Table of Contents

Course Guide ix-xiv

Topic 1 Sociology of Education 1
  1.1 Sociology as a Discipline 3
  1.2 Primary Social Institutions 5
    1.2.1 Family 6
    1.2.2 Education 8
    1.2.3 Religion 9
    1.2.4 Economic and Political Institutions 10
  1.3 Sociology of education 11
    1.3.1 Definitions 12
    1.3.2 Main Areas of Concern 12
  1.4 Theoretical Approaches to Sociology of Education 13
    1.4.1 Functionalism 13
    1.4.2 Conflict Theory 14
    1.4.3 The Interpretivistic and Interaction Approach 15
    1.4.4 Recent Theories 15
  Summary 17
  Key Terms 18
  References 19

Topic 2 Functions of Education 20
  2.1 Functions of Socialisation 22
  2.2 Functions of Cultural Transmission 24
  2.3 Function of Social Control and Personal Development 25
  2.4 Function of Selection and Allocation 27
  2.5 Function of Change and Innovation 29
  Summary 30
  Key Terms 32
  References 32

Topic 3 The School in Society 34
  3.1 Education and the Process of Stratification 35
  3.2 Stratification and Equality of Educational Opportunity 38
  3.3 Issues of Race, Class and Gender in Achieving Quality of Opportunity 42
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic 4</th>
<th>The School as a Social System</th>
<th>54</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Social System of the School</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Goals of the School System</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>The Purpose of the School</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>The School as an Organisation</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Centralised Versus Decentralised Decision-Making</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Terms</td>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic 5</th>
<th>The School as a Social System</th>
<th>54</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Students and Their Environments</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>School Effectiveness</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Educational Movements and Reform</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Change and Planning in Educational Systems</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Terms</td>
<td></td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic 6</th>
<th>The School as a Social System</th>
<th>54</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>What is philosophy?</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Branches of Philosophy</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1</td>
<td>Metaphysics</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.2</td>
<td>Epistemology</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.3</td>
<td>Logic</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.4</td>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>The Meaning of Education and Philosophy of Education</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Terms</td>
<td></td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td></td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic 7</th>
<th>Idealism, Realism, and Pragmatism in Education</th>
<th>100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Idealism</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1.1</td>
<td>Platonic Idealism</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1.2</td>
<td>Religious Idealism: Augustine</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1.3</td>
<td>Modern Idealism: Rene Descartes, Immanuel Kant, and Friedrich Hegel</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 7.2 Realism
- 7.2.1 Aristotle Realism 113
- 7.2.2 Religious Realism: Thomas Aquinas 115
- 7.2.3 Modern Realism: Francis Bacon and John Locke 118
- 7.2.4 Contemporary Realism: Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell 122

### 7.3 Pragmatism
- 7.3.1 Centrality of Experience: Francis Bacon and John Locke 125
- 7.3.2 Science and Society: Auguste Comte, Charles Darwin, and John Dewey 126

### 7.4 Idealism, Realism, and Pragmatism and its Critique in Philosophy of Education
- 7.4.1 Idealism in Philosophy of Education 129
- 7.4.2 Realism in Philosophy of Education 131
- 7.4.3 Pragmatism in Philosophy of Education 133

### Summary 136

### Key Terms 140

### References 141

### Topic 8 Idealism, Realism, and Pragmatism in Education 143

#### 8.1 Reconstructionism 144
- 8.1.1 Theodore Brameld 145
- 8.1.2 George S. Counts 147

#### 8.2 Behaviourism 150
- 8.2.1 Ivan Pavlov 151
- 8.2.2 John B. Watson 152
- 8.2.3 Behaviourism and Positivism 155
- 8.2.4 B. F. Skinner 157

#### 8.3 Existentialism 160
- 8.3.1 Soren Kierkegaard 161
- 8.3.2 Jean-Paul Sartre 162

#### 8.4 Reconstructionism, Behaviourism, and Existentialism in Philosophy of Education 166
- 8.4.1 Reconstructionism in Philosophy of Education 166
- 8.4.2 Behaviourism in Philosophy of Education 168
- 8.4.3 Existentialism in Philosophy of Education 170

### Summary 171

### Key Terms 174

### References 175
### Topic 9  Islamic Philosophy of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1 Islamic Philosophy</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2 Basic Principles of Islamic Education</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3 Aims of Islamic Education</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4 Islamisation of Contemporary Knowledge</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Terms</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Topic 10  Islamic Philosophy of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.1 Indian Thought on Education</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1.1 Vedas</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1.2 Upanishads</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1.3 Epics</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1.4 Modern Hinduism</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2 Chinese Thought on Education</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2.1 Buddhism</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2.2 Confucianism</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3 Eastern Thought and Philosophy of Education</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4 Critique of Eastern Philosophy of Education</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5 National Philosophy of Education</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Terms</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COURSE GUIDE

DESCRIPTION

You must read this Course Guide carefully from the beginning to the end. It tells you briefly what the course is about and how you can work your way through the course material. It also suggests the amount of time you are likely to spend in order to complete the course successfully. Please keep on referring to Course Guide as you go through the course material as it will help you to clarify important study components or points that you might miss or overlook.

INTRODUCTION

HBEF1103(M) Educational Sociology and Philosophy is one of the courses offered by Faculty of Education and Languages at Open University Malaysia (OUM). This course is worth 3 credit hours and should be covered over 8 to 15 weeks.

COURSE AUDIENCE

This course is offered to all students taking the Bachelor in Teaching (Primary Education) with Honours programme. This module aims to impart knowledge of sociology and philosophy in education; identifying the major concepts and elicit the main features of their applications, and evaluating critical issues related to those fields of study. This module should be able to help students to build on a strong foundation in the area of sociology and philosophy of education.

As an open and distance learner, you should be acquainted with learning independently and being able to optimise the learning modes and environment available to you. Before you begin this course, please confirm the course material, the course requirements and how the course is conducted.

STUDY SCHEDULE

It is a standard OUM practice that learners accumulate 40 study hours for every credit hour. As such, for a three-credit hour course, you are expected to spend 120 study hours. Table 1 gives an estimation of how the 120 study hours could be accumulated.
Table 1: Estimation of Time Accumulation of Study Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDY ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>STUDY HOURS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Briefly go through the course content and participate in initial discussions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study the module</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend 3 to 5 tutorial sessions</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Participation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revision</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment(s), Test(s) and Examination(s)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL STUDY HOURS ACCUMULATED</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Analyse and evaluate the four theoretical approaches in the sociological analysis of education;

2. Discuss the functions of education, issues of stratification and equality in educational access, the school as a social system, and educational effectiveness and reforms;

3. Identify and explain the main philosophical ideas of the West, Islam, and the East and its relevant to the field of education;

4. Critique and comment the influence exercised by the various philosophical ideas associated with educational practice, specifically in terms of the aims of education, methods of education, curriculum, and the role of the teacher.
COURSE SYNOPSIS

This course is divided into 10 topics. The first five topics discuss the perspectives of sociology of education and the rest of the topics focus on the philosophy of education. The synopsis for each topic can be listed as follows:

Topic 1 begins with a discussion on the basic of sociology as a discipline; identify the social institutions, and defining the concept and theories of sociology of education.

Topic 2 introduces the functions of education, the function of socialisation as what we learn and how we learn it, the function of cultural transmission and the process of passing on culture, the function of social control and personal development, the function of selection and allocation as the sorting process, and the function of change and innovation as the process of looking to the future.

Topic 3 discusses education and the process of stratification, stratification, equality of educational opportunity, issues of race, class, and gender in achieving equality of educational opportunity, and ability grouping and teacher expectations.

Topic 4 explains the concept of the social system of the school, the goals of the school system, the purposes of the school from many views of people involved in the field of education, the structural elements that makes up the school as an organization, and the issue of centralised and decentralised decision making.

Topic 5 examines the meaning of environments and examples of institutional environments that affect students, aspects of school effectiveness, the economics of education in relation to school financing, major educational movements and reform that have influenced school systems and education, and the process of change in educational systems and some methods that have been proposed to bring about change.

Topic 6 give details in explaining what is philosophy, the main branches of philosophy, and a basic knowledge of philosophy in education.

Topic 7 clarifies upon major world views of philosophies: idealism, realism, and pragmatism and the contributions of the world views of philosophies to the field of education.

Topic 8 gives explanations upon other major world views of philosophies: reconstructism, behaviourism, and existentialism and the contributions of the world views of philosophies to the field of education.
**Topic 9** enlightens students with meanings of Islamic philosophy, the basic principles of Islamic education, the aims of Islamic education, and the concept of Islamization of contemporary knowledge.

**Topic 10** describes the basic knowledge of Indian philosophy on education, the basic knowledge of Chinese philosophy on education, relevant thought and philosophy of the Eastern traditions and its critiques, and understanding the Malaysian National Philosophy of Education.

**TEXT ARRANGEMENT GUIDE**

Before you go through this module, it is important that you note the text arrangement. Understanding the text arrangement should help you to organise your study of this course to be more objective and more effective. Generally, the text arrangement for each topic is as follows:

**Learning Outcomes:** This section refers to what you should achieve after you had completely gone through a topic. As you go through each topic, you should frequently refer your reading back to these given learning outcomes. By doing this, you can continuously gauge your progress of digesting the topic.

**Self-Check:** This component of the module is inserted at strategic locations throughout the module. It is inserted after you had gone through one sub-section or sometimes a few sub-sections. It usually comes in a form of a question that may require you to stop your reading and start thinking. When you come across this component, try to reflect what you had already gone through. When you attempt to answer the question prompted, you should be able to gauge whether you had understand what you had read clearly, vaguely or worse you might find out that you had not comprehended or retained the sub-section(s) that you had just gone through. Most of the time, the answer to the question can be found directly from the module itself.

**Activity:** Like Self-Check, activities are also placed at various locations or junctures throughout the module. Compared to Self-Check, Activity can appear in various forms such as questions, short case studies or it may even ask you to conduct an observation or research. Activity may also ask your opinion and evaluation on a given scenario. When you come across an Activity, you should try to widen what you had gathered from the module and introduce it to real situations. You should engage yourself in higher order thinking where you might be required to analyse, synthesise and evaluate instead of just having to recall and define.
Summary: You can find this component at the end of each topic. This component assists you to recap the whole topic. By going through summary, you should be able to gauge your knowledge retention level. Should you find points inside the summary that you do not fully understand; it would be a good idea for you to revisit the details from the module.

Key Terms: This component can be found at the end of each topic. You should go through this component so as to remind yourself on important terms or jargons used throughout the module. Should you find terms here that you are not able to explain, you should look for the terms from the module.

References: References is where a list of relevant and usually useful textbooks, journals, articles, electronic contents or sources can be found. This list can appear in a few locations such as in the Course Guide (at References section), at the end of every topic or at the back of the module. You are encouraged to read and refer to the suggested sources to elicit the additional information needed as well as to enhance you overall understanding of the course.

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

No prior knowledge required.

ASSESSMENT METHOD

Please refer to myLMS

REFERENCES


INTRODUCTION

Before we begin, you are probably wondering why on earth you, as a future teacher need to undertake this course, Educational Sociology and Philosophy, in your degree program. As beginners, let’s start by understanding what is sociology. Sociology is one of several disciplines referred to as a social science. As the term itself implies, social sciences address the social world. In addition to sociology, the other fields of social sciences include anthropology, economics, political science, and psychology. Moreover, as a scientific discipline, sociology seeks to explain why something happens, attempts to make generalizations that can be applied to a broader group or situation, and then predict what will happen based on the knowledge so far gathered.

In short, sociology specifically seeks to:

- Explain the causes of human behaviours;
- Recognize the patterns of human behaviours; and
- Predict the future behaviours of people.
Sociologists usually do not make decisions on how society should be changed or people should be treated, but they will provide valuable data obtained through their researches that can be used by authorities who would make such decisions.

Sociology grew out of the social, political, economic, and technological revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For example, the Industrial Revolution that took place from 1760 up to 1850, had tremendously changed old traditions and necessitated new ways of perceiving and examining the social world, thus in the mid-1800s sociology emerged in Western Europe as a distinct discipline.

Because human social life is so expansive, sociology has many sub-sections of study, ranging from the analysis of conversations up to the development of theories in trying to understand how the entire world works. This topic will introduce you to sociology and explain why it is important and how it can change your perspective of the world around you, as a human being and a teacher.

Figure 1.1: A cartoon that tells us a little about the characteristic of sociology — a study on human beings

Source: www.cartoonstock.com
According to Gidden et al. (2007), sociology is a branch of the social sciences that uses systematic methods of empirical investigation and critical analysis to develop and refine a body of knowledge about human social structure and activities. In other words, sociology is a broad discipline in terms of both methodology and subject matter.

The term “sociology” was first used in 1780 by a French essayist named Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès (1748 – 1836) in an unpublished manuscript. Later, the word was used by a French thinker named Auguste Comte. He stated that a society’s acquisition of knowledge passed through three basic stages:

- Theological (the study of God);
- Metaphysical (aspects of the ultimate nature of reality); and
- Scientific — to this he also gave the term, ‘positive.’

Moreover, Comte argued that if a society could grasp the structure of this stages, it could prescribe suitable remedies for social ills. Auguste Comte had been identified as the “Father of Sociology”. Later, sociology evolved as a purely scientific discipline, responding to the academic challenges of modernity and urbanization that took place in the 19th century.

Sociology shares deep ties with other disciplines that also discuss the study of society such as anthropology, economics, political sciences, and psychology. These areas, to some extent, have influenced and have been influenced by sociology since it shares some great amount of theory and common research interest. For example, we have an area of study called socio-biology that blends sociology with anthropology, biology, zoology, and others. Socio-biology is a study of how social...
behaviour and organisation have been influenced by evolution and other biological processes.

Sociology as a discipline first emerged in the University of Kansas, Lawrence, United States of America in 1890. The title of the subject was called *Elements of Sociology* and was taught by Frank Blackmar. In 1891, the university established its Department of History and Sociology.

Furthermore to understand sociology as a discipline, let’s analyse the various definitions of the term “sociology”. Understand these various definitions will help us to enjoy the subject matter more effectively. The table below outlines the various definitions of “sociology”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meighan, R. &amp; Siraj-Blatchford, I.</td>
<td>Sociology is a systematic study of social life (institutions, cultures, and behaviour patterns) created by people and in turn influencing their behaviour in a continuous interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schaefer, R.</td>
<td>Sociology is not a question of truth, but of social aspects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferrante, J.</td>
<td>Sociology is the study of human behaviours as they are affected by social interactions within groups, organizations, societies, and the planet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Heritage Dictionary of English Language</td>
<td>The study of human social behaviours, especially the study of the origins, organization, institutions, and development of human society. Analysis of a social institution or societal segment as a self-contained entity or in relation to society as a whole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collins Essential English Dictionary</td>
<td>The study of the development, organization, functioning, and classification of human societies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Ferrante (2005), sociologists are compelled to study social interactions, whether they occur on a local, national, or global scale. Social interactions are everyday events in which the people involved take one another into account by consciously and unconsciously attaching meaning to the situation, interpreting what others are saying, and then responding accordingly. In addition, Durkheim (1895) believed that the sociologists’ task is to study social facts which are ideas, feelings, and ways of behaving “that possess the remarkable property of existing outside the consciousness of the individual”.


A social institution is a set of organised beliefs and rules that establish how a society will attempt to meet its basic social needs. In the past, the primary social institutions are based around five areas:

(a) Family – what ideologies and standardised pattern of behaviours that organises family life.
(b) Religion – as a social construction where its patterns act back to define our world.
(c) Education – knowledge acquired by learning and instruction.
(d) Economy – the branch of social science that deals with the production and distribution and consumption of goods and services and their management.
(e) Government or politics – the activities or affairs engaged in by a government, politician, or political party.

However, there are a few new social institutions that have been identified in line with the growth of industrialised societies, such as the mass media, science and medicine, sports, and military.

A social institution is different than a group in terms of its meaning since a group is only composed of specific identifiable people. Moreover, an institution is a standardized way of doing something and is a relatively stable and predictable arrangement among people that has emerged over time to coordinate human interaction and behaviours in ways that meet some human need, such as need for food, shelter, clothing, or medical attention (Ferrante, 2008).
Some sociologists believe that social institutions basically perform five basic functions:

(a) Replacing members – societies and groups must have socially approved ways of replacing members who may leave or die;

(b) Teaching/socialize new members – people who are born into a society or move into it must learn the group’s values and customs;

(c) Producing, distributing, and consuming goods and services – all societies must provide and distribute goods and services for their members;

(d) Preserving order – every group or society must preserve order within its boundaries and protect itself from attack by outsiders; and

(e) Providing and maintaining a sense of purpose – some societies encourage the development of a sense of purpose through religious values, moral codes, or patriotism.

### ACTIVITY 1.3

(a) Why do we have so many forms of social institutions?

(b) How do these forms of social institutions develop and when do the forms of these social institutions change?

### 1.2.1 Family

Murdock (1949) states that a family is a universal social institution found in all societies. Murdock’s claim is based on his study of 250 societies of all kinds, from small hunting communities up to industrial societies. He defines family as a social group that lives together, shares resources, works as a unit and rears children.

Moreover, in a family there are at least two adult members that conduct a sexual relationship that is tolerated by the religion and norms of the society they live in. The family is also known as a *domestic society*, a name derived from the Latin word “*domus*” or house, owing to the fact that it is the original and primary manifestation of human sociability. In another sense, we can say that the family is the starting point for the development of all forms of social organisations. Table 1.2 outlines other definitions of “family”.

Table 1.2: Definitions of Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States Census Bureau</td>
<td>A family includes a householder and one or more people living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage or adoption. All people in a household who are related to the householder are regarded as members of his or her family. A family household may contain people not related to the householder, but those people are not included as part of the householder’s family incensus tabulations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Supreme Court</td>
<td>A traditional “nuclear family” of two parents and their children, and where the parents are presumed to be acting in the best interests of their children; An extended-kind model of family made up of community of parents, siblings, grandparents, and other relatives which should be recognized as a primary family, even if the blood-ties are not as strong as nuclear family; and An individualist model where family members are fairly autonomous and that individuality should be respected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford English Dictionary</td>
<td>A family as the servants of a house, or the households; Everyone who lives in a house or under one roof; and A “group of persons consisting of the parents and their children, whether actually living together or not”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aristotle</td>
<td>Family as the community designed to attend to the basic and permanent needs to the household, such as food, clothing, and shelter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As family is the cornerstone of society, the smallest family unit is known as the nuclear family that consists of a husband, a wife and their children. If there are other individuals that are included in the family, then the family is called an extended family. According to Murdock (1949), extension to the nuclear family can take the form of:

(a) Vertical extensions – including other generations, such as parents of the spouses; and

(b) Horizontal extensions – including the members of the same generations as the spouses, such as the wife’s brother.

Furthermore, Talcott Parsons (1951) assumes that the family is a small group that serves basic functions for the larger society, including reproduction, regulation of
sexual behaviours, socialization into adult roles, and emotional support. Men in a nuclear family specializes in instrumental, goal-oriented activities, where as the women specializes in expressive, relationship activities where both of these individuals adapt well to the demands of an urban and industrialized society.

1.2.2 Education

According to a philosopher of education George F. Kneller (1941), education is:

“In its broad sense, education refers to any act or experience that has formative effect on the mind, character, or physical ability of an individual ... In its technical sense, education is the process by which society, through schools, colleges, universities, and other institutions, deliberately transmits its cultural heritage – its accumulated knowledge, values, and skills – from one generation to another.”

Moreover, Emile Durkheim, a prominent figure in the area of sociology of education in his book titled “Education and Sociology” wrote in 1956 defined education as:

“Education is the influence exercised by adult generations on those that are not yet ready for social life. Its object is to arouse and to develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual, and moral states which are demanded of him by both the political society as a whole and the special milieu for which he is specifically destined” (p. 28).

Using the term education as defined in the technical sense, makes us limit our thought to the context of teachers instructing students. Teachers will need to understand a particular subject or subjects to convey its knowledge to students, which with the passing of knowledge allow students to grow into useful members of society. Based on the Article 13 of the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights of 1966, the right of education is considered as a basic human right.

However, education is a broad concept, referring to all experiences in which students can learn something:

(a) Instruction – refers to the intentional facilitating of learning toward identified goals, delivered either by an instructor or other forms;
(b) Teaching – refers to the actions of a real live instructor designed to impart learning to the student; and
(c) Training – refers to learning with a view toward preparing learners with specific knowledge, skills, or abilities that can be applied immediately upon completion.

Globally, education can be divided into three mainstreams:

(a) **Primary or elementary education**
   This is the first few years of formal learning. Generally six or seven years of schooling starting at the age of five or six years old. This varies according to countries.

(b) **Secondary education**
   Consists of the second years of formal education that occurs during adolescence or the teenage years of an individual. The purpose of secondary education can be to give common knowledge, to prepare for higher education, or to train directly students in a profession.

(c) **Higher / tertiary education**
   As the third stage of education that follows after the completion of secondary education. It normally includes undergraduate and postgraduate education, as well as vocational education and training and results in the receipt of certificates, diplomas, or academic degrees.

For many, education is understood to be a means of overcoming handicaps, achieving greater equality and acquiring wealth and status for all by developing every individual to their fullest potential (Sargent, 1994). Students can be motivated by giving them aspirations for progress and a better life. Therefore, education is perceived as a place where children can develop according to their unique needs and potentialities (Schofield, 1999).

### 1.2.3 Religion

Religion is an institution that provides answers to questions of “ultimate concern” such as “what will happen to me when I die”, “why is there so much suffering in the world”, and “what does it all mean” (Schaefer, 1995). As stated by Durkheim (1895), religion is a unified set of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things. Therefore, there are two elements that is common to all religions in this world:

(a) Set of beliefs common to all members – the sacred, the supernatural and extraordinary versus profane, the common and every day; and
(b) Set of practices believers perform – rituals that allow members to transcend the mundane and capture a collective experience.

1.2.4 Economic and Political Institutions

An economic institution is defined as the organizing, production, and distribution of goods and services. This institution is responsible for providing cultures and societies with basic human needs such as food, clothes, shelter and others. Moreover, economy can also be viewed in a global perspective where the economy of a country or a nation is interfaced and dependent on other country. If a country is suffering with a economic downturn, other countries will also be affected.

Political institutions demonstrate the types of political system a country adhere to and believe in. Elected officials by the people and the government of the country in a political institution make decisions to lead and manage a country. In addition, political institutions is also a place for learning where it teaches people how politics work in that particular country now as well as how it had worked in the past.

A political system is a system of politics and government (Adler, 1995). It is a system that has law, economic, cultural and other social systems that demonstrates the views of people who have the authority, religion that they believe and practice, and the influence of the government on its people and economy.

Below are more definitions of a “political system” and the basic forms of political systems (Almond, 2000):

(a) A political system is a complete set of institutions, interest groups (political parties, trade unions, lobby groups), the relationships between those institutions and the political norms and rules that govern their functions (constitution and election laws);

(b) A political system is composed of the members of a social organization who are in power;

(c) A political system is a system that necessarily has two properties: a set of interdependent components and boundaries toward the environment with which it interacts;
(d) A political system is a concept in which it is theoretically regarded as a way the government makes a policy and also to make them more organized in their administration; and

(e) A political system is one that ensures the maintaining of order and sanity in the society and at the same time makes it possible for other institutions to also have their grievances and complaints put across in the course of social existence.

Some forms of political systems are mutually exclusive, while others may overlap in various combinations, such as anarchism, democracy, monarchy, republic, socialism, sultanates, Islamic democracy, theocracy, Westminster system, and feudalism.

### 1.3 SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

Education has always been seen as a fundamentally optimistic human endeavour characterised by aspirations for progress and betterment. In fact, education is understood by many people to be a means of overcoming handicaps, achieving greater equality and acquiring wealth and status. In addition, education is perceived as a place where children can develop and grow according to their unique needs and potentials. Hence, if we look into the area of sociology that relates with education, called “sociology of education”, we will study on how public institutions and individual experiences affect education and its outcomes.

A systematic sociology of education began with Emile Durkheim’s work on moral education as a basis for organic solidarity. The sociology of education contains a number of theories, such as (Ritzer & Goodman, 2004):

(a) Structural functionalism – basically sees society as a human body, where institutions such as education are like important organs that keep the society healthy and well;

(b) Conflict theory – sees society as a full rival between social groups with different aspirations, different access to life chances, and gain different social rewards; and

(c) Structure and agency – concepts are based on the idea that objective structures determine individuals’ chances, through the mechanism of the habits, where individuals internalise these structures.

The idea of education is not merely to impart knowledge to students in some subjects but to develop in them those habits and attitudes with which they can successfully face the future. Worsley (1998) mentioned that a large part of our social and technical skills are acquired through deliberate instruction which we
call education. The main function of an educative process is to pass down knowledge from generation to generation — a process that is essential to the development of culture.

**1.3.1 Definitions**

In the recent years education has become the major interest to some sociologists. As a result a new branch of sociology called “sociology of education” has become established. Durkheim (1895) conceived education as the socialization of the younger generation, which is a continuous effort to impose on the child ways of seeing, feeling and acting which he could not have arrived at spontaneously. Thus, formal education is primarily designed to inculcate crucial skills and values central to the survival of the society or to those who hold effective power.

