, a blending of various concepts and lines of thinking leads to this discussion about the movements of educational philosophy.

#### **3.2.1 Classical Education**

The classical education movement advocates a form of education based on the traditions of Western culture, with a particular focus on education as understood and taught in the Middle Ages. By the end of the eighteenth century, in addition to the Trivium and Quadrivium of the Middle Ages, the definition of classical education embraced the study of literature, poetry, drama, philosophy, history, art and languages. In the twentieth and the twenty first centuries, classical education refers to a broad-based study of the liberal arts and sciences, as opposed to a practical or pre-professional program.

Classical education is like a very large museum with many beautiful, wonder-filled rooms that could be studied over a lifetime. It is a long tradition of education that has emphasized the seeking of truth, goodness, and beauty and the study of the liberal arts and the great books. What are the liberal arts? They are grammar, logic, rhetoric (the verbal arts of the *Trivium*), arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy (the mathematical arts of the *Quadrivium*). This approach to education also includes the study of Latin. The classical approach teaches learners how to learn and how to think.

### 3.2.2 Contemplative Education

Contemplative education focuses on bringing spiritual awareness into the pedagogical process. Contemplative approaches may be useful in the tertiary or high school classroom.

Contemplative methods may also be used by teachers in their course preparation. In this case, inspiration for enriching the content, format, or teaching methods may be sought through various practices, such as consciously reviewing the previous day's activities, actively holding the learners in consciousness, and contemplating inspiring pedagogical texts. Waldorf education is one of the pioneers of this approach. Edward Ziegler, the distinguished American developmental psychologist and Sterling Professor Emeritus of Psychology at Yale University, suggests that only through focusing on their own spiritual development can teachers positively impact the spiritual development of learners.

### 3.2.3 Humanistic Education

Humanistic education refers to an educational philosophy that believes human beings are, by nature, self-developing creatures. An educator's primary responsibility is to create an environment in which students can do their own growing. Humanistic educators have a broad understanding of the knowledge that children acquire as they grow, and highly value student's affective social development as well as their intellectual development. The goal of humanistic education is to contribute to the development of energetic, positive, self-respecting, caring human beings who can meet all challenges.

Humanistic education emphasizes issues of moral autonomy, personal freedom, and tolerance. Its long history can be traced through several phases: Classical Humanism, with roots going back to the Paideia of Classical Athens; Romantic Humanism,

as presented in the works of Rousseau, Coethe, and Pestalozzi; Existentialist Humanism, emphasizing issues of freedom and identity and questioning modernism's focus on the primacy of rational thinking; and Radical Humanism, or critical pedagogy, emphasizing social and political engagement.

Key proponents of humanism include Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. In humanism, learning is student-centred and personalized, and the educator's role is that of a facilitator. Affective and cognitive needs are important, and the goal is to develop self-actualized people in a cooperative and supportive environment.

Humanism emphasizes the human capacity for choice and growth. The overriding assumption is that human beings have free will and are not simply fated to behave in specific ways or are zombies blindly reacting to their environment. The humanists state that the subject matter or psychology is the human-subjective experience of the world: how people experience things, why they experience things, and so on<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> One of the founders of humanist psychology, Abraham Maslow is best known for his theory of human motivation centred on self-phrase "hierarchy of needs". He maintains that the basic human drive is for self-actualization, the need to fulfill ones full potential ( a painter must paint in order to be truly happy, a potentially, great teacher must teach, and so on). But, says Maslow, the individual whose basic needs are clamouring to be met finds it harder to achieve self-actualization. "Successful people", he observes "are those who are skilled at balancing their higher order needs". Psychotherapist Carl Rogers is a founder of the Association for Humanistic Psychology (AHP) and the centre for Studies of the Person (CSP), and a pioneer in the Human potential Movement. In 1964 he received the Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award of the American Psychological Association, and among present-day psychologists he is generally regarded as second in influence only to Sigmund Freud.

Humanists look at human conduct not only through the eyes of the observer, but through the eyes of the person doing the behaving. Humanistic psychologists believe that an individual's behaviour is connected to his inner feelings and self-image.

Unlike the behaviourists, humanistic psychologists believe that humans are not solely the product of their environment. Rather, humanistic psychologists study human meanings, understandings, and experiences involved in growing, teaching and learning. They emphasize characteristics that are shared by all human beings such as love, grief, caring and self-worth.

Humanistic psychologists study how people are influenced by their self-perceptions and personal meanings attached to their experiences. Humanistic psychologists are not primarily concerned with instinctual drives, responses to external stimuli, or past experiences. Rather, they consider conscious choices, responses to internal needs, and current circumstances to be important in shaping human behaviour.

Humanistic theory is based upon the idea that everyone has the potential to make a contribution to society and be a good and likable person - if their needs are fulfilled.

The veritable American psychologist and humanist Abraham Maslow believes that fulfilling fundamental needs in the correct order allows individuals to become self-actualized. So only after basic physiological needs such as food, shelter and warmth are met can individuals move on to further stages: the need to feel secure, to be loved and accepted, and so forth.

Maslow develops his theory not by studying mentally ill patients, which is where much historical psychological knowledge has been drawn from, but by studying healthy, productive, creative individual lives and careers. He concludes that there are common characteristics which are shared by successful individuals, including self-acceptance, openness and respect for other individuals.



For a person to develop fully they need to be in an environment which provides them with genuineness, acceptance and empathy. Without such a nourishing environment, healthy personalities and relationships are unable to flourish.

Humanistic theory is basically about the development of the individual. It is very popular in the 1970s but seems to be slightly out of favour today as Western nations have generally moved towards the political right and there is more emphasis on conforming and contributing to a slightly more Conservative society. Of course, whilst humanistic theory does have a very strong focus on the individual, it is based upon the belief that well developed, successful individuals are best placed to make a positive contribution to society.

Humanistic theory suggests that the achievement of happiness is frequently dependent upon achieving or giving oneself the opportunity to pursue one's deepest interests and desires.

Maslow's contribution to humanistic education is often summarised as the hierarchy of needs with the following key points:

- Physiological needs, which include oxygen, food, water, and a reasonably regular body temperature. They are the strongest needs because if a person were deprived of all needs, the physiological ones would come first in the person's quest for satisfaction. We need these for basic survival. Remarkably, one needs to first satisfy basic needs like physiological needs and safety needs in order to get motivation to truly attain the higher-level needs esteem and social status;
- Safety needs which come whence all physiological needs are satisfied and no longer dictating our thinking and conduct. A person's attention turns to safety and security, to be free from the threat of physical and emotional harm.

Such needs may be accomplished by living in a safe area, seeking medical insurance, ensuring job security, and establishing financial reserves;

- Belongingness and love needs follow once safety needs are secured. Such needs include friends, a sense of belonging and the need to be loved. After attaining both safety and physiological needs, people increasingly seek to overcome feelings of loneliness and alienation;
- Esteem needs follow belongingness. Esteem can be either internal or external. Self-respect and achievement are some examples of internal esteem needs. Social status and recognition are some examples of external esteem needs. Typical esteem needs include self-respect, achievement, attention, recognition and reputation. When these needs are satisfied, the person feels self-confident and valuable. However, when these needs are frustrated, the person feels inferior, weak, helpless and worthless;
- Need for self-actualization follows after the attainment of an acceptable element of esteem. This is the ultimate point of satisfaction, and includes purposed personal growth and the pursuit of hobbies and causes. People of this level act more or less on their own volition and have a healthy personality.

Maslow believes, however, that very few people reach the state of self-actualization. Although we all have the need to move toward the goal of reaching out full potential, other more pressing needs often get in our way.

Self-actualized individuals tend to accept themselves for what they are. They freely admit their weaknesses, but do make attempts to improve. Furthermore, they do not worry endlessly about the mistakes they have made, but instead focus on improving their inner spirit. They respect and feel good about themselves. Indeed,

the self-actualized person is less restricted by cultural norms than the average person.

Elsewhere, the person-centred approach based on the work of Carl Rogers is designed to promote openness, growth and change in understanding the counselling processes. It is an approach which is practical and helpful in education, because it can solve some of the problems faced by students outside of the curriculum. For instance, it provides a way of understanding and solving issues of relationships, emotional development and ethical behaviour that seem to be at the root of most of the problems in school and society at large. However, it is essential to incorporate some accelerating ingredients to inform conditions which facilitate growth. These include acceptance, empathy and positive regard from others.

The person-centred approach is founded on the principles of attitudes, and is based on the three core conditions of correspondence of congruence, empathy and unconditional positive regard.

The person-centred approach is not concerned with finding out the cause of the problem and finding the best solution. Rather, it is the individual client, in an open and accepting relationship with the counsellor, who is empowered to take control over his healing. Healing is then seen as something which should originate from the client and not from any professional technique provided by the caregiver. The helper is only meant to be a useful companion in the process. Person-centred therapy does not therefore have any specific techniques which are applied in any particular situation and each caregiver chooses what is most appropriate according to the case at hand.

One of the most important care conditions in the humanistic approach is empathy. Although congruence and unconditional positive regard sometimes take an important position, empathy takes the highest priority. Empathy basically is the attempt by the

caregiver to enter the world of the client and really come to know it. The caregiver therefore in a sense enters into the shoes of the client. It is not an easy task to get as close as possible to another person's way of seeing reality or construct system and here lies the difficult part for the caregiver. It even becomes more difficult especially when one still wishes to hold onto one's own reality. True empathic understanding development can take a long time to achieve.

It is important for the caregiver to feel comfortable in their own identify for them to give empathy. It is thus basically important for the caregiver to hold on his own identity, because this will be necessary in creating the needed growth in the client's self-concept. An important condition for empathy is that it must be accurate and that it must be made known to the client. Both of these skills can be learned and they have been known to make a big difference to the existing relationship between a client and the caregiver.

Another important condition in the humanistic methodology is congruence, an apt allusion to genuineness - being transparent, real or honest in a helping relationship. In simple terms, the caregiver should be able to be genuine about the way he is feeling and let the client be aware of this, rather than play professional and keep the feeling to himself.

Normally, empathy is conveyed through active listening to the client while genuineness is about listening to oneself. It means being open to one's own experience in totality and also ensuring that the client is aware of it and so benefits from it. The caregiver therefore should be open to her feelings as much as possible, be herself and put up no professional mask in the relationship. Counselling will be inhibited if the caregiver feels one way about the client but acts in a different way. She should be genuine because this makes the client feels safer. This can increase the chances of the client being more ready for self-exploration.

However, congruence does not imply that the caregiver completely denies his own feelings, but is only willing to risk sharing his feelings when they can improve the relationship because they are expressed genuinely.

Being genuine does not mean disclosing to the client negative feelings during the helping session. It would therefore not be in order for the caregiver to express feelings that she genuinely feels at any one time in much the same way as to qualify for open criticism or some prejudgment of sorts, as this may not be of benefit to the client.

Essentially, congruence cannot be acquired through reading. It is important to acknowledge that a person will struggle to work with integrity to the degree that there is a conflict between the values she holds and the values that drive the approach.

The third and last condition in humanism is unconditional positive regard. This is a non-judgmental form of psychosocial acceptance. It is the skill of communicating with a deep and genuine caring for the client as a person. There is no judgment of the client's feelings, thoughts or outright behaviour or personality. Though it is not possible to force affection (though we can pretend if dishonest) it is possible though to feel for the client, see them as having the ability to direct their own life and behave towards them accordingly. This shows trust in the client's capability and tendency to actualize.

Caregivers communicate through their behaviour that they value



An ideal society as conceived by the English Renaissance humanist Saint Thomas More (1478-1535) in his book *Utopia*, the political system of an imaginary, ideal island nation.

clients as they are and therefore can feel free in expressing feelings and experience without risking the loss of the caregiver's acceptance. The caregiver should accept and respect the client as a simple person, without regard to matters race religion, political, sexual or personal.

Consequently, even though it may not be an easy step to take initially, the caregiver should be able to accept the client without seeking to approve of his or her behaviour, accepting the client as a person of *some* worth. An argument can be advanced about the obvious difficulty of achieving total unconditionally. Even if it were possible, it would be likely to be dysfunctional.

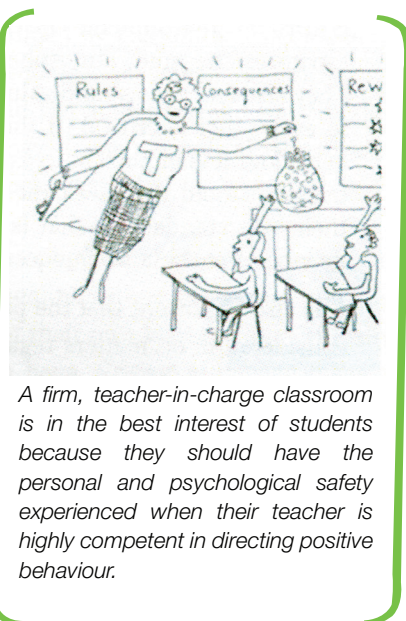
But what are the advantages and disadvantages of the person-centred or humanist approach?

In the person-centered approach no condition is attached. Therefore, a caregiver should display a caring respect for the clients, which allows them to be themselves and overcome the temptations of criticizing their behaviour or suggesting to know a better way of solving their problems. There should be respect and no judgment, however bad the behaviour, thus separating the person from the bad behaviour. But the respect is not a condition for unacceptable behaviour and neither is it an approval of bad behaviour.

The core conditions stated above of empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard are very important qualities that any person would desire to receive from fellow human beings. All human beings wish to have an environment where there is acceptance, non-judgment and warmth. The core conditions enhance effective and caring relationships. They are not only useful and applicable in counselling but to all interactions with human beings outside the counselling room. In such an environment, the person will be less prone to defend his self-

concept and begin to accept and value himself. He now has the capability of re-evaluating himself and is relaxed. Therefore he feels the motivation to focus on the moment while being sensible to the caregiver.

However, a caregiver is in an awkward position because he is not supposed to seek to guide a client to a particular goal, while at the same time he is explicitly and actively guiding the client towards contact with her organismic self. Therefore, the person-centred approach is not a neutral method, as is claimed to be. If it is taken as a philosophy of life and not just a psychotherapeutic approach chances are that it will foster a quasi-religious movement or a sect with all the dangers of dogmas and rituals. This would reduce it to the level of faith, magic and religion.



And how can the person-centred approach be used in the classroom? The assertive discipline plan was first developed by Lee Marlene and Marlene Canter in 1976 with the aim of managing classroom behaviour. This plan has today taken the centre stage in managing the challenging pupil behaviour by holding pupils responsible for their own action. Such a proactive approach should help the teacher create a cooperative environment, where pupils learn to make the right choice of behaviour. This choice should allow effective teaching and learning, together with academic and social growth of pupils.

The teacher and the pupil are always in contact, and this is very important for effective teaching. The classroom can be referred to as a social-technical system in organizational terms, where delivering the curriculum coincides with the social needs of the pupils (and teacher) to form an interdependent system. It is advisable to adopt useful ways of showing concern for pupils.

These skills can be demonstrated when teachers interact with pupils. The teacher shows respect for pupils, when she cares about their wellbeing and feels that each pupil is worth the time spent with her. The teacher should also show genuineness by not playing roles or putting up unnecessary barriers between herself and the pupils. It is also important to be consistent in values and behaviour. And empathy is shown when a teacher appears to understand how a pupil feels, so the teacher is able to see the world as the pupil see it. The more the teacher is able to see the world from the pupil's perspective, the more likely the teacher is able to help.

As previously mentioned, the person-centred approach is founded on the belief that individuals can be trusted to solve their own problems without the caregiver directly getting involved. This is assumed possible because the individual is the only one who really understands the problem.

An important physical feature in many classrooms is the decorations in many forms of paintings and pictures on the walls, potted plants and flowers. All these have important roles in welcoming the students and making them feel comfortable in the classroom environment. The classroom sitting arrangement takes care of individual territory. The quiet atmosphere in the classroom is important for concentration. They also feel needed and valued. However, the way both teachers and pupils relate to each other is critical. If the teacher seeks to set a good standard of classroom behaviour it is important to explain to the audience the importance



of doing so. The teacher should then seek the opinion of the pupils through allowing them to set their own standards. What is agreed upon includes action to be taken in case of defiance and the consequences, but this should not consist of rules cast in stone.

It is also important that the process is student-centred so that views are taken into consideration on matters regarding education. When pupils are part and parcel of decisions made they feel they have a role to play and the responsibility attached. It is also good to allow democracy to grow in schools which allow pupils to freely raise their concerns and worries, after which remedy is sought. This has the result of the pupils acknowledging and respecting the person-centred approach and there is a feeling of security and worth by the pupils when their views and ideas are taken into consideration. This works well by bringing objectives to the open and agreeing on how they should be achieved.

In conclusion, the relationship that exists in the person-centred therapy between a caregiver and a client is such that the client's world is the central context for being in the relationship. Ideally, it is hoped that upon entering the person-centred therapy, clients will experience the three core conditions of congruence, unconditional positive regard and empathy. A teacher can approach the management of student behaviour in a more proactive manner through building a positive and trusting relationship. The teacher establishes herself as one who cares about the pupil's wellbeing in and out of school. This can help create an atmosphere in which the student's self-esteem can flourish.

The core conditions then interact with the client's conditions of worth, which kick starts a helping relationship within which change and growth can occur.

What is important to the caregiver is the establishment of an appropriate environment under which the self-healing process occurs. Therefore, the person centred caregiver is not likely to offer **ready-made** solutions or to direct the client to follow a particular coping strategy. What the caregiver does is capitalize on a trusting relationship through which the worth of a client is recognized and therefore issues which are of concern are sorted out. Overall, the client is assumed to possess the ability to come up with a solution to his problem while the caregiver only acts as an important companion in the healing process.

### **3.2.4 Critical pedagogy**

Critical pedagogy is an educational movement guided by passion and principle to help learners develop consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect knowledge to power and the ability to take constructive action. Based on Marxist theory, critical pedagogy draws on radical democracy, anarchism, feminism, and other movements for social justice.

Critical pedagogy is a progressive teaching philosophy that challenges learners to examine power structures and patterns of inequality within the status quo. By questioning authority, learners can take control of their own learning and critically evaluate the opinions they have been taught to have. Critical pedagogy takes a sociological conflict perspective in examining power structures. Conflict theory is a perspective in sociology that criticizes imbalances of power and income as a source of conflict within society.

### **3.2.5 Critical Thinking**

A concern with critical thinking in education in the broader sense of teaching learners the rules of logic or how to assess evidence is hardly new: it is woven throughout the Western tradition of education, from the Greeks to the Scholastics, and from these to the contemporary time.

Separate segments of the curriculum have often been dedicated to such studies, especially at higher levels of schooling. What the critical thinking movement has emphasized is the idea that specific reasoning skills undergird the curriculum as a whole; that the purpose of education generally is to foster critical thinking and that the skills and dispositions of critical thinking should infuse teaching and learning at all levels of schooling. Critical thinking is linked to the idea of rationality itself, and developing rationality is seen as a prime aim of education.

In critical thinking, the person is something like a critical consumer of information and he is driven to seek reason, evidence and judgment. Part of this is a matter of mastering certain skills of thought: learning to diagnose invalid forms of argument, knowing how to make and defend distinctions, and so on. Much of the literature in this area, especially early on, seemed to be devoted to lists and taxonomies of what a critical thinker should know and be able to do.

More recently, however, various authors in tradition have come to recognize that teaching content and skills is of minor importance if learners do not also develop the dispositions or inclination to look at the world critically. By this, critical thinking means that the person has not only the capacity or the skill to seek reason, truth and evidence, but also that he has the drive or the disposition to seek them. We emphasize that a cluster of dispositions or the critical attitude is more like a deep-seated character trait and it is part of critical thinking itself. It is important to stress the distinction between “weak” and “strong” critical thinking. Weakness means that one has learned the skills and can demonstrate them when asked to do so. Strength, on the other hand, means that one has integrated these aptitudes into a way of living in which his own conjectures are re-assessed and methodically doubted as well.

A strong critical thinker therefore has a fervent drive for “clarity, accuracy, and fair-mindedness”.<sup>2</sup> This inclinational aspect of critical thinking has real advantages over the ability-only view. But in key respects it is still limited. To begin with, it is not clear exactly what is the consequence of making such inclinations part of critical thinking. In our view it not only stretches the idea of criticality beyond sheer logical soundness but it also demands and expects a greater attention to institutional contests and social networks than critical thinking scribes have made available.

Both the skills-based view and the skills-plus dispositions view are still focused on the individual person. But it is only in the context of social relations that these dispositions or character traits can be formed or expressed, and for this reason the practices of critical thinking *necessarily* involves creating a conducive social environment. One key task of a critical thinker is engagement in certain kinds of discourse and relations with others; and the kinds of social conditions that advance or impede that must therefore be part of the appraisal of what Critical Thinking is seeking to accomplish.

Another sphere in the critical thinking literature has been the degree to which critical thinking can be portrayed as a set of universal skills and inclinations, as opposed to content-specific abilities and inclinations that are cognized and articulated differently in different areas of inquiry. Can a general critical thinking course develop abilities and dispositions that will then be applied in any range of fields or should such material be presented specifically in connection to the questions and content of particular fields of study? Is a scientist who is a critical thinker doing the same things

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<sup>2</sup> Richard, P. (1990). *Critical Thinking: What Every Person Needs to Survive in a Rapidly Challenging World*, CA: Rohnert park.

as a historian who is a critical thinker? When each evaluates “good evidence” are they truly thinking about problems in similar ways, or are the differences in interpretation application dominant? This issue relates not only to the question of how we might teach critical thinking, but also to how and whether one can test for a general facility in critical thinking.

The other debate is based on the question of the degree to which the standards of critical thinking, and the conception of rationality that underlies them, are culturally biased in favour of a particular masculine or Western mode of thinking, one that implicitly devalues other ways of knowing.

Theories of education that stress the primary importance of logic, conceptual clarity, and rigorous adherence to scientific evidence have been challenged by various advocates of cultural and gender diversity who emphasize respect for alternative world views and styles of reasoning.

Partly in response to such criticisms, there can be developed a conception of critical thinking that regards sociocentrism as itself a sign of flawed thinking and believes that because critical thinking allows us to overcome the influence of our egocentric and sociocentric beliefs it is essential to our role as moral agents and as potential shapers of our own nature and destiny.

For other critical thinking proponents part of the method of critical thinking involves fostering dialogue, in which thinking from the perspective of others is also relevant to the assessment of truth claims.

### **3.2.6 Democratic education**

Democratic education is a theory of learning and school governance in which learners and staff participate freely and equally in a school democracy. In a democratic school, there is typically shared decision-making among learners and teachers on matters concerning living, working and learning together.

Democratic education infuses the learning process with fundamental values of society. Democratic education sees young people as more than simple and passive recipients of knowledge. In other words, this school sees them as active co-creators of their own learning. They are not the products of an education system, but rather valued participants in a vibrant learning community. This education begins with the premise that everyone is unique, so each of us learns in a different way. By supporting the individual development of each young person within a caring community, democratic education helps young people learn about themselves, engage with the world around them, and become positive and contributing members of society.

While it sounds like common sense for any society to base its educational approach on democratic values, a great deal of research lends further support to this ideology.

Studies show that educational environments engaging young people as active participants in their own learning are linked with higher learner attendance and learner achievement, greater creativity and conceptual learning, and increased intrinsic motivation and determination in learning. Moreover, recent brain and cognitive research points to the value of the democratic education learning environment, including key elements such as collaborative projects, age mixing, learning through active experiences, and the importance of a caring community.

### **3.2.7 Unschooling**

Unschooling is a range of educational philosophies and practices centred on allowing children to learn through their natural life experiences, including child directed play, game play, household responsibilities, work experiences, and social interaction, rather than through a more traditional school curriculum.

Unschooling encourages the exploration of activities led by the children and facilitated by adults. Unschooling differs from

conventional schooling principally in the sense that the standard curriculum and other conventional grading methods as well as other features of traditional schooling are counterproductive to the goal of maximizing the education of each child.

Unschooling is a natural way to learn. However, this does not mean unschoolers do not take traditional classes or use curricular materials more so by need. Learning to read or do quadratic equations are not “natural” processes, but the unschooler nonetheless learns them when it makes sense to her, and not simply because she should learn them at a particular age. Therefore it isn’t unusual to find unschoolers who are barely eight-years-old studying law or actuarial science or those who are ten years old and barely able to read the basic alphabet.

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## CHAPTER 4

# NON-AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

**T**here is an exciting and dialectical multitude of philosophies on education outside sub-Saharan Africa. Typically, their philosophy has contributed to an endless pit of knowledge and insight in the discourse of philosophy of education.

### 4.1 Socrates (469 - 399 BC)

Socrates' influence is such that all earlier Greek philosophy is classified as pre-Socratic, and he is responsible for the shift of philosophy interest from speculations about the natural world and cosmology to ethics and conceptual analysis.

His important contribution to Western thought is his dialectic method of inquiry, known as the Socratic Method. It is first described by Plato in the Socratic Dialogues, that a problem should be broken down into a series of questions the answers to which gradually distil the answer a person seeks. The influence of this approach is most strongly felt today in the use of scientific method, in which hypothesis is the first stage. The development and practice of this method is one of Socrates' most enduring contributions.

Socrates regularly uses two metaphors to describe what he considers his life-work to be. One metaphor is that of the gadfly, the horsefly that stings the intellectually and morally sluggish citizens of Athens with his questioning because, he says, Athens is a great and noble steed that is tardy in its motions, and needs someone to sting it to life.



The other metaphor he uses to describe his work is that of the midwife who helps others give birth to the wisdom that is in them. He says it thus, in the Theaetetus:

*“My art of midwifery is in general like theirs [real midwives]: the only difference is that my patients are men, not women, and my concern is not with the body but with the soul that is in travail of birth. And the highest point of my art is the power to prove by every test whether the offspring of a young man’s thought is a false phantom or instinct with life and truth. I am so far like the midwife that I cannot myself give birth to wisdom, and the common reproach is true, that, though I question others, I can myself bring nothing to light because there is no wisdom in me. The reason is this. Heaven (read: ‘the god’) constrains me to serve as a midwife, but has debarred me from giving birth. So of myself I have no sort of wisdom, nor has any discovery ever been born to me as the child of my soul. Those who frequent my company at first appear, some of them, quite unintelligent, but, as we go further with our discussions, all who are favoured by heaven make progress at a rate that seems surprising to others as well as to themselves, although it is clear that they have never learned anything from me. The many admirable truths they bring to birth have been discovered by themselves from within. But the delivery is heaven’s work and mine”.*

Indeed, one of the classic metaphors for the teacher is to be found in this short section from Plato’s Theaetetus. Socrates is questioning the young man Theaetetus about what constitutes knowledge. Theaetetus is not certain he can provide sensible answers. The dialogue is set in the year 299 BC, it was probably written in 257 BC:

*THEAETETUS: But I assure you Socrates, I have often set myself to study (the problem of defining knowledge) when I heard reports of the questions you ask. But I cannot persuade myself that I can give any satisfactory solution or that anyone has ever stated in my hearing the sort of answer you require. And yet I cannot get the question out of my mind.*

*SOCRATES: My dear Theaetetus, that is because your mind is not empty or barren. You are suffering the pains of travail.*

*THEAETETUS: I don't know about that, Socrates. I am only telling you how I feel.*

*SOCRATES: How absurd of you, never to have heard that I am the son of a midwife, a fine buxom woman called Phaenarete!*

*THEAETETUS: I have heard that.*

*SOCRATES: Have you also been told that I practice the same art?*

*THEAETETUS: No, never.*

*SOCRATES: It is true, though; only don't give away my secret. It is not known that I possess this skill; so the ignorant world describes me in other terms as an eccentric person who reduces people to hopeless perplexity. Have you been told that too?*

*THEAETETUS: I have.*

*SOCRATES: Shall I tell you the reason?*

*THEAETETUS: Please do.*

*SOCRATES: Consider, then, how it is with all midwives; that will help you to understand what I mean. I dare say you know that they never attend other women in childbirth so long as they themselves can conceive and bear children, but only when they are too old for that.*

*THEAETETUS: Of course.*

*SOCRATES: They say that is because Artemis, the patroness of childbirth, is herself childless, and so, while she did not allow barren women to be midwives, because it is beyond the power of human nature to achieve skill without any*

*experience, she assigned the privilege to women who were past childbearing, out of respect to their likeness to herself.*

*THEAETETUS: That sounds likely.*

*SOCRATES: And it is more likely, is it not, that no one can tell so well as a midwife whether women are pregnant or not?*

*THEAETETUS: Assuredly.*

*SOCRATES: Moreover, with the drugs and incantations they administer, midwives can either bring on the pains of travail or allay them at their will, make a difficult labour easy and at an early stage cause miscarriage if they so decide.*

*THEAETETUS: True.*

*SOCRATES: Have you also observed that they are the cleverest matchmakers, having an unerring skill in selecting a pair whose marriage will produce the best children?*

*THEAETETUS: I was not aware of that.*

*SOCRATES: Well, you may be sure they pride themselves on that more than on cutting the umbilical cord. Consider the knowledge of the sort of plant of seed that should be sown in any given soul. Does not that go together with skill in tending and harvesting the fruits of the earth? They are not two different arts?*

*THEAETETUS: No, the same.*

*SOCRATES: And so with a woman; skill in the sowing is not to be separated from skill in the harvesting?*

*THEAETETUS: Probably not.*

*SOCRATES: No. Only because there is that wrong and ignorant way of bringing together man and woman which they call pandering, midwives, out of self-respect, are shy even of matchmaking, for fear of falling under the accusation of pandering. Yet the genuine midwife is the only successful matchmaker.*