The sociology of education is the study of how public institutions and individuals experiences affect education and its outcomes (Corwin, 1965). According to Marshall (1998), in sociology of education we are very much concerned with public schooling systems of modern industrial societies including the expansion of higher, further, adult, and continuing education. As such, sociology of education is a philosophical as well as a sociological concept, that denotes ideologies, curricula, and pedagogical techniques of the inculcation and management of knowledge as well as the social reproduction of personalities and cultures.

**1.3.2 Main Areas of Concern**

According to Ballantine (2001), below are questions that are of concern by many sociologists of education:

(a) Are children of parents who are involved in their schooling more successful in school?

(b) How effective are different teaching techniques, styles of learning, and classroom organizations in teaching students of various types and abilities?
(c) What are some community influences of the school, and how these affect decision making in schools, especially as its relates to socialization of the young?

(d) How does professionalization of teachers affect the school system? Do teacher proficiency exams increase teaching quality?

(e) How do issues such as equal opportunity and integration affect schools? Can minority students learn better in an integrated school?

(f) How does education affect income potential?

As future teachers, studying and understanding the subject of “sociology of education” is very crucial. With the knowledge gained and looking in depth to education as one of major institutions of society, a teacher studying sociology will understand a school system better, makes rational decisions regarding their students’ education, gives a unique look at educational institutions and its independence and dynamic interactions among other institutions in society. Therefore, these teachers are able to deal better with the complex organizational and interpersonal issues that are faced by teachers and school administrators.

1.4 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

A theoretical approach in the study of sociology helps to determine the questions to be asked by researchers and its way to organize research in order to get answers. Basically, there are three approaches to the study of sociology in education:

(a) Functionalist theory;

(b) Conflict theory; and

(c) Interaction and interpretive theories.

1.4.1 Functionalism

As one of the major approaches in sociology, functionalism or structural functionalism is based on some kind of equilibrium theory. This theory assumes that society and institutions within a society, such as education, are made up of interdependent parts all working together, each contributing some necessary activity to the functioning of the whole society (Ballantine, 2001). This approach is similar to the biological functioning of a human body where each part of the human body plays a role in the total system of a human body and all are dependent on each other for survival. For example, a heart or a brain is a part of
a human body that helps the survival of a human being, so too an educational system that is necessary for the survival of society.

Emily Durkheim (1895 – 1917) sets the tone for this conservative functional approach to education. He was the first person to recommend that a sociological approach should be used to the study of education. Therefore, his ideas centred so much on the relationship between society and its institutions which he strongly believes are all independent. He was very much concerned with the parts of the community, and with solidarity and cohesion as it moves from the traditional to the modern societies (Ballantine, 2001). Some issues of concern pointed out by Durkheim are the needs of different segments of society in relation to education, discipline in school, and the role of schools in preparing young people for society. In addition, Durkheim saw the importance of education in creating moral values as the foundation of the society that helps to instil values in children.

### Activity 1.5

A structural functional view tends to dominate educational thinking, so investigation of the student’s view are often seen as radical even when they are not. Discuss and comment.

#### 1.4.2 Conflict Theory

Conflict theory claims that society is held together by the ability of dominant groups to keep others subordinate, thus inequality is legitimized (Sadonik, 2001). This theory also sees the preserving of power of those who dominate the society where the educational system is responsible for the status quo — the downcast lower classes into being obedient workers.

Furthermore, conflict theorists argue that schools sort along distinct class and ethnic appearance where schools train those in the working classes to accept their position as a lower-class member of the society. Besides that, education is assumed not to be as a social benefit or opportunity, but as a powerful means of maintaining power structures and creating a docile work force for capitalism.

To some extent, conflict theorists agree with the functionalist that social institutions were organized to meet basic social needs, however, they do not agree that social institutions work for the common good of everyone in the society. For example, the homeless people have less power and resources to
promote their own interests when they are opposed by the dominant social groups. Besides, the social institutions in conflict theory such as the government maintain the privileges of the wealthy and powerful while contributing to the powerlessness of others.

1.4.3 The Interpretivistic and Interaction Approach

Interpretivism argues that understanding human behaviour involves seeing the world “through the eyes” of those being studied. People give meanings to their behaviour, so in order to understand this behaviour we must discover how they interpret their actions. In other words, sociologists who support this view are interested in how people experience the world and find explanations for why people behave a certain way. For example, in the study of suicide, an interpretivist is not interested in suicide statistics because suicide is just a label that is meaningless, but they are interested in how suicides came to be labelled in the first place and why do coroners label some deaths as suicides and not others.

The interactionist theorists in sociology of education limit their analysis of education to what they directly observe happening in the classroom. They focus much on how teachers’ expectations influence student performance, perceptions, and attitudes. Furthermore, other than the researches to study the effects of teacher expectations of student performance and achievement emerge from this theory of educational sociology. The interactionist theorists are also interested in the studies of the results of ability grouping of students as well as the studies of schools as social institutions. These interaction theories are very useful to us in understanding the dynamics of the classroom.

1.4.4 Recent Theories

Three recent theories in sociology of education is reviewed here, as we need to understand better the educational system:

- **Code Theory** by Bernstein (1975): He attempts to connect macro understanding of class relations to micro understanding of the educational process in schools. According to a study, working class students tend to use a form of communication referred to as “restricted codes” (dominated by use of pronouns and not very clear), while middle and upper class students use “elaborated codes” (more nouns and easier to understand). These code differences are not a reflection of deficiency, but rather a reflection of the division of labour. Working class students are at a disadvantage because schools have a preference for the elaborated codes. He also highlights that schools that serve upper and middle class students have different teaching
and curricula than those that serve working class students, which perpetuates inequalities.

- **Cultural Capital and Symbolic Violence** by Bourdieu (1973): His emerging theory is synthesized ideas of Durkheim and Marx. He discussed the “symbolic violence” that is power which imposes its meanings by appearing neutral or masking where it is coming from (i.e. schools appear to serve everyone, but actually really advantage those of higher socioeconomic status). He mentioned that those students with higher socioeconomic status possess more “cultural capital” (symbolic representation of cultural domination – language, arts, ideas that have high exchange value), a commodity that can be traded in for higher status in school and later in workforce. Thus, cultural capital reinforces social class, and schools unevenly distribute cultural capital across socioeconomic groups where education leads to the domination of those in the upper classes.

- **Postmodernism - Critical Education Theory**: This new theory focuses on localized rather than broad theory; the connection between theory and practice stresses the response to authoritarianism and totalitarianism. It sees modernist thought as patriarchal and feels it does not address the needs of women and people of different colour. All socio-political discourse is related to power. This recent theory calls teachers and students to really explore conflicts to reach greater understanding. Besides, this critical education theory sees the classroom as a site for political action, and the teachers are agents of change.

- Giroux (1991) stresses the principles of critical pedagogy in which should transform teacher, schools, and society. He also argues that schooling must be linked to provide a democratic education, ethics should be part of the education process, room must be made for competing views and challenges to the cannon, and critical pedagogy should create new knowledge and include previously silenced voices where education should enrich students with new forms of knowledge that reflect our pluralistic society.

---

**ACTIVITY 1.6**

(a) How do the use of standardized tests contribute to the problems of inequality in our schools today?

(b) What are the major problems confronting schools in your country today? What do you think we should do about these problems?
Sociology is one of several disciplines referred to as social sciences.

Sociology specifically seeks to explain the causes of human behaviours, recognize the patterns of human behaviours, and to predict the future behaviours of people.

A social institution is a set of organized beliefs and rules that established how a society will attempt to meet its basic social needs.

Social institutions basically perform five basic functions: replacing members, teaching/socialized new members, producing, distributing, and consuming goods and services, preserving order, and providing and maintaining a sense of purpose.

Family is a social group that lives together, share resources, works as a unit and rears children.

Education is understood to be a means of overcoming handicaps, achieving greater equality and acquiring wealth and status for all by developing every individual to their fullest potential.

Religion is a unified set of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things.

An economic institution is defined as the organizing, production, and distribution of goods and services.

A political system is a system of politics and government.

In sociology of education, we will study on how public institutions and individual experiences affects education and its outcomes.

The sociology of education contains a number of theories, such as structural functionalism, conflict theory, and structure and agency.

There are three approaches to the study of sociology in education:

- Functionalist theory, conflict theory; and interaction and interpretive theories.
- Functionalism or structural functionalism is based on some kind of equilibrium theory.
- Conflict theory claims that society is held together by the ability of dominant groups to keep others subordinate, thus inequality is legitimatized.
- Interpretivism argues that understanding human behaviour involves seeing the world “through the eyes” of those being studied.
• Code theory attempts to connect macro understanding of class relations to micro understanding of the educational process in schools.

• Symbolic violence is power which imposes its meanings by appearing neutral or masking where it is coming from.

• Cultural capital is symbolic representation of cultural domination – language, arts, ideas that have high exchange value.

• Postmodernism or critical education theory seeks the connection between theory and practice stresses the response to authoritarianism and totalitarianism.

---

**KEY TERMS**

| Code theory | Restricted code |
| Conflict theory | Secondary education |
| Critical pedagogy | Social institutions |
| Cultural capital | Social interactions |
| Economy | Sociology |
| Education | Sociology of education |
| Elaborated codes | Structural functionalism |
| Equilibrium | Structure and agency |
| Family | Symbolic violence |
| Functionalist theory | Tertiary education |
| Government | Vertical extension |
| Horizontal extension | Political system |
| Human behaviours | Politics |
| Human social structures | Postmodernism |
| Inequality | Primary education |
| Interaction and interpretive theory | Religion |


INTRODUCTION

Ever since the education system was invented, there have been a lot of ideas and criticisms of how it should work. Most people believe that public education after all is the engine that moves a society toward a common destiny. Basically, there are two functions of education that are to help to socialise the young into becoming ‘good citizens’ and prepare people for employment and to be generally productive citizen.

Functionalists believe that the education system has three main functions. Firstly it socialises young people into key cultural values such as equality of opportunity, competition and religious morality. Education is said by functionalists, especially Durkheim (1961), to emphasise moral responsibilities in society that people should have towards each other. If these norms were not
passed down through generations then there would be a tendency for individualism (where people believe that they are more important than social groups). Citizenship and religious education were introduced as compulsory subjects in schools to see that young people did things with thought for the society.

The second function of education is to do with the skills that education teaches children, from literacy and numeracy to more job-specific skills. Occupational jobs are becoming more specialised and this in turn will lead to more years in education. The final function of education, according to functionalists is the allocating of roles of young people in society. Examinations and qualifications are said to allocate people for their most suited job. The equality of opportunity took place and so higher talented people are given the most functionally important jobs for the society.

In the broadest sense, education includes the formal and informal experiences that train, discipline, and shape the mental and physical potentials of the maturing person (Ferrante, 2008). Accordingly, this topic is concerned with the functions of education: socialisation, cultural transmission, social control, personal development, selection and allocation, and change and innovation. As Durkheim (1961) said, “education must make the child cover in a few years the enormous distance travelled by mankind in many centuries.”

Nevertheless, what constitutes an ideal education varies according to time and place, leaving different views of education, such as whether education is viewed as a mechanism for meeting society’s need or as a mechanism for helping students become independent thinkers, freed from the constraints on thought imposed by family, peers, culture, and nation. Most importantly, education performs a number of significant functions that, ideally contribute to the smooth operation of society. Education does enhance individuals’ intellectual, emotional, and social development. The ability to reason, to think critically and independently leads to an enlightened and creative individuals.

**ACTIVITY 2.1**

How can educators prepare students for the future? Discuss.
Socialisation is not a mere accompaniment of material civilisation, nor is it an absolute goal toward which social evolution is moving by its own momentum (Burgess, 1967). On the contrary, the socialising process is functional and relative to the group situation implying that socialisation is dynamic and not static in human progress, that it plays an effective part in social change. Moreover, Clausen (1968) stated that “the term socialisation is used by sociologists, social psychologists and educationalists to refer to the process of learning one’s culture and how to live within it. For the individual it provides the skills and habits necessary for acting and participating within their society. For the society, inducting all individual members into its moral norms, attitudes, values, motives, social roles, language and symbols is the means by which social and cultural continuity are attained” (p. 5).

The social function of education includes:

(a) **Transmitting skills** – education exists to teach children the skills they need to adapt to their environment, therefore teachers must pass on a sufficient “community of ideas and sentiments without which there is no society”. The ideas and sentiments may relate to installing a love for the country, training a skilled labour force, or encouraging civic engagement;

(b) **Facilitating personal reflection and change** – education can broaden students’ horizon, making them aware of the conditioning influences around them and encourage them to think independently of authority;

(c) **Integrating diverse populations** – education function to integrate people of different ethnic, racial, religious, and family background;

(d) **Screening and selecting** – education uses tests and grades to evaluate students and reward them accordingly by conferring or withholding degrees, issuing certificates, assigning students to academic tracks, rejecting or accepting students into programs, and giving negative or positive recommendations. Hence, education channels students towards different career paths; and

(e) **Solving social problems** – societies used education-based programs to address and solve a variety of social problems: racial inequality, drug and alcohol addiction, malnutrition, teenage pregnancy, illiteracy, and others.
As process of socialisation includes a range of topics, two main issues that are forwarded here are the early childhood program and the role of media in socialisation.

From the moment we are born, the socialisation process has become part of our lives; the family is the primary context within with the child receives initial socialisation that differs based on society, social class, and family background. As a result early childhood education takes on special significance because children are developing their self-concept and social awareness (Ballantine, 2008). More than half of the nations of the world have some formal early childhood education that starts at age of 3 to 5 years old. Early childhood education provides children valuable learning experience that is not available at home and the fact that young children also need to interact with other children and adults other than their siblings and parents.

Many socialisation agencies such as commercial ventures and the media complement or compete with school to get attention from students. In schools and classrooms across the nation, we witness directly and indirectly big business advertising on school book and magazine covers, in texts, and on television monitors with the main intent to sell their products. A two minutes of advertising on television, another agent of socialisation, for such product such snack foods, personal care products, movies, clothes, and electronics have created controversy in education.

Each new generation of children learns the rights and wrongs, values and roles of the society into which they are born. In learning their role children are socialised, are taught, how to meet the expectations placed on them. Therefore, educational systems socialised students to become members of society, to play meaningful roles in the complex network of interdependent positions (Ballantine, 2001).

Figure 2.1 shows the environment of a pre-school/early childhood classroom.
Cultures and subcultures have developed over the ages. Education has played a major part in the continuation as well as in the renewal of existing cultures by way of cultural transfer, culture transmission, and cultural transformation. Cultural transmission is not a straightforward process but one that reflects the dynamics and heterogeneous viewpoints of a pluralistic society (Ballantine, 2001). Cultural transmission in school focuses on what is taught; answering questions: what culture is transmitted?, what should be transmitted?, and what should be the goals of the curriculum? As curriculum content is influenced by certain concerns and trends in society, teachers and school administrators may expresses preferences for certain materials and classroom organisation and reject others, so as the structure, composition, hierarchy, philosophy, and the architecture of any one school influences the curriculum content within that school.

Learning is a process that is not only influenced by the teacher, but a myriad of other factors such as the teaching techniques, classroom setting, formal or informal materials, child’s ability, motivation, interest in the subject matter, readiness to learn, retentiveness, values and attitudes, relationship with the teacher, feelings about self, relationships with peers, background experiences, environmental pressures for learning, family support for learning, and the atmosphere of the school and classroom.

Furthermore, there are two issues related to passing on culture: what teaching techniques are most effective in producing learning outcomes and what role critical thinking plays in education (Ballantine, 2001). As Dewey (1916) stated that learning can be more effective if it were relevant to the lives of the children, thus child-centred curricula is needed that focus more on learner needs and interests, highly flexible, provide many options to the learner, and involve the learners in the curricula around their needs.

On the other hand, critical thinking requires one to be reflective with some reasonable thinking that is focused on what to believe or do by evaluating
evidence and support conclusions before making decisions. With critical thinking, ideally all students will be able to express their thoughts cogently in oral and written form, and to evaluate their value stances on issues. No doubt, some teachers do include elements of critical thinking in their teaching, but it is not in classrooms for children who are most likely to hold working class jobs, meaning that training in critical thinking is not equally available to all.

Cultural transmission is a universal process, serious thoughts are very much concern on what culture is transmitted and what should be transmitted. As a consequence, in every society there are expectations concerning ideas about the “products” that school should produce. These expectations are build into the curriculum that provides for instruction in areas seen as desirable through the planned experiences in line with the concerns and trends in the society. In this way schools are believed to serve the crucial function of preparing young people for society (Parsons, 1959).

Schools are one place where individuals and communities can dig in and take a stand; where in other institutions this might be uncontrollable. Any decision about the content of the curriculum represents broader issues about power and control of people’s lives, what happen to their children, and changes in their communities.

### SELF-CHECK 2.1

(a) What has been the role of families, schools, and cultures in the transmission of knowledge, values and attitudes? Discuss.

(b) Why have certain elements of a culture been transmitted within the official educational institutions, and why have other elements been neglected or systematically suppressed? Discuss.

### 2.3 FUNCTION OF SOCIAL CONTROL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Social control includes social mechanisms that regulate individual and group behaviour, leading to conformity and compliances to the rules of a given society or social group. Many mechanisms of social control are cross-cultural, if only in the control mechanisms used to prevent the establishment of chaos or anomie. Some theorists, such as Emile Durkheim, refer to this form of control as regulation. Sociologists identify two basic forms of social controls that are, internalisation of norms and values and the use of sanctions, which can be either
positive - reward or negative - punishment (Jary & Jary, 1991). Schools are expected to instil values related to social control and personal development.

Schools have varying ways of passing on the skills of social control, ranging from authoritarian to humanistic methods. Some people believed that an authoritarian disciplinary technique are punitive and have a negative impact on the student’s learning environment and academic achievement. In contrast, the humanistic social control help students to understand that rules are serve to give everyone equal rights and that these rules ensure society’s safety and well-being. Thus, a more humanistic way of instilling discipline would be to teach students right from wrong, the purpose of rules, and the consequences of breaking those rules.

The process of discipline is a major method of enforcing control in schools. However, this mean of achieving social control within the schools creates dilemmas and controversies for schools as well as for society. At this point in time there are three interrelated issues that depict the situation: violence, discipline, and gangs in school.

School violence is a widely held issue that have become a serious problem in recent decades in many countries, especially where weapons such as guns or knives are involved. It includes violence between school students as well as physical attacks by students on teachers. In 2007, a nationwide survey conducted biennially by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention that involved representative samples of United States high school students; found that 5.9% of students carried a weapon (e.g. gun, knife, etc.) on school property during the 30 days antedating the survey.

Conversely, Sergiovanni (2005) make it clear that little learning is going to take place in a school where there is poor student discipline or as he refers to it as a ‘wild culture’. The first and most important job of the principal is to provide a ‘safe and secure’ environment for the students. Providing a ‘safe and secure’ learning environment has always been the hallmark of a successful school principal and a successful school.

Gangs or ‘organised groups’ in school have become a growing problem in public schools, are often actively involved in drug and weapons trafficking therefore their presence can increase tensions and the level of violence in schools.

As school have been burdened with a task that not even society would take on, teachers nowadays do not always have the time, energy, or interest to deal with these problems directly, instead they opted to techniques of discipline or control such as corporal punishment, expulsion or suspension, detention, transfer to another class or school, and loss of privileges (Ballantine, 2001). Having said all,
there are no easy answers to problems in schools, especially when it also reflect the problems faced in the society at large.

SELF-CHECK 2.2

In what situations might authoritarian discipline be most effective in solving school discipline problems? How about the humanistic approach in dealing with school discipline problems? State and explain your opinion.

2.4 FUNCTION OF SELECTION AND ALLOCATION

How individuals are placed in the society is the key issue here. As we discuss the selection and allocation function of schooling, schools tend to act as sorting and sifting mechanism in preparing students for the workforce. As a result the selection and allocation function dominates schooling through assessment, testing, or examinations and credentialing.

In testing, we tend to rest on dubious assumptions such as “ability and intelligence”. Since everyone has to get sorted in certain roles in the society, education act as a major avenue of occupational socialisation by selecting, screening, allocating, and certifying talents for labour markets. With this, education fulfils a broader social class and status allocation function by providing opportunity for social mobility up to the income, wealth, power, prestige, and knowledge hierarchies. In other words, schools use tests and grades to evaluate students and reward them accordingly by conferring or withholding degrees, issuing certificates, assigning students to academic track, rejecting or admitting students into programs, and giving negative or positive recommendations (Ferrante, 2008). Under such sorting and allocation system, students may be assigned to separate institutional groups within a single classroom. For example, in United States of America, students are required to pass in examinations in order to graduate from high school, then must take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or the American College Test (ACT) for college entrance.

The use of IQ test scores also has been controversial for years (Ballantine, 2001). Alfred Binet (1904) who first developed the intelligence tests in France to diagnose mental retardation and areas of individual difficulty or weakness, believed that an individual intelligence was not a fixed quality but could be increased with “expert training”. However, the concerns about IQ tests are deepening when schools start using the IQ tests for sorting purposes for placement of students.
Basically, there are three worries that have been raised about the nature of intelligence test (Ballantine, 2001):

(a) The “nature” of intelligence – defining intelligence requires using a complex system of reasoning;

(b) The disagreement over genetic and environmental determinants of intelligence – Jensen (1969) stated that what IQ tests measure is 80 percent inherited and 20 percent cultural factors, furthermore together with Herrnstein (1980), they theorised that IQ differences between socioeconomic, social, and ethnic groups are primarily caused by genetic factors; and

(c) Using intelligence tests to classify members of society deals with whether it is possible to devise tests that are free of cultural bias – class, ethnicity, regionalism, and other variables that make our nation and school systems so varied.

Assessment of a standard tests may have more to do with allocating occupations, social class positions and life chances than with anything else (Meighan & Siraj-Blatchford, 2004). Therefore, within schools tests may be seen as one means of selection and one method of allocating.

Figure 2.2 is an example of a situation of students taking public test/or in a classroom.

**Figure 2.2:** Students taking public test/or in a classroom

SELF-CHECK 2.3

“Assessment, far more than religion has become the opiate of the people”, by Patricia Broadfoot (1979) in “Assessment, School, & Society.” Discuss and justify your opinion of the above quotation.
FUNCTION OF CHANGE AND INNOVATION

As schools provide a link to the future, schools are considered as change agents that play a very critical role in the successful initiation, implementation, and continuation of planned educational change. Depending on the school and classroom context, in particular, teachers are important change agents that must possess knowledge of innovation that can be gained through experience or study, have a positive attitude, show confidence, and encourage students’ participation.

With the coming on of computers in education in society nowadays, imagine a school of the future, where students use laptops in a wireless building and teachers customise lessons according to each one’s ability. The school’s building itself is entirely environmentally friendly, and all administrative processes are efficiently handled with the latest technology. However, the concern whether schools are able to teach and implement the new technology and are these tools equally available to all students remain as important issues as the thoughts of education being a function of change and innovation.

Undoubtedly, the use of computers in classroom is to create a school where learning is more continuous, more relevant, and more adaptive that will break down the dependency on time and place. Besides, using computer in classroom will improve the quality of instruction, provide the students with the supplements they would need to enhance student achievement, and improve communications between teachers, students, and parents.

In the early 1990s, the use computers in the classroom were strengthening by the explosive growth of the Internet and the World Wide Web. Many educators believed that the Internet would enrich “computer assisted instruction” and the overall educational experience by connecting classrooms to the outside world. Many nations provide funds from the government and spend it to help bring computer and Internet technology into all classrooms in schools. Nonetheless, the use computers in education has had its share of critics, such as do students actually need to be computer literate to succeed in the workplace, arguments from parents, teachers, and policy makers who oppose that the money that schools spend on computers could be better used for other things, such as, primarily hiring more teachers for schools, and whether the distribution of computers for schools are equally done.

Ultimately, decisions about whether and how to use computers in education will be made largely by individual communities and schools, based on their particular resources, needs, and goals. As mentioned by Ballantine (2001), which
has access to the technological training may have an edge in future placements and success.

Refer to Figure 2.3 for an example of an environment of students using computers in classroom.

![Figure 2.3: Picture of students using computers in classroom](image)

**SELF-CHECK 2.4**

Does access to a computer or use of a computer in instructing students improve their academic achievement? Analyse and explain.

**SUMMARY**

- There are five primary functions of education and processes that make the system function: socialisation, cultural transmission, social control and personal development, selection and allocation, and change and innovation.

- Two main issues that are forwarded when education is functioning of socialisation are the early childhood program and the role of media in socialisation.

- Early childhood education provides children valuable learning experience that is not available at home and the fact that young children also need to interact with other children and adults other than their siblings and parents.

- Advertisements on television, another agent of socialisation, also have created controversy in education as excessive television viewing lowers achievement and television violence may increase aggression.
• Educational systems socialised students to become members of society, to play meaningful roles in the complex network of interdependent positions.

• Cultural transmission in school focuses on what is taught and answering questions: what culture is transmitted, what should be transmitted, and what should be the goals of the curriculum.

• Social control includes social mechanisms that regulate individual and group behaviour, leading to conformity and compliances to the rules of a given society or social group.

• The process of discipline is a major method of enforcing control in schools.

• Schools tend to act as sorting and sifting mechanism in preparing students for the workforce.

• The selection and allocation function dominates schooling through assessment, testing, or examinations and credentialing.

• Schools use tests and grades to evaluate students and reward them accordingly.

• Teachers are important change agents that must possess knowledge of innovation that can be gained through experience or study, have a positive attitude, show confidence, and encourage students’ participation.

• Using computers in classroom will improve the quality of instruction, provide the students with the supplements they would need to enhance student achievement, and improve communications between teachers, students, and parents.

• The use computers in the classroom were strengthening by the explosive growth of the Internet and the World Wide Web.
KEY TERMS

Ability
Allocation
Assessment
Authoritarian
Change
Cultural transmission
Examination
Good citizen
Humanistic
Individualism
Innovation
Intelligence
Internet
Moral responsibilities
Public education
School violence
Social control
Socialisation
Sorting
World Wide Web

REFERENCES


INTRODUCTION

Generally, at the start of a very young age, children learn to develop and use their mental, moral and physical powers, which they acquire through various types of education. Education is commonly referred to as the process of learning and obtaining knowledge at school, in a form of formal education. Education is the key that allows people to move up in the world, seek better jobs, and ultimately succeed fully in life. As education is very important, no one should be deprived of it. It has been learned that education is thought of as some kind of reform for the human mind, thus when young children go to school, they mostly think they are there to get good grades. To some extent, the media represents the main reason for education as making the economy more powerful since to certain people they believed that the children are our future will becomes “the children will make us money”. As a result, this makes children learn for all the wrong reasons. In short, we can understand that school, in essence, functions as a ladder to the future. The farther up the ladder a person goes, the more prepared for real life he will find himself.
Early in the twentieth century, Durkheim (1922) pointed out the importance of school in initiating the children into the moral life of the society. Certainly, most people believed that schooling is directly linked to occupational and financial success, accordingly, in this topic we will address few issues that are considered to be critical as it relates to schools in society. These issues are:

(a) The role of education and the “process of stratification” in the society;
(b) Stratification and equality of educational opportunity;
(c) Concern of race, class and gender in achieving equality of opportunity; and
(d) Ability grouping and teacher expectations.

### EDUCATION AND THE PROCESS OF STRATIFICATION

Education is the main factor in giving a person class position. For example, one gets higher social ranking when they have a degree obtained from colleges or universities. This is the primary factor of education. Schools face the challenge in operating as a social evaluation, from the time children enter formal schooling it has already been shaped by the first and perhaps one of the most significant institution that are their families (Heckman, Stixrud & Urzua, 2006).

**Social stratification** typically refers to the process by which societal institutions hierarchically sort individuals into particular groups based on one or more criteria.

These placement have unique characteristics and subsequently affects individuals’ lifestyles, educational, and occupational status.
One of the earliest scholars to conceptualised the process of social stratification in school was a sociologist, Sorokin (1927 – 1963). Sorokin referred schools as “channels of vertical circulation” which use testing and other measures of performance to sort and distribute students along various strata. School arrange students into distinct instructional groups according to similarities in past academic performance, performance on standardised tests, or even anticipated performance, which is known as tracking or ability grouping.

Stratification describes the different "layers" that exist in society. These 'layers' are distinguished by unequal rewards and life chances. Sociologists view stratification as the classification of groups and the relationships that exist between them. The study of social stratification is the study of class, caste, privilege and status.

According to the sociologist Scott (1996), at its most simple social stratification of a society can be defined as “its internal division into hierarchy of distinct social groups, each having specific chances and a distinctive style of life” (p. 1). Class division separates most known communities, sometimes with no chance of mobility within its structure or grouping. A good example of closed social differentiation is found among the hindus, where they practise “caste” system. Hindu “caste” system is the result of good or bad conduct in a previous life and each individual within the system is born and lives as their caste decrees with no chance of furthering into a higher caste, either through marriage or merit. Each stratum is totally recruited from within their own ranks or caste.

Basically, stratification means to a position in society (Ballantine, 2001). In our open class system perspective, stratification is perceived as interconnected part of the whole societal system. Family, politics, economics, and most importantly education are vital and interlink in the system for us to understand the phenomenon of stratification. Figure 3.1 illustrates the interrelationships between the process of stratification and the educational system. Stratification of groups in schools start with teachers, students, and the community itself.
Figure 3.1: Stratification and The Educational System

### 3.2 STRATIFICATION AND EQUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

All education systems promise that increased opportunities come with education, however sometimes these opportunities are not materialise. Through the eyes of a functionalist, social stratification reflects a positive effect on society. Functionalism assumes that society is a system whose various sections work together to encourage balance. Social stratification is the condition of being arranged in social strata or classes. For example, view the differences between a doctor and a custodian. A career as a custodian requires little education, while a doctor requires many years of education. Social stratification is a problem effecting different societies for ages. Many years ago, social stratification was also common throughout the kingdoms. A king had more money and respect then a farmer would do much more laborious work than that of a king, but he would receive a fraction of the benefits.

According to the functionalist, stratification is necessary for a society to function efficiently which enables it to reach its full potential economically and socially, in line with their view that society is a set of interconnected parts which work together to form a whole. A major functionalist theorist, Parsons (1954), saw social stratification as inevitable as it derives from shared values and differential ranking of human individuals who compose a given social system and their treatment as superior or inferior relative to one another in certain socially important respects. By this perspective, society is likened to a machine, where all parts function together to keep it running smoothly.

On the other hand, conflict theorists consider the inaccessibility of resources and lack of social mobility in many stratified societies. They conclude, often working from the theories of Karl Marx, that stratification means that working class people are not likely to advance socioeconomically, while the wealthy may continue to exploit the working class generation after generation. Marx distinguished social classes by their connection to the means of production. Therefore the ruling class (the bourgeoisie) and the working class (the proletariat), identify their social positions by their relationship to the means of production. This maintenance of status quo is achieved by various methods of social control employed by the bourgeoisie in the course of many aspects of social life, such as through ideologies of submission promoted through the institution of religion.
Conflict theory begins with three assumptions (as shown in Figure 3.2), two of which are of importance for understanding stratification:

1. Society is comprised of different sub-groups and each group shares different norms, values, and beliefs;

2. Groups in society are in fierce competition for limited resources;

3. Conflict among groups will arise and, in fact, it is inevitable.

Figure 3.2: Assumptions in conflict theory

Those with social, economic, and political power actively work to maintain the present social order in which the others have either very limited or no access to precious resources such as good jobs, houses, networks, and others. The conflict theory of social inequality holds that stratification exists because it benefits individuals and groups who have the power to dominate and exploit others.

The equalisation of educational opportunities is essentially linked with the equality notions in the social system. The social system which intends to provide equal opportunities for the advancement of all has to make provisions for equal educational opportunities too. In modern industrial society, education has become the main agency for socialising a new born into a law abiding citizen and a productive member of the society. Formal education has become almost indispensable because to participate in economic production one needs to learn specialised skills which cannot be acquired through family or any other institutions. Due to the obligatory of formal education in advanced industrial societies, education is provided by the state as a matter of right for all its citizens where formal institutions such as schools, colleges and universities are organised for this purpose.

Equality of Educational Opportunity (EEO) has inspired decades of research on school effects, on the impact of socioeconomic status (SES) on achievement, and on racial and ethnic disparities in academic achievement. Schooling at times has been regarded as “the great equaliser” in many society. Because of schooling, ability may succeed over circumstance and this would be the predominant result if public schools provided equality in content coverage. Any student who are willing to work hard and to take advantage of the opportunities to learn surely would have the chance to go as far as his or her talent would allow, regardless of their family origins and socioeconomic status. A false conclusion is sometimes
expressed that the lack of success in schooling must be due to students’ lack of talent, hard work, perseverance or some mixture of these.

Coleman (1966) explored the concepts of equality and inequality, by considering the two opposite theory simultaneously. The Equality of Educational Opportunity Study (EEOS), also known as the “Coleman Study”. It was commissioned by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare of USA in 1966 to assess the availability of equal educational opportunities to children of different race, color, religion, and national origin. This study was conducted in response to provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and serves as an example of the use of a social survey as an instrument of national policy-making. The EEOS consists of test scores and questionnaire responses obtained from first, third, sixth, ninth, and twelfth-grade students, almost 570,000 students participated, and questionnaire responses from 60,000 teachers and principals. These data were obtained from a national sample of schools in the United States of America. Data on students include age, gender, race and ethnic identity, socioeconomic background, attitudes toward learning, education and career goals, and racial attitudes. Scores on teacher-administered standardised academic tests are also included. These scores reflect performance on tests assessing ability and achievement in verbal skills, nonverbal associations, reading comprehension, and mathematics whereas data on teachers and principals include academic discipline, assessment of verbal facility, salary, education and teaching experience, and attitudes toward race. The Coleman Report also estimated educational production functions, in an effort to quantify the relationship between student achievement and the quantity and quality of school inputs and other factors.

Some of the principal findings of the Coleman Report of 1966 includes:

(a) That children attending the nation’s schools in the late 1960’s were highly segregated by race. The white students were the most segregated, with 80% of 1st and 12th grade white students attending schools that were 90–100 percent white.

(b) A major portion of EEO examined the racial and ethnic gaps in student achievement, where it is found that among students who stayed in school until 12th grade, about 85 percent of blacks scored below the average for whites.

(c) School resources had surprisingly little effect on educational outcomes once family background was controlled.

Equality of Educational Opportunity was a landmark not only in its empirical findings, but also in its conception of what equal opportunity meant. Prior to the Coleman report, equal opportunity was conceived as similar levels of inputs to schooling (Coleman, 1968). EEO recognised this view and attended to it by
examining school differences in expenditures, laboratories, libraries, and so on, as well as racial composition, which—following the Supreme Court’s declaration that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal” (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954, p. 495), that was also viewed as a school input. At the same time, Coleman and his colleagues redefined equality of opportunity by focusing on results in terms of consequences of the school for individuals with equal backgrounds and abilities.

In this definition, equality of educational opportunity is equality of results, given the same individual input (Coleman, 1968, p. 14). This was the main definition of equal opportunity addressed in EEO, and it has also served as the primary focus for decades of research on school and schooling effects that have followed EEO. Controlling for family background, these studies ask what school and schooling conditions influence achievement. By controlling for individual inputs, these studies assess equality of results among students with similar backgrounds.

Similarly, equal opportunity also rests on the chances for minority groups to participate in the process of defining the experiences of schooling and the criteria by which school success is to be judged. In the absence of equal representation and participation, unequal outcomes are likely to persist since the terms of success are dictated by dominant groups and located in criteria that best preserve their place in the social hierarchy. Thus, another prevailing definition of equal opportunity was presaged by Coleman et al. (1966), though it was not their main focus, that equality of educational opportunity is equality of results given different individual inputs.

In this conception, equal opportunity means equal results even among students from different social backgrounds. In short, equality of opportunity means to all people having an equal chance of achieving a high socioeconomic status in society, regardless of sex, race, or class and as it relates to schools, the concerns are on facilities, financing, and availability (Ballantine, 2001).

Education is a positive right, to which children should have equal opportunity and access. Therefore, all public schools should spend roughly the same amount per student. The outcomes of these expenditures, however, depend on a variety of factors. Nevertheless, equal educational opportunity is critical to the maintenance of a democratic society. Education benefits society because it is viewed as a means to enable citizens to achieve happiness and morality.
Issues of Race, Class and Gender in Achieving Quality of Opportunity

Around the world, demographic factors such as gender, race, and family status or class affects individuals’ chances for an education and have substantial effects on their future occupations, incomes, and prospects for poverty. The positions that individual holds in the societal and educational systems are influenced by their race, sex, cultural background, and social class. These background factors affect the stratification within the educational systems and society as a whole where the dynamics of systems cannot be understood without regard for such factors.

Racial discrimination in education was not, and some will argue still is not, an accident. While contemporary racial disparities in education are not always due to racial discrimination, most of them can be traced either to current social policies and educational practices or to the leftovers of the dual systems that scarred the educational landscape. Racial discrimination in education arises from actions of individuals or institutions, attitudes and ideologies, or processes that systematically treat students from racial/ethnic groups in a disparate and/or inequitable way.

Empirical evidences available from United States of America indicates that racial and ethnic minorities are less likely than whites to have access to the highest quality educational inputs. Inputs include access to challenging curricula and instruction, fair tests and testing practices, fair discipline rates and punishments, fair identification for special education and gifted programs, and financial resources. Possibly, the most pervasive and harmful contemporary manifestation of educational discrimination is *de facto segregation* where racially isolated minority schools, especially in urban and rural areas, frequently are also resource-poor schools where low performing, low income students are taught disproportionately by inexperienced and less qualified teachers. In America, students who attend resource-poor schools are disproportionately members of...
minority groups and given the system of public school financing, which is largely
dependent upon property taxes, and in view of the racial segregation in public and
private housing markets, it is not surprising that there are striking race and class
differences in school revenues and related opportunities to learn.

Again, according to the Coleman Report of 1966 the factor most strongly correlated
to black children’s educational performance is the social class of their schoolmates.
Black children in school with children from middle class homes generally do better
than black children from lower class homes. Social class refers to groups of people
who share certain similar characteristics such as educational level, income, and
occupational status. For Marxists, the structure of society and of domination and
subordination was based upon the economy, or the production and distribution of
goods and services. Hence, the school system is critical in reproducing the social
class structure from generation to generation and the educational inequality is
closely linked with economic inequality.

An education system with equal numbers of men and women participating, who
may progress evenly through the system, may not in fact be based on gender
equality. A consideration of gender equality in education therefore needs to be
understood as the right to education - access and participation, as well as rights
within education - gender-aware educational environments, processes, and
outcomes, and rights through education - meaningful education outcomes that link
education equality with wider processes of gender justice (Wilson, 2003).

Assessing progress towards gender equality, therefore, requires measuring
meaningful progress towards the right to education, in turn assessing on a wide
range of phenomena that underpin the rights of men and women, to, within and
through education. Gender equality in education can also be understood as
equality that is premised on the notion of the “sameness” of men and women,
prevailing norms about what women and men do, and how their activities and
roles are to be valued determine the opportunities to which they have access.

The households may discriminate, as they often do, against girls in favour of boys
in access to education, for instance schools may be available to girls and boys, but
constraints arising from the nature of the work that girls do may impede their
ability to participate in schooling since their work within the home is far more
time-intensive than work boys may undertake in wage activities. As a result,
girls’ work is often not compatible with schooling, whereas boys’ work is more
likely to be so.
ABILITY GROUPING AND TEACHER EXPECTATIONS

The following rationales underlie ability grouping, streaming, or tracking:

(a) Students learn better when they are grouped with those who learn at the same rate. The brighter students are not held back by the slower learners, and the slower learners receive the extra time and special attention needed to correct academic deficiencies;

(b) Slow learners develop more positive attitudes when they do not have to compete with the more academically capable; and

(c) Groups of students with similar abilities are easier to teach than students of various ability.

However, the different tracks were not treated as equally valued instructional groups. There are clear differences existed in the quality, content, and quantity of instruction and in classroom climates, as reflected in the teachers’ attitude and in student-student and teacher-student relationships.

Low-ability students were consistently exposed to inferior instructions – watered-down curricula and endless repetition – and to a more rigid, more emotionally strained classroom climate. In fact, according to Darling-Hammond (1994) the testing that has been used as a primary method of placing students in groups can increase social stratification.

In a classic study, sociologist Jeannie Oakes (1985) investigated how ability grouping affected the academic experiences of 13,719 middle and high school students in 297 classrooms and 25 schools across the United States of America. Her study found that:
(a) **Placement**
- Poor and minority students were placed disproportionately in the lower tracks. This stratification influences educational attainment and is likely to affect students’ later job attainments and earnings.

(b) **Treatment**
- The different ability grouping of students were not treated as equally valued instructional groups.

(c) **Self-image**
- Low-ability students did not develop positive images of themselves, because they were publicly indentified and treated as educational discards, damaged merchandise, or unteachable.
- Overall, among the average and the low-ability group, grouping them into ability seemed to foster lower self-esteem and promote misbehavior, higher dropout rates, and lower academic aspirations.

(d) **Achievement**
- The brighter students tended to do well regardless of academic achievement of the students with whom they learned. According to Oakes (1985), one teacher in a high-ability group mentioned that:
  "there is a tremendous rapport between myself and the students. The class is designed to help students in college freshman English composition. This makes them receptive. It is a very warm atmosphere. I think they have confidence in my ability to teach them well, yet because of the class size - 32 - there are times they feel they are not getting enough individualised attention” (p. 122).
- Conversely, a teacher in the a low-ability students classroom replied in a less positive terms:
  "this is my worst class. The students are very slow-underachievers and they don’t care. I have no discipline cases because I’m very strict with them and they are scared to cross me. They couldn’t be called enthusiastic about math – or anything, for that matter” (p. 123).

Although many educators have recognised the problems associated with ability grouping, efforts not to do it have collided with demands from politically powerful parents of high-achieving or “gifted” students; these parents insist that their children must get something more than other students (Wells & Oakes, 1996). As a result, ability grouping remains, “even though many educators and policymakers acknowledge that students in the low and middle ability groups are not held to
Although ability grouping can help teachers differentiate instruction, simply assigning a student to a group can create a “self-fulfilling prophecy”, where the teacher expects certain behaviors from the child and the child responds to the expectations. Ability group placement affects learning in part because teachers often perceive all members of a group as equivalent, despite the considerable variation that usually exists within groups. Because teachers’ expectations are influenced by group placement itself, they often do not monitor individual progress as much as they should, and they do not adjust instruction or move a student to another group when the student would benefit from different instructional input.

Another problem with ability grouping is that teachers vary the nature and pace of instruction between groups more than is necessary or appropriate. In general, studies find that students in high level reading groups receive more effective instruction than students in low level reading groups. Reading lessons for higher groups have been observed to be more loosely structured, to involve more meaningful questions, and opportunities to connect reading to personal experiences, and to be more fun whereas decoding skills, rather than meaning, are often stressed more with the low ability group (Borko & Eisenhart, 1986; McDermott, 1987).

Does ability grouping enhance academic achievement? Researches tell us that it is not a neutral or kind practice, either. Although it is widespread and widely accepted, ability grouping generally depresses student achievement and is harmful to kids. It’s harmful for a number of reasons:

- The criteria we use to group kids are based on subjective perceptions and fairly narrow views of intelligence;
- Ability grouping leads students to take on labels, both in their own minds as well as in the minds of their teachers, that are usually associated with the pace of learning such as the slow or fast learners. Because of this, we end up confusing students’ pace of learning with their capacity to learn;
- As we associate students’ placement with the type of learners they are and therefore create different expectations for different groups of students.
- Once students are grouped, they generally stay at that level for their school careers, and the gap between achievement levels becomes exaggerated over time. The notion that students’ achievement levels at any given time will predict their achievement in the future becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.
Brookover, et al. (1982), Cooper (1984), and Good (1987) have identified numerous factors which can lead teachers to hold lower expectations for some students than others. These factors are discussed in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Factors that influence teachers’ expectations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Lower expectations are often held for older girls - particularly in scientific and technical areas - because of sex role stereotyping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic status (SES)</td>
<td>Teachers sometimes hold lower expectations of students from lower SES backgrounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race / ethnicity</td>
<td>Students from minority races or ethnic groups are sometimes viewed as less capable than majority races or ethnic groups students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of school</td>
<td>Students from either inner city schools or rural schools are sometimes presumed to be less capable than students from suburban schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>The expense or style of students' clothes and students' grooming habits can influence teachers' expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral language patterns</td>
<td>The presence of any nonstandard English speaking pattern can sometimes lead teachers to hold lower expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messiness / disorganisation</td>
<td>Students whose work areas or assignments are messy are sometimes perceived as having lower ability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readiness</td>
<td>Immaturity or lack of experience may be confused with learning ability, leading to inappropriately low expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halo effect</td>
<td>Some teachers generalise from one characteristic a student may have, thereby making unfounded assumptions about the student’s overall ability or behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seating position</td>
<td>If students seat themselves at the sides or back of the classroom, some teachers perceive this as a sign of lower learning motivation and/or ability and treat students accordingly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Negative comments about students

Outdated theories

Tracking or long-term ability groups

Teachers’ expectations are sometimes influenced by the negative comments of other staff members.

Educational theories which stress the limitations of learners can lead to lowered expectations.

Placement in low tracks or groups can cause students to be viewed as having less learning potential than they actually have.

Moreover, according to research, those teachers who hold low expectations for students based on factors such as those listed in Table 3.1 are rarely acting out of malice; indeed, they are often not even aware that their low expectations have developed based on false reasoning. Thus, efforts aimed at helping teachers to avoid harmful stereotyping of students often begin with activities designed to raise teachers’ awareness of their unconscious biases.

Researchers too have found that some teachers do interact with students for whom they hold low expectations in such a way as to limit their development. The types of differential treatment listed below are identified in the work of Brookover, et al. (1982) and others:

(a) Giving low-expectation students fewer opportunities than high-expectation students to learn new material.

(b) Waiting less time for low-expectation students to answer during class recitations than is given to high-expectation students.

(c) Giving low-expectation students answers or calling on someone else rather than trying to improve their responses by giving clues or repeating or rephrasing questions, as they do with high-expectation students.

(d) Giving low-expectation students in appropriate reinforcement, e.g., giving reinforcement which is not contingent on performance.

(e) Criticising low-expectation students for failure more often and more severely than high-expectation students and praising them less frequently for success.

(f) Failing to give feedback to the public responses of low-expectation students.

(g) Paying less attention to low-expectation students than high-expectation students, including calling on low-expectation students less often during recitations.

(h) Seating low-expectation students farther from the teacher than high-expectation students.

(i) Interacting with low-expectation students more privately than publicly and structuring their activities much more closely.
Conducting differential administration or grading of tests or assignments, in which high-expectation students - but not low-expectation students--are given the benefit of the doubt in borderline cases.

Conducting less friendly and responsive interactions with low-expectation students than high-expectation students, including less smiling, positive head nodding, forward leaning, eye contact, and others.

Giving briefer and less informative feedback to the questions of low-expectation students than those of high-expectation students.

Asking high-expectation students more stimulating, higher cognitive questions than low-expectation students.

Making less frequent use of effective but time consuming instructional methods with low-expectation students than with high-expectation students, especially when time is limited.

What can be done to improve the ways teachers form expectations and communicate them, especially to students they perceive as having limited potential? The following recommendations are drawn from the work of Brophy (1983) and others:

Avoid unreliable sources of information about students’ learning potential, e.g., social stereotypes, the biases of other teachers, etc.

Set goals (for individuals, groups, classrooms, and whole schools) in terms of floors (minimally acceptable standards), not ceilings; communicate to students that they have the ability to meet those standards.

Use heterogeneous grouping and cooperative learning activities whenever possible; these approaches capitalise on students’ strengths and take the focus off weaknesses.

Develop task structures in which students work on different tasks, on tasks that can be pursued in different ways, and on tasks that have no particular right answer; this will minimise harmful comparisons.

Emphasise that different students are good at different things and let students see that this is true by having them observe one another’s products, performances, etc.

Concentrate on extending warmth, friendliness, and encouragement to all students.

Monitor student progress closely so as to keep expectations of individuals current.
(h) Give all students generous amounts of wait-time to formulate their answers during recitations; this will increase participation and improve the quality of responses.

(i) In giving students feedback, stress continuous progress relative to previous levels of mastery, rather than comparisons with statistical norms or other individuals.

(j) In giving students feedback, focus on giving useful information, not just evaluation of success or failure.

(k) When students do not understand an explanation or demonstration, diagnose the learning difficulty and follow through by breaking down the task or reteach it in a different way, rather than merely repeating the same instruction or giving up.

(l) In general, think in terms of stretching the students’ minds by stimulating them and encouraging them to achieve as much as they can, not in terms of “protecting” them from failure or embarrassment.

Besides, the research of Marshall and Weinstein (1984) indicates that teachers can be trained to view intelligence as a multi-faceted and continuously changing quality and to move away from holding and communicating unfounded or rigidly constrained expectations to their students. Given the power of teacher expectations to influence students’ learning and their feelings about themselves, providing such teacher training is a good, perhaps essential investment in our educational system now.

**ACTIVITY 3.3**

(a) How do you expect your students to succeed in classroom?

(b) What about the students’ attitude toward school, as you perceived?
TOPIC 3  THE SCHOOL IN THE SOCIETY

Social stratification typically refers to the process by which societal institutions hierarchically sort individuals into particular groups based on one or more criteria.

Family, politics, economics, and most importantly education are vital and interlink in the system for us to understand the phenomenon of stratification.

According to the functionalist, stratification is necessary for a society to function efficiently which enables it to reach its full potential economically and socially, in line with their view that society is a set of interconnected parts which work together to form a whole.

Conflict theorists conclude that stratification means that working class people are not likely to advance socioeconomically, while the wealthy may continue to exploit the working class generation after generation.

The equalisation of educational opportunities is essentially linked with the equality notions in the social system.