*THEAETETUS: That is clear.*

*SOCRATES: All this, then lies within the midwife's province, but her performance falls short of mine. It is not the way of women sometimes to bring forth real children, sometimes mere phantoms, such that it is hard to tell the one from the other. If it were so, the highest and noblest task of the midwife would be to discern the real from the unreal, would it not?*

*THEAETETUS: I agree.*

*SOCRATES: My art of midwifery is in general like theirs; the only difference is that my patients are men, not women, and my concern is not with the body but with the soul that is in travail of birth. And the highest point of my art is the power to prove by every life and truth. I am so far like the midwife that I cannot myself give birth to wisdom, and the common reproach is true, that, though I question others, I can myself bring nothing to light because there is no wisdom in me.*

*The reason is this. Heaven constrains me to serve as a midwife, but has debarred me from giving birth. So of myself I have no sort of wisdom, nor has any discovery ever been born to me as the child unintelligent, but, as we go further with our discussions, all who are favoured by heaven make progress at a rate that seems surprising to others as well as to themselves, although it is clear that they have never learned anything from me. The many admirable truths they bring to birth have been discovered by themselves from within. But the delivery is heaven's work and mine.*

*The proof of this is that many who have not been conscious of my assistance but have made light of me, thinking it was all their own doing, have left*

*me sooner than they should, whether under others' influence or of their own motion, and thenceforward suffered miscarriage of their thoughts through falling into bad company, and they have lost the children of whom I had delivered them by bringing them up badly, caring more for false phantoms than for the true. And so at last their lack of understanding has become apparent to themselves and to everyone else. Such a one was Aristides, son of Lysimachus, and there have many more. When they come back and beg for a renewal of our intercourse with extravagant protestations, sometimes the divine warning that comes to me forbids it; with others it is permitted, and these begin again to make progress.*

*In yet another way those who seek my company have the same experience as a woman with child; they suffer the pains of labor and, by night and day, are full of distress for greater than a woman;s, and my art has power to bring on those pangs or to allay them. So it fares with these, but there are some, Theaetetus, whose minds, as I judge, have never conceived at all. I see that they have no need of me and with all good will I seek a match for them. Without boasting unduly I can guess pretty well whose society will profit them. I have arranged many of these matches with Prodicus, and with other me of inspired sagacity.*

*And now for the upshot of this long discourse of mine; I suspect that, as you yourself believe, your mind is in labour with some thought it has conceived. accept then, the ministration of a midwife's son who himself practices his mother's art, and do the best you can to answer the questions I ask. Perhaps when I examine your statemnts I may judge one or another of them to be an unreal phantom.*

*If I then take the abortion from you and cast it away, do not be savage with me like a woman robbed of her first child. People have often felt like that toward me and have positively ready to bit me for taking away some foolish notion they have conceived. They do not see that I am doing them a kindness. They have not learned that no divinity is ever ill-disposed toward man, nor is*

*such action on my part due to unkindness; it is only that I am not permitted to acquiesce in falsehood and suppress the truth.*

*So, Theaetetus start again and try to explain what knowledge is. Never say it is beyond your power; it will not be so, if heaven wills and you take courage.*

But what is the Socratic Method? A single, consistent definition of the Socratic Method is not possible due to the diversity with which the method has been used in history. There are many styles of question oriented dialogue that claim the name Socratic Method. However, just asking a lot of questions does not automatically constitute use of the Socratic Method. Even in the dialogues of Plato, which are the most significant and detailed historical references to Socrates, there is not just one Socratic Method. Indeed, the exact style and methodology of Plato's Socrates changes significantly throughout the dialogues.

If there is a classic Socratic method, this designation must refer to the style of the Socratic Method found primarily in the early dialogues including those of Plato. In this dialogues, Socrates claims to have no knowledge of even the most fundamental principles, such as justice, holiness, friendship or virtue.

In the Socratic dialogues, Socrates only wants short answers that address very specific points and refuses to move on to more advanced or complicated topics until an adequate understanding of basic principles is achieved. This means that the conversation is often stuck in the attempt to answer what appears to be an unanswerable basic question. This image of Socrates' conversations, with their typical failure to find an answer, is the most widely recognized portrait of Socrates and his method. In the dialogues of Plato, the portrayal of Socrates and his method were diverse and ranged from the portrait of Socrates in the early

dialogues to a richer diversity of conversational styles and ideas in latter dialogues. This diversity in the dialogues was so great that Plato even decided to drop both Socrates and his method in some of his writing. In a later Platonic dialogue “*The Laws*”, there is still conversation but Socrates is replaced with “the stranger” and his method is gone as well. Socrates and his method are not vividly seen in the early and middle dialogues.

It is noteworthy that the Socrates inculcates the ideology or philosophy of critical thinking. Never in the history of humanity has it been more important to the survival of our species to raise whole generations of excellent thinkers than it is today. A dreamy ideal of modern education is that college graduates will not only have gained some mastery in the particular disciplines they have chosen, but also graduate with advanced skills in critical thinking. Unfortunately, there is a large number of new college students to whom the idea of critical thinking is absolutely new or totally alien.

Critical thinking should be actively cultivated throughout public schools in order for college learners to have the base they need to advance their skill. However, if critical thinking as a skill is neglected in the elementary school, so many children will complete time with inadequate knowledge and skills that enable them function *optimally* in society.

The Socratic Method primarily addresses aspects of the development of skill in critical thinking that do not come from learning types of logical fallacies or the heuristics for evaluating arguments and solving problems. It comes from a socially communicated inspiration to thirst for understanding and to experience the hard work involved in creating understanding as a joyful and satisfying journey.

We may want to know what areas Socrates' approach impacts. His critical thinking has two main areas of impact. We define these areas of impact as the safety and the preference factors. Both areas affect people's psychological health with regard to their capacity to do their own critical thinking.

According to the Socratic Method, a safety factor is about how well a person is able to cope with interpersonal conflict, social marginalization, physical danger and death. The safety factor influences the quality of our critical thinking through the dynamics of our desires for social and physical self-preservation. Belief structures are formed and maintained as a response to the demands of our environment. To critically challenge such structures is to risk compromising our ability to meet the demands of our environment and therefore compromise our safety.

A basic value that the Socratic Method brings to people is to make it possible for them to feel confident about the experience of questioning anything including their own ideas and beliefs. One cannot develop a capacity for critical thinking without a capacity to question anything and everything, until they first overcome their fear of questioning.

Ironically, for a species that prides itself in thinking even the best of our human societies are not *optimally* organized to cultivate fearless questioning. Thus, in many countries people suffer retributions because they asked questions. We have real



A cartoonist's light moment on the Socrates method of enquiry. Essentially, this methodology involves two processes: the destructive and the constructive. In the destructive process, weak ideas held by the student are shown to be illogical and non-scientific. In their stead, the constructive process encourages the student to replace these weak ideas with more logical and substantiated purviews and ideologies

Photo: Courtesy



reasons to be concerned about the results of our own questioning. And the pressure to “conform” comes from family, peers, schools, churches, societies, corporations and governments.

Elsewhere, the preference factor involves the effect of our own presuppositions, attachments and personal commitments. The preference, personal beliefs and our pre-existing commitments to taking a particular side in various issues or social conflicts.

It is important to find your own love for questioning prior to using the Socratic Method. If you are not comfortable with being questioned then the method may not be of much benefit to you as a form of philosophical adventurism because this process invariably addresses both factors by providing people with the opportunity for positive questioning experiences.

When people are placed in a situation where they are questioned in a way that is friendly, respectful and useful, people are empowered to experience the value of good questions. They are inspired to see questioning as a fundamentally important part of life. This is particularly true if a person can experience having a personal belief or idea refuted in a positive way. In the midst of Socratic questioning people can learn to feel good about getting one of their beliefs or ideas questioned and discarded. This is true because the successful application of the Socratic Method provides people with the realization that if they work hard they can either create a better belief or idea, or they can in true Socratic fashion feel good about knowing what they do not know.

We all have experiences which make us cautious and fearful about questioning. Through the use of the Socratic Method we can offer a balancing positive experience of the act of asking questions. This can inspire people to eagerly embrace the heart of critical thinking.

Learning to love the experience of questioning gives psychological strength to our will to question. Learning to love the experience of having our own beliefs and ideas questioned and even discarded gives us an inspired vision of our power to work for our own improvement. If we see questioning as a sacred activity that is vital to our own safety (by safeguarding our integrity and growth), we are less afraid to question the world. If we develop a preference for questioning our own preferences we find a true Socratic spirit within ourselves that will empower our critical thinking for life. The successful use of the Socratic Method gifts those who experience it with the living heart of critical thinking.

## **4.2 Plato (c.428-348 BC)**

Plato is a Greek philosopher born in Athens of a distinguished aristocratic family that claims descent from the early king Codrus. His works show profound influence of Socrates his mentor extraordinaire.

His educational philosophy is grounded in his vision of the ideal Republic,<sup>3</sup> where an individual is best served by being subordinated to a just society. He advocates removing children from their mothers' care and raising them as wards of the state,

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<sup>3</sup> Plato's strategy in *The Republic* is to first explicate the primary notion of societal, or political, justice, and then to derive an analogous concept of individual justice. In Books II, III, IV, Plato identifies political justice as harmony in a structured political body. An ideal society consists of three main classes of people - producers (craftsmen, farmers, artisans, etc.), auxiliaries (warriors), and guardians (rulers): a society is just when relations between these three classes are right. Each group must perform its appropriate function, and only that function, and each must be in the right position of power in relation to others. Rulers must rule, auxiliaries must uphold rulers' convictions, and producers must limit themselves to exercising whatever skills nature granted them (farming, blacksmithing, painting, etc.) Justice is a principle of specialization: a principle that requires that each person fulfill the societal role to which nature fitted him and not interfere in any other business.

with great care being taken to differentiate children suitable to the various castes, the highest receiving the most education, so that they could act as guardians of the city and care for the less able. Education should be holistic, including facts, skills, physical discipline, and music and art, which he considered the highest form of endeavour.

Plato believes that talent is distributed non-genetically and thus must be found in children born in any social class. He builds on this by insisting that those suitably gifted are to be trained by the state so that they may be qualified to assume the role of a ruling class. What this establishes is essentially a system of selective public education premised on the assumption that an educated minority of population are, by virtue of their education (and inborn educability), sufficient for healthy governance.

In Plato's Republic elementary education should be confined to the guardian class up to the age of eighteen, followed by two years of compulsory military training and then by higher education for those who qualified. While elementary education made the soul responsive to the environment, higher education helped the soul to search for truth which illuminated it. Both boys and girls receive the same kind of education. Elementary education consisted of music and gymnastics, designed to train and blend gentle and fierce qualities in the individual and create a harmonious person.<sup>4</sup>

At the age of twenty a selection should be made. The best learners should take an advanced course in mathematics, geometry, astronomy and harmonics. The first course in the scheme of higher education would last for ten years. It would be for those who had a flair for science.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid

At the age of thirty there should be another selection: those who qualified would study dialectics and metaphysics, logic and philosophy for the next five years. After accepting junior positions in the army for fifteen years, a man should have completed his theoretical and practical education by the age of fifty.

Education for Plato is one of the great things of life. Education is an attempt to touch the evil at its source, and reform the wrong ways of living as well as one's outlook towards life.

The object of education is to turn the soul towards light. Plato once stated that the main function of education is not to put knowledge into the soul, but to bring out the latent talents in the soul by directing it towards the right objects. This explanation of Plato on education highlights his object of education and guides the readers in proper direction to unfold the ramifications of his theory of education.

Plato was perhaps the first ancient political philosopher either to espouse the idea of university learning. This emphasis on education came to the forefront only due to the then prevailing education system in Athens. Plato was against the practice of buying knowledge, which according to him was a heinous crime than buying meat and drink. Plato strongly believed in a state control education system.

He held the view that without education, the individual would make no progress any more than a patient who believed in curing himself by his own loving remedy without giving up his luxurious mode of living. Therefore, Plato stated that education touches the evil at the grass root and changes the whole outlook on life.

It was through education that the principle of justice was properly maintained. Education was the positive measure for the operation of justice in the ideal state. Plato was convinced that the root of

the vice lay chiefly in ignorance, and only by proper education can one be converted into a virtuous man.

The main purpose of Plato's theory of education was to ban individualism, abolish incompetence and immaturity, and establish the rule of the efficient. Promotion of common good was the primary objective of platonic education.

Plato was greatly influenced by the Spartan system of education. The education system in Athens was privately controlled unlike in Sparta where the education was state-controlled. The Spartan youth were induced to military spirit and the educational system was geared to this end.

However, the Spartan system lacked the literacy aspect. Intriguingly, many Spartans could neither read nor write. Therefore the Spartan system did not greatly produce the intellectual potential in man, which made Plato discard the Spartan education to an extent. The Platonic system of education is, in fact, a blend of Athens and the organization of Sparta. This is because Plato believed in the integrated development of human personality.

Plato believed in strong state-controlled education for both men and women. He was of the opinion that every citizen should be compulsorily trained to fit into a particular class, be it the ruling, the fighting or the producing class.

Education, however, should be imparted to all in the early stages without any discrimination. Plato never stated out rightly that education system was geared to those who want to become rulers of the ideal state and this particular aspect attracted widespread criticism.

Plato was of the opinion that education should begin at an early age. In order to make sure that children studied well, he insists that

children should be brought up in a hale and healthy environment and that atmosphere should implant ideas of truth and goodness. Plato believes that early education should be related to literature as it would bring out the best of the soul. The study should be mostly related to story-telling with a progression to poetry.

Music and the arts were the subjects of early education. Plato believed in regulation of necessary step towards conditioning the individual. For further convenience, Plato's system of education can be broadly divided into two parts: elementary education and higher education.

Plato was of the opinion that for the first 10 years, there should be predominantly physical education. In other words, every school must have a gymnasium and a playground in order to develop the physique and health of children and make them resistant to any disease.

Aside from physical education, Plato also recommends music to bring about certain refinement in character. He also prescribes subjects such as mathematics, history and science.

Nonetheless, these subjects should be taught by smoothing them into verse and songs and should never be forced on children. This is because knowledge acquired under compulsion has no hold on the mind.

On the matter of higher education, Plato is of the view that a child should take an examination that should determine whether or not to pursue higher education at the age of twenty. Those who fail the examination should take up fundamental activities as businessmen, clerks, workers, farmers and the like.

Those who pass the exam should receive another ten years of education and training in body and mind. At this stage, apart from physical and mathematical sciences, subjects like arithmetic, astronomy, geometry and dialectics should be taught. Again at the age of thirty, learners should take another examination which serves as elimination test, much severe than the first test.

Those who do not succeed should become executive assistants, auxiliaries and military officers of the state. Plato states that based on their capabilities, candidates should be assigned to particular fields. Those who pass the examination should receive another five years of advanced education in dialectics in order to find out who is capable of freeing himself from sense perception.