Equality of opportunity refers to all people having an equal chance of achieving a high-socioeconomic status in society, regardless of sex, race, or class.

Social class are reproduced through private and elite schools, ability grouping, and teacher expectations.

Teacher behaviors and expectations can affect student achievement.

Demographic factors such as gender, race, and family status or class affects individuals' chances for an education and have substantial effects on their future occupations, incomes, and prospect for poverty.

SUMMARY
KEY TERMS

“Coleman study”        Race
Ability grouping        Racial discrimination
De facto segregation    School
Education              Social class
Equality               Social inequality
Equality of educational opportunity Social stratification
Gender                Stratification
Gender inequality      Teacher expectations

REFERENCES


The notion of a social system is a general one. It can be applied to social organisations that are carefully and deliberately planned or to those that emerge spontaneously. For example, a school is a system of social interaction (please refer to Figure 4.1); it is an organised whole comprising interacting personalities bound together in an organic relationship (Waller, 1932). All social systems have some activities and functions that are accomplished in a fairly stable fashion.

**Figure 4.1:** School is a system of social interaction  
*Source:* facstaff.gpc.edu
A social system is a group of elements and activities that interact and constitute a single social entity (Longress, 2000). This statement implies that a social system is creative because by definition it has properties and purpose over and above the parts and relationships. In a school, for example, educated individuals are created. Olsen (1970) defines a social system more specifically:

“It is a model of organisation that possesses creativity beyond its component parts; it is distinguished from its environment by a clearly defined boundary; it is composed of subunits, elements, and subsystems that are interrelated within relatively stable patterns of social order.”

A social system refers to activities and interactions of groups consisting of members brought together for a common purpose. Furthermore, we see that a social system involves two dimensions:

(i) **Institutions** - with certain roles and expectations, and
(ii) **Individuals** - with certain personalities and need-dispositions.

In fact, the classroom is a unique social system, where it is mediated by cultural factors such as ethos, norms, and values, as well as psychological aspects.

In this topic, we will try to understand and explore the meanings of social system of the school, defining the goals of the school system, looking into the purposes of schooling as it relates to the society, people, and students, the elements that make up schools as an organisation, and discuss the issue of centralised against decentralised decision-making.

**ACTIVITY 4.1**

In a rapidly changing society, schools have a particular role to play both in preserving that which we hold important as a society and in preparing individuals to deal with the future and with change.

What issues do you think is important in addressing the statement above?
SOCIAL SYSTEM OF THE SCHOOL

As a social system, the school is characterised by an interdependence of parts, a clearly defined population, differentiation from its environment, a complex network of social relationships, and its own unique culture. Furthermore, the analysis of the school as a social system calls attention to both the planned and unplanned - the formal and informal – aspects of organisational life.

There are some explicit assumptions as we examine the school as a social system (Getzels & Guba, 1957; Bidwell, 1965; Scott, 2003):

(a) **Social systems are open systems** – schools are affected by state mandates, politics, history, and other environmental forces.

(b) **Social systems consist of interdependent parts, which interact with each other and the environment** – relationships between the principal, teachers, and students in a school.

(c) **Social systems are goal-oriented** – student learning and control are some examples of school goals, but the main goal of any school system is the preparation of its students for adult roles.

(d) **Social systems are peopled** – teachers act on the basis of their needs, beliefs, and goals as well as their roles.

(e) **Social systems have structure** – school systems have division of labour, specialisation, and hierarchy.

(f) **Social systems are political** – schools have power relations that inevitably affect administrators and teacher activities.

(g) **Social systems have cultures** – schools have a dominant set of shared values that influence behavior.

(h) **Social systems have norms** – schools have formal rules and regulations as well as informal norms that prescribe appropriate behavior.

(i) **Social systems are conceptual and relative** – for one purpose, a class room can be considered a social system, but for other purposes, the school may be viewed as a social system.

(j) All formal organisations are social systems but not all social systems are formal organisations.

With the assumptions above, it suggests that a school then consists of a number of important elements that affect organisational behavior:

- **Structure** - roles are expectations of positions that are arranged in a hierarchy.
• **Individual** - the individual is a key unit in any social system; regardless of position, people bring with them individual needs, beliefs, and a cognitive understanding of the job.

• **Culture** - represents the unwritten feeling part of the organisation; its shared values.

• **Politics** - informal power relations that develop spontaneously.

• **Core** - the teaching-learning process is the technical core of schools.

• **Environment** - everything outside the organisation; source of inputs.

• **Outputs** - the products of the organisation, e. g. educated students.

• **Feedback** - communication that monitors behavior.

• **Effectiveness** - the congruence between expected and actual outcomes.

The social systems model gives a dynamic view of the school. Figure 4.2 pictures the major elements, or subsytems, of a social system of the school. The key elements, their interactions, the demands and constraints of the environment, and the behavioral outcomes are also summarised in Figure 4.2. Together these parts make up the functioning whole. Each part is dependent on the others for smooth operation, for the materials or resources it needs to function, and even for its existence.

4.2 GOALS OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

A goal is a future state that an individual is striving to attain (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Hence, goals of the school system are the aims or outcomes that the school would like to achieve, where it will provide outlines for activities of the system and focus the activities of its members.

Goals are constantly being “negotiated” and reconsidered depending on the interests of the powerful and the needs of the system (Ballantine, 2001). Below are some goals expectations of various societal sectors that influence official school goals:

(a) Societal and community goals – each society has certain goals for its educational system that are put into practice in the schools and classrooms. Basically, in the homogeneous societies there is often consensus on the key goals with uniform curricula and materials, but heterogeneous societies have communities with competing goals. For the functionalist, the goals of the school are for it to function smoothly and to support the societal system. On the other hand, conflict theorists assert that school goals are responsible for the stratification system. The diversity of goals and expectations of schools in nations depends on those who have so much vested interest in education, especially politicians. For example, in the United States of America, during the Bush administration (please refer to Figure 4.3), they developed an educational plan named America 2000: An Education Strategy, while in the Clinton administration (please refer to Figure 4.4) Goals 2000: Educate America Act was formed. Urban schools have less consensus on academic goals and spend more energy on the goals of discipline and control, in contrast with the suburban schools that focus more on success and achievement goals (Ballantine, 2001).
(b) **School goals** – each school should have written goals that are made known to all involved in the school. However, stated goals of the school are often different from the operational procedures, which outline what is to happen and what programmes are to be carried out in school; translate the goals into action. According to Ingersoll (1994), the degree of control of goals in school depends much on what activities are considered and on differences in the degree of “control” put forth by the boards of education, principals, and teachers in different types of school. School goals could be to maintain focus on curriculum development, to encourage student self-assessment in the area of written language, to enhance teachers’ understanding and use of instructional strategies, and to provide academic support services for at risk students.

(c) **Individual goals** – goals vary depending on the role of the individuals in the school. For example, a teacher might set goals to have a more professional appearance, to have fun and enjoy teaching, to stay positive even when things change, to form a better working relationship with other teachers, improve teacher-parent communication, to build better relationships with team and other staff, and to establish and maintain a classroom management plan. Students need to be guided and taught to establish their own goals and how to achieve them so that they will be successful in life.

### 4.3 **THE PURPOSE OF THE SCHOOL**

As schools include many diverse functions reflecting competing interest groups in communities, it is practical to look at these purposes of schooling from differing perspectives within the system (society, community and family, and individual student) as shown in Table 4.1.
Table 4.1: The Functions of Schooling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Functions of Schooling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Society                | • To socialise the young to perform needed adult roles.  
• Keep the young occupied.  
• Delay entry into the job market.  
• Help perpetuate society, socialise the young into particular societal values, traditions, and beliefs.  
• Develop skills needed to live in society such as reading, writing, and responsibility.  
• Select and allocate the young to needed roles from professionals to labourers. |
| Community and family   | • To formalise socialisation experiences, especially in formal learning.  
• Facilitate peer interaction.  
• Structure socialisation experience.  
• Help meet family goals for successful children.  
• Give children more options in the competitive marketplace.  
• Produce young people who will fit into the community. |
| Individual student     | • Provides an opportunity to get together with peers and engage in sports and other activities.  
• Students’ attitudes toward and cooperation with adults help socialise them into having acceptable attitude and behaviors, and they provide skills and knowledge for them to fit into society’s competitive bureaucracies. |


These functions might overlap, causing conflicts to appear between the different groups over the importance of various purposes and methods of implementing the functions in the school setting. Furthermore, each of the functions mentioned might have both positive and negative outcomes as the intended purpose is not always the only result or even the main result of the process of education. Conflicts happen between the community members and the school on matters such as the curriculum and school structures. Many families wish that their children are learning in school, but not to be exposed to thoughts that contradict the families’ values and teaching. Besides, individual students also deal with
disagreements when formal schooling broadens opportunities and career options, but it also limits freedom to choose what to learn and how to act.

4.4 THE SCHOOL AS AN ORGANISATION

In this part, we are looking at the school as an organisation. Many people, when they think of an organisation, tend to think of it as a group of people working towards a common goal – this is how it depicts schools nowadays. An organisation is also a social structure which allocates costs and benefits, both symbolic and substantial. This way of looking at schools is made possible through the development of organisation theory. Organisation theory ranges, for example, from studies of the effects of management, of bureaucratic structures, or of technology, to the systems of motivation and learning established in an organisation.

The characteristics of schools that make it an organisation are:

(i) The presence of people; and

(ii) The existence of a common goal and a certain regulated structure (Van der Westhuizen, 1996).

The school, unlike an industry, is never concerned with production based on a profit motive. In addition, almost all modern organisations, including schools, have the characteristics of bureaucracy. Max Weber’s (1947) classic analysis of bureaucracy is a beginning point for us to understand the school as an organisation (please refer to Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5: Max Weber
Source: images.zeno.org
The characteristics of a Weberian Model of Bureaucracy are:

- **Division of labour** - division of labour leads to specialisation and specialisation promotes expertise.
- **Impersonal orientation** - decisions based on facts, not feelings or biases.
- **Hierarchy of authority** - systems of superiors and subordinates; hierarchy promotes disciplined compliance and coordination.
- **Rules and regulations** - formalisation ensures stability and uniformity of behavior.
- **Career orientation** - promotion according to seniority, achievement, or both.
- **Efficiency** - bureaucracy maximises rational decision-making and administrative efficiency.

Weber’s model of bureaucracy is functional in that its application can promote efficiency and goal attainment. Nonetheless, there is also the possibility that this model creates some problems related to school as an organisation, such as:

- **Boredom** – extreme division of labour causes boredom.
- **Lack of morale** – impersonality creates an atmosphere where people interact as “non-persons” resulting in low morale.
- **Communication blocks** – every level in the hierarchy of authority produces a potential communication block since subordinates are reluctant to communicate with their superiors.
- **Rigidity and goal displacement** – rigid rules and regulations produce employees that are rule-oriented where they forget that rules and regulations are only means to achieve goals, not ends in themselves.
- **Conflict between achievement and seniority** – seniority and achievement are not necessarily compatible. High-achievers often complain about senior employees who are not as productive as they are, but who nevertheless get promoted.

As teachers have to deal with the problem of variability in students’ abilities on a day-to-day basis, they need to have the freedom to make professional judgments. Therefore, we require a structural looseness within the school. The structural looseness of the school supports a professional basis of organisation. Loose couplings are structural connections among the elements that are tied together loosely and in some cases are disconnected. This happens when the administration of a school has little influence in what is happening in the classroom as teachers work alone in the classroom. However, some schools are tightly coupled and others are loosely coupled. Bureaucracies tend to be tightly
coupled while professional organisations tend to be more loosely coupled. Additionally, tight coupling limits the discretion of teachers whereas loose coupling enhances the discretion of teachers.

The analysis leads us to the conclusion that in schools there are two basic organisational domains:

(i) A bureaucratic one consisting of the institutional and managerial functions of mediating between the school and community, implementing the policies, administering internal affairs, procuring and allocating necessary resources, and mediating between students and teacher; and

(ii) A professional one involved with the actual technical processes of teaching and learning.

ACTIVITY 4.3

To what extent is your school loosely coupled? Analyse the tight and loose couplings in your school. Does the structure need tightening or loosening?

4.5 CENTRALISED VERSUS DECENTRALISED DECISION-MAKING

Centralisation is defined as the process of transferring and assigning decision-making authority to higher levels of organisational authority. With centralisation, people can control everything and everything would be done exactly as they want it to be. In a school, a principal (please refer to Figure 4.6) who sits at the top of the organisational hierarchy will make all the major decisions if centralised decision-making is practised. Hence, the principal is in control of the day-to-day operations of a school. If principals make the school’s key decisions with little or no input from others in the school, then the school is centralised. Schools that wish to consolidate power and decision-making abilities at the top of the organisational chart of a school tend to be centralised organisations. This method of decision-making is very helpful for schools which need to be stable or are facing a crisis and need one source of decision-making to lead them.
Decentralisation is defined as the process of transferring and assigning decision-making authority to lower levels of organisational authority. Decentralisation will help employees handle responsibilities. Decentralised decision-making is any process where the decision-making authority is distributed throughout a larger group. It also connotes a higher authority given to lower-level functionaries in a school, teachers, and students. Thus, the decisions arising from a process of decentralised decision-making are the functional result of group intelligence and group wisdom. In decentralised organisations, responsibility for key decisions is distributed as far down the management hierarchy as is prudently possible. One of the advantages of decentralisation is that it gives lower-level people substantial practice at making decisions in preparation for moving up the management hierarchy.

Decentralised organisations are becoming more popular as the ability for organisations to decentralise increases. Decentralisation allows organisations to take advantage of division of labour by sharing decision-making across the organisation. It also empowers employees and allows them to improve their performance by being able to act to improve deficient or inefficient areas immediately without approval from the top of the organisation. Another advantage of decentralisation is allowing people to actually use their first hand knowledge and experience to improve in their areas. By trusting the individuals within the organisation to obtain accurate information and use their minds to provide appropriate analysis, schools are able to take advantage of division of labour and allows for multiple individuals to give input for the betterment of the schools.

By means of decentralisation, organisations encourage people to work in teams, that can be based on each function – cross-functional teams which collaborate with other functions to ensure that no one employee becomes bored by performing the same basic task over and over again in an organisation (please refer to Figure 4.7). In the field of business, many organisational successes have occurred in highly decentralised organisations where top management...
concentrates on strategy, and leaves the day-to-day operation and decision-making tasks to lower-level personnel. This facilitates rapid "front-line" response to customer issues and is instrumental in identifying and training emerging managers. It can also improve morale by providing each employee with a clear sense of importance that is often lacking in a highly centralised environment. Decentralisation can prove to be a fertile ground for cultivating new and improved products and business processes.

Sometimes through planning, and sometimes simply as a result of top management’s leadership style, organisations will tend to gravitate towards either a centralised or a decentralised style of management. Hence, an appropriate balance of centralisation and decentralisation is essential to effective and efficient functioning of an organisation.

**Figure 4.7: Teamwork**

*Source: cheekylulu.wordpress.com*

**SELF-CHECK 4.1**

What are the advantages and disadvantages of centralised and decentralised decision-making systems?

Discuss how it relates to school setting.

**SUMMARY**

- A social system refers to activities and interactions of groups consisting of members brought together for a common purpose.

- As a social system, the school is characterised by an interdependence of parts, a clearly defined population, differentiation from its environment, a complex network of social relationships, and its own unique culture.

- A goal is a future state that an individual is striving to attain. Hence, goals of the school system are the aims or outcomes that schools would like to achieve, where
it will provide outlines for activities of the system and focus the activities of its members.

- Society have manifested several functions for schools which affect society. Because there are diverse needs within the society, the purposes of the school differ.

- Two models of school as an organisation are discussed: bureaucracy and loosely coupled.

- The characteristics of a Weberian Model of Bureaucracy are:
  (a) Division of labour,
  (b) Impersonal orientation,
  (c) Hierarchy of authority,
  (d) Rules and regulations,
  (e) Career orientation, and
  (f) Efficiency.

- The structural looseness of the school supports a professional basis of organisation.

- Schools will tend to gravitate towards either a centralised or a decentralised style of management. Hence, an appropriate balance of centralisation and decentralisation is essential to effective and efficient functioning of a school.

### KEY TERMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bureaucracy</th>
<th>Impersonal orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career orientation</td>
<td>Individual goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centralised decision-making</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralised decision-making</td>
<td>Rules and regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of labour</td>
<td>School goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Social organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functions of schooling</td>
<td>Social system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Societal and community goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy of authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


The central question posed in this topic is: What is the sociology of learning? No doubt, to some extent, sociology plays a vital role in the level of success in education for students. The term learning as used here, refers to concerted activity that increases the capacity and willingness of individuals, groups, organisations and communities to acquire and productively apply new knowledge and skills, to grow and mature and to adapt successfully to changes and challenges. Such learning empowers individuals and organisations to make wise choices, solve problems and break new ground. Learning certainly includes academic studies and occupational training through high school and beyond. But it also encompasses the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of children in the earliest years of their lives.
In this topic we will consider the meaning of environments and examples of institutional environments that affect students, several aspects of school effectiveness, the economics of education, school financing, how the major educational movements have affected the educational system, and explore the process of change in the educational system and methods proposed to bring about change.

5.1 STUDENTS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENTS

Do you think that the environment provided to students at their home affect their studies? Environments refer to influence outside the school that affect the student’s role in the school (Ballantine, 2001). According to Hammer (2003) the home environment is as important as what goes on in the school. Important factors include parental involvement in their children's education, how much parents read to young children, and how much television shows are children allowed to watch. Achievement gap is not only about what goes on once students get into the classroom, but it is also about what happens to them before and after school.

Parents and teachers have a crucial role to play to make sure that every child becomes a high achiever. Parental influence has been identified as an important factor affecting student achievement. Results indicate that parent education and encouragement are strongly related to improved student achievement (Wang, Wildman, & Calhoun, 1996).

Phillips (1998) also found that parental education and social economic status have an impact on student achievement. Students with parents who were both college-educated tended to achieve at the highest levels. Income and family size were modestly related to achievement (Ferguson, 1991). Peng and Wright's (1994) analysis of academic achievement, home environment, including family income and educational activities, concluded that home environment and educational activities explained the greatest amount of variance.

Allen and Kickbusch (1992), cited in Wisconsin Educational Association Council of 2005, found that the higher-achieving students:

- Plan to continue their education after graduation from high school;
- Participate extensively in extracurricular activities;
- Have a few absences each school year;
- More likely to engage in recreational reading and to check books out of the school or public library on a regular basis;
• Watch less television, spend more time each evening doing their home work, have friends who have positive attitudes toward school and who rarely cut classes or skip school;
• Have positive feelings about their teachers and about specific courses they take; and
• Attribute success in school to hard work rather than ability.

This study attempted to reveal the relationship between motivation, family environment, student characteristics and academic achievement.

Moreover, there are extensive literatures that indicate that parental involvement in schooling relates to children’s school achievement (e.g., Epstein, 1992; Paulson, 1994). Parental involvement in schooling refers to the parents’ role in their child’s education at home and at school. It can take several forms: presence at school, communicating with the teachers, or helping at home with homework (Christenson, Rounds & Franklin, 1992; Epstein, 1992).

At the high school level, some studies have suggested both negative and positive correlations between activities of parental involvement and school performance. For example, Lee (1994) and Deslandes (1996) noted a negative relationship between parents teacher contacts and school achievement. They suggested that communications between parents and teachers were more likely to occur when adolescents are experiencing problems in school.

Other researches have also found that family discussions about students’ school experiences, courses and future educational plans have a sizable effect on school achievement (Lee, 1994; Otto & Atkinson, 1997). Findings from Deslandes’ study (1996) revealed that parental affective support was the best predictor of adolescents’ school grades. Consistent with Paulson’s results (1994), Deslandes (1996) concluded that parental involvement dimensions predicted achievement above and beyond parenting style dimensions.

More recently, researchers have begun to explore how family demographic characteristics might exert their effects on school achievement. However, the research results are mixed; for example, some studies have demonstrated that parental involvement in schooling is important for understanding lower student grades in non-intact families and with less-educated parents (Dornbusch & Ritter, 1992; Lee, 1994). Likewise, Stevenson and Baker (1987) demonstrated that the relationship between parents’ education and school achievement was mediated by parents’ levels of involvement. Downey (1994) introduced the economic parental resources as important mediators for understanding why children from non-intact families do less well in school than children from intact families.
Coleman (1997) proposes that family influences can be separated into components such as economic, human, and social capital. Economic capital refers to the financial resources and assets available to families, whereas human capital provides parents with the knowledge resources necessary to create supportive learning environments for their children. In contrast, family social capital is defined by the relationships that develop between family members. It is through these relationships that children gain access to the economic, human, and cultural resources of their families.

Similarly, Bourdieu (1998) suggests that children in families from various social status and ethnic/racial groups have differing degrees of access to those forms of cultural capital that support academic success. Bourdieu claims that within social groups, parents provide experiences that result in children developing similar tastes, preferences, academic motivation, and preferences. Eventually, these attributes are related to social status and ethnic/racial group differences in academic and occupational outcomes.

In a set of investigations, Steinberg (1996) proposes that to understand family influences, it is important to disentangle three different aspects of parenting. These include: parenting style, which provides the emotional context in which parent-child interactions occur; the goals that parents establish for their children; and the practices adopted by parents to help children attain those goals. It has been shown, for example, that a parenting style defined as authoritative is related to positive academic motivation and successful academic achievement (Steinberg et al., 1994). Such a style creates a context in which parents encourage their children's independence and individuality, provide opportunities for children to be involved in family decision making, expect high standards for their children, and have warm relationships with their children.

In one of the most significant attempts to construct a framework for the study of family influences, Rosen (1959, 1973) developed the concept of the family achievement syndrome. He proposes that achievement-oriented families can be characterized by variations in the interrelated components of: achievement training, independence training, achievement-value orientations, and educational occupational aspirations. Whereas achievement training aims at getting children to do things well, independence training attempts to teach children to do things on their own.

Rosen (1973) indicates that achievement and independence training act together to generate achievement motivation, which provides children with the impetus to excel in situations involving standards of excellence. In the achievement syndrome, it is proposed that achievement values help to shape children's behaviour so that achievement motivation can be translated into successful academic achievement. However, unless parents express high aspirations for
their children, other family influences may not necessarily be associated with academic success (Rosen, 1973). In analyses of social mobility, it has been shown that families from various social status and ethnic/racial groups place different emphases on the dimensions of the family achievement syndrome, and that variations in mobility are related to these group differences in family-achievement orientations.

It was not until Bloom (1964) and a number of his students examined the family correlates of children’s affective and academic outcomes, that a school of research emerged to investigate the relationships between family influences and academic outcomes. Bloom (1964) defines family environments as the conditions, forces, and external stimuli that impinge on children.

He proposes that these forces, which may be physical or social as well as intellectual, provide a network that surrounds, engulfs, and plays on the child. Bloom (1964) suggests that the total family context surrounding a child may be considered as being composed of a number of sub-environments. If the development of particular characteristics, such as academic motivation and academic achievement, are to be understood, then it is necessary to identify those sub-environments that are potentially related to the characteristics. The analyses guided by the sub-environment model indicate that it is possible to measure family influences that, when combined, have medium associations with children’s academic motivation and large associations with their academic achievement.

Findings from family learning environment research suggest that children’s academic success is influenced by the interrelationships among high parental educational and occupational aspirations; a language environment that is characterized by strong reading habits and rich parent-child verbal interactions; academic involvement and support, where parents become actively involved in their children’s schooling; an intellectually stimulating home setting, in which parents provide opportunities for children to explore ideas and encourage their children to become involved in imagination provoking activities; and parent-child interactions that support the pursuit of excellence in academic and cultural experiences, and that allow independent-oriented behaviour. It is important, therefore, that when attempts are made to help families develop more enriched learning environments, the strategies adopted acknowledge the significance of the interrelationships among such influences.

Analyses of the relations between families and academic achievement also need to consider children’s family structures: two-parent families and single-parent families. Research that has examined relationships between changing family structures and students’ school-related outcomes, has tended to show that in relation to two-parent families, children in single-parent families have lower
academic performance, are more susceptible to peer pressure to engage in deviant behavior, have higher dropout rates from high school, and have greater social and psychological problems.

**ACTIVITY 5.1**

(a) What can families do to enhance the academic achievement of their children?

(b) Discuss and elaborate.

### 5.2 SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

Issues of school effectiveness represent enduring and fundamental challenges to the school administrators’ practice. Mutually, educators and the public, for instance acknowledge that different schools achieve different level of success, even with similar student population. Based on the information of varying accuracy and completeness, parents choose and decide to locate their children in certain schools that has high academic expectations and standards. With differing perceptions and choices, the public often question educators about the effectiveness of their schools. As a result, the administrators have responded to this challenge by offering a variety of information to show that their schools are effective and by implications that they themselves are performing effectively.