The education system does not end here. Candidates are to study for another fifteen years for practical experience in dialectics. Finally at the age fifty, those who withstand the hard and fast process of education are to be introduced to the ultimate task of governing their country and the fellow citizens.

The rulers were expected to spend most of their time in philosophical pursuits. Thus, after accomplishing perfection, the rulers would exercise power only in the best interests of the state. The ideal state would be realized and its people would be just, honest and happy.

### **4.3 Aristotle (384 - 322 BC)**

Aristotle was born at Stagira, a Greek colony on the peninsula of Chalcidice where his father was a court physician to Amyntas III (grandfather of Alexander the Great) of Macedon. He is a Greek philosopher, scientist and a highly important and influential figure in the history of Western thought. In 367 we went to Athens and was first a pupil then a teacher at Plato's Academy where he stayed for 20 years until Plato's death in 347 BC. In 335 BC in Athens he found his own school - Lyceum - where he taught for the next twelve years.

His writings represent a vast output covering many fields of knowledge: logic, metaphysics, ethics, politics, rhetoric, poetry, biology, zoology, physics and psychology. He believed that sense perception is the only means of human knowledge. In ethics, he believed that human happiness is achieved by living in conformity with nature. In natural philosophy, he saw that the Earth is the centre of the eternal universe.

He considered human nature, habit and reason to be equally important forces to be cultivated in education where repetition is a key tool in developing good habits. The teacher was to lead the learner systematically; this differs, for example, from Socrates' emphasis on questioning his listeners to bring out their own ideas (though the comparison is perhaps incongruous since Socrates was dealing with adults).

Aristotle placed great emphasis on balancing the theoretical and practical aspects of subjects taught. Subjects he explicitly mentions as being important included reading, writing and mathematics; music; physical education; literature and history; and a wide range of sciences. He also mentioned the importance of play.

One of education's primary missions for Aristotle, perhaps its most important, was to produce good and virtuous citizens for the polis. He writes: *"All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth"*.

Unlike Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*, Aristotle's treatises do not contain lengthy discussions of education. His most explicit discussion of education, in Books 7 and 8 of the *Politics*, ends without being completed. Yet, like Plato, Aristotle's educational thinking is inseparable from his account of pursuing the highest good for human beings in the life of a community.



The science of politics takes into account the conduct of the individual as inseparable from the conduct of the community. Thus Aristotle holds that ethics is a part of politics; and equally, politics is a part of ethics. This leads him to argue that the end of individuals and states is the same. Inasmuch as human beings cannot realize their potentiality apart from the social life that is necessary for shaping their mind and character, an investigation into the nature of society is a necessary companion to an investigation into the nature of ethics. The good life is inescapably a social life - a life of conduct in a community.

For Aristotle, "the Good of man must be the end of the science of Politics" (1975, 1.2.1094b 7-8). In community life, the activity of doing cannot bring into existence something apart from doing; it can only "end" in further doing. And education, as one of the activities of doing, does not "produce" anything apart from education, but must be a continuing process that has no end except further education.

In Aristotle's explicit remarks about the aims of education, it is clear that, like all activities in pursuit of the good life, education is "practical" in that it is a way of conduct, of taking action. At the same time, in pursuing the good life, the aim is to know the nature of the best state and the highest virtues of which human beings are capable. Such knowledge enables us to have a sense of what is possible in education. Educational activity is also "craft" in the sense that determining the means appropriate for pursuing that which we think is possible is a kind of making as well as a kind of doing. It is commonplace to say that, in doing, we try to "make things happen". Education is an attempt to find the kind of unity of doing and making that enables individuals to grow, ethically and socially.

The *Politics* ends by citing three aims of education: the possible, the appropriate, and the "happy mean." The idea of a happy mean

is developed in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. There human conduct is held to consist of two kinds of virtues, moral and intellectual; moral virtues are learned by habit, while intellectual virtues are learned through teaching. As examples, while humans are not temperate or courageous by nature, they have the potentiality to become temperate and courageous.

By taking on appropriate habits, their potentialities can be actualized; by conducting themselves appropriately they can learn to actualize their moral virtues. Thus children learn the moral virtues before they know what they are doing or why they are doing it. Just because young children cannot control their conduct by intellectual principles, Aristotle emphasizes habit in training them. First, children must learn the moral virtues; later, when their intellectual powers have matured, they may learn to conduct themselves according to reason by exercising the intellectual virtues.

Arguing that the state is a plurality that should be made into a community by education, Aristotle insisted that states should be responsible for educating their citizens. In the *Politics*, Book 8, he makes four arguments for public education: (1) from constitutional requirements; (2) from the origins of virtue; (3) from a common end to be sought by all citizens; and (4) from the inseparability of the individual and the community. In most states in the Greek world before Aristotle's time, private education has prevailed.

Finally, Aristotle's enduring legacy in education may be characterized as threefold. First is his conception of distinct subject matters, the particular nature and conclusions reached in each to be determined as the facts of its subject matter take their places in the thinking and conduct of the investigator. Second is his insistence on the conjoint activities of ethics and politics, aiming to gain the practical wisdom that can be realized only insofar as citizens strive for the highest good in the context of a community

of shared ends. This means that the end of ethics and politics is an educational end. And, third, the education that states need is public education.

#### 4.4 Abu Ali al-Husayn ibn Abd Allah ibn Sina (980 - 1037)

Abu ali al-Husayn ibn abd Allah ibn Sina (or simply Avicenna, as he is known in the West) is a Persian philosopher and physician, born near Bokhara, Persia. Ibn Sina was indeed a true polymath with his contributions ranging from medicine, psychology and pharmacology to geology, physics, astronomy, chemistry and philosophy. He was also a poet and an Islamic scholar and theologian.

He was one of the main interpreters of Aristotle to the Islamic world, and was the author of some two hundred works on science, religion and philosophy. His medical textbook *al-Qanum fi at-tibb* (Canon of Medicine) has long remained a standard reference.

In the medieval Islamic world, an elementary school was known as a *maktab*, which dates back to at least the 10th century. Lie Madrasahs (which referred to higher education), a *maktab* was often attached to a mosque. In the 11th century, Ibn Sina wrote a chapter dealing with the *maktab* entitled "The Role of the Teacher in the Training and Upbringing



A Persian polymath who is regarded as one of the most significant physician, astronomer, social thinker, poet, Islamic theologian, mathematician and writer of the Islamic Golden Age. Avicenna has been described as the father of early modern medicine. Of the 450 works he is known to have written, around 240 have survived, including 150 on philosophy and 40 on medicine.

of Children”, as a guide to teachers working at maktab schools<sup>5</sup>. He wrote that children can learn better if taught in classes instead of individual tuition from private tutors, and he gave a number of reasons for why this is the case, citing the value of competition and emulation among learners as well as the usefulness of group discussions and debates. Ibn Sina described the curriculum of a *maktab* school in some detail, describing the curricula for two stages of education in a *maktab* school.

Ibn Sina wrote that children should be sent to a *maktab* school from the age of 6 and be taught primary education until they reach the age of 14. During which time, he wrote that they should be taught the Qur’an, Islamic metaphysics, language, literature, Islamic ethics, and manual skills (which could refer to a variety of practical skills).

Ibn Sina refers to the secondary education stage of *maktab* schooling as the period of specialization, when learners should begin to acquire manual skills, regardless of their social status. He writes that children after the age of 14 should be given a choice to choose and specialize in subjects they have an interest in, whether it was reading, manual skills, literature, preaching, medicine, geometry, trade and commerce, craftsmanship, or any other subject career. He wrote that this was a transitional stage and that there needs to be flexibility regarding the age in which learners graduate, as the learner’s emotional development and chosen subjects need to be taken into account.

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<sup>5</sup> Avicenna, Arabic Ibn Sina, (born 980, near Bukhara, Iran [now in Uzbekistan] - died 1037, Hamadan, Iran), Muslim physician, the most famous and influential of the philosopher-scientists of the medieval Islamic world. Ibn Sina was indeed a true polymath with his contributions ranging from medicine.

The empiricist theory of *tabula rasa* was also developed by Ibn Sina. He argued that “human intellect at birth is rather like a *tabula rasa*, a pure potentiality that is actualized through education and comes to know” and that knowledge is attained through “empirical familiarity with objects in this world from which one abstracts universal concepts” which is developed through a “syllogistic method of reasoning, observations lead to prepositional statements, which when compounded lead to further abstract concepts.” He further argued that the intellect itself “possesses levels of development from the material intellect (*al-ʿaql al-hayulani*), that potentiality that can acquire knowledge to the active intellect (*al-ʿaql al-faʿil*), the state of the human intellect in conjunction with the perfect source of knowledge.”

#### 4.5 John Locke

The English philosopher John Locke’s *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* is an outline on how to educate the mind: he expresses the belief that education **make the** man or, more fundamentally, that the mind is an “empty cabinet”, with the statement “I think I may say that of all the men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education.”

Locke also wrote that “the little and almost insensible impressions on your tender infancies have very important and lasting consequences.” He argued that the “associations of ideas” that one makes when young are more important than those made later because they are the foundation of the self: they are, put differently, what first mark the *tabula rasa*.

In his *Essay*, in which is introduced both of these concepts, Locke cautioned against, for example, letting “a foolish maid” convince

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Psychology and pharmacology to geology, physics, astronomy, chemistry and philosophy. He was also a poet and an Islamic scholar theologian.

a child that “evil spirits and devils” are linked to the night because “darkness shall ever after that bring with it those frightful ideas, and they shall be so connected, that the child can no more bear the one than the other.”

Associationism, as this theory would come to be called, exerted a powerful influence over eighteenth-century thought, particularly educational theory, as nearly every educational writer warned parents not to allow their children to develop negative associations. It also led to the development of psychology and other new disciplines with David Hartley’s attempt to discover a biological mechanism for associationism in his *Observations on Man* (1749).

#### **4.6 Jean-Jacques Rousseau**

The Frenchman Jean-Jacques Rousseau is known as a revolutionary philosopher, who wrote against the social and political set up of hypocrisy, artificially, cruelty, corruption, and despotism. The key note of his philosophy is termed *Naturalism*. It contains his concepts of natural state, natural man and natural civilization: *“Natural state is a simple farming community or state without the evils of large cities corrupt rulers, social classes and luxury. He believed that ‘Goodness was innate and evils as acquired’.* About natural man he says, *“Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains”* In the words of Rousseau, *“Civilized man is born, lives and dies in a state of slavery.”*

Natural man according to Rousseau is governed and directed by the laws of his own nature rather than those of social institutions. He believed the man would have been happier if he had been allowed to remain in his natural primitive existence. Thus, he was against the notion of civilization.

By natural civilizations, he meant the simple farming life. Rousseau asserted that, "God makes all the things good; man meddles with them and they become evil". He declared, "Everything is good as it comes from the hands of the Author of nature, but everything degenerates in the hands of man."

Natural civilization is free from artificial surroundings and rigid barriers that pollute the goodness of our nature, 'Return to nature' was his method to cure all troubles of human nature. His natural heritage is essentially good and must be given the full opportunities for free development. He advocated the concept of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Rousseau has given three fundamentals of nature, considering these as the best sources of education:

- Isolation from society: man should be isolated from society and brought up by laws of nature. He should not be allowed to acquire the evils of the society.
- Innate tendencies of the child: in the words of Rousseau, the innate tendencies to primitive emotions, instinctive judgment and natural instinct are more reliable bases for action than the experience gained from the society. In this sense, education means the spontaneous development of these innate tendencies of the child.
- Contact with natural environment: to make contact with the natural environment, the hills, trees, plants, birds, animals, woods, stones and physical forces. Thus the child should be brought up in natural environment. As a result of it he will automatically become a rational being and act according to the voice of his conscience.

For Rousseau education does not mean merely imparting information or storing knowledge. It is not accretion from without. It is the development of the child's natural powers and abilities from within.

Rousseau's educational philosophy is born out of his naturalism philosophy, and some of its characteristics are as follows:

- Education from nature: It consists in the spontaneous development of our endowment and faculties i.e. of child's natural tendencies and interests. Rousseau gave it the top priority.
- Education from Man: It consists in influencing our social contacts and various groups. He did not favor it at least in initial stages.
- Education from Things: It consists in the acquisition of knowledge and information through contact with physical surroundings and over experience of dealings with the things.

Rousseau's conviction is that education should be considered as "the process of development into an enjoyable, rational harmoniously balanced useful and hence natural life".

On the matter of types of education, Rousseau starts with an interesting treatise on *negative* education to the child should be "negative" between the age of five and twelve years: "I call negative education that which tends to perfect the organs that are the instruments of the knowledge, and before giving this knowledge directly and that endeavours to prepare the way for reason by proper exercise of the sense. A negative education does not keep the time of idleness, far from it; It does not give virtues, it projects from vice. It does not inculcate truth. It projects from errors."



## **The following are characteristics of negative education:**

- Time saving is not favoured. Do not save time but rather lose it. By running, dancing, playing the child will have continuous reconstruction of experiences, which is nothing but education.
- Book learning is not favoured. For reading, at this point, is the curse of childhood. He despises books as they are of little value. He considers them to be the cause of the child's misery.
- Formal lessons are not favoured. Rousseau does not believe in the efficacy of verbal lessons. He states: "Get rid of the lesson and we get rid of the chief cause of their sorrow". Rousseau remarked, "give me a child of five years who know nothing and at the fifteen I shall return him to you knowing as much as those who have been under instruction since infancy with difference that your learner only knows things by heart while mine knows how to use his knowledge."
- Habit formation is not favoured. Thus he argues: "The only habit which the child should be allowed to form is to contract no habit at all." He does not want children to be slaves of their habits. He wishes them to be free in their unrestricted activities. If any habits are to be formed they should arise of natural instincts.
- Direct moral education favoured: Rousseau believed that no moral training should be imparted to the child. Let him get moral training through natural consequences.

- Social education is not favoured. he holds the view that society is corrupt and it degenerates the child.
- Formal discipline is not favoured. He believes in discipline according to natural consequences. If the child climbs a tree, let him fall and learn not to attempt it again.

On the subject of positive education, Rousseau advocates more polemics: "I call positive education one that tends to form the mind prematurely and to instruct the child in the duties that belongs to man."

### **The characteristics of positive education are:**

- stress on verbalism
- stress on duty, morality and religion
- stress on strict discipline
- stress on Social education
- emphasis on formation of habits.

Rousseau revolts against the positive education and also these characteristics. He terms it as unnatural and inhuman and opposed it fully. It is in revolt this that he introduces negative education<sup>6</sup>.

### **In brief, Rousseau explains the aims of education as follows:**



Development of the child's inner faculties. He says that the most important aim of education is the natural development of the child's inner faculties and powers. To live is to work, to develop and to properly utilize the various part

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid

of the body. In his book *Emile*<sup>7</sup>, he seeks to train Emile in the profession of living so that he may become a human being before becoming a soldier, a magistrate, or a priest education aim at making the child a real human being.



Different aim at different stages. In addition to the foregoing aim, education should be different at each stage in the life of the individual.



Development of well-regulated freedom. During the period of infancy, that is up to five years, the aim of education is to develop in Emile a well regulated freedom according to his capacities.



Develop sufficient strength at childhood stage. At the childhood stage, that is from five to twelve years, the aim of education is to develop the child sufficiently enough, in order to have well regulated freedom. His advise for this period is "exercise the body, the organs, the senses and powers and keep the soul lying fellow, as long as you can". Intellectual development in pre-adolescent period. at the boyhood stage (twelve to fifteen years) the aim of education is to develop the intellect of the Emile. Education should help in the acquisition of knowledge which may enable him to the practical needs of life.

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<sup>7</sup> *Emile or On Education*, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, exposes the philosophy of education of the Genevan thinker. As the *Social Contract*, *Emile* was immediately banned by the authorities because it criticizes Rousseau's rejection of traditional conceptions of religion. This book describes the dialogue between the tutor and Emile, from birth to adulthood. The Book was published in 1762 and translated to English in 1763.



Emotional, moral and religious development during adolescence. During the fourth stage (fifteen to twenty four years) Emile should learn to live for others and to live in social relationships. His emotions should be sublimated. Moral and religious bias should be given to education. In short, during this stage, education should aim at emotional, moral and religious development of the Emile.

In framing his preferred curriculum, Rousseau paid attention to the following four stages of development:

- Infancy stage, up to five years. "A feeble body makes a feeble mind. All wickedness comes from weakness. Give his body constant exercise, make it strong and healthy." During this stage of infancy the child should be properly protected.<sup>8</sup>
- Childhood stage from five to twelve years. Rousseau says: "Childhood is the sleep of reason and the educator is not to disturb him in this sleep." So at this stage, neither intellect nor moral or social education is to be imparted to the child. Negative education will consist of the free development of his physical organs and the exercises of his senses. The child should be given maximum freedom. There should be no verbal lessons, in language, history and geography. Physical exercises constitute the core of the curriculum at this stage.
- Boyhood stage from twelve to fifteen years. Physical sciences, languages, mathematics, manual work, a trade, social relations, music

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid

and drawing constitute the curriculum at this stage. Sciences develop heuristic attitude, mathematics develop precise thinking, manual craft develops qualities of character and drawing trains the eyes and the muscles. However, the knowledge of social relations will impress upon the boy the need for cooperation, an economic inter dependence of man upon man.

- Adolescence stage from fifteen to twenty years. Rousseau lays special emphasis on moral and religious education at this stage. Moral education is given through activities and occupations and not through lectures on ethics. Besides moral and religious education, history, geography, sex education, physical culture and aesthetics are to constitute the curriculum. For all these subjects he has specific aims. *Ipso facto*, history is to be taught for the service of moral instructions. Religious education should be taught for realizing the existence of god, while sex education about the innate matters of gender and related socio-biological affairs. Equally so, aesthetics is to be taught for the cultivation and improvement of tastes.

Meanwhile, it is instructive to note what Rousseau advocates in his treatise on methods of teaching:

- Learning by doing: "Teach by doing whenever you can, and only fall back upon words when doing is out of the question. The child should take part in various activities and learn in a natural way. It will help him in satisfaction of creative activity."
- Direct experience. Knowledge acquired through books is second hand and so is easily forgotten. On the other hand, knowledge directly acquired

from various learning situations is permanent. He also urged experience before expression and object before words.

- **Heuristic method.** In this method the child is placed in the position of a discoverer. He is to be given an opportunity to make experiment with the apparatus that he made himself or invented. Rousseau also advocates the heuristic method of teaching.
- **Example is better than precept.** For imparting moral education Rousseau stated, 'Example is better than precept. Teacher should practice morality. He should provide opportunities to practice virtue. Lectures on morality will not prove useful.'
- **Social participation.** During the period of adolescence will get knowledge about social relations by actually visiting places and establishing contact with the members of the community practically.

On the subject of child discipline, he is opposed to formalized discipline for it is only in a *carefree* atmosphere that the child can develop his innate powers. No punishment should be given to the child for improving his behaviour. He advocates discipline by natural consequence: "[...] allow the child to suffer the natural results of his acts. If the child puts his hand into fire, let him burn his hand and learn by that painful consequence."

Interestingly, Rousseau does not assign a high role for the teacher beyond providing the exact environment that should enable the natural education and learning to take place. Accordingly, the teacher should work around providing suitable opportunities and protecting the child from repression and absurd mental conflicts.

## 4.7 Johann Friedrich Herbart

Considered the founder of pedagogy as an academic discipline, Herbart established a system of pedagogy built on the preparation and then presentation of engaging material (for example, using genuine works of literature rather than school readers), analysis with the class, review of the material, and drawing conclusions relevant to larger contexts. He strongly influenced the development of pedagogy throughout Europe and beyond, an influence which is felt to this day.

Although his teaching methodology was overtaken by new ideas, Herbart's institution of pedagogy as an academic field has remained. The idea of a science of education including psychology as a source of information about the nature of the learner as well as the learning process remains significant. The building of character as the essential goal of education, rather than simply the accumulation of knowledge, is not itself a new idea.

His structuring of a scientific model of education in which development of internal character is the priority, and the acquisition of knowledge and skills - the activity of teaching that is used to achieve that goal - was subordinate is rather innovative.

Herbart also drew a clear connection between the development the development of individual character through education and the resulting benefits to society: the emergence of productive citizens.

Herbart's system of philosophy stems from the analysis of experience. The system includes logic, metaphysics and aesthetics as coordinate elements. He rejects all concepts of separate mental faculties, postulating instead that all mental phenomena result

from interaction of elementary ideas. He believes that educational methods and systems should be based on psychology and ethics: psychology to furnish necessary knowledge of the mind and ethics to be used as a basis for determining the social ends of education.

Herbart was the first scientist to distinguish instructional process from subject matter. He states that interest develops when already strong and vivid ideas are hospitable towards new ones, thus past associations motivate a **perception** of current ones.

More notably, his treatise that learning follows from the building up of sequences of ideas important to the individual gives teachers a semblance of a theory of motivation.

He also stresses the study of the psychological processes of learning as a means of devising educational programs based on the aptitudes, abilities and interests of learners. No wonder then that Herbartinism has been adopted in many teacher training programmes globally.

At the same time Herbart advocates five formal steps to be adopted in the teaching process:

- preparation: a process of relating new material to be learned to relevant past ideas or memories in order to give her learner a vital interest in the topic under consideration;
- presentation: presenting new material by means of concrete objects or actual experience;
- association: thorough assimilation of the new idea through comparison with past ideas and consideration of their similarities and differences in order to implant the new idea in the mind;



- generalization: a procedure especially important to the instruction of adolescents and designed to develop the mind beyond the level of perception and the concrete;
- application: using acquired knowledge not in a purely utilitarian way but so that every learned idea becomes a part of the functional mind and an aid to a clear, vital interpretation of life. This step is presumed possible only if the learner immediately applies the new idea, making it his own.

## 4.8 Charlotte Mason

Charlotte Maria Shaw Mason was a British educator in England at the turn of the twentieth century. Her revolutionary methods led to a shift from utilitarian education to the education of a child based on “living” ideas.

She invested her life in improving the quality of children’s education. Her ideas led to a method used by some **home-schoolers**.

Mason believed that children should be introduced to subjects through “living” books, not through the use of compendiums, abstracts, or selections. She used abridged books only when content was deemed inappropriate for children. She preferred that parents or teachers read aloud texts such as Plutarch and the Old Testament, making omissions only when necessary.

It goes without saying that anyone who is familiar with home-schooling, has undoubtedly heard of Charlotte Mason. Her educational principles, which she developed in the nineteenth century, offer much to home-schooling children and families alike. But what exactly is a Charlotte Mason education? How can we know if it will work well for our family?

Here is a brief discussion of the seven characteristics of Charlotte mason's recommended style of teaching:

- **habits.** Charlotte believed that the development of good habits within a child provides the foundation for early education. She wrote, "The mother who takes pains to endow her children with good habits secures for herself smooth and easy days." For this reason Charlotte advised delaying formal academics until six years of age, while advocating play and work within the gentle boundaries of the family unit. Charlotte saw good habits as so crucial that she recommended putting all else aside if a bad habit appeared, and working with the child (in a friendly manner) to reconcile the issue before it could develop further.
- **style of lessons.** Charlotte Mason style lessons are short, especially for young children. The goal is to train the child to focus fully on their work, but only for the amount of time they are developmentally capable of. For early elementary-aged children this often means only five to fifteen minutes per subject. In order grades the duration extends to forty five minutes per subject. In older grades the duration extends to forty five minutes or more. When a child becomes restless, Charlotte advises changing the lesson to a different subject - maybe moving from handwriting to music study, or from maths to handicrafts. Short lessons means that more subjects can be incorporated into a school day.

This fits with the Charlotte Mason philosophy of introducing many topics to children and allowing them to **delve deeper into the ones that spark their** interest.

- **“living” books.** “Living” books are the opposite of textbooks - quality literature (either fiction or non-fiction) written by an author with a passion for the topic. The writer’s passion and expertise breathes life into the book, as opposed to a textbook that gives impersonal overviews of many topics. Living books present inspiring stories that engage the minds of children and adults alike, providing characters our children can look up to and emulate.
- **narration.** A Charlotte Mason style education uses narration as one of the central methods to evaluate a learner. The goal is to teach a child to think and express themselves clearly. Up until the age of ten or eleven years, Charlotte advises teachers to use mainly oral narrations with the child. After listening to a short passage of a book, the child will tell back, in his or her own words, important aspects of the story. Letting the young child do this orally helps them develop analytical skills without getting stuck by the physical mechanics of handwriting. Charlotte Mason teachers have children, at the age of around eleven years, do written narrations, which lengthen and become more in depth as children get older.
- **dictation.** Dictation exercise introduce and reinforce spelling and grammar concepts. Charlotte recommends using inspiring quotations or scripture for dictation. The child studies the passage until they are certain of the spelling

and punctuation. Then the teacher dictates the passage slowly while the child writes it down. Formal grammar study is usually delayed until age ten or eleven years in the Mason education system.

- **art and music studies.** Charlotte Mason believes in exposing a child to greatness in many forms, which is why she introduces music and art appreciation. In the typical school one composer or artist is to be studied each term - both through experiencing the music and art, reading living books about the Artist, perhaps reproducing the style through art and music lessons.
- **nature study.** Charlotte believes that children should spend as much time as possible outdoors, especially as young learners. Learners are to keep their own detailed nature journals and also use nature guides to discover and identify the natural world in their neighbourhood.

Charlotte Mason's ideas created an educational revolution when she developed them. She believed that, regardless of what social class they belonged to, children deserved dignity and respect. She hoped education would open the doors of equality and opportunity to all.

## 4.9 John Dewey

In *Democracy and Education* the American psychologist John Dewey states that education, in its broadest sense, is the means of the social continuity of life given the primary ineluctable facts of the birth and death of each one of the constituent members in a social group. Education is therefore a necessity if the life of the group is to go on.

Dewey was a proponent of educational progressivism and was a relentless campaigner for reform of education, pointing out that

the authoritarian, strict, pre-ordained knowledge approach of modern traditional education was too concerned with delivering knowledge, and not enough with understanding the learner's actual experiences.

John Dewey maintained that schools should *reflect* society. He believed that there was a strong connection between education and social action in a democracy.

Trained as a philosopher at Johns Hopkins, Dewey was intrigued by the relationship between the individual and society. In the book written in 1899, *The School and Society*,<sup>9</sup> he wrote "democracy has to be born anew every generation, and education is its midwife." He felt that schools should not simply be places where lessons are disseminated that could, or could not, one day play a role in a learner's life.

On the contrary, the good school should be full of activities that are vital and important to the learner now. It should "be a miniature community, an embryonic society'. Dewey felt that in the new industrial society children were not realizing the basic foundational skills that had led to the development of their current society. School should provide children with that foundation so they could in turn make meaningful contributions to, and play important roles in society. They would be able to use their mind as a powerful tool to help both themselves and the society in which they live.

From Dewey's viewpoint, traditional education set up the child to play a passive, receptive role in the educational process. The

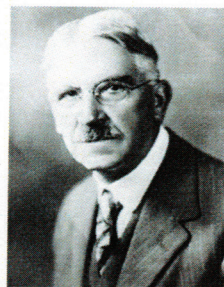
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<sup>9</sup> *The School and Society. Being Three Lectures* was John Dewey's first published work of length on education. A highly influential publication in its own right, it would also lay the foundation for his later work.

schoolrooms and curriculum that were being utilized during this time were that of a one size fits all mentality. However, children are unique, full of spontaneity and imagination. Their minds are active and naturally inquisitive. Hence, when information is merely disseminated and expected to be regurgitated, it is no wonder that children lose interest and it becomes hard work just to gain attention.

It is worthy to note that Dewey's philosophy of education embraces the natural urges of the child. He encourages questioning and testing to discover truth, stating thus: "A thought is not a thought, unless it is one's own".

But he quickly adds that children's interests are not simply to be freely explored without direction. The interests are to be controlled and fostered by the educator with a specific purpose and enduring goal in mind.



The American educationists, psychologist and philosopher John Dewey (1859-1952) was a great proponent of the theories of pragmatism and functional psychology. His central theme is the ubiquity of ideal democracy in all sphere of human life and intellect. He posits that education and learning are socially interactive processes and the school should be the centre for social reform. He adds that the student prospers better if he is given to experience and interaction with the core curriculum.

In 1916 John Dewey wrote another influential book that was penned within the framework of how education is to **fulfill** the needs of society. *Democracy and Education*<sup>10</sup> defined democracy as a way of defining culture. Dewey viewed democracy as a way of government that allowed for the members of society to

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<sup>10</sup> *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* is a 1916 book by John Dewey. Dewey sought to at once synthesize, criticize, and expand upon the democratic educational philosophies of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Plato.

enjoy freedom in a well-organized civilization. He refers to the countries that do not use technology and mass elections to govern themselves as “savage”.

In his extensive works throughout his life, he outlines his views on how education can improve society. The founder of what would be known as the progressive education movement, Dewey argued that it was the job of education to encourage individuals to develop their full potential as human beings. He was especially critical of the rote learning of facts in schools and argued that children should learn by experience. In this way learners would not just gain knowledge but would also develop skills, habits and attitudes necessary for them to solve a wide variety of problems.

Dewey attempted to show the important links between education and politics. Dewey believed that active learning would help people develop the ability and motivation to think critically about the world around them. Progressive education was therefore a vital part of a successful democracy as it was necessary for people to be able to think for themselves. Dewey also argued that the development of critical thought would also help protect society from the dangers of dictatorship. Learners must be engaged in meaningful and relevant activities which allow them to apply the concepts they are endeavoring to learn. Hands-on projects are the key to creating authentic learning experiences.