To ask questions about whether a school is effective or ineffective is of limited value as effectiveness is not one thing alone. For example, effectiveness indicators can be derived for each phase of the open-system cycle: inputs, transformation process, and the outputs. Accordingly, the social system model of a school can serve as a theoretical guide to makes us understand school effectiveness and to assess the actions necessary to promote school effectiveness. As accepted by Edmonds (1979), there are five-factor effective-schools formula that has become known to most educators. The five-factor effective-schools formula includes:

- Strong leadership by the principal, especially in instructional matters;
- High expectations by teachers for student achievement;
- An emphasis on basic skills;
- An orderly environment; and
- Frequent, systematic evaluations of students.
In addition, Table 5.1 shows a larger number of school effectiveness (Scheerens & Bosker, 1997; Purkey & Smith, 1983). In short, effective schools research exhibits characteristics such as: high quality curriculum, experienced, motivated, knowledgeable, collegial teachers, clear goals and high achievement expectations, a healthy school climate that encourages teaching and learning, staff development program, reward for success, involved parents, and strong instructional leadership by the principals and teachers.

Table 5.1: Two Sets of Factors in the Effective-Schools Formula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purkey &amp; Smith, 1983</th>
<th>Scheerens &amp; Bosker, 1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional leadership</td>
<td>Educational leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned and purposeful curriculum</td>
<td>Curriculum quality / opportunity to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear goals and high expectations</td>
<td>Achievement orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time on task</td>
<td>Effective learning time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of academic success</td>
<td>Feedback and reinforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orderly climate</td>
<td>Classroom climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of community</td>
<td>School climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental support and involvement</td>
<td>Parental involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School site management</td>
<td>Independent learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff development</td>
<td>Evaluative potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff stability</td>
<td>Consensus and cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegial and collaborative planning</td>
<td>Structured instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct support</td>
<td>Adaptive instruction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


On top of school effectiveness concerns, strong school cultures can improve the effectiveness of the school. School culture can be interpreted by analyzing their symbols, artefacts, rites, ceremonies, icons, heroes, myths, rituals, and legends. Furthermore, schools have distinctive cultures of efficacy, trust, optimism, and control. Schools cultures of efficacy, trust, and optimism promote student achievement, whereas a culture of humanistic control supports the socioemotional development of students. On the other hand, a conducive school climate also contributes to the effectiveness of the school and student achievement. The climate of the school can be viewed from the openness of
behaviour, the health of interpersonal relations, and the citizenship behaviours of teachers and students.

**ACTIVITY 5.2**

Consider the school system in which you are currently familiar with.

(a) How is the effectiveness of the system determined?
(b) How dynamic is the notion of school effectiveness that takes place in the system?

## 5.3 THE FINANCING OF EDUCATION

Many societies view education as an investment for the future. Adolescents are trained to socialize into productive roles in society, prepared to contribute to society, and then “selected” for future roles. In many countries around the world, central governments provide funds to state and local districts to carry out equitable public education aligned with the goals of efficiency, equity, and liberty. But, rich members of the society may send their children to private or elite education, ensuring them high positions later and these results in the stratification system.

Schools serve the ever-growing expansion and technological sophistication of the economic sector in most nations in the world. The growth of schools is seen by the functionalist as meeting the economic needs for an educated labour force, thus with more schools for children it creates more economic possibilities for individuals and nations. Alternatively, conflict theorists believe that schools train individuals to meet the economic and occupational demands of society where education stratifies them by credentialing individuals for the labour force alike testing that sorts individuals.

In most nations, school financing occurs at three levels: local, state, and federal. Which level provides the most funds varies from time to time. Local funding are based on the collection of taxes where suburbs that have greater tax bases are to provide better schools. State funding of education in many countries comes from sales taxes, personal income taxes, and other special funding. The concern on the distribution of funds at the state level is important so that fairness is given to all groups of children and areas of a state. Finally, the federal funding for education is influenced by the economic state of the nation. For example, when recession hit the United States of America in the early 1980s, available funds from the
government revenues dropped. A nation’s priorities also influence where funds are channelled at the federal level.

Several suggestions have been proposed to improve the funding of education such as private-sector support and companies running schools. Due to financial pressures, schools are put into situations of having to “survive” themselves in the environment. Certainly, the financial environment of the school has a great impact on the type of school activities and planning that takes place.

5.4 EDUCATIONAL MOVEMENTS AND REFORM

Educational movements are common in countries that lack centralisation of decision making in the educational system because influencing education at the local level is much more easier. Social and educational movements reflect the diversity of opinion present in a society. The role of the schools in preparing young people for the workplace has been in the forefront of educational reform movements. Thus, social movements are one major indication of the direction in which a society is moving and of the constant pressure for change on parts of the system.

The concept of social movement has been used to refer to numerous collective efforts for change – women’s rights movement, civil rights movement, prohibition movement, anti-war movement, right-to-life movement. Movements crop up because large groups of people are dissatisfied with existing conditions. Movements may be organized, or they may be unstructured and without leadership. Below are types of social movements that are most relevant to the area of education (Robertson, 1989):

(a) Reform movements believe that certain reforms are necessary, usually in specific areas of society;
(b) Regressive movements aim to “put the clock back”, reverse current trends, and return to a former state of affairs;
(c) Revolutionary movements are deeply dissatisfied with the existing order and seek to reorganise society; and
(d) Utopian movements include “loosely constructed collectivities that envision a radically changed and blissful state”, such as the 1960s counterculture movement.

The history of educational movements start as early in the ancient Greece and Rome, where boys (seldom girls) were educated by wandering teachers called “sophists” who taught the youngsters the skills needed to develop their
reasoning power and rhetoric (the art of persuasion) in meeting the needs of the society at that time.

After the fall of the Roman Empire and the decline of the ancient, classical civilization, formal education was found in only a few places for instance religious institutions. Societies at this time did not rely on a formally educated class to perform necessary functions, however formal education were found at the castles of great lords where young knights were trained in the skills of military tactics and the code of chivalry (good manners).

The universities evolved during the Middle Ages, where one influence from the education at this time was on today’s educational movements is the concept of human immorality. Because desire was considered a sin, all children were conceived in sins, and thus were born corrupted. However, early religious leaders, such as St. Augustine, stressed that corruptive weakness could be corrected by a strong teacher who used authoritarian methods.

During the Renaissance in Europe, then only the concept of the well-rounded and liberally educated person was developed. With its God-centred worldview, the secular education of Renaissance focused on the earthly experience of human beings that affect curriculum movements, especially in the higher education level that focuses on developing well-rounded students.

The Enlightenment period during the eighteenth century affected the educational system where it was believed that people could improve their lives by reason, by using their minds to solve problems, and education would enable society to progress toward a new and better world. Schools were believed to be the instruments for cultivating the reasoning powers of youngsters.

Conversely, the educational movements in the United States of America can be classified into the:

(a) Public school movement – to increase the opportunity for schooling for children.

(b) Progressive education movement – teaching “life skills” in schools.

(c) Essentialism – opposing progressive education, wanted schools to focus more on the intellectual mission of schooling rather than teaching survival skills.

(d) Humanistic education movement – schools should eliminate coercive rules and regulations, more opportunities should be created for students to participate in shaping educational goals, moral education evolved to help students deal with ethical issues that affect them and the world they live in.
 Movements are only as effective in changing societal institutions as the attention they attract and the feasibility of the programs they propose and stimulate.

**ACTIVITY 5.3**

List and discuss some specific educational movements and reform that affect the schools in your country.

### 5.5 CHANGE AND PLANNING IN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

Schools face constant challenges from within the system and from the environment. As there are constant pressures for change, schools need to be flexible and adaptable if it wants to survive. Changes affects all aspect of the educational system. Since change is ever present in all organizations, societies, groups, and individuals; there are regular forces for change. Change is defined as “a process of planned and unplanned qualitative and quantitative alterations in social phenomena” (Vago, 1989). Several components of the change process are (Vago, 1989):

(a) Identity – a specific social phenomenon undergoing transformation.
(b) Level – the location in a social system where a particular change takes place.
(c) Duration – how long a particular change continues after it has been accepted.
(d) Direction – indicate development or decay, progress or decline.
(e) Magnitude – based on a three-part scheme of incremental or marginal, comprehensive, and revolutionary change.
(f) Rate of change – fast or slow.

The process of change can take place in rapid spurs or it can be gradual and almost evolutionary. The change can be planned or unplanned; planned change happen as a result of the manifest functions or stated purpose of a system whereas unplanned change occurs from unanticipated consequences of planned change.

When we think of change, we must visualize a complex and ever-present process. Social scientists conceptualise four levels of analysis when referring to change in the system such as schools:
• The individual level – change that is initiated by persons who have roles within the system, for example teachers and students.
• The organisational level – change within a school.
• The institutional or societal level – change that happens in other parts of society.
• The cultural level – change in societal attitudes and values.

Change occurs at each level of analysis, and major change affects all levels.

According to Olsen (1968) stresses and strains in the school systems are major sources of change. Strains are sources of conflict and pressure that develop within the internal organisation (Ballantine, 2001).

There are also major trends in societies that stimulate change in all organizations: movement toward urbanization, industrialization, modernisation, and post-industrial, technocratic society. In spite of that, another source of change also comes from attitudes of the public and educators at any particular time stirred by social movements reflecting societal concerns. Adams (1997) mentioned that legislation, mandates, or accreditation requirements are also major sources of change for schools.

The structural-functional theorists looked at change as something that happens in a gradual, adaptive fashion and sudden changes leaves the core structure unchanged. From this point of view, change stems from three sources:

(i) Adjustment of the system to environmental demands;
(ii) Growth of the system; and
(iii) Inventions or innovations of group members.

Change is seen by conflict theorists as expected, ever present, and part of the nature of events; change is the essential element of social life. For them, conflict between competing interest groups in the modern society puts emphasis on the pressures for change in the school and community. Dominant groups or the power-holders challenge to protect from change that will affect and threaten their status and interest, such as an educational system that favours a certain group of people or changes in the curriculum content of schooling.

The open systems approach is based on the statement that change, whether revolutionary or evolutionary, is predictable and ever present in systems; systems are constantly in the process of change because their adaptation to feedback from the environment. This approach towards change gives us a framework for looking at the total system, locating the drive for change, and
tracing the repercussions of change throughout the system; therefore change is examined from different aspects as it is removed from the emphasis of stability and equilibrium in the system. To them, change is seen as a normal part of the system, whether it is planned or unplanned. For example, change may originate from inside a school system or subsystem or may derive from environmental sources outside.

Whenever we introduce a major change, we must consider the impact it has on the entire system since every part of the system experiences stresses and strains. For instance, in the educational system, environmental forces and educational hierarchies together with teachers and students must support and perform the change. Educators and social scientists differ in their views concerning the strategies most effective for implementing change. Nevertheless, in implementing change in the educational system, Baldridge and Deal (1975) delineate five key perspectives that have been commonly suggested for bringing about change:

(a) Individual perspectives – focuses on the individual and small-group approach that is greatly influenced by the psychological and social-psychological research; implementing change depends on changing the person (s) who will be establishing and employing the change.

(b) Goals and saga perspectives – as goals establish reasons for an organization’s existence and saga is the myth or believe system rooted in the organization’s history, thus goals and saga are crucial elements to regard when managing organizational change.

(c) Technological perspectives – technology of a system is the nature of the work the system performs, including its procedures, processes, activities, and devices that assists it in accomplishing its goals and objectives, thus technological changes must be evaluated in terms of the demands they make on the structure.

(d) Environmental perspectives – parents, students, teachers, the local community, teachers’ union, state, local, federal government agencies or other educational agencies are examples of school environment elements that are important to be financially and morally supported during change processes.

(e) Structural perspectives – structural elements that include individual jobs, departments or division, organization’s hierarchy, rules, goals, and plans must be considered for change to take place successfully.

On the other hand, strategies to implement for change can be categorised into four strategies:

(a) Facilitative strategies — implementation for change is made easier by and/or among the target group.
(b) Reductive strategies — providing rational justifications for action to change.

(c) Persuasive strategies — bring out change through bias in the way in which a message is structured and presented.

(d) Power strategies — the use of coercion to change.

The hardest barrier to overcome resistance of change within the educational system are from the teachers who may feel helpless when change is implemented. Their fears come from perceived threats of being considered not competent in their job performance; as teachers have their sets of routines and work patterns, there must be convincing reasons for them to leave those work patterns and take a chance or risk on the new task. Over again, according to Baldridge and Deal (1975), implementation of change must take into account several factors mentioned below:

(a) A serious assessment of the needs of the organisation must be done.
(b) The proposed change must be relevant to the organisation.
(c) The environment must be considered.
(d) Both the organisational structure and the individual attitudes must be concerned about.
(e) The change must be directed at controllable factors.
(f) The change must be both politically and economically feasible.
(g) The change must be effective in solving the problems that were diagnosed.

Once these considerations are taken into account, change is more likely to be successfully implemented.

The dynamic system of education in any nation will continue to change. We can deal with the changes in a logical and consistent method only if we have a clear understanding of the change process and not disregarding at all the elements that make up the educational system.

**ACTIVITY 5.4**

Looking at the educational system in your society, identify and give details of the kinds of changes that you foresee that will take place in your schools system as we move through the twenty-first century.
• Environments refer to influence outside the school that affect the student’s role in the school.

• Home environment has a major impact on student’s achievement in school. When parents are involved with their children’s schooling, although differs in the social class and parenting styles, children’s achievement is higher.

• Family aspirations for the future also influence student achievement.

• More highly educated mothers take more active roles in managing their children’s education. Number of siblings can also affect achievement as smaller families giving more attention to each child.

• The social system model of a school can serve as a theoretical guide to make us understand school effectiveness and to assess the actions necessary to promote school effectiveness.

• The five-factor effective-schools formula includes: strong leadership by the principal, especially in instructional matters; high expectations by teachers for student achievement; an emphasis on basic skills; an orderly environment; and frequent, systematic evaluations of students.

• Effective schools exhibits characteristics such as: high quality curriculum, experienced, motivated, knowledgeable, collegial teachers, clear goals and high achievement expectations, a healthy school climate that encourages teaching and learning, staff development program, reward for success, involved parents, and strong instructional leadership by the principals and teachers.

• In many countries around the world, central governments provide funds to state and local districts to carry out equitable public education aligned with the goals of efficiency, equity, and liberty.

• School financing occurs at three levels: local, state, and federal.

• Social and educational movements reflect the diversity of opinion present in a society.

• Social movements are one major indication of the direction in which a society is moving and of the constant pressure for change on parts of the system.

• Change is ever present in all organizations, societies, groups, and individuals; there are regular force for change.

• Social scientists conceptualised four level of analysis when referring to change in the system such as schools: the individual level, the organisational level, the institutional or societal level, and the cultural level.
• The structural-functional theorists look at change as something that happens in a gradual, adaptive fashion and sudden changes leaves the core structure unchanged.

• Change is seen by conflict theorists as expected, ever present, and part of the nature of events; change is the essential element of social life.

• Strategies to implement for change can be categorised into four strategies: facilitative strategies, reductive strategies, persuasive strategies, and power strategies.

• The hardest barrier to overcome resistance of change within the educational system are from the teachers who may feel helpless when change is implemented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY TERMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitative strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five-factor effective school formula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanistic educational movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utopian movement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It is not easy to say what exactly philosophy is, how to study it, or how to “do” it. Philosophy, like all other field, is unique. The reason why it is so difficult for us to categorise philosophy is because philosophising makes up so much of what we do during life - there is no escaping it for anyone who wants to think clearly or think about important subjects. Hence, we need to learn how to do it well.

Defining and explaining philosophy is not an easy task — the very nature of the subject seems to resist description. The problem is that philosophy, in one way or another, ends up touching upon nearly every aspect of human life. Philosophy has something to say when it comes to science, art, religion, politics, medicine, and a host of other topics. This is also why a basic grounding in philosophy is so important for all mankind.

In this introductory topic of philosophy, we will explore what philosophy mean, what are the main branches of philosophy and for philosophy of education, what kind of study of education that is philosophical in common to the meaning of education. In short, this topic is an introduction to philosophy for future teachers seeking to fulfil the first of their university philosophy requirements and
intended to introduce you to philosophical questions, to make you aware of how some of history’s greatest philosophers have approached those questions and what they have had to say about them, to help you articulate philosophical concerns of your own and, most importantly, to learn how to address them.

**ACTIVITY 6.1**

(a) What is the usefulness of philosophy? Explain.
(b) Why do we need it? Discuss.

### 6.1 WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

Philosophy comes from the Greek for “love of wisdom”, giving us two important starting points: love or passion and wisdom through knowledge and understanding. Philosophy sometimes seems to be pursued without passion as if it were a technical subject like engineering or mathematics. Although there is a role for dispassionate research, philosophy must derive from some passion for the ultimate goal: a reliable, accurate understanding ourselves and our world.

Philosophy is the study of general and fundamental problems concerning matters such as existence, knowledge, truth, beauty, law, justice, validity, mind, and language (Teichmann & Evans, 1999). According to Grayling (1998), philosophy is distinguished from other ways of addressing these questions, such as mysticism or mythology, by its critical, generally systematic approach and its reliance on reasoned argument. Moreover, philosophy is rationally thinking, of a more or less systematic kind about the general nature of the world - metaphysics or theory of existence, the justification of belief - epistemology or theory of knowledge, and the conduct of life - ethics or theory of value (Quinton, 1995). Quinton (1995) mentioned further that:

“Each of the three elements in this list has a non-philosophical counterpart, from which it is distinguished by its explicitly rational and critical way of proceeding and by its systematic nature. Everyone has some general conception of the nature of the world in which they live and of their place in it. Metaphysics replaces the unargued assumptions embodied in such a conception with a rational and organised body of beliefs about the world as a whole. Everyone has occasion to doubt and question beliefs, their own or those of others, with more or less success and without any theory of what they are doing. Epistemology seeks by argument to make explicit the rules of correct belief formation. Everyone governs their conduct by directing it to desired or valued ends. Ethics, or moral philosophy, in
Philosophy is a subject at the core of most humanities courses. It focuses on abstract questions, for example such as:

- Does God exist?
- Is the world really as it appears to us?
- How should we live?
- What is art?
- Do we have genuine freedom of choice?; and
- What is the mind?

These very abstract questions can arise out of our everyday experience. The analysis of reasons and arguments is a particular province of philosophy. In fact, in as much as philosophy has a distinctive method, it is this: the construction, criticism and analysis of arguments. Philosophical skills are applicable in any area where arguments are important, not just in the realms of abstract speculation. For this reason, a basic grounding in philosophy is extremely valuable in whatever academic subject.

Why should anyone, including teachers, care about philosophy? Many think of philosophy as an idle, academic pursuit, never amounting to anything of practical value. If you look at the works of ancient Greek philosophers, they were asking the same questions which today philosophers ask. Doesn’t this mean that philosophy never gets anywhere and never accomplishes anything?

The study of philosophy is usually approached in one of two different ways: the systematic or topical method and the historical or biographical method. Both have their strengths and weaknesses and it is often beneficial to avoid focusing on one to the exclusions of the other, at least whenever possible. To study philosophy you have to engage in philosophical argument - reasons or evidence leading to a conclusion. Nevertheless, philosophy is:

(a) A doctrine - a belief or system of beliefs accepted as authoritative by some group or school;
(b) The rational investigation of questions about existence and knowledge and ethics;
(c) Any personal belief about how to live or how to deal with a situation; and
(d) An academic discipline that is often divided into five major branches:
(i) Logic;
(ii) Metaphysics;
(iii) Epistemology;
(iv) Ethics; and
(v) Aesthetics.

Therefore, a philosopher is a wise person who is calm and rational, and someone who lives a life of reason with equability.

A philosophy is a system of beliefs about reality. It is one’s integrated view of the world. It includes an understanding of the nature of existence, man, and his role in the world. Philosophy is the foundation of knowledge. It is the standard by which ideas are integrated and understood. Philosophy is a necessary product of man’s rational mind. To live, man must gain knowledge of the world. To understand the world, man must form conclusions about its very nature. For instance, to gain knowledge of particular objects, man must recognise that objects have identity. He must recognise that conclusions are possible because the world does exist, and exists in a particular way.

Philosophy provides the framework for which man can understand the world. It provides the premises by which man can discover truth, and uses his mind to support his life. Every man has an understanding of the world. Every man must have a philosophy, even if it is never made explicit.

It is notoriously difficult to give a good general definition of philosophy. Finally, one example of problem that you may find philosophers discussing and arguing is:

The Problem of Evil – as Christians believe that God is all powerful and all loving, but these attributes are difficult to reconcile with the existence of evil in the world, as Epicurus, an ancient Greek philosopher pointed out: Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then He is powerless. Is He able, but not willing? Then He is mean. Is he both able and willing? When then is evil? How serious a threat is this line of thought to traditional Christian belief?

To conclude what philosophy is, consider this statement: PHILOSOPHY = “a critical examination of reality characterised by rational inquiry that aims at the Truth for the sake of attaining wisdom.”
Instead of being treated as a single, unified subject, philosophy is typically broken down into a number of specialties and it is common for contemporary philosophers to be experts in one field but know little about another. After all, philosophy addresses complex issues from all facets of life - being an expert on all of philosophy would entail being an expert on all of the most fundamental questions which life has to offer.

The discipline of philosophy has traditionally been broken into five main branches or areas of study:

(a) **Metaphysics** or ontology is the study of reality or existence. Some of the questions that metaphysics deals with are: what is ultimate reality?, is it one thing or is it many different things?, can reality be grasped by the senses or is it transcendent?, and what is the mind, what is its relation to the body?, and what’s out there?

(b) **Epistemology** is the study of knowledge. Among the questions that epistemology deals with are: what is knowledge?, is knowledge acquired exclusively through the senses or by some other means?, how do we know that what we perceive through our senses is correct?, and how do I know about it?

(c) **Ethics** is the study of right and wrong in human action or the study of action. Some of the questions treated by the field of ethics are: what is right?, are there any objective standards of right and wrong?, are moral values absolute or relative?, and what should I do?

(d) **Aesthetics** is the study of beauty or the study of art. Among the questions aesthetics deals with are: what makes a thing beautiful?, are there any objective standards of beauty?, and what can life be like?

(e) **Logic** is the study of the principles of right reasoning. Logic is the basic tool that philosophers use to investigate reality. Among the questions raised by logic are: what makes an argument valid or invalid, and what is a sound argument?

**ACTIVITY 6.2**

Can philosophy answer everything and every question in our life? Comment and explain.
These are the main branches of philosophy. Throughout its history, however, the discipline of philosophy has also been used as a tool to investigate other domains of life. For example: philosophy of God, philosophy of religion, political philosophy, social philosophy, philosophy of science, and philosophy of law.

Most academic subjects have a philosophy, for example the philosophy of science, the philosophy of mathematics, the philosophy of logic, the philosophy of law, and the philosophy of history. In addition, a range of academic subjects have emerged to deal with areas which would have historically been the subject of philosophy. These include psychology, anthropology, and science.

There is a hierarchical relationship between these branches: at the root is metaphysics: the study of existence and the nature of existence; closely related is epistemology: the study of knowledge and how we know about reality and existence; dependent on epistemology is ethics: the study of how man should act; ethics is dependent on epistemology because it is impossible to make choices without knowledge; and aesthetics: the study of art and sense of life is slightly separate, but depends on metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics.

### 6.2.1 Metaphysics

In Western philosophy this field has become the study of the fundamental nature of all reality - what is it, why it is, and how are we to understand it. Several regard metaphysics as the study of “higher” reality or the “invisible” nature behind everything, but that isn't actually true. It is, instead, the study of all of reality, visible and invisible. Metaphysics investigates the nature of being and the world and its traditional branches are cosmology and ontology.

Moreover, metaphysics is the branch of philosophy responsible for the study of existence. It is the foundation of a worldview. It answers the question "What is?" It encompasses everything that exists, as well as the nature of existence itself. It says whether the world is real, or merely an illusion. It is a fundamental view of the world around us.

Metaphysics is the foundation of philosophy. Without an explanation or an interpretation of the world around us, we would be helpless to deal with reality. We could not feed ourselves, or act to preserve our lives. The degree to which our metaphysical worldview is correct is the degree to which we are able to comprehend the world, and act accordingly. Without this firm foundation, all knowledge becomes suspect. Any flaw in our view of reality will make it more difficult to live.
6.2.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is the study of the grounds and nature of knowledge itself. Epistemological studies usually focus upon our means for acquiring knowledge; thus modern epistemology generally involves a debate between rationalism and empiricism, or the question of whether knowledge can be acquired a priori or a posteriori. Epistemology is concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge, and whether knowledge is possible. Among its central concerns has been the challenge posed by scepticism and the relationships between truth, belief, and justification.

Epistemology is the study of our method of acquiring knowledge. It answers the question, “how do we know?”. It encompasses the nature of concepts, the constructing of concepts, the validity of the senses, logical reasoning, as well as thoughts, ideas, memories, emotions, and all things mental. It is concerned with how our minds are related to reality, and whether these relationships are valid or invalid.

Epistemology is the explanation of how we think. It is required in order to be able to determine the true from the false, by determining a proper method of evaluation. It is needed in order to use and obtain knowledge of the world around us. Without epistemology, we could not think. More specifically, we would have no reason to believe our thinking was productive or correct, as opposed to random images flashing before our mind. With an incorrect epistemology, we would not be able to distinguish truth from error. The consequences are obvious. The degree to which our epistemology is correct is the degree to which we could understand reality, and the degree to which we could use that knowledge to promote our lives and goals. Flaws in epistemology will make it harder to accomplish anything.

6.2.3 Logic

Logic is the study of methods of reasoning and argumentation, both proper and improper. Logic deals with patterns of thinking that lead from true premises to true conclusions, originally developed in ancient Greece. Beginning in the late 19th century, mathematicians such as Frege focused on a mathematical treatment of logic, and today the subject of logic has two broad divisions: mathematical logic - formal symbolic logic and what is now called philosophical logic. Logic comes from classical Greek - logos, originally meaning the word, or what is spoken, but coming to mean thought or reason is most often said to be the study of arguments, although the exact definition of logic is a matter of controversy amongst philosophers. However the subject is grounded, the task of the logician
is the same, that is, to advance an account of valid and fallacious inference to allow one to distinguish good from bad arguments.

### 6.2.4 Ethics

Ethics is the formal study of moral standards and conduct and is also often called “moral philosophy”, finding answers to questions such as: what is good?, what is evil?, how should I behave - and why?, and how should I balance my needs against the needs of others? These are some of the questions asked in the field of ethics. Ethics is concerned with questions of how persons ought to act or if such questions are answerable. The main branches of ethics are meta-ethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. Meta-ethics concerns the nature of ethical thought, comparison of various ethical systems, whether there are absolute ethical truths, and how such truths could be known. Ethics is also associated with the idea of morality.

Ethics is also the branch of study dealing with what is the proper course of action for man. It answers the question, “what do I do?”. It is the study of right and wrong in human endeavours. At a more fundamental level, it is the method by which we categorize our values and pursue them. Do we pursue our own happiness, or do we sacrifice ourselves to a greater cause?

In addition, ethics is a requirement for human life. It is our means of deciding a course of action. Without it, our actions would be random and aimless. There would be no way to work towards a goal because there would be no way to pick between a limitless numbers of goals. Even with an ethical standard, we may be unable to pursue our goals with the possibility of success. To the degree which a rational ethical standard is taken, we are able to correctly organize our goals and actions to accomplish our most important values. Any flaw in our ethics will reduce our ability to be successful in our endeavours.

### SELF-CHECK 6.1

(a) What is the difference between metaphysics and epistemology? Explain.

(b) What is the difference between aesthetics and ethics? Explore.
6.3 THE MEANING OF EDUCATION AND PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Education means a wide variety of things to different people. For some, education is something we do in school in order to get a decent career. For others, education is the gaining of life experience. Education in its broadest sense is any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character, or physical ability of an individual. In its technical sense education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another through institutions. In Webster’s Dictionary of 1828, the definition of education is “the bringing up, as of a child, instruction; formation of manners; education comprehends all that series of instruction and discipline which is intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, and form the manners and habits of youth, and fit them for usefulness in their future stations”. There are two types of education: formal and informal.

Teachers in schools direct the education of students and might draw on many subjects, including reading, writing, mathematics, science and history. This process is called schooling when referring to the education of youth. Essentially, the purpose of education is to:

(a) “Enlighten” the “understanding” - that is to give light to, to give clearer views, to illuminate, to instruct, to enable to see or comprehend truth as to enlighten the mind or understanding; whereas understanding is the faculty of the human mind by which it apprehends the real state of things presented to it, or by which it receives or comprehends the ideas which others express and intend to communicate.

(b) Correct the temper - instil good character, behaviour, communication skills.

(c) Form the manners and habits of youth - encourage good work habits and behaviour: industriousness, truthfulness, honesty, responsibility, patience, resourcefulness, gentleness, and carefulness.

(d) Fit them for usefulness for their future stations - train them in being able to teach the next generation and teach them appropriately for their God-given roles.

Education is the knowledge of putting one's potentials to maximum use. One can safely say that a human being is not in the proper sense till he is educated. In consequence, the importance of education is basically for two reasons:

(i) That the training of a human mind is not complete without education as education makes man a right thinker and it tells man how to think and how to make decision.
(ii) Only through the attainment of education, man is enabled to receive information from the external world and to acquaint himself with past history and receive all necessary information regarding the present; since without education, man is as though in a closed room and with education he finds himself in a room with all its windows open towards outside world.

Philosophy of education is the philosophical study of education and its problems. In other words, it is the application of philosophical methods to the theory and practice of education. Several topics investigated in the philosophy of education are the nature of learning, especially in children; the purpose of education, particularly the question of whether the chief goal of educators should be imparting knowledge, developing intellectual independence, or instilling moral or political values; the nature of education-related concepts, including the concept of education itself; the sources and legitimacy of educational authority; and the conduct of educational research. To mentioned, a few major figures in the history of the philosophy of education include Plato, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and John Dewey.

In addition, philosophy of education is the study of such questions as what education is and what its purpose is, the nature of the knowing mind and the human subject, problems of authority, and the relationship between education and society. To some extent, philosophy of education has been linked to greater or lesser degrees to theories of human development where the philosophy of education recognises that the enterprise of civil society depends on the education of the young, and that to educate children as responsible, thoughtful and enterprising citizens is an intricate, challenging task requiring deep understanding of ethical principles, moral values, political theory, aesthetics, and economics as well in understanding who are children, in themselves and in society.

Philosophy of education began as early in ancient Greece as an integral facet of the philosophy of Socrates and other who called them themselves philosophers. Concisely, the philosophy of education deals with how children should be educated, what they should be educated in, and what the ultimate purpose of education should be for society. If a person wants to be a more effective teacher, practically he or she need to have a sound philosophical perspectives that helps the teacher to see the interaction among students, curriculum, administration, and aims and goals of education.

To end our discussion of “philosophy of education” let think about what some great people have said on this subject:

- Aristotle, “It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.”
• De Montaigne from *On Teaching Philosophy of Education*: “Since philosophy is the art which teaches us how to live, and since children need to learn it as much as we do at other ages, why do we not instruct them in it? .. but in truth I know nothing about the philosophy of education except this: that the greatest and the most important difficulty known to human learning seems to lie in that area which treats how to bring up children and how to educate them.”

• Jean Jacques Rousseau, Emile from *On Philosophy of Education*: “Plants are shaped by cultivation and men by education...we are born weak, we need strength; we are born totally unprovided, we need aid; we are born stupid, we need judgment. Everything we do not have at our birth and which we need when we are grown is given us by education.”

SELF-CHECK 6.2

(a) What kind of questions and problems does philosophy of education deals with? Discuss.
(b) Why there is a need to have some understanding of philosophy of education in order to be good teachers? Explain.

SUMMARY

• Philosophy comes from the Greek for “love of wisdom”, giving us two important starting points: love or passion and wisdom through knowledge and understanding.

• Philosophy is rationally thinking, of a more or less systematic kind about the general nature of the world - metaphysics or theory of existence, the justification of belief - epistemology or theory of knowledge, and the conduct of life - ethics or theory of value.

• The discipline of philosophy has traditionally been broken into five main branches or areas of study: metaphysics or ontology is the study of reality or existence; epistemology is the study of knowledge; ethics is the study of right and wrong in human action or the study of action; aesthetics is the study of beauty or the study of art; and logic is the study of the principles of right reasoning.

• Education is define as: “the bringing up, as of a child, instruction; formation of manners; education comprehends all that series of instruction and
discipline which is intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, and form the manners and habits of youth, and fit them for usefulness in their future stations.”

- Philosophy of education is the study of such questions as what education is and what its purpose is, the nature of the knowing mind and the human subject, problems of authority, and the relationship between education and society.

- Several topics investigated in the philosophy of education are the nature of learning, especially in children; the purpose of education, particularly the question of whether the chief goal of educators should be imparting knowledge, developing intellectual independence, or instilling moral or political values; the nature of education-related concepts, including the concept of education itself; the sources and legitimacy of educational authority; and the conduct of educational research.

---

**KEY TERMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aesthetics</th>
<th>Metaphysics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A priori</td>
<td>Morality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A posterior</td>
<td>Mysticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief</td>
<td>Philosophy of education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Rational Inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Rationalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlighten the understanding</td>
<td>Rational thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemology</td>
<td>Reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equability</td>
<td>Reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>Right reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existence</td>
<td>Scepticisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification</td>
<td>The Problem of Evil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logic</td>
<td>Value</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Traditionally, philosophical methods have consisted of analysis and clarification of concepts, arguments, theories, and language. Philosophers have analysed theories and arguments; by enhancing previous arguments, raising powerful objections that lead to the revision or abandonment of theories and lines of arguments (Noddings, 1998).

This topic will provide readers with some general knowledge of philosophies. Basically, there are three general or world philosophies that are idealism, realism, and pragmatism. Educators confront philosophical issues on a daily basis, often not recognising them as such. In fact, in the daily practice of educators, they formulate goals, discuss values, and set priorities. Hence, educators who get involved in dealing with goals, values and priorities soon realises that in a modern society such as ours there are many competing choices. Some are
incompatible with others. Hard decisions have to be made on some everyday dilemmas that educators confront, such as: how do we treat a specific student’s needs, yet deal fairly with a class of students as a whole?, when, if ever, should we bend the rules?, and should a teacher ever emphasize good behaviour over subject skills? In trying to resolve such questions, the discussion may become philosophical, even though it may not be recognised by educators as such. With philosophy it can help educators to make better choices among goals, values and priorities.

**ACTIVITY 7.1**

“Philosophy is concerned primarily with identifying beliefs about human existence and evaluating arguments that support those beliefs”. Develop a set of questions that may drive philosophical investigations.

### 7.1 IDEALISM

In the Western culture, idealism is perhaps the oldest systematic philosophy, dating back at least to Plato in ancient Greece. From that time until now, idealism has been a dominant philosophical influence to our society, for example in the American philosophical thought, it was inspired so much by the German idealism. Even though idealism is not as strong as it was before, it is still alive in certain areas such as contemporary religious studies and certain aspects of moral philosophy.

Idealism is the philosophical theory that maintains that the ultimate nature of reality is based on mind or ideas. It holds that the so-called external or “real world” is inseparable from mind, consciousness, or perception. Idealism is any philosophy which argues that the only things knowable are consciousness or the contents of consciousness; not anything in the outside world, if such a place actually exists. Indeed, idealism often takes the form of arguing that the only real things are mental entities, not physical things and argues that reality is somehow dependent upon the mind rather than independent of it. Some narrow versions of idealism argue that our understanding of reality reflects the workings of our mind, first and foremost, that the properties of objects have no standing independent of minds perceiving them.

Besides, the nature and identity of the “mind” in idealism upon which reality is dependent is one issue that has divided idealists of various sorts. Some argue that there is some objective mind outside of nature; some argue that it is simply the common power of reason or rationality; some argue that it is the collective mental faculties of society; and some focus simply on the minds of individual human beings.
In short, the main tenant of idealism is that ideas and knowledge are the truest reality. Many things in the world change, but ideas and knowledge are enduring. Idealism was often referred to as “idea-ism”. Idealists believe that ideas can change lives. The most important part of a person is the mind. It is to be nourished and developed.

To achieve a sufficient understanding of idealism, it is necessary to examine the works of selected outstanding philosophers usually associated with this philosophy. Idealism comes in several flavours:

(a) Platonic idealism - there exists a perfect realm of form and ideas and our world merely contains shadows of that realm; only ideas can be known or have any reality;

(b) Religious idealism - this theory argues that all knowledge originates in perceived phenomena which have been organised by categories.

(c) Modern idealism - all objects are identical with some idea and the ideal knowledge is itself the system of ideas.

**ACTIVITY 7.2**

How does modern idealism compare with the other idealism of earlier periods? Discuss.

### 7.1.1 Platonic Idealism

![Figure 7.1: Plato (427 – 347 B.C.E.)](image)

Plato was a Greek philosopher during the 4th century B.C.E. - a student of Socrates and teacher of Aristotle. Platonism is an ancient school of philosophy
founded by Plato. At the beginning, this school had a physical existence at a site just outside the walls of Athens called the “Academy”, as well as the intellectual unity of a shared approach to philosophising.

Platonic idealism usually refers to Plato’s theory of forms or doctrine of ideas, the exact philosophical meaning of which is perhaps one of the most disputed questions in higher academic philosophy. Plato held the realm of ideas to be absolute reality. Plato’s method was the dialectic method – all thinking begins with a thesis; as exemplified in the Socratic dialogues. Its main doctrine is that the objects of our thoughts constitute the ultimate and eternal reality. The reality we physically perceive is but a shadow of that.

Plato’s argument that the real world is the same as the world of ideas played a great role in the later development of western religion. Some critics hold Plato argued that truth is an abstraction. In other words, we are urged to believe that Plato’s theory of ideas is an abstraction, divorced from the so-called external world, of modern European philosophy, despite the fact Plato taught that ideas are ultimately real and different from non-ideal things.

According to Platonic idealism, there exists a perfect realm of “form and ideas” and our world merely contains shadows of that realm. Plato was a follower of Socrates, a truly innovative thinker of his time, who did not record his ideas, but shared them orally through a question and answer approach. Plato presented his ideas in two works: The Republic and Laws. He believed in the importance of searching for truth because truth was perfect and eternal. He wrote about separating the world of ideas from the world of matter. Ideas are constant, but in the world of matter, information and ideas are constantly changing because of their sensory nature. Therefore Plato’s idealism suggested moving from opinion to true knowledge in the form of critical discussions, or the dialectic. Since at the end of the discussion, the ideas or opinions will begin to synthesise as they work closer to truth. Knowledge is a process of discovery that can be attained through skilful questioning. For example, a particular tree, with a branch or two missing, possibly alive, possibly dead, and with the initials of two lovers carved into its bark, is distinct from the abstract form of “tree-ness”. A “tree” is the ideal that each of us holds that allows us to identify the imperfect reflections of trees all around us.

Platonism is considered to be in mathematics departments all over the world, regarding the predominant philosophy of mathematics as the foundations of mathematics. One statement of this philosophy is the thesis that “mathematics is not created but discovered”. The absence in this thesis is of clear distinction between mathematical and non-mathematical “creation” that leaves open the inference that it applies to supposedly creative endeavours in art, music, and
literature. Plato held Pythagoras together with the Pythagorean theorem in high regard, where Pythagoras as well as his followers in the movement known as Pythagoreanism claimed the world was literally built up from numbers; an abstract and absolute form.

Plato believed in the importance of state involvement in education and in moving individuals from concrete to abstract thinking. He believed that individual differences exist and that outstanding people should be rewarded for their knowledge. With this thinking came the view that girls and boys should have equal opportunities for education. In Plato’s utopian society there were three social classes of education: workers, military personnel, and rulers. He believed that the ruler or king would be a good person with much wisdom because it was only ignorance that led to evil.

7.1.2 Religious Idealism: Augustine

Religion and idealism are closely attached. Judaism, the “originator” of Christianity, and Christianity were influenced by many of the Greek philosophers that hold idealism strongly. Saint Augustine of Hippo, a bishop, a confessor, a doctor of the church, and one of the great thinkers of the Catholic Church discussed the universe as being divided into the City of God and the City of Man.

Figure 7.2: Saint Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430 C.E.)
The City of God was governed by truth and goodness whereas The City of Man was governed by the senses. This parallels Plato’s scheme of the world of ideas and the world of matter. Religious thinkers believed that man did not create knowledge, but discovered it. Augustine, like Plato did not believe that one person could teach another. Instead, they must be led to understanding through skilful questioning. Religious idealists see individuals as creations of God who have souls and contain elements of godliness that need to be developed.

Augustine was connected the philosophy of Platonists and Neoplatonists with Christianity. For instance, he saw the World of Ideas as the City of God and the World of Matter as the City of Man. He interpreted the pagan idea of the Good as God and matter as man: evil. Plato believed in absolute truth based on science and reason whereas Augustine believed in irrational faith in God. Augustine also saw parallels with the ideas of rediscovery of knowledge - the fall of Adam, the origin of knowledge - God created it, and educational philosophy: worldly knowledge was wrong, faith over reason. He believed that faith based knowledge is determined by the church and all true knowledge came from God.

According to Ozmon & Craver, 2008 today one can see the tremendous influence religious idealism has had on American education. Early Christians implemented the idea of systematic teaching, which was used consistently throughout new and established schools. Many Greek and Jewish ideas about the nature of humanity were taught. For centuries, the Christian church educated generations with Idealist philosophy. In addition, idealism and the Judeo-Christian religion were unified in European culture by the Middle Ages and thereafter.

Augustine was also very influential in the history of education where he introduced the theory of three different types of students and instructed teachers to adapt their teaching styles to each student’s individual learning style. The three different kinds of students are:

(a) The student who has been well-educated by knowledgeable teachers;
(b) The student who has had no education; and
(c) The student who has had a poor education, but believes himself to be well-educated.

If a student has been well educated in a wide variety of subjects, the teacher must be careful not to repeat what they have already learned, but to challenge the student with material which they do not yet know thoroughly. With the student who has had no education, the teacher must be patient, willing to repeat things until the student understands and sympathetic. Perhaps the most difficult student, however, is the one with an inferior education who believes he understands something when he does not. Augustine stressed the importance of showing this type of student the difference between “having words and having understanding” and of helping the student to remain humble with his acquisition of knowledge.
An additional fundamental idea which Augustine introduced is the idea of teachers responding positively to the questions they may receive from their students, no matter if the student interrupted his teacher. Augustine also founded the “controlled” style of teaching. This teaching style ensures the students’ full understanding of a concept because the teacher does not bombard the student with too much material; focuses on one topic at a time; helps them discover what they don’t understand, rather than moving on too quickly; anticipates questions; and helps them learn to solve difficulties and find solutions to problems. In a nutshell, Augustine claimed there are two basic styles a teacher uses when speaking to the students:

(i) The mixed style includes complex and sometimes showy language to help students see the beautiful artistry of the subject they are studying; and

(ii) The grand style is not quite as elegant as the mixed style, but is exciting and heartfelt, with the purpose of igniting the same passion in the students’ hearts.

Augustine balanced his teaching philosophy with the traditional “bible-based” practice of strict discipline where he agreed with using punishment as an incentive for children to learn. Augustine believed all people tend toward evil, and students must therefore be physically punished when they allow their evil desires to direct their actions.

7.1.3 Modern Idealism: Rene Descartes, Immanuel Kant, and Friedrich Hegel

By the beginning of the modern period in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, idealism has become to be largely identified with systematisation and subjectivism. Some major features of modern idealism are:

(a) Belief that reality includes, in addition to the physical universe, that which transcends it, is superior to it, and which is eternal. This ultimate reality is non-physical and is best characterised by the term “mind”;

(b) Physical realities draw their meaning from the transcendent realities to which they are related;
(c) That which is distinctive of human nature is mind. Mind is more than the physical entity, brain;

(d) Human life has a predetermined purpose. It is to become more like the transcendent mind;

(e) Man's purpose is fulfilled by development of the intellect and is referred to as self-realisation;

(f) Ultimate reality includes absolute values;

(g) Knowledge comes through the application of reason to sense experience. In so far as the physical world reflects the transcendent world, we can determine the nature of the transcendent; and

(h) Learning is a personal process of developing the potential within. It is not conditioning or “pouring in” facts, but it is self-realisation. Learning is a process of discovery.

The identification of modern idealism was encouraged by the writings and thoughts of Renè Descartes, Immanuel Kant, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.

![Renè Descartes](http://www.renedescartes.com/)

**Figure 7.3:** Renè Descartes (1596 – 1650 C.E.)

**Source:** http://www.renedescartes.com/

(i) **Renè Descartes**
Descartes, a French philosopher, was born in the town of La Haye in the south of France. In 1606, at the age of 8, Descartes attended the Jesuit college of Henri IV in La Flèche, where he studied literature, grammar, science, and mathematics. In 1614, he studied civil and cannon law at Poitiers. In 1616, he received his *baccalaureate and licentiate* degrees in law. Aside from his law degrees, Descartes also spent time studying philosophy, theology, and medicine. After a short stay in the military, Descartes went on to lead a quiet life, continuing his intellectual pursuits,
writing philosophical essays, and exploring the world of science and mathematics.

In 1637, he published “geometry”, in which his combination of algebra and geometry gave birth to analytical geometry, known as “Cartesian Geometry”. But the most important contribution Descartes made was his philosophical writings. Descartes was convinced that science and mathematics could be used to explain everything in nature, so he was the first to describe the physical universe in terms of matter and motion - seeing the universe as a giant mathematically designed engine. Descartes wrote three important texts: “Discourse on Method” of rightly conducting the reason and seeking truth in the sciences, “Meditations on First Philosophy”, and ‘Principles of Philosophy’.

In his Discourse on Method, he attempts to arrive at a fundamental set of principles that one can know as true without any doubt. To achieve this, he employs a method called “metaphysical doubt”, sometimes also referred to as methodological scepticism where he rejects any ideas that can be doubted, and then re-establishes them in order to acquire a firm foundation for genuine knowledge. Initially, Descartes arrives at only a single principle - thought exists: “thought cannot be separated from me, therefore, I exist”. Most famously, this is known as “cogito ergo sum” where it means “I think, therefore I am”. Therefore, Descartes concluded, if he doubted, then something or someone must be doing the doubting, therefore the very fact that he doubted proved his existence. Descartes decides that he can be certain that he exists because he thinks as he perceives his body through the use of the senses, however, these have previously been proven unreliable. Hence, Descartes assumes that the only indubitable knowledge is that he is a thinking thing. Thinking is his essence as it is the only thing about him that cannot be doubted. Descartes defines “thought” or cogitatio as “what happens in me such that I am immediately conscious of it, insofar as I am conscious of it”. Thinking is thus every activity of a person of which he is immediately conscious.
(ii) **Immanuel Kant**

![Immanuel Kant](http://www.philosophypages.com/)

**Figure 7.4: Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804 C.E.)**

**Source:** http://www.philosophypages.com/

Immanuel Kant, one of the world’s great philosophers, was born in the East Prussian city of Königsberg, Germany. He studied at its schools and university, and worked there as a tutor and professor for more than forty years. He had never travelled more than fifty miles from home. Although his outward life was one of legendary calm and regularity, Kant’s intellectual work easily justified his own claim to have effected a “Copernican Revolution” in philosophy. Beginning with his inaugural dissertation in 1770 on the difference between right and lefthanded spatial orientations, Kant patiently worked out the most comprehensive and influential philosophical programme of the modern era. His central thesis—that the possibility of human knowledge presupposes the active participation of the human mind—is deceivingly simple, but the details of its application are notoriously complex.

In writing his “Critique of Pure Reason” and “Critique of Practical Reason”, Kant tried to make sense of rationalism and empiricism within the idealist philosophy. In his system, individuals could have a valid knowledge of human experience that was established by the scientific laws of nature. The “Critique of Pure Reason” spells out the conditions for mathematical, scientific, and metaphysical knowledge in its “Transcendental Aesthetic”, “Transcendental Analytic”, and “Transcendental Dialectic”. Carefully distinguishing judgments as analytic or synthetic and as a priori or a posteriori, Kant held that the most interesting and useful varieties of human knowledge rely upon synthetic a priori judgments, which are, in turn, possible only when the mind determines the conditions of its own experience. Thus, it is we who impose the forms of space and time upon all possible sensation in mathematics, and it is we who render all experience coherent as scientific knowledge governed by traditional notions of substance and causality by applying the pure concepts of the understanding to all possible experience. However, regulative principles of this sort hold only for the world as
we know it, and since metaphysical propositions seek a truth beyond all experience, they cannot be established within the bounds of reason. In Critique of Practical Reason, Kant grounded the conception of moral autonomy upon our postulation of God, freedom, and immortality.

Kant’s philosophy of education involved some aspects of character education. He believed in the importance of treating each person as an end and not as a means. He thought that education should include training in discipline, culture, discretion, and moral training. Teaching children to think and an emphasis on duty toward self and others were also vital points in his philosophies.

Teaching a child to think is associated closely with Kant’s notion of will, and the education of will means living according to the duties flowing the categorical imperatives. Kant’s idealism is based on his concentration on thought processes and the nature of relationship between mind and its objects on the one hand and universal moral ideas on the other. With these systematic thoughts it has greatly influenced all subsequent Western philosophy, idealistic, and otherwise.

(iii) **Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel**

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, German philosopher, is one the creators of German idealism. He was born in Stuttgart, Germany and conduct a normal and uneventful life as a youth and even until he was a tutor of theology in the University of Tubingen. Hegel continued to study and end up as a professor of philosophy at the University of Berlin, remaining there until his death.

Hegel developed a comprehensive philosophical framework, or “system”, to account in an integrated and developmental way for the relation of mind and nature, the subject and object of knowledge, and psychology, the state, history,
art, religion, and philosophy. In particular, he developed a concept of mind or 
spirit that manifested itself in a set of contradictions and oppositions that it 
ultimately integrated and united, such as those between nature and freedom, and 
immanence and transcendence, without eliminating either pole or reducing it to 
the other. However, Hegel most influential conceptions are of speculative logic or 
“dialectic”, “absolute idealism”, “absolute spirit”, negativity, sublation, the 
“master / slave” dialectic, “ethical life”, and the importance of history.