#### **4.10 Rudolf Steiner**

Steiner founded a holistic educational impulse on the basis of his spiritual philosophy or anthroposophy. Now known as Steiner or Waldorf education, his pedagogy emphasizes a balanced development of cognitive, effective (or artistic), and practical skills (head, heart and hands).

Steiner's theory of child development divides education into three discrete development stages predating but with close similarities to the states of development described by Piaget. Early childhood education occurs through imitation; teachers provide practical activities and a healthy environment. Steiner believed that young children should meet only goodness.

Elementary education is strongly arts-based, centred on the teacher's creative authority; the elementary school-age child should meet beauty. Secondary education seeks to develop the judgment, intellect, and practical idealism; the adolescent should meet truth. In all stages of schooling, learning is interdisciplinary, integrating practical, artistic, and cognitive elements and emphasizing the role of the imagination in learning. Schools and teachers are given considerable freedom to define curricula and instructional methods within collegial structures.

#### **4.11 Maria Montessori**

The Montessori method arose from Dr. Maria Montessori's discovery of what she referred to as "the child's true normal nature"<sup>11</sup> in 1907, which happened in the process of her experimental observation of young children given freedom in an environment prepared with materials designed for their self-directed learning activity. The method itself aims to duplicate this experimental observation of children to bring about, sustain and support their true natural way of being.

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<sup>9</sup> The Montessori Method is an approach to educating children based on the research and experiences of Italian physician and educator Maria Montessori (1870-1952). The method arose in the process of her experimental observation of young children given freedom in an environment, leading her to believe by 1907 that she had discovered "the child's true normal nature". Based on her observations, she created an environment prepared with materials designed for their self-directed learning activity. The method itself aims to duplicate this experimental observation of children to bring about, sustain and support their true natural way of being.



The Montessori method is founded on Maria Montessori's educational philosophy. Her basic principle was to "follow the child". A Montessori classroom is carefully prepared to allow the child to work independently and allow for the joy of self-discovery. Teachers introduce materials and children are free to choose them, again and again, working and discovering, and ultimately mastering ideas. Lessons are given, but the goal is for children to discover the answers by using the "self-correcting" materials that are found only in Montessori classrooms.

Children grow academically in the Montessori environment.

They discover an ability to complete complex math problems, name the continents, identify geometric shapes, write beautifully and talk about scientific concepts such as "metamorphosis". Just as important in the classroom is the engaging of the child's creative intelligence. Children are exposed to fine art, drama, music, history, and a second language. They might paint their own Impressionist "water lily" one day, participate in the challenges of Sport Day on another, prepare a traditional food from another country, or put on a play based on an ancient folktale.



The Italian physician and educationist Maria Tecla Artemisia Montessori (1870-1952) is best known for the philosophy of education that bears her name, and her writing on scientific pedagogy. Montessori's theory and philosophy of education are greatly influenced by the work of Jean Marc Gaspard Itard, Edouard Seguin, Friedrich Froebel, and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi: all propose sensory exploration in young learners. In scientific pedagogy she calls for observation and measurement of students, and, more importantly, the development of new methods which would transform both observation and measurement for the ultimate benefit of the young learner.

The most important aspect of Montessori educational mission does not concern academics. Its primary goal is to foster and enhance each child's natural sense of joy and wonder. Children should be allowed to delight in their childhood; the school day must include laughter and the buzz of creative silliness as part of its curriculum. This will enable learners to love school and the process of learning. The idea that "education is not a chore, but a joyous exploration of life's mysteries", is the most important lesson that the Montessori philosophy aims at teaching learners.

#### 4.12 Jean Piaget

Jean Piaget was a Swiss developmental psychologist and educationists known for his studies that eventually described the genesis of an exceptionally wide spectrum of human understanding. His theory of cognitive development linked the philosophical study of knowledge formation and the psychological study of child development. He described himself as an epidemiologist interested in the qualitative development of knowledge.

Piaget placed great importance on the education of children. As a Director of the International Bureau of Education, he declared in 1934 that "only education is capable of saving our societies from possible collapse, whether violent, or gradual. "Piaget created the International Centre for Genetic Epistemology in Geneva in 1955 and directed it until 1980.



Jean Piaget (1896-1980) was a Swiss psychologist and epistemologist known for his pioneering work in child development. His theory of cognitive development and epistemological view are together called genetic epistemology, a philosophical pursuit centred around the process of the qualitative development of knowledge and education. He considered cognitive structures development as a differentiation of biological regulations.

Piaget has been branded an interactionist as well as a constructivist. His interest in cognitive development came from his training in the natural sciences and his interest in epistemology. Piaget was very interested in knowledge and how children come to know their world. He developed his cognitive theory by actually observing children (some of whom were his own children). Using a standard question or set of questions as a starting point, he followed the child's train of thought and allowed the questioning to be flexible. Piaget believed that children's spontaneous comments provided valuable clues to understanding their thinking. He was not interested in a right or wrong answer, but rather what forms of logic and reasoning the child used.

After many years of observation, Piaget concluded that intellectual development is the result of the interaction of hereditary and environmental factors. As the child develops and constantly interacts with the world around him, knowledge is invented and reinvented. His Theory of intellectual Development is strongly grounded in the biological sciences. He saw cognitive growth as an extension of biological growth and as being governed by the same laws and principles. He argued that intellectual development controlled every other aspect of development whether emotional, social, and moral or otherwise.

Piaget may be best known for his stages of cognitive development. He discovered that children think and reason differently at different periods in their lives. He believed that everyone passed through an invariant sequence of four qualitatively distinct stages. Invariant means that a person cannot skip stages or reorder them. Although every normal child passes through the stages in exactly the same order, there is some variability in the ages at which children attain each stage.

## The four stages of cognitive development are:

- **sensorimotor** - birth to two years;
- **preoperational** - two to seven years;
- **concrete operational** - seven to eleven years
- **formal operational (abstract thinking)** - eleven years and up.

Each stage has major cognitive tasks which should be accomplished. In the sensorimotor stage, the mental structures are mainly concerned with the mastery of concrete objects. The mastery of symbols takes place in the preoperational stage. In the concrete stage, children learn mastery of classes, relations, and numbers and how to reason. The last stage deals with the mastery of thought.

A central component of Piaget's developmental theory of learning and thinking is that both involve the participation of the learner. Knowledge is not merely transmitted verbally but ought to be constructed and reconstructed by the learner. Piaget asserts that for a child to know and construct knowledge of the world the child should act on objects and it is this action which provides knowledge of those objects: the mind organizes reality and acts upon it.

The learner should be active; he is not a vessel to be filled with facts. Piaget's approach to learning is a readiness approach. Readiness approaches in developmental psychology emphasize that children cannot learn something until maturation gives them certain prerequisites. The ability to learn any cognitive content is always related to their stage of intellectual development. Children who are at a certain stage cannot be taught the concepts of a higher stage.

Intellectual growth involves three fundamental processes: assimilation, accommodation, and equilibration. Assimilation involves the incorporation of new events into pre-existing cognitive structures. Accommodation means existing structures change to accommodate to the new information. This dual process, assimilation-accommodation, enables the child to form schema. Equilibration involves the person striking a balance between self and the environment, between assimilation and accommodation. When a child experiences a new event, disequilibrium sets in until he is able to assimilate and accommodate the new information and thus attain equilibrium. There are many types of equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation that vary with the levels of development and the problems to be solved. For Piaget, equilibration is the major factor in explaining why some children advance more quickly in the development of logical intelligence than do others.

Indeed, a Piagetian-inspired curriculum emphasizes a learner-centred educational philosophy. The teaching methods which most American school children are familiar with - teacher lectures, demonstrations, audio-visual presentations, teaching machines, and programmed instruction - do not fit in with Piaget's ideas on the acquisition of knowledge.

Remarkably, Piaget espoused active discovery learning environments in our schools. Intelligence grows through the twin processes of assimilation and accommodation; therefore, experiences



Pupils in a typical classroom set up practising role play and elementary debate. Piaget's philosophy of education opines that education should ideally be based on the "growth" needs of the learner.

should be planned to allow opportunities for assimilation and accommodation. Children need to explore, to manipulate, to experiment, to question, and to search out answers for themselves - activity is essential. However, this does not mean that children should be allowed to do whatever they want. So what is the role of the teacher? Teachers should be able to assess the child's present cognitive level; their strengths and weaknesses.

Instructions should be individualized as much as possible and children should have opportunities to communicate with one another, to argue and debate issues. He saw teachers as facilitators of knowledge - they are there to guide and stimulate the learners. Allow children to make mistakes and learn from them. Learning is much more meaningful if the child is allowed to experiment on her own rather than listening to the class teacher's lecture.

The teacher should present learners with materials and situations and occasions that allow them to discover new learning. In his book *To Understand is to Invent*,<sup>12</sup> Piaget said the basic principle of active methods can be expressed as follows: "to understand is to discover, or reconstruct by rediscovery and such conditions must be complied with if in the future individuals are to be formed who are capable of production and creativity and not simply repetition". In active learning, the teacher must have confidence in the child's ability to learn on his own.

Laboratories, workshops and technologies that encourage interactivity such as multimedia, hypermedia and virtual reality fit in with Piagetian thought. Computer software that is strictly drill

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<sup>12</sup> Piaget, J., *To Understand is to Invent: The Future of Education*. Grossman Publishers, 1973.

and practice does not fit in with an active discovery environment. So too is a drill and memorization, because it does not engender creativity.

Learners can not only use multimedia to learn, but they can also use it to communicate their understanding of the subject to those around them. Peer teaching is used as the learners work together in the making of their projects. Learners become active participants instead of passive sponges and the teacher truly takes on the role of facilitator as she gives them guidance in their creations.

Hypermedia also allows the learners to manipulate their environment as they follow the path of their choice. Virtual reality has the potential to move education from its reliance on books to empirical learning in naturalistic settings. For example, rather than reading about an event, children can participate in the event with simulated persons and objects. These technologies supply the learners with a learning environment that encourages children to initiate and complete their own activities.

#### **4.13 Paulo Freire**

The Brazilian academic Freire committed to the cause of educating the impoverished peasants of his nation and collaborating with them in the pursuit of their liberation from what he regarded as oppression. Freire is best known for his attack on what he called the “banking concept” of education<sup>13</sup> in which the learner is viewed as an empty account to be filled by the teacher.

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<sup>13</sup> The term banking education was first used by Paulo Freire in his highly influential book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire describes this form of education as “fundamentally narrative (in) character” with the teacher as the Subject (that is, the active participant) and the students as passive objects. In this book originally published in Portuguese in 1968, Paulo Freire, proposes a pedagogy with a new relationship between teacher, student, and society.

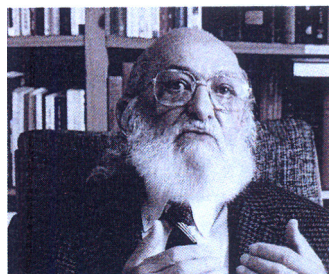
Freire also suggests that a deep reciprocity be inserted into our notions of teacher and learner; he comes close to suggesting that the teacher-learner dichotomy be completely abolished, instead promoting the roles of the participants in the classroom as the teacher-learner (a teacher who learns) and the learner-teacher (a learner who teaches). In its early, strong form this kind of classroom has sometimes been criticized on the grounds that it can mask rather than overcome the teacher's authority.

Aspects of the Freirian philosophy have been highly influential in endless academic debates over participatory development and development more generally. His emphasis on what he describes as

"emancipation" through interactive participation has been used as a rationale for the participatory focus of development, as it is held that 'participation' in any form can lead to empowerment of poor or marginalized groups.

In essence, he was a proponent of critical pedagogy. He participated in the import of European doctrines and ideas into Brazil, assimilated them to the needs of a specific socio-economic situation, and thus expanded and refocused them in a thought-provoking way.

*Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is his multi-layered treatise concerning education as a means to eradicating oppression. While breaking



Paulo Freire (1921-1997) was a Brazilian philosopher and educator, influenced by Marxist thought and a pioneer of "popular education". His work was intended to empower the oppressed through literacy programs to raise social and political awareness.

*Courtesy: New World Encyclopedia (2018)*



down his own theory for combating and eliminating oppression to bring about liberation, Freire also addresses the theory of oppression itself, including its origins and systematic use by oppressors.

Accordingly, the vital component to bringing about liberation from the oppressor is to tap into critical awareness, an awareness that individuals hold in their own thought processes. To do so, education itself should evolve, thus creating an educational dynamic where the teacher-learner rubric is more of a partnership than a hierarchy. In this way, a dialogue that posits both sides on equal footing can be enacted, one that points toward a realized humanity for both the oppressor and the oppressed.

The narrative's preface addresses the concept of developing a consciousness within the oppressed that is critical, and therefore responsive. Freire points out how the oppressed suffer from a fear of freedom, therefore crippling critical consciousness as this fear leaves the oppressed chained to their oppressive situations. To begin exercising critical consciousness, the oppressed have to look outside of themselves, therefore undertaking their situation in relation to the world around them. Freire's stance is that education, and more importantly, the dialogue that education can bring about, is the key to bringing about this radical change. In fact, Freire admits that his view is radical, but that to bring it about, the reader must embrace this radical change.

Freire then goes on to examine critical consciousness in detail, explaining how the act of looking outside oneself and the dialogue of education can result in a synthesis of thought and action. This synthesis is what is needed to bring the oppressed from a place of dehumanization to a reclaimed humanity. By extension, he points out that it is the oppressed that hold the key to their liberation. By engaging in this synthesis, the oppressed engages critical consciousness and realizes self-worth, which results in action on

the part of the oppressed. This action causes the oppressed to view reality clearly, and is what frees both the oppressed and the oppressor from the cycle of oppression.

Continuing with the thread of education, Freire states that the traditional relationship between learner and teacher is an oppressive system known as “banking education”.




In this dysfunctional system, the teacher holds all the power and, as such, takes on the role of the oppressor. The learner, then, takes on the role of the passive individual, someone not able to think critically, merely following.

As an alternative to this empty educational method, Freire suggests a system he calls “problem-posing education” whereby learners are encouraged to not only think, but to be part of a greater dialogue. By examining issues important to community members, and by creating objects of study, such as film, audio interviews, pictures and other media, a dialogue that addresses issues important to the lives of the community can begin. This vital step ensures that free will, a constant theme throughout the narrative, is maintained. By allowing for free will, the oppressed can effectively see outside themselves and engage in a dialogue where both sides learn.





The narrative also posits Freire’s theory on a larger scale, as he shows how his revolutionary theory also applies to politics, including the rise of revolutionary leaders from among the oppressed. In his explanation, Freire describes four oppressive techniques that are used by oppressors, and that are inherently opposed to the dialogue he encourages. The techniques are conquest, division, manipulation, and cultural invasion. These techniques, in the hands of oppressive leaders, are also used to control the populace.