“Hegelianism” is a collective term for schools of thought following Hegel's 
philosophy which can be summed up by the saying that “the rational alone is 
real”, which means that all reality is capable of being expressed in rational 
categories. His goal was to reduce reality to a more synthetic unity within the 
system of transcendental idealism. In fact, one major feature of the Hegelian 
system is movement towards richer, more complex, and more complete 
synthesis.

Three of Hegel’s most famous books are “Phenomenology of Mind, Logic, and 
Philosophy of Right”. In these books, Hegel emphasises three major aspects: 
logic, nature, and spirit. Hegel maintained that if his logical system were applied 
accurately, one would arrive at the “Absolute Ideas”, which is similar to Plato’s 
unchanging ideas. However, the difference is that Hegel was sensitive to change 
where change, development, and movement are all central and necessary in 
Hegel’s logic. Even Absolute Ideas is the final stage only as it concerns thought 
process because Absolute Ideas have an antithesis – Nature.

Nature was considered to be the opposite of the Absolute Ideas. Ideas and nature 
together form the “Absolute Spirit” which is manifested by history, art, religion, 
and philosophy. Hegel’s idealism is in the search for final “Absolute Spirit”. 
Examining any one thing required examining or referring to another thing. 
Hegel’s thinking is not as prominent as it once was because his system led to the 
gratification of the state at the expense of individuals. Hegel thought that to be 
truly educated an individual must pass through various stages of the cultural 
evolution of mankind. Additionally, he reasoned that it was possible for some 
individuals to know everything essential in the history of humanity.

The far reaching influence of Hegel is due in a measure to the undoubted 
vastness of the scheme of philosophical synthesis which he conceived and partly 
realised. A philosophy which undertook to organise under the single formula of 
triadic development every department of knowledge, from abstract logic up to 
the philosophy of history, has a great deal of attractiveness to those who are 
metaphysically inclined. Hegel’s philosophy is the highest expression of that 
spirit of collectivism which characterised the nineteenth century. In theology, 
Hegel revolutionised the methods of inquiry. The application of his notion of 
development to biblical criticism and to historical investigation is obvious to 
anyone who compares the spirit and purpose of contemporary theology with the
spirit and purpose of the theological literature of the first half of the nineteenth century. In science, as well, and in literature, the substitution of the category of becoming for the category of being is a very patent fact, and is due to the influence of Hegel’s method. In political economy and political science the effect of Hegel’s collectivistic conception of the “state” supplanted to a large extent the individualistic conception which was handed down from the eighteenth century to the nineteenth.

Hegel also had considerable influence on the philosophy and theory of education. He appeared to think that to be truly educated, an individual must pass through the various stages of the cultural evolution of humankind. This idea can be much applies to the development of science and technology. For instance, to a person who lived 300 years ago, electricity was unknown except as a natural occurrence, such as lightning. Then again, today, practically everyone depends on the electrical power for everyday use and has a working, practical knowledge of it entirely outside the experience of a person from the past. A contemporary person can easily learn elementary facts about electricity in a relatively short time; that is he or she can “pass through” or learn an extremely important phase of our cultural evolution simply due to a passing of time.

Finally, in short, in Hegel’s philosophical education, he believed that only mind is real and that human thought, through participation in the universal spirit, progresses toward a destined ideal by a dialectical process of resolving opposites through synthesis.

### 7.2 REALISM

According to Ozmon and Craver (2008) the most central thread of realism is the principal or thesis of independence. This thesis holds that reality, knowledge, and value exist independently of the human mind. The world of ideas and matter defined in idealism by Plato and Socrates do not exist separately and apart from each other for realists. Realists contend that material things can exist whether or not there is a human being around to appreciate or perceive them.

Realists believe that the study of ideas can be enhanced by the study of material things. They believe that knowledge is power, and acquiring knowledge allows individuals to deal with problems and to face life effectively. If the mind is a blank slate, then knowledge comes from sources other than the mind, those things gained from sensation and reflection. Moreover, realists hold that the essence of things is objectively given in nature, and that our classifications are not arbitrary. As such, realism is contrasted with nominalism, the theory that universals are merely names or general terms.
More generally, realism is any philosophical theory that emphasises the existence of some kind of things or objects, in contrast to theories that dispense with the things in question in favour of words, ideas, or logical constructions. In particular, the term stands for the theory that there is a reality quite independent of the mind. In this sense, realism is opposed to idealism, the theory that only minds and their contents exist.

To understand this complex philosophy, one must examine its development beginning from the classical times up to the nineteenth century. Philosophers like Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Francis Bacon, John Locke, Alfred North Whitehead, and Bertrand Russell have contributed much to realism ideology.

### 7.2.1 Aristotle Realism

Aristotle (384 – 322 B.C.E.), a great Greek philosopher, was a child of a physician to the King of Macedon, thus science was in his background. At the age of seventeen, he went to Athens and joined Plato’s school, where he stayed until Plato’s death. Although he studied under Plato, Aristotle fundamentally disagreed with his teacher on just about everything. Aristotle could not bring himself to think of the world in abstract terms the way Plato did; above all else, Aristotle believed that the world could be understood at a fundamental level through the detailed observation and cataloguing of phenomenon. That is, knowledge, which is what the word science means, is fundamentally empirical. As a result of this belief, Aristotle literally wrote about everything: poetics, rhetoric, ethics, politics, meteorology, embryology, physics, mathematics, metaphysics, anatomy, physiology, logic, dreams, and so forth.

Aristotle was the first person to assert that nature is understandable. This tradition, opposed to the idea that nature is under the control of changeable divinity which are to be appeared rather than understood, is one of the roots of science. Aristotle also provides a good example of the way in which what one knows or believes influences the way one understands new information. His theory of motion flows from his understanding of matter as constituted of four elements: air, earth, fire, and water. Objects, being solid like earth, would tend to clump together with other solids - earth, so objects tend to fall to earth, their natural place and an object’s natural state is then at rest. Certainly, this explains a common observation. Falling is an example of a natural motion in Aristotle's scheme.
Aristotle described the relation between form and matter with the Four Causes:

(a) Material cause – the matter from which something is made;
(b) Formal cause – the design that shapes the material object;
(c) Efficient cause – the agent that produces the object; and
(d) Final cause – the direction toward which the object is tending.

Through these different forms, Aristotle demonstrated that matter was constantly in a process of change. He believed that God, the Ultimate Reality held all creation together.

Organisation was very important in Aristotle’s philosophy. It was his thought that human beings as rational creatures are fulfilling their purpose when they think and thinking are the highest characteristic. According to Aristotle, each thing had a purpose and education’s purpose was to develop the capacity for reasoning. Proper character was formed by following the “Golden Mean”, the path between extremes of the soul. Aristotle believed that a good education helps achieve the Golden Mean and thereby promotes harmony and balance of soul
and body. Aristotle spoke of three aspects of the soul: vegetative - brass, animative - silver, and rational - gold. Balance and moderation in all things was a key to a happy life. The body and mind were not in opposition, but by collecting data using the senses, reasoning was developed.

The importance of education in the philosophy of Aristotle was enormous, since the individual man could learn to use his reason to arrive at virtue, happiness, and political harmony only through the process of education. For Aristotle, the purpose of education is to produce a good man. Man is not good by nature so he must learn to control his animal activities through the use of reason. Only when man behaves by habit and reason, according to his nature as a rational being, he is capable of happiness. In short, education must aim at the development of the full potentialities of each man – man’s intellectual capacities to the fullest extent and individual’s body to its highest level of health and strength.

### 7.2.2 Religious Realism: Thomas Aquinas

Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274) was a priest of the Roman Catholic Church in the Dominican Order in Italy. He is also an immensely influential philosopher and theologian in the tradition of scholasticism, known as “Doctor Angelicus” and “Doctor Communis”. He is frequently referred to as Thomas since “Aquinas” refers to his residence rather than his surname. He was the foremost classical proponent of natural theology and the father of the Thomistic school of philosophy and theology.

The philosophy of Aquinas has exerted enormous influence on subsequent Christian theology, especially the Roman Catholic Church, and extending to Western philosophy in general. He stands as a vehicle and modifier of Aristotelianism, which he merged with the thought of Augustine. Aquinas believed “that for the knowledge of any truth whatsoever man needs divine help, that the intellect may be moved by God to its act”. Besides, he believed that human beings have the natural capacity to know many things without special divine revelation, even though such revelation occurs from time to time. Aquinas believed that truth is known through reason - the natural revelation and faith - the supernatural revelation. Supernatural revelation has its origin in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and is made available through the teaching of the prophets, summed up in Holy Scripture, and transmitted by the Magisterium, the sum of which is called “Tradition”. On the other hand, natural revelation is the truth available to all people through their human nature where certain truths all men can attain from correct human reasoning.

Thomism is the philosophical school that arose as a legacy of the work and thought of Thomas Aquinas where it is based on Summa Theologica meaning
“summary of theology”. Summa Theologica is arguably second only to the Bible in importance to the Roman Catholic Church, written from 1265 to 1274 is the most famous work of Thomas Aquinas. Although the book was never finished, it was intended as a manual for beginners as a compilation of all of the main theological teachings of that time. It summarises the reasoning for almost all points of Christian theology in the West. The Summa’s topics follow a cycle:

(a) the existence of God;
(b) God’s creation;
(c) Man;
(d) Man’s purpose;
(e) Christ;
(f) The Sacraments; and
(g) back to God.

In these works, faith and reason are harmonised into a grand theologico-philosophical system which inspired the medieval philosophical tradition known as Thomism and which has been favoured by the Roman Catholic church ever since. Aquinas made an important contribution to epistemology, recognising the central part played by sense perception in human cognition. It is through the senses that we first become acquainted with existent, material things. Thomas held that the relation of dependence of objects on something which transcends them is disclosed to the observer through the contemplation of material things. Just as our knowledge depends not on innate ideas but perceiving the material world, the same material world is dependent on a productive agent for its existence. Aquinas thought the proposition “everything which begins to exist through the agency of an already existent, extrinsic thing” to be a fact beyond doubt.

Moreover, in the Summa Theologica, Aquinas records his famous five ways which seek to prove the existence of God from the facts of change, causation, contingency, variation and purpose. These cosmological and teleological arguments can be neatly expressed in syllogistic form as below:

(i) Way 1

- The world is in motion or motus.
- All changes in the world are due to some prior cause.
- There must be a prior cause for this entire sequence of changes, that is, God.
(ii) Way 2
- The world is a sequence of events.
- Every event in the world has a cause.
- There must be a cause for the entire sequence of events, that is, God.

(iii) Way 3
- The world might not have been.
- Everything that exists in the world depends on some other thing for its existence.
- The world itself must depend upon some other thing for its existence, that is, God.

(iv) Way 4
- There are degrees of perfection in the world.
- Things are more perfect the closer they approach the maximum.
- There is a maximum perfection, that is, God.

(v) Way 5
- Each body has a natural tendency towards its goal.
- All order requires a designer.
- This end-directedness of natural bodies must have a designing force behind it.

Therefore each natural body has a designer, that is, God.

Thomas Aquinas tried to balance the philosophy of Aristotle with Christian ideas. He believed that truth was passed to humans by God through divine revelation, and that humans had the ability to seek out truth. Unlike Aristotle, Aquinas believed that the soul was not a biological entity, but an immortal creation from God. Because of this the soul has an inner knowledge that can be used to guide individuals in life. The path to the soul was through the physical senses and education should use this path to help students to progress from a lower to a higher form. He felt that knowledge gained from the senses leads to God and that education should focus on the physical and spiritual nature of individuals.
Aquinas’s realism came to the forefront because he held that human reality is not only spiritual or mental but also physical and natural. From the standpoint of a human teacher, the path to the soul lies through the physical senses, and education must use this path to accomplish learning. Proper instruction thus directs the learner to knowledge that leads to true being by progressing from a lower to a higher form. As knowledge can be gained from sense data, and it can lead one to God, provided the learner views it in the proper perspectives.

In view of education, Aquinas believed that the primary agencies of education are the family and the church; the state – or organised society – runs a poor third; the family and the church have an obligation to teach those things that relate to the unchanging principles of moral and divine law. In fact, Aquinas mentioned that the mother is the child’s first teacher, and because the child is moulded easily; it is the mother’s role to set the child’s moral tone; the church stands for the source of knowledge of the divine and should set the grounds for understanding God’s law. The state should formulate and enforce law on education, but it should not abridge the educational primacy of the home and church.

7.2.3 Modern Realism: Francis Bacon and John Locke

Modern realism began to develop because classical realism did not adequately include a method of inductive thinking. If the original premise or truth was incorrect, then there was a possibility of error in the logic of the rest of the thinking. Modern realists therefore believed that a process of deduction must be used to explain ideas. Of all the philosophers engaged in this effort, the two most outstanding did Francis Bacon and John Locke; where they were involved in developing systematic methods of thinking and ways to increase human understanding.
(a) **Francis Bacon**

Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626) was an English philosopher, statesman, scientist, lawyer, jurist, and author. He also served as a politician in the courts of Elizabeth I and James I. He was not a successful in his political efforts, but his record in the philosophical thought remained extremely influential through his work as a philosophical advocate and practitioner of the scientific revolution. He claimed to take all knowledge as his field of investigation. His most famous work is “Novum Organum”, which he challenged the Aristotelian logic.

![Figure 7.8: Francis Bacon (1561–1626)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Bacon)

The Novum Organum is a philosophical work by Francis Bacon published in 1620. This is a reference to Aristotle’s work Organon, which was his treatise on logic and syllogism. In Novum Organum, Bacon details a new system of logic he believes to be superior to the old ways of syllogism of Aristotle. In this work, we see the development of the “Baconian Method”, consisting of procedures for isolating the form, nature or cause of a phenomenon, employing the method of agreement, method of difference, and method of associated variation.

Bacon felt that the problem with religious realism was that it began with dogma or belief and then worked toward deducing conclusions. He felt that science could not work with this process because it was inappropriate and ineffective for the scientific process to begin with preconceived ideas. Bacon felt that developing effective means of inquiry was vital because knowledge was power that could be used to deal effectively with life. He therefore devised the inductive method of acquiring knowledge which begins with observations and then uses reasoning to make general statements or laws. Verification was needed before a judgment could be made. When data was collected, if contradictions were found, then the ideas would be discarded.
The “Baconian Method” consists of procedures for isolating the form nature, or cause, of a phenomenon, including the method of agreement, method of difference, and method of concomitant or associated variation. Bacon suggests that we draw up a list of all things in which the phenomenon we are trying to explain occurs, as well as a list of things in which it does not occur. Then, we rank the lists according to the degree in which the phenomenon occurs in each one. After that, we should be able to deduce what factors match the occurrence of the phenomenon in one list and do not occur in the other list, and also what factors change in accordance with the way the data had been ranked. From this, Bacon concludes that we should be able to deduce by elimination and inductive reasoning what is the cause underlying the phenomenon.

Because of the scientific or inductive approach uncover many errors in propositions that were taken for granted originally. Bacon urged that people should re-examine all previously accepted knowledge. At the least, he considered that people should attempt to get rid off the various “idols” in their mind before which they bow down and that cloud their thinking. Bacon identified the “idols”, called the “Idols of the Mind”; where he described these as things which obstructed the path of correct scientific reasoning:

(i) Idols of the Tribe (Idola Tribus): This is humans' tendency to perceive more order and regularity in systems than truly exists, and is due to people following their preconceived ideas about things.

(ii) Idols of the Cave or Den (Idola Specus): This is due to individuals' personal weaknesses in reasoning due to particular personalities, likes and dislikes. For instance, a woman had several bad experiences with men with moustaches, thus she might conclude that all moustached men are bad; this is a clear case of faulty generalisation.

(iii) Idols of the Marketplace (Idola Fori): This is due to confusions in the use of language and taking some words in science to have a different meaning than their common usage. For example, such words as liberal and conservative might have little meaning when applied to people because a person could be liberal on one issue and conservative on another.

(iv) Idols of the Theatre (Idola Theatri): This is due to using philosophical systems which have incorporated mistaken methods. Bacon insisted on housekeeping of the mind, in which we should break away from the dead ideas of the past and begin again by using the method of induction.

Bacon did not propose an actual philosophy, but rather a method of developing philosophy. He wrote that, although philosophy at the time used the deductive
syllogism to interpret nature, the philosopher should instead proceed through inductive reasoning from fact to axiom to law.

(b) **John Locke**
John Locke (1632 - 1704) was an English philosopher. Locke is considered the first of the British empiricists. His ideas had enormous influence on the development of epistemology and political philosophy, and he is widely regarded as one of the most influential Enlightenment thinkers, classical republicans, and contributors to liberal theory. Surprisingly, Locke’s writings influenced Voltaire and Rousseau, many Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, as well as the American revolutionaries. This influence is reflected in the American Declaration of Independence.

![Figure 7.9: John Locke (1632 - 1704)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Locke)

John Locke sought to explain how we develop knowledge. He attempted a rather modest philosophical task: “to clear the ground of some of the rubbish” that deter people from gaining knowledge. He was trying to do away with thought of what Bacon called “idols”.

Some Thoughts Concerning Education is a 1693 discourse on education written by John Locke. For over a century, it was the most important philosophical work on education in Britain. It was translated into almost all of the major written European languages during the eighteenth century, and nearly every European writer on education after Locke, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau, acknowledged its influence. He believed that education makes the man; as Locke writes at the opening of his treatise, “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”. He further explains how to educate that mind using three distinct methods: the development of a healthy body; the formation of a virtuous character; and the choice of an appropriate academic curriculum.

In Locke’s Essay Concerning Human Understanding, wrote in 1690, Locke outlined a new theory of mind, contending that the child’s mind was a “tabula
rasa” or “blank slate” or “empty mind”; that is, it did not contain any innate or inborn ideas. In describing the mind in these terms, Locke was drawing on Plato’s Theatetus, which suggests that the mind is like a “wax tablet”. Although Locke argued vigorously for the tabula rasa theory of mind, he nevertheless did believe in innate talents and interests. For example, he advises parents to watch their children carefully in order to discover their “aptitudes”, and to nurture their children’s own interests rather than force them to participate in activities which they dislike. John Locke believed that the mind was a blank slate at birth; information and knowledge were added through experience, perception, and reflection. He felt that “what we know is what we experience”. Locke believed that play was very important in learning and stressed the importance of age appropriate readiness to receive certain concepts of learning. He thought that teachers shouldn’t push children beyond their natural inclinations and should make lessons interesting and rewarding. The focus of Locke’s curriculum was on educating the total child. He felt that reading instruction should begin as soon as a child was talking.

Another Locke most important contribution to eighteenth-century educational theory also stems from his theory of the self. He writes: “the little and almost insensible impressions on our tender infancies have very important and lasting consequences”. That is, the “associations of ideas” made when young are more significant than those made when mature because they are the foundation of the self - they mark the tabula rasa.

### 7.2.4 Contemporary Realism: Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell

Contemporary realism developed around the twentieth century due to “concerns with science and scientific problems of a philosophical nature” (Ozmon and Carver, 2008). Two outstanding figures in the twentieth century of contemporary realism were Alfred Norton Whitehead and Bertrand Russell.

(a) **Alfred North Whitehead**

Alfred North Whitehead (1861 – 1947) was an English mathematician who became a philosopher. He wrote on algebra, logic, foundations of mathematics, philosophy of science, physics, metaphysics, and education. He co-authored the epochal Principia Mathematica with Bertrand Russell.

While Thomas Aquinas tried to balance the ideas of Aristotle with the ideas of the Church, Alfred North Whitehead tried to balance the ideas of realism with the ideas of idealism. He felt that philosophy was a search for patterns with pattern being similar to form as described by Aristotle. Whitehead did not believe in gaining knowledge just for the sake of knowledge, but
gaining ideas connected with the experience. He felt that curriculum should not be taught just because it was taught in the past. According to Whitehead ideas should be learned in a practical and useful context.

Figure 7.10: Alfred North Whitehead (1861 – 1947)
Source: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/whitehead/#WPI

The Principia Mathematica is a three-volume work on the foundations of mathematics, written by Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell and was published in 1910, 1912, and 1913. It is an attempt to derive all mathematical truths from a well-defined set of axioms and inference rules in symbolic logic. The Principia is widely considered by specialists in the subject to be one of the most important and seminal works in mathematical logic and philosophy since Aristotle's Organon. Logicism, the theory that mathematics is in some important sense reducible to logic, consists of two main theses. Firstly, all mathematical truths can be translated into logical truths or, in other words, that the vocabulary of mathematics constitutes a proper subset of the vocabulary of logic. The second is that all mathematical proofs can be recast as logical proofs or, in other words, that the theorems of mathematics constitute a proper subset of the theorems of logic.

Whitehead’s philosophical influence can be felt in all three of the main areas in which he worked - logic and the foundations of mathematics, the philosophy of science, and metaphysics, as well as in other areas such as ethics, education and religion. Whitehead was interested in actively “utilising the knowledge and skills that were taught to students to a particular end”. He believed we should aim at “producing men who possess both culture and expert knowledge in some special direction”. He even thought that, “education has to impart an intimate sense for the power and beauty of ideas coupled with structure for ideas together with a particular body of knowledge, which has peculiar reference to the life of being possessing it”.

Bertrand Arthur William Russell

Bertrand Arthur William Russell, a British mathematician and philosopher had embraced materialism in his early writing career. Russell earned his reputation as a distinguished thinker by his work in mathematics and logic. In 1903 he published “The Principles of Mathematics” and by 1913 he and Alfred North Whitehead had published the three volumes of Principia Mathematica. The research, which Russell did during this period, establishes him as one of the founding fathers of modern analytical philosophy; discussing towards mathematical quantification as the basis of philosophical generalisation.

Russell appears to have discovered his paradox in the late spring of 1901, while working on his Principles of Mathematics of 1903. Russell’s paradox is the most famous of the logical or set-theoretical paradoxes. The paradox arises within naive set theory by considering the set of all sets that are not members of themselves. Such a set appears to be a member of itself if and only if it is not a member of itself, hence the paradox. For instance, some sets, such as the set of all teacups, are not members of themselves; other sets, such as the set of all non-teacups, are members of themselves. If we call the set of all sets that are not members of themselves: “R”. If R is a member of itself, then by definition it must not be a member of itself. Similarly, if R is not a member of itself, then by definition it must be a member of itself. The paradox has prompted much work in logic, set theory and the philosophy and foundations of mathematics. The significance of Russell’s paradox can be seen once it is realised that, using classical logic, all sentences follow from a contradiction.

Bertrand Russell is considered to be one of the most significant educational innovators of his time. In his influential and controversial work, Russell calls for an education that would liberate the child from unthinking obedience to parental and religious authority. He argues that if the basis of all education is knowledge manipulated by love then society can be transformed.
PRAGMATISM

The root of the word pragmatism is a Greek word meaning “work”. According to pragmatism, the truth or meaning of an idea or a proposition lies in its observable practical consequences rather than anything metaphysical. It can be summarised by the phrase “whatever works, is likely true.” Because reality changes, “whatever works” will also change - thus, truth must also be changeable and no one can claim to possess any final or ultimate truth. In other word, pragmatism is the philosophy that encourages us to seek out the processes and do things that work best to help us achieve desirable ends (Ozmon and Craver, 2008).

Pragmatism is also a practical, matter-of-fact way of approaching or assessing situations or of solving problems. However, we might wonder why people insist on doing things and using processes that do not work. Several true reasons for this to happened is because the weight of the customs and tradition, fear and apathy, and the fact that habitual ways of thinking and doing seem to work even though they have lost use in today’s world.

Although pragmatism as a philosophical movement began in the United States of America in the late 1800s, but it roots can be traced back to British, European, and the ancient Greek philosophical traditions. One important element of this tradition is the development of world-view with regards to scientific revolution. The “questioning” attitudes cultivated by the Enlightenment and the development of a more naturalistic humanism also have outgrows this movement. The background of pragmatism can be found in the works of such people like Francis Bacon and John Locke.

7.3.1 Centrality of Experience: Francis Bacon and John Locke

Human experience is an important ingredient of pragmatist philosophy. John Locke talked about the mind as a “tabula rasa” and the world of experience as the verification of thought, or in other words: the mind is a tabula rasa at birth; world of experience verify’s thought. Another philosopher, Rousseau followed Locke’s idea but with an expansion of the “centrality of experience” as the basis for a philosophical belief. Rousseau saw people as basically good but corrupted by civilisation. If we would avoid that corruption then we should focus on the educational connection between nature and experience by building the education of our youth around the youths’ natural inquisitiveness while attending to their physiological, psychological and, social developmental stages.
Locke believed that as people have more experiences, they have more ideas imprinted on the mind and more with which to relate. However, he argued that one could have false ideas as well as true ones. The only way people can be sure of their ideas are correct is by verifying them in the world of experience, such as physical proof.

Consequently, Locke emphasised the idea of placing children in the most desirable environment for their education and pointed out the importance of environment in making people who they are. Nevertheless, Locke’s notion of experience contained internal flaw and caused difficulties. His firmness that mind is a tabula rasa established mind as a passive, malleable instrument buffeted by a muddle conflict of impressions received through senses. When carried to its logical conclusion, Locke’s notion leads to separation of mind from body, with the result that one can know only ideas.