Freire then mentions a set of techniques that can effectively combat the above mentioned anti-dialogic techniques. His techniques are cooperation, unity for liberation, organization, and cultural syntheses. By using these pro-dialogue techniques in opposition to oppressive techniques, revolutionary leaders can fight dialogue, thus changing the definition of education for the betterment of the individual and the world at large.

**It is prudent, in summary, to reflect upon key concepts advanced by Freire in his treatise:**

-  **Praxis (action or reflection).** It is not enough for people to come together in a dialogue in order to gain knowledge of their social reality. They must act together upon their environment in order critically to reflect upon their reality and so transform it through further action and critical reflection.
-  **Generative themes.** According to the scholar, an epoch is characterized by a complex of ideas, concepts, hopes, doubts, values and challenges in dialectical interaction with their opposites striving towards their fulfillment. The concrete representation of these constitutes the themes of the epoch. For example, we may say that in our society some of these themes would include the power of bureaucratic control or the social exclusion of the elderly and disabled. In social analysis these themes may be discovered in a concrete representation in which the opposite theme is also revealed (or more aptly, each theme interacts with its opposite).
-  **Easter experience.** He says that those who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly. This conversion is

so radical as not to allow for ambivalent behaviour. Conversion to the people requires a profound rebirth. Those who undergo it must take on a new form of existence; they can no longer remain as they were.

-  **Dialogue.** To enter into dialogue presupposes equality amongst participants. Each person should trust one another and there should be mutual respect, care and commitment. Through dialogue existing thoughts will change and new knowledge will be created.
-  **Conscientization.** Conscientization refers to the process of developing a critical awareness of one's social reality through reflection and action. Action is fundamental because it is the process of changing the reality. Freire says that we all acquire social myths which have a dominant tendency, and so learning is a critical process which depends upon uncovering real problems and actual needs.
-  **Codification.** This is a way of gathering information in order to build up a picture around real situation and real people. Decodification is a process whereby the people in a group begin to identify with aspects of the situation until they feel themselves to be in the situation and so able to reflect critically upon its various aspects, thus gathering understanding. It is like a photographer bringing a picture into focus.
-  **Banking concept of knowledge.** This refers to the concept of education in which "knowledge" is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing".

## 4.14 Nel Noddings

Noddings' first sole-authored book *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (1984) followed close on the 1982 publication of Carol Gilligan's ground-breaking work in the ethics of care *In a Different Voice*.

While her work on ethics continued, with the publication of *Women and Evil* (1989) and later works on moral education, most of her later publications have been on the philosophy of education and educational theory. Her most significant works in these areas have been *Educating for intelligent Belief or Unbelief* (1993) and *Philosophy of Education* (1995).

She believes that the main aim of education should be to produce competent, caring, loving and lovable people. Although her theory of caring seems implicitly religious, her outlook on education is nothing short of practical. Noddings believes navigate the world around them, while simultaneously caring for children, the elderly, animals and the environment.

She reflects on the two ways themes of care can exist in schools. In one arena, subjects in school are organized around the thematic units of care. For example, she notes, we might consider life stages, spiritual growth, and what it means to develop an admirable character; in exploring the topic of caring for intimate others, we might include units on love, friendship and parenting; under the theme of caring for strangers and global others, we might study war, poverty and tolerance; and in addressing the human-made world, we might encourage competence with the machines that surround us and a real appreciation for the marvels of technology.

In the other arena, she says that subjects in school may remain the standard modern-day disciplines but should incorporate themes of care throughout. Thus such themes as war, poverty,

crime, racism, or sexism can be addressed in almost every subject area.

In both examples, she suggests that the schools should allow free discussion of these topics with powerful stories of honesty, compassion, moderation, and chastity.

More essentially, Noddings, like Socrates, regards knowledge as justified true belief. In schools, she adds, learners make claims to knowledge on what they have learned from reliable sources. Thus in mathematics they are more often asked how they got it rather than why their answers are true, and if they can give an account using legitimate operations, we credit them with knowledge. Therefore, she separates knowledge from belief, as knowledge is something that is not just perceived but backed-up with justification.



Nel Noddings (born 1929) is an American feminist, educationalist, and philosopher best known for her work in philosophy of education, educational theory, and ethics of care. Her philosophy is less concerned with achievement scores than with personal direction in gaining knowledge and skills. The curriculum should be adopted to fit the personal interests of the student. Furthermore, core subjects should have practical applicability in real life.

She also regards knowledge as cultural capital. Knowledge is a source of power that allows people opportunities. Nevertheless, the absence of “privileged knowledge” will leave people with less freedom and choice.

She argues further that certain forms of knowledge - the subjects usually associated with college preparation - have been used to exclude large numbers of people from various material goods. The underprivileged include minority groups and people in: their

knowledge may help them survive in their own right, but it is not considered important by the dominant community.

Accordingly, all learners should have access to this privileged knowledge, and thus, that power of opportunity. In addition, “children should not be told that their cultural knowledge is a deficit; it is a resource, sometimes even a treasure. ” Finally, though, Noddings accepts the fact that the people in power in a culture define what dictates privileged knowledge; concurrently, when that privileged knowledge is accessible to all people, the people in power may change what knowledge they think is important.

Knowledge, for Noddings, includes our experiences and what we take from them. What we know is acquired only through experience. In her influential book *Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy* she defines education as “a constellation of encounters, both planned and unplanned, that promote growth through the acquisition of knowledge, skills, understanding and appreciation”.<sup>14</sup>

She argues that education from the care perspective has four key components: modelling, dialogue, practice and confirmation. Modelling encompasses educators who not only teach learners how to care, but also show learners how to care through their interactions. Educators must engage their learners in dialogue about caring so that it can be explored and understood through discussion. With exploring and engaging in dialogue, learners are able to gain knowledge through practice. “If we want to produce people who will care for one another, then it makes

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<sup>14</sup> Nel Noddings, one of the central figures in the contemporary discussions of ethics and moral education, argues that caring--a way of life learned at home--can be extended into a theory that guides social policy. This Book, *Starting at Home: Caring and social policy* was published by University of California Press in 2002.

sense to give learners practice in caring and, more importantly, reflection on that practice". Lastly, Noddings' feels confirmation is "what sets caring apart from all other moral education. When we confirm someone, we identify a better self and encourage its development. To do this we must know the other reasonably well. Otherwise we cannot see what the other is really striving for, what ideal he or she may long to make real. Formulas and slogans have no place in confirmation.

Nonetheless she does not look at the mental processes that define learning, so her views of learning are more contextual than scientific. She does, however, comment on constructivism as her preferred theory on learning.

#### **4.15 Sarah Maxine Greene**

Sarah Maxine Greene's work encompasses what might be and what is not yet. It is about the power of the possible, which is rooted in the idea of freedom. This is basically freedom to alter situations by reinterpreting them and, by so doing, seeing oneself as a person in a new perspective. Once that happens, there are new beginnings, new actions to undertake in the world.<sup>15</sup>

Human beings are capable of reflection and can view the world critically if they are able to become "wide awake" and view the world from a variety of perspectives; wide-awake to their subjective realities and making intentional choices to act.

It seems eminently clear, she states, that the freedom of wide-awakeness has to be expressed in international action of some kind. The one who drifts, who believes that nothing matters outside of his or her own self-preservation, can hardly be considered to be free.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Kisaka, S.T., and A. A. Osman, Education as a Quest to Freedom: Reflections on Maxine Greene: *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies (JETERAPS)* 4(2):338-344



According to Maxine, imagination is a means to help us construct a coherent world. Of all our cognitive capacities, imagination is the one that permits us to give credence to alternative realities. It allows us to break with the taken for granted, to seaside familiar distinctions and definitions.<sup>17</sup>

In this way she shows how she can be situated as white and woman and uses her imagination to become attuned to alternative realities, she could not experience directly. She is able to model how people can come together in a pluralistic community to open spaces, break with what is taken-for-granted, and create something new.

She argues also that to transcend the effects of mystification, it is necessary to wake up to the world and start seeing it from a variety of vantage points. This can be accomplished if we pay attention to “our nagging sense that things ought not to be this way” or we can be jolted into awareness through works of art that help us see a situation from a new perspective or when we come together with others to authentically ask questions and choose to act. Humans have the unique “capacity to surpass the given and look at things as if they could be otherwise.”<sup>18</sup>



The American philosopher of education and social activist Dr. Sarah Maxine Greene (1917-2014) was an American educational philosopher, author, social activist and teacher. Critics argue that she is the reincarnation of John Dewey the philosopher of great repute whose contributions about in the world of education policy.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Kisaka, S.T., and A. A. Osman, Education as a Quest to Freedom: Reflections on Maxine Greene: Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies (JETERAPS) 4(2):338-344

The new cultists of efficiency, the would-be scientific managers, create their own mystifications by attempting to describe education as a technocratic operation, dependable because linked to what is most controllable and “real”. This is one way of the many indications of the importance of working against what Dewey called a “social pathology” and to do so with as much passion as can be mustered”.

As we attempt to make sense we might well look through some of the perspectives provided by literature and the other arts.

For Greene, the imagination interacting with words of art is another way to access multiple perspectives, and even give us a reason to “wake up”. Interacting with a work of art by “bracketing out” the everyday world and tapping into the “realm of work of art imaginative possibility” can “offer alternative ways of structuring experience, as dreams and other kinds of imaging do. In other words, the interaction with the work of art in this way is an experience, an experience from which learning can take place, and an avenue from which people can expand the scope of their lived realities.”<sup>19</sup>

It is through and by means of education, many of us believe, that individuals can be provoked to reach beyond themselves in their inter-subjective space and that they may become empowered to think about what they are doing, to become mindful, to share meanings, to conceptualize, to make varied sense of their lived worlds.”<sup>20</sup>

Greene observes that teachers have profound influence on learners, which influence can be either empowering or disempowering. The teacher who can help young people attune to their own

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<sup>18</sup> Kisaka, S.T., and A. A. Osman, Education as a Quest to Freedom: Reflections on Maxine Greene: Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies (JETERAPS) 4(2):338-344

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

consciousness is one who can take on the persona of “stranger” - someone who, like one coming home from a long trip, sees their world with new eyes, the eyes of a stranger. This person notices hitherto unseen details, and views the world with wonder and curiosity. This teacher reflects on her/his philosophy of education, which “begins in wonder; philosophy always begins in wonder. The individual must be moved to ask questions about the universe, to engage in dialogue with self about the world as it impinges on him/her and about the explanations others provide.”<sup>21</sup>

#### 4.16 Bell Hooks

Hook’s conviction that education is “the practice of freedom” emphasises the view that anyone can learn. The learning process comes easiest to those who believe that there is an aspect of our vocation that is sacred: who believe that our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our learners.

She emphasises that teachers should be actively involved and committed to the process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers learners. That teachers should be aware of themselves as practitioners and as human beings if they wish to teach learners in non-threatening, or non-discriminatory way.

*Ipsa facto*, self-actualization should be the goal of the teacher as well as learners. Teaching learners to transgress against racial, sexual and class boundaries in order to achieve the gift of freedom should be the ultimate goal of teaching.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

Accordingly, teaching is a performative act that offers space for change, invention and spontaneous shifts that can serve as a catalyst drawing out the unique element in each classroom. She makes the point that what is needed are mass-based political movements calling on citizens to uphold democracy and the rights of everyone to be educated, to work on behalf of ending domination in all of its forms: to work for justice, changing the educational system so that schooling is not the site where learners are indoctrinated to support “imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy” but rather when they learn to open minds, to engage in rigorous study and to think critically.<sup>22</sup>



Gloria Jean Watkins (born 1952), better known by her pen name Bell Hooks is a reputed African-American author, feminist, and social activist. The focus of her writing is the relationship of race, capitalism, and gender, and their ability to produce and perpetuate systems of oppression and class domination.

Freedom is the process that draws on the creative energy of the teachers, learners and the school administration in developing a unique vision for the institution. It is an aspect that protects the rights of free speech in a meaningful sense of term without coercion or hindrance.<sup>23</sup>

Further, Hooks examines the varied perceptions of black women, of black women writers and the development of feminist identities.

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<sup>22</sup> Kisaka, S.T., and A. A. Osman, Education as a Quest to Freedom: Reflections on Maxine Greene: Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies (JETERAPS) 4(2):338-344

She is devoted to critical consciousness and awareness of oneself and society.

In her research, Hooks finds that women of colour often find themselves in a double-bind. By supporting the suffrage movement they should have to ignore the racial aspect of womanhood and if they support the civil rights movement they should be subjected to the same patriarchal order that bedevils all women.

She argues there is need to be a more transformative politics that is not rooted in Western ideology. She believes that intimate sentiments reinstitute the ideology that feminism aims to change. Hooks states that if there is to be liberation for women, men should also play a role in the struggle to expose, confront, oppose and transform sexism.

Remarkably, she believes that the “new” feminism works effectively to set women against one another; reducing feminism to nothing but an engagement over what brand of feminism is more effective.

Hooks regards literacy as more than the ability to read and write. Accordingly, literacy should enable people - particularly the marginalized and the discriminated - to acquire some critical consciousness. Freire’s concept of consciousness has been particularly important to her work. She acknowledges that within the teaching and learning relationship more often than not, the question of power and authority raises its head.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Nel Noddings, one of the central figures in the contemporary discussions of ethics and moral education, argues that caring--a way of life learned at home--can be extended into a theory that guides social policy. This Book, *Starting at Home: Caring and social policy* was published by University of California Press in 2002.

In order to create a learning environment within the classroom, she aims to diffuse hierarchy and create a sense of community. Hooks maintains that the classroom should be a place that is life-sustaining and mind-expanding, a place of liberating mutuality where teachers and learners work in partnership.<sup>25</sup>

In the integrated school white teachers seem uninterested in transforming the minds of their learners if not merely to transfer irrelevant bodies of knowledge. She writes that the knowledge she was supposed to soak up bore no relation to how she lived or behaved.

In the Kenyan context the contributions of Bell Hooks tend to aim at the government's policy framework centred around the Vision 2030 and the UN Millennium Development Goals.<sup>26</sup>

Education as the practice of freedom is realized by promoting individualized teaching and learning while putting into consideration children's individual differences. Freedom in education emanates by the adoption of cultural diversity in curriculum development. Advocacy for child-centred methods of learning helps to promote collaboration and minimizes domination and oppression in the classroom situation.<sup>27</sup>

Liberation and feminism is realized in the Kenyan education system by advocating for gender parity. Both boys and girls at present receive equal opportunities for education. Progressive

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

education is a curriculum theory that places emphasis on the child. The learner centred curriculum is whereby learners are motivated and made interested in the learning task.<sup>28</sup>

In a nutshell, Hooks ideas have led to the introduction of courses and topics such as sex education, drug addiction, race relations and urban. The extension of the curriculum beyond the school walls through such innovations as work-study programmes and external degree programmes to meet educational needs for all people can also be cited.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Bell Hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as a Practice of Freedom*, quoted in Akello, S, & A. A. Osman.

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## CHAPTER 5

# PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION IN AFRICA

**E**ducation has existed for as long as people have lived in Africa. This type of education is known as indigenous African education or traditional African education.

This type of education existed in Africa way before the coming of the missionaries and the colonialists. Colonialism however came along with “modern” or Western education.

Each form of education has its own strengths and weaknesses. When the missionaries came, they only looked at the weaknesses of traditional African indigenous education and concluded that Africans were uneducated.

Education may be defined as a lifelong process in which the older generation imparts skills, values and knowledge into the young ones for their own survival. Education is not the same as schooling but it is a lifelong process conducted by many societal agencies. Education is the action exercised by adult generation on those who are not yet ready for social life.

African children in pre-colonial period learnt what they lived because they acquired informal education which is the life-long process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experiences and other educational influences and resources in each one’s environment for their own survival. This is the type of education in where one learns how to survive in life through experiences and instructions from the elders by adapting to the environment.



Indigenous African education teaches individuals to adapt to the environment by finding out means of surviving on their own void of others. It is clear in Africa and Kenya in particular today that our adopted Western form of education taught in our schools alienates children from their environment. In traditional African society, individuals acquired most of their knowledge, skills, attitudes and values through informal education, that is, in the home, from peers, in market places and at social gatherings.

African children in pre-colonial period learnt from their own life experiences because their type of education looked mainly at the functionality of an individual. We can hence authoritatively conclude that education existed in every society around the world. If education had never existed, then people would never have survived. However, the provision of education may have differed depending on the social needs of the people in a particular society. Thus, it would be imperative to argue based on its nature that African children in pre-colonial period learnt what they lived in every respect.

Before the introduction of education brought by the missionaries in Africa there was a form of education that was aimed at preparing people for a better life in the society. This type of education started from childhood until such a time when an individual attained adulthood. Although indigenous education systems can vary from one place to another, the goals of these systems are often strikingly similar. It may be further argued that the aim of indigenous education concerned with instilling the accepted standards and beliefs governing correct behaviour and creating unity and consensus. This looked mainly at the role of an individual in society.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Kelly, M.J. (1998), *Origin and Development of Schools in Zambia*, Lusaka: Image Publishers Limited.

On the contrary, modern education or the type of education that was brought by the missionaries was aimed at making Africans learn how to read and write so that Africans could easily be converted to Christianity. Thus, the missionaries were motivated to give formal education, that is literacy and numeracy so that Africans could read the Bible (evangelization) and spread the gospel to others. The missionaries rejected much of traditional way of life because their desire was to convert as many Africans as possible to Christianity. Thus, the education provided was biased towards religion. The more the indigenous people learnt how to read the Bible the higher the chances that they would be drawn to the Christian faith. This kind of education did not teach African children to adapt to their environments.

African children in pre-colonial period learnt what they lived as their education was organized and administered in the way that learners could easily adapt to it. In African indigenous education, administration was done by the elders who determined what was best for their generation and those generations to come. The entire tribe or chiefdom would be administered by the kings or chiefs who would either be elected or put in power through hereditary. The chief was mainly assisted by the council which composed of the elder men of the tribe. It was some of these elders who would play a bigger role in the provision of indigenous education by establishing what children were encountering in their daily lives. This is because the education was mainly towards the inculcation of good morals.

The curriculum of indigenous education placed more emphasis on the community and common good rather than on an individual. This was done mainly to train boys and girls for adult life in households, villages and tribes. The type of education provided

was described as 'perennial' because it remained unchanged from generation to generation, in other words it was rather conservative with little innovation. Thus it was the same education that was practiced over and over for years.

The content of indigenous education had its paramount importance on the detailed knowledge of physical environment and the skills to exploit it. For instance, hunting on the part of male and farming part of female. It also emphasized on togetherness or unity as well as understanding the rights and obligation of each individual in a particular society. The concept of togetherness would teach the indigenous people on how to live and work with others within the societies or chiefdoms. The establishment of general communal rights and obligations helped to determine the extent and limitations of individual rights. This was responsible for making sure that boys and girls understand what is required of them in a particular society.

In its content, indigenous education also included laws, moral principles, obligation to ancestral spirits, to relatives and to others in groups or tribe. It is from these lessons that children would learn to respect elders as well as pay allegiance to the spirits if they wanted their days of their lives to be extended.

In contrast, the learning experiences included in education provided by the missionaries was only biased towards religion. The education provided emphasized on agriculture, carpentry, iron smelting and other functional skills. This type of education had no appeal to the way people had hitherto transmitted wisdom, knowledge and experiences from one generation to the next. Missionaries, on the contrary, did not consider the indigenous African education to benefit them in any way, and never considered how helpful it was even to the Africans themselves.

Indigenous education encouraged togetherness or cooperation rather than competition as it is today. In short, competition was castigated in the strongest terms possible; instead unity was encouraged and rewarded in indigenous education. It is an open secret that present day African and Kenyan education enshrines and promotes competition.

African children in pre-colonial period learnt what they lived because they were action oriented and all based on doing. It was planned from childhood to adulthood for children to adapt to their environments. So children would learn through “imitations” Men would work, hunt or play and boys would imitate. Women would also do the house chores in the presence of their daughters and later tell them to do likewise. Sometimes, especially at evening time, children would learn through oral literature as elders told education stories while sited around a fire. This was actually the time when fear and punishment was used as motivators for learning and behaviour. For instance, children would be told to stand still if elders are passing and never to answer harshly if elders are rebuking them. They used to be told that defaulters would grow hair on the neck or the earth would open and swallow them. Thus the children would adhere to the instructions out of fear.

The other methods used were through social gatherings and initiation rituals. Adult men learnt the value of working hard to provide for their families. Adult women were on the other hand trained on how to serve their husbands, take care of children and the extended family. It was during rites of passage ceremonies that men and women were taught how to fully participate in grown up activities such as fishing, hunting, housekeeping, among others.

African children in pre-colonial era learnt from real life experiences. This was because traditional education was relevant, unifying, holistic, effectual and instrumental not only to the learner but also to the extended family, clan and the larger community. It created strong human bonds because it involved the whole community.

African indigenous education was valuable to both the individual as well as the society. An individual benefited in that emphasis was much more concerned with instilling the accepted standards and beliefs governing correct behaviour. In addition, indigenous education did not encourage competitiveness in intellectual and practical matters instead it created unity and consensus among members of a particular society or tribe. Thus indigenous education was not only concerned with socialization of younger generation into norms, religion, moral beliefs and collective opinions of the wider society, it also laid a very strong emphasis on acquisition of knowledge which was useful to the individual and society as whole.

In conclusion, indigenous African education served the needs of the community as a whole and that indigenous education philosophies were premised and concluded on the fact that every individual could both influence and be influenced by all the other members in the community. Therefore, there exists a real need today to synchronize and combine the best practices of both the indigenous and contemporary education system in order to have a more holistic philosophy of education in Africa.

Customary education in Africa was based on sound philosophical foundations. These foundations or principles may be identified as preparationism, functionalism, communalism, perennialism and holism.

The principle of preparationism, which underlined both formal and informal educational practices, implied that the role of learning and teaching was to equip boys and girls with the skills appropriate to their gender in preparation for their distinctive roles in the society. Pre-colonial education, even in the most centralized and stratified societies, was gender-based, with boys and girls receiving the kind of education that enabled them to fulfil masculine and feminine responsibilities respectively.

Male education thus produced farmers, warriors, blacksmiths, rulers and other male-dominated occupations from which women were excluded.

Female education was predominantly designed to produce future wives and mothers. The principle of preparationism further meant that male and female education prepared its recipients to adjust to the community and to play a specialised useful role in it. Children developed a sense of obligation towards the community and grew to appreciate its history, language, customs and values. This is perhaps one of the greatest attributes of indigenous education as opposed to Western education which tended to alienate young Africans from their cultural heritage.

Under functionalism, pre-colonial African societies were predominantly utilitarian. It was a participatory kind of education in which people learned through imitation.

Under communalism, all members of society owned things in common and applied the communal spirit to life and work. Children belonged to the community and every member of the community had a stake in their upbringing. For example, if a child misbehaved any adult member of community could exert discipline.

Fourthly, perennialism. Most traditional communities in Africa perceived education as a vehicle for maintaining or preserving the cultural heritage and *status quo*. This partly accounts for why traditional teachers discouraged learners from experimenting with the unknown.

The fifth philosophical foundation of customary education is holism or multiple learning. A child destined to become a fisherman, as already noted, learned not only to catch fish but also to preserve and market it; to make and mend nets; to manufacture canoes and to erect temporary fishing puts. The holistic nature of customary education enabled young people to acquire a variety of skills which made them productive in many ways. An individual in most non-literate communities could, therefore, embark on a variety of occupations without difficulty.

Although African indigenous education points to educational practice it also includes educational theory, albeit of a general character. African indigenous education was however thought to be an empty concept: that it referred to educational practice that was devoid of meaning and foundational theory. But Robin Horton of Ife University, Nigeria has studied the relationship between African thought and Western science. His studies conclude that traditional ways of thinking were not irrational or emotional expressions of simple minds.<sup>31</sup>

Very few studies have analysed the educational ideas of Africa's past. One of these is Pierre Erny's essay on traditional education, published in French in 1972 and translated into English in 1981. Erny's *The Child and his Environment in Black Africa* argues

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<sup>31</sup> Horton, R.W.G. Patterns of Thought in Africa and the West: Essays on Magic, Religion and Science, *The Journal of Religion* 75, no

the case for a traditional education pedagogy and calls for an elaborate, explicit, coherent and systematic way of thinking about traditional education providing detailed evidence from all over Africa.

Of equal importance is Islamic education in Africa. Although not indigenous - in the strict sense of the word - it is a traditional of long standing, noticeably so in the northern, the eastern and the western extremes of the continent.

Islamic Education is greatly concerned with the transmission of Islamic religious values. Unlike the African tradition, Islamic education is distinctly.

With colonialism came formal education. This Western tradition encouraged the idea of seven Liberal Arts, namely Logic, Rhetoric, Geometry, Arithmetic, Music, Poetry and Astronomy. Liberal education, which valued knowledge for knowledge's sake, was at the time greatly encouraged in academic institutions.

But a discussion of traditional African philosophy of education is incomplete without a revisit of Prof. Odera Oruka's studies. Accordingly, there are four inclinations that can be regarded as the core of African contemporary philosophy. The first of these trends is ethnophilosophy. While the second is branded as philosophic



Prof. Henry Odera Oruka (1944-1995). The Swedish-trained scientist and later world-renowned professor of neo-philosophy championed philosophic sagacity to argue that in the typical pre-colonial sub-Sahara African society there existed people both literate and illiterate who engaged in philosophical escapades in explaining mundane realities. He argues that even if these analytics do not qualify as philosophical in the keener sense they nevertheless provide material for further anthropological enquiries on Man and Nature.



sagacity, the third trend is nationalist-ideological philosophy. Finally, there is what we all know, professional philosophy. What precisely do these philosophies mean?

Ethnophilosophy is a system of thought that deals with collective worldviews of diverse African peoples as a unified form of knowledge. It is based on the myths, folk-wisdom and the proverbs of the people. The term "ethnophilosophy" was coined by Paulin Hountondji to refer to the works of those anthropologists, sociologists, ethnographers and philosophers who present collective philosophies of life of African peoples. Ethnophilosophy is thus a specialized and wholly customs dictated philosophy that requires a communal consensus. It identifies with the totality of customs and common beliefs of a people. It is a folk philosophy. An ethnophilosopher is committed to the task of describing a world outlook or thought of a particular African community or the whole of Africa.

The second current trend of philosophy in Africa today is the sagacity philosophy. This is a reflective system of thought based on the wisdom and the traditions of people. Basically it is a reflection of a person who is acknowledged both as a sage and a thinker. As a sage, the person is well versed in the wisdoms of his people and the people of a particular society will quickly recognize that sages possess that wisdom. But that is not enough, for it is possible to be a sage and not a thinker.

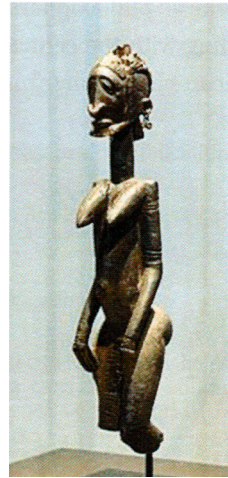
The acknowledged sage should be a thinker who is rationally critical and capable of conceiving excellent options and recommending ideas that offer alternatives to the commonly accepted opinions and practices. Sages therefore transcend the communal wisdom and remain the spokespersons of their culture. Sagacity philosophers are convinced that the study of

African philosophy does not consist in the study of general works but in identifying wise women and men in society whose reputation is very high on the basis of their wisdom. By interviewing them, their recorded wisdom and that of the professional philosopher amount to true African thought.

The aim is to show that literacy is not a necessary condition for philosophical reflection and exposition and that in Africa there are critical independent thinkers who guide their thought and judgments by the power of reason and inborn insight. Their philosophy is based on the evidence of their research. For instance in Marcel Griaule's *Conversations with Ogotemelli: an Introduction to Dogon Religious Idea*, Ogotemelli is a sage who is interviewed by Marcel and the result is the philosophy of religion of the Dogon people.

This philosophical trend is a creation of the late Prof. Odera H. Oruka of the University of Nairobi and it is a school subscribed to by many contemporary philosophers mostly in eastern Africa.

The third form of philosophy in Africa is the nationalist-ideological philosophy. It is a system of thought based on traditional African socialism and family hood. It is represented by the works of politicians like Kwame Nkrumah,



A Dogon wood sculpture, probably an ancestor figure, of the seventeenth century. This Malian community is best known for its religious traditions, its mask dances, wooden sculpture and its remarkable architecture. The blind Dogon elder, Ogotemelli, taught the main symbols of the Dogon religion to the French anthropologist Marcel Griaule in October 1946.

Julius Nyerere and Leopold Senghor. This philosophy seeks a true and meaningful epistemy for African people, one that can be attained by mental liberation and a return to genuine traditional African humanism. So it is basically a socio-political philosophy.

The final trend of philosophy in Africa today is the professional philosophy. In the African context, professional philosophy consists in the analysis and interpretation of reality in general. Philosophy is a universal discipline that has the same meaning in all cultures in spite of the fact that a particular philosopher maybe conditioned by cultural biases, method and the existential situation in a given society. According to this school, African philosophy is the philosophy by African philosophers, be it on the subject matter that is African or alien.

To these philosophers, African philosophy is predominantly a metaphilosophy, dealing with the central theme of "What is philosophy?" and the corollary "What is African philosophy?".

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Written by two experienced researchers in the field, the book raises subtle questions: What are the epistemological confines of education? How well buttressed is the ideology behind contemporary education? How veritable are the antecedent theories of education as surmised in past philosophies of education? And, what is the future of education in the light of an increasing interest in philosophical quantifications therein?

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