### 7.3.2 Science and Society: Auguste Comte, Charles Darwin, and John Dewey

Bridging the transition between the Age of Enlightenment and the Modern Age, Auguste Comte (1798 – 1857) and Charles Darwin (1809 – 1882) shared a belief that science could have a profound and positive effect on society. Comte’s commitment to the use of science to address the ills of society resulted in the study of sociology. The effects of Charles Darwin and his five years aboard the HMS Beagle are still echoing throughout the world of religion and education. Basically, Comte talked on use of science to solve social problems in sociology and was very much influenced by John Dewey’s (1859 – 1952) ideas regarding the role of science in society. While Darwin initiate “Origin of the Species”; nature operates by process of development without predetermined directions or ends, reality not found in being but becoming, and promoted pragmatist view that education tied directly to biological and social development.

![Figure 7.12: From Left: Auguste Comte, Charles Darwin, and John Dewey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/)
Auguste Comte was a French philosopher and one of the founders of sociology and positivism. He is responsible for the coining and introduction of the term altruism. Altruism is an ethical doctrine that holds that individuals have a moral obligation to help, serve, or benefit others, if necessary at the sacrifice of self interest. Auguste Comte's version of altruism calls for living for the sake of others. One who holds to either of these ethics is known as an "altruist." One universal law that Comte saw at work in all sciences where he called it the “law of three phases”. It is by his statement of this law that he is best known in the English-speaking world; namely, that society has gone through three phases: theological, metaphysical, and scientific. In Comte’s lifetime, his work was sometimes viewed sceptically, with perceptions that he had elevated “positivism” to a religion and had named himself the Pope of Positivism. Comte’s emphasis on the interconnectedness of social elements was a forerunner of modern functionalism. His emphasis on a quantitative, mathematical basis for decision-making, remains with us today. It is a foundation of the modern notion of positivism, modern quantitative statistical analysis, and business decision-making. His description of the continuing cyclical relationship between theory and practice is seen in modern business systems of Total Quality Management and Continuous Quality Improvement where advocates describe a continuous cycle of theory and practice through the four-part cycle of plan, do, check, and act. Despite his advocacy of quantitative analysis, Comte saw a limit in its ability to help explain social phenomena.

Darwin coined the idea that “nature is in process without some preconceived or predetermined end, redefined reality as a state of becoming, not a state of being”. Darwin gave credence to the idea that education should be tied directly to biological and social development by demonstrating that the process of becoming was subject to external forces. It should be remembered that during this time period, the world was beginning to experience the effects of industrialisation. A significant decline in agricultural occupations and an increase in the opportunities for travel and more open commerce between nations led to the expansion of the middle class and a change in the daily lives of the world’s population. Political power was shifting; money became more important than any previous period of time because the opportunity to provide for the family was not a matter of growing more food but of earning more money to buy food. Modern times brought difficulties that were not previously experienced.

Charles Darwin’s wrote the “On the Origin of Species”, published in 1859, is a seminal work of scientific literature considered to be the foundation of evolutionary biology. The full title was “On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life”. For the sixth edition of 1872, the short title was changed to “The Origin of
Species”. Darwin’s book introduced the theory that populations evolve over the course of generations through a process of natural selection, and presented a body of evidence that the diversity of life arose through a branching pattern of evolution and common descent. He included evidence that he had accumulated on the voyage of the Beagle in the 1830s, and his subsequent findings from research, correspondence, and experimentation.

Various evolutionary ideas had already been proposed to explain new findings in biology. There was growing support for such ideas among protestor anatomists and the general public, but during the first half of the 19th century the English scientific establishment was closely tied to the Church of England, while science was part of natural theology. Ideas about the transmutation of species were controversial as they conflicted with the beliefs that species were unchanging parts of a designed hierarchy and that humans were unique, unrelated to animals. The political and theological implications were intensely debated, but transmutation was not accepted by the scientific mainstream. The book was written to be read by non-specialists and attracted widespread interest on its publication. As Darwin was a well-known scientist, his findings were taken seriously and the evidence he presented generated scientific, philosophical, and religious discussion. Darwin’s concept of evolutionary adaptation through natural selection became central to modern evolutionary theory, now the unifying concept of the life sciences.

On the other hand, Dewey attempted to create a philosophy that captured and reflected the influences of the contemporary world on the preparation of the future leaders through the educational system. The reliance on the source of knowledge has to be tempered by an understanding of the societal effects if the learning was to be meaningful, beneficial, or productive. John Dewey discussed the Nature of Experience; experience and nature are not two different things separated from each other, rather experience itself is of nature: experience is and of nature.

Dewey viewed method, rather than abstract answer, as a central concern, thought that modern industrial society has submerged both individuality and sociality. He defined individuality as the interplay of personal choice and freedom with objective condition. Whereas sociality refers to milieu or medium conducive to individual development.

Moreover, Dewey believed that most religions have a negative effect because they tend to classify people. Dewey thought that two schools of social and religious reform exist: one holds that people must be constantly watched, guided and controlled to see that they stay on the right path and the other holds that people will control their own actions intelligently. Dewey also believed that a
truly aesthetic experience is one in which people are unified with their activity. Finally, Dewey stated that we should project art into all human activities, such as, the art of politics and the art of education.

### SELF-CHECK 7.2
(a) How is pragmatism similar and different from idealism and realism? Explain.
(b) Discuss your thoughts about why pragmatism is seen as most effective in a democratic society.
(c) Compare and contrast Dewey’s philosophical thoughts with your society’s approach and your own.

#### 7.4 IDEALISM, REALISM, AND PRAGMATISM AND ITS CRITIQUE IN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Developing a philosophical perspective on education is not easy. However, it is very important if a person wants to become a more effective professional educator. A sound philosophical perspective helps one sees the interaction among students, curriculum, and aims and goals of education of various type of philosophy in achieving a teacher personal and professional undertakings.

### 7.4.1 Idealism in Philosophy of Education

Idealism as a philosophy had its greatest impact during the nineteenth century. Its influence in today’s world is less important than it has been in the past. Much of what we know as idealism today was influenced by German ideas of idealism. The main tenant of idealism is that ideas and knowledge are the truest reality. Many things in the world change, but ideas and knowledge are enduring. Idealism was often referred to as “idea-ism”. Idealists believe that ideas can change lives. The most important part of a person is the mind. It is to be nourished and developed.

Table 7.1 discuss the aims of education, methods of education, curriculum, role of teacher, and critique for idealism in philosophy of education:
### Table 7.1: Idealism in Philosophy of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aims of Education</th>
<th>Emphasis is placed on developing the mind, personal discipline, and character development. A person should be literate and of good moral character.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Methods of Education</td>
<td>Idealist education involves depth of learning, a holistic approach that involves teaching the whole rather than its parts. The best method of learning for Plato was the dialectic, a process where ideas are put into battle against each other, with the most significant idea winning the battle. Knowledge was not important just for the material needs that it met. The idealist is not concerned with turning out students with technical skills so much as having students with a broad view and understanding of the world in which they live. Self realisation and self education are very important in idealism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>The important factor in education at any level for idealists is teaching children to think. Teachers should help students to explore texts for ideas about the purposes of life, family and the nature of peer pressures, and the problems of growing up. Idealists believe that ideas can change lives and that classical literature can be used and explored to help solve problems in today’s world. Creativity will be encouraged when students immerse themselves in the creative thinking of others and when they are encouraged to reflect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Teacher</td>
<td>Since idealists believe in character development, they also believe that the teacher should be a role model for students to emulate. Teaching is considered a moral calling. The teacher’s role is to be a skilful questioner who encourages students to think and ask more questions in an environment that is suitable for learning. While the lecture method is still important in an idealist’s education system, it is considered more of a way to convey information and to help students comprehend ideas. Since teachers cannot always be present when learning occurs, they must attempt to stimulate students so that learning occurs even when they are not present. Project based learning is an example of a self directed learning activity where learning can occur without a teacher’s presence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critiques</td>
<td>Idealism has been influential in education for a considerable amount of time. It is considered a conservative philosophy because of its emphasis in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
preserving cultural traditions. The strengths of idealism include encouraging thinking and cognition, promoting cultural learning, and providing for character development of students. Teachers are considered valuable parts of the educational process who should strive to provide a comprehensive, systematic, and holistic approach to learning that stresses self realisation. Today, science has challenged idealism and brought about challenges to idealistic principles. Science is based on hypothesis and tentativeness, but idealism promotes a finished and absolute universe waiting to be discovered. Idealism has often been linked with traditional religion. The weakening of religion has led to the weakening of idealism as a philosophy. Through Plato’s ruler kings, and Augustine’s emphasis on the monastic life, it has been said that idealism leads to intellectual elitism. In the past, education was considered important for the upper classes of society, marking education as a luxury. Vocational and technical studies were considered good enough for the general public. Idealistic education was considered bookish and lacking relevance. It is argued that the character development aspect of the philosophy involved conformity and subservience on the part of the learner. This type of character development was considered to stifle creativity and self direction, making students naive and ready to accept ideas without serious examination.

Source: http://pangea.tec.selu.edu/~vmartinez/ETEC644/philosophy_idealism_martinez.doc.

7.4.2 Realism in Philosophy of Education

According to Ozmon and Craver (2008) “the central thread of realism is the principal of independence.” The world of ideas and matter defined in idealism by Plato and Socrates do not exist separately and apart from each other for realists. They contend that material things can exist whether or not there is a human being around to appreciate or perceive them.

Table 7.2 discuss the aims of education, methods of education, curriculum, role of teacher, and critique for realism in philosophy of education:
### Table 7.2: Realism in Philosophy of Education

| Aims of Education | Educational aims are viewed from two perspectives: religious realism and secular realism. The religious realist believed that matter was not important unless it led to something else. For example, not only looking at a rock’s physical characteristics, but also using that information to lead to more philosophical questions such as its beginnings and purpose. Religious realists believe that God created the universe out of nothing, giving it order, and people could get to know God by studying the universe. Secular realists believed in understanding the material world through methods of rigorous inquiry. They promoted the study of science and scientific inquiry with the beliefs that people needed to know about the world in order to promote their survival. Self preservation was the aim of education. Students needed to be equipped with basics in a nononsense approach. The basics also included a moral education. They felt that learned information should be useful and practical, developing rational abilities to their fullest for the achievement of a good life. |
| Methods of Education | Secular realists believe that schools should teach fundamental facts about the universe in ways that make learning interesting and enjoyable. They place much emphasis on critical reasoning which is assisted by observation and experimentation. Realists believe that self realisation is valuable and that it occurs best when students are able to obtain knowledge of the external world by the didactic method and other methods of learning. Regardless of the method, however, realists felt it should be organised and systemic. Locke believed that play was very important in learning and stressed the importance of age appropriate readiness to receive certain concepts of learning. |
Curriculum | Realists agree that the educational curriculum should be practical and useful.
---|---
Role of Teacher | They believe that the role of the teacher is that of a person who provides the basics in a fun and interesting way. The basics should include practical studies like reading, writing, drawing, geography, astronomy, and math, with additional physical activities. Many experiences should be provided since children are blank slates coming to school ready to receive information. Most realists believe that children should have a positive learning climate and be provided with rewards as a motivation for learning. The realist’s curriculum tends to be one that emphasizes mental and physical development in a very organised and systematic approach.
Critiques | According to Ozmon and Carver (2008), realism appears primarily in times of trouble, but was brought into focus more by the advancement of industry and technology. Although classical and religious realists promote the development of morals and character, many other critics say that scientific realists are too materialistic and “biased toward social control and social order”. In some countries, a realist outlook has been used to support totalitarian regimes, religious systems, and other worldviews that seem to seek over riding, controlling authority. Realists seem very concerned with testing and having students measure up to certain standards. The result of this approach is the development of a very rigid curriculum that focuses on preparing students for taking a test which is scientific and fact based. In one sense, getting through the test itself is preparation for survival.

Source: [http://pangea.tec.selu.edu/~vmartinez/ETEC644/philosophy_realism_martinez.doc](http://pangea.tec.selu.edu/~vmartinez/ETEC644/philosophy_realism_martinez.doc)

### 7.4.3 Pragmatism in Philosophy of Education

Pragmatism is basically an American philosophy, but has its roots in European thinking. Pragmatists believe that ideas are tools that can be used to cope with the world. They believe that educators should seek out new process, incorporate traditional and contemporary ideas, or create new ideas to deal with the changing world. There is a great deal of stress placed on sensitivity to
consequences, but are quick to state that consideration should be given to the method of arriving at the consequences. The means to solving a problem is as important as the end. The scientific method is important in the thinking process for pragmatists, but it was not to seem like sterile lab thinking. Pragmatists want to apply the scientific method for the greater good of the world. They believe that although science has caused many problems in our world, it can still be used to benefit mankind.

However, the progressive pragmatic movement believed in separating children by intelligence and ability in order to meet the needs of society. The softer side of that philosophy believed in giving children a great deal of freedom to explore, leading many people to label the philosophy of pragmatism in education as permissive.

Table 7.3 discuss the aims of education, methods of education, curriculum, role of teacher, and critique for pragmatism in philosophy of education:

Table 7.3: Pragmatism in Philosophy of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pragmatism in Philosophy of Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aims of Education</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>According to Dewey, education was a preparation for life that allowed cultures to survive over time and that allowed all individuals to have the fullest life possible in a social environment using democratic ideals. He felt that educators should be as interested in the interests of children as they were in the environments from which they were coming. Education according to Dewey is a social process that should be flexible and always have an objective in mind. The aim of education is the growth in the ability to learn from experience and to make good decisions based on that experience because humankind is ultimately responsible for bringing order to the universe. Education should be a process that looks at the past for guidance, choosing the ideas that work and apply for the situations of today, solving problems intelligently rather than automatically relying on tradition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methods of Education</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pragmatism encourage a curriculum that is flexible and open-ended, involving cross curricula project based activities which involve the application of all subject matter. It is an action based philosophy which would include using multiple methods of educating students, some of which involve going into the community or involving community members. Teachers need to be concerned with teaching children how to solve real life problems in a practical setting. This philosophy advocates meeting the needs and interests of individual children through a directed approach. Experimentation is basic, leading to problems which children must learn to solve.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Curriculum

The curriculum focuses on learning experiences in a syllabus that is diversified and problem centred, not fragmented or compartmentalized. All learning starts with a problem or question that allows students to search for answers according to interests and abilities that may involve working alone, or in group. Use of a wide variety of resources from traditional to modern, is encouraged with students identifying those resources which are best suited for the project at hand.

Role of Teacher

According to Dewey, learning was essential for the continuation of society, which would make the job of the teacher quite significant. Pragmatists believe that people learn through informal processes, but these processes must have a purpose and a flexible plan of action. The teacher’s job is to provide an open-ended opportunity for study in an environment that allows the child to think and act intelligently in order to test ideas and skills. All children do not learn in the same way or at the same rate, so teachers are the guides to the learning process, which meets children at their level of ability. In that respect, teachers must have sufficient knowledge of a subject to be able to break it down into parts for students to study, and they must be able to link the learning to a motivation and natural curiosity that the children already possess. It is also important for teachers to also understand the background and environment that learners are bringing to school so that they can make suggestions and arouse student interests in order to help them grow by leading them into new areas of knowledge.

Critiques

One criticism of the pragmatist philosophy of education is that it dilutes the curriculum by incorporating pieces of each discipline or subject area without exploring any of them in detail. It is also often said that this philosophy rejects traditional values for values that are uncertain or impermanent. However, the pragmatist believes that traditional methods that work should be kept and those that do not should be replaced. Sometimes the replacement process involves experimenting with new ideas and processes. The teacher who teaches in a pragmatist curriculum must be an extremely capable and organised person who is able to think spontaneously and possess a wide base of knowledge. In the past, many teachers were not well trained enough to be able to support this concept adequately. Because of the idea that the curriculum should be centred on the interests of children, pragmatists are also often charged with being too permissive with children.

Source: http://pangea.tec.selu.edu/~vmartinez/ETEC644/philosophy_pragmatism_martinez.doc.
TOPIC 7  IDEALISM, REALISM, AND PRAGMATISM IN EDUCATION

Basically, there are three general or world philosophies that are idealism, realism, and pragmatism.

Idealism is the philosophical theory that maintains that the ultimate nature of reality is based on mind or ideas. It holds that the so-called external or “real world” is inseparable from mind, consciousness, or perception.

Platonic idealism says that there exists a perfect realm of form and ideas and our world merely contains shadows of that realm; only ideas can be known or have any reality.

Religious idealism argues that all knowledge originates in perceived phenomena which have been organized by categories.

Modern idealism says that all objects are identical with some idea and the ideal knowledge is itself the system of ideas.

Platonic idealism usually refers to Plato’s theory of forms or doctrine of ideas. Plato held the realm of ideas to be absolute reality. Plato’s method was the dialectic method – all thinking begins with a thesis; as exemplified in the Socratic dialogues.

Augustine discussed the universe as being divided into the City of God and The City of Man.

Augustine believed that faith-based knowledge is determined by the church and all true knowledge came from God.

Descartes was convinced that science and mathematics could be used to explain everything in nature, so he was the first to describe the physical universe in terms of matter and motion – seeing the universe as a giant mathematically designed engine.

Kant held that the most interesting and useful varieties of human knowledge rely upon synthetic a priori judgments, which are, in turn, possible only when the mind determines the conditions of its own experience.

Which of the philosophy is most compatible with your beliefs as an educator? Why?

SELF-CHECK 7.3
• Kant’s philosophy of education involved some aspects of character education. He believed in the importance of treating each person as an end and not as a means.

• Hegel developed a concept of mind or spirit that manifested itself in a set of contradictions and oppositions that it ultimately integrated and united, such as those between nature and freedom, and immanence and transcendence, without eliminating either pole or reducing it to the other.

• “Hegelianism” is a collective term for schools of thought following Hegel’s philosophy which can be summed up by the saying that “the rational alone is real”, which means that all reality is capable of being expressed in rational categories.

• The most central thread of realism is the principal or thesis of independence. This thesis holds that reality, knowledge, and value exist independently of the human mind.

• Aristotle believed that the world could be understood at a fundamental level through the detailed observation and cataloguing of phenomenon.

• Aquinas believed that truth is known through reason - the natural revelation and faith - the supernatural revelation.

• Thomism is the philosophical school that arose as a legacy of the work and thought of Thomas Aquinas where it is based on Summa Theologica meaning “summary of theology”.

• Aquinas mentioned that the mother is the child’s first teacher, and because the child is moulded easily; it is the mother’s role to set the child’s moral tone; the church stands for the source of knowledge of the divine and should set the grounds for understanding God’s law. The state should formulate and enforce law on education.

• Bacon devised the inductive method of acquiring knowledge which begins with observations and then uses reasoning to make general statements or laws. Verification was needed before a judgment could be made. When data was collected, if contradictions were found, then the ideas would be discarded.

• The “Baconian Method” consists of procedures for isolating the form nature, or cause, of a phenomenon, including the method of agreement, method of difference, and method of concomitant or associated variation.

• Bacon identified the “idols”, called the “Idols of The Mind”; where he described these as things which obstructed the path of correct scientific reasoning.
- John Locke sought to explain how we develop knowledge. He attempted a rather modest philosophical task: “to clear the ground of some of the rubbish” that deter people from gaining knowledge. He was trying to do away with thought of what Bacon called “idols”.

- Locke outlined a new theory of mind, contending that the child’s mind was a “*tabula rasa*” or “blank slate” or “empty mind”; that is, it did not contain any innate or inborn ideas.

- Whitehead was interested in actively “utilising the knowledge and skills that were taught to students to a particular end”. He believed we should aim at “producing men who possess both culture and expert knowledge in some special direction”.

- Russell, one of the founding fathers of modern analytical philosophy; discussing towards mathematical quantification as the basis of philosophical generalisation.

- Russell’s paradox is the most famous of the logical or set-theoretical paradoxes. The paradox arises within naive set theory by considering the set of all sets that are not members of themselves. Such a set appears to be a member of itself if and only if it is not a member of itself, hence the paradox.

- Pragmatism is a practical, matter-of-fact way of approaching or assessing situations or of solving problems.

- Human experience is an important ingredient of pragmatist philosophy.

- John Locke talked about the mind as a “*tabula rasa*” and the world of experience as the verification of thought, or in other words: the mind is a *tabula rasa* at birth; world of experience verify’s thought.

- Rousseau followed Locke’s idea but with an expansion of the “centrality of experience” as the basis for a philosophical belief. Rousseau saw people as basically good but corrupted by civilization. If we would avoid that corruption then we should focus on the educational connection between nature and experience by building the education of our youth around the youths’ natural inquisitiveness while attending to their physiological, psychological and, social developmental stages.

- Locke believed that as people have more experiences, they have more ideas imprinted on the mind and more with which to relate.

- Comte is responsible for the coining and introduction of the term altruism. Altruism is an ethical doctrine that holds that individuals have a moral obligation to help, serve, or benefit others, if necessary at the sacrifice of self interest.
• One universal law that Comte saw at work in all sciences where he called it the “law of three phases”. It is by his statement of this law that he is best known in the English-speaking world; namely, that society has gone through three phases: theological, metaphysical, and scientific.

• Darwin coined the idea that “nature is in process without some preconceived or predetermined end, redefined reality as a state of becoming, not a state of being”. Darwin gave credence to the idea that education should be tied directly to biological and social development by demonstrating that the process of becoming was subject to external forces.

• Dewey attempted to create a philosophy that captured and reflected the influences of the contemporary world on the preparation of the future leaders through the educational system. The reliance on the source of knowledge has to be tempered by an understanding of the societal effects if the learning was to be meaningful, beneficial, or productive.

• John Dewey discussed the Nature of Experience; experience and nature are not two different things separated from each other, rather experience itself is of nature: experience is and of nature.

• Idealists believe that ideas can change lives. The most important part of a person is the mind. It is to be nourished and developed.

• The world of ideas and matter defined in idealism by Plato and Socrates do not exist separately and apart from each other for realists. They contend that material things can exist whether or not there is a human being around to appreciate or perceive them.

• They believe that educators should seek out new process, incorporate traditional and contemporary ideas, or create new ideas to deal with the changing world.
### KEY TERMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absolute idealism</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absolute reality</td>
<td>Law of Three Phases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolute spirit</td>
<td>Law of nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolute truth</td>
<td>Logic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstraction</td>
<td>Material cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altruism</td>
<td>Mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical philosophy</td>
<td>Modern idealism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aristotelian realism</td>
<td>Modern realism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A priori</td>
<td>Natural revelation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A posteriori</td>
<td>Nature of experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baconian method</td>
<td>Platonic idealism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blank slate</td>
<td>Platonism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centrality of experience</td>
<td>Positivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character education</td>
<td>Pragmatism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of God</td>
<td>Perceived phenomena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Man</td>
<td>Rationality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cogitatio</td>
<td>Reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective mental faculties of sociology</td>
<td>Realism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary realism</td>
<td>Realm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialectic</td>
<td>Real world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empiricism</td>
<td>Religious idealism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empty mind</td>
<td>Rusell’s paradox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existence</td>
<td>Socratic dialogues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final cause</td>
<td>Supernatural revelation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal cause</td>
<td>Syllogism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form and Ideas</td>
<td>Tabula rasa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hegelianism  
Human experience  
Idealism  
Ideas  
Idols of the Mind  
Immortality  
Inductive method  
Theory of motion  
Truth  
Ultimate reality  
World of ideas  
World of matter

**REFERENCES**


Introduction

When it comes to teaching our students, what aspects will you bring into the classroom? What are some of the qualities that will help shape the way you teach your students? As a teacher, it is beneficial for you to have a firm knowledge of philosophy in education. Your views on such a topic will greatly affect the way you teach your students.

This topic discusses different types of educational philosophies that can used in the classroom, where they originated, how best to use them in your classroom, and which philosophies are best used in different types of learning scenarios. From each type of philosophy learned (reconstructionism, behaviourism, and existentialism), one can begin to organize his or her own personal educational philosophy. Educating yourself in the different types of educational philosophy is one step towards assuring that your teaching becomes more effective.
Reconstructionism is a philosophical theory holding that societies should continually reform themselves in order to establish more perfect governments or social networks, thus social questions will emerge as there are quests to create a better society and worldwide democracy. Reconstructionism is an ideology that emphasizes the importance of changing for the better.

In other words, reconstructionism is a philosophy that centers on the idea of constant change. To a reconstructionist, the world is a ceaselessly evolving whole and its inhabitants need to ceaselessly evolve themselves in order to cope with the situations around them. Reconstructionism sharply contrasts with idealist theories, which reconstructionists regard as reflective theories that mirror inherited social patterns and values. Simply stated, the major premises of reconstructionism are:

- Society is in need of constant reconstruction or change; and
- Such social change involves a reconstruction of education and the use of education in reconstructing society.

Reconstructionists encourage others to make necessary changes that will be beneficial to their future. These are positive changes that will help make life better and solve social problems. These changes are completed through a systematic outlook called the reconstructionist philosophy. However, the reconstructionist philosophy is not a philosophy in the traditional sense of the word since it does not seek to make detailed epistemological or logical studies. Reconstructionism is more concerned with the broad social and cultural fabric in which humans exist. As a result, reconstructionist philosophy should be seen as a purely social philosophy. For example, reconstructionist educators focus on a curriculum that highlights social reform as the aim of education. Leading exponents of reconstructionism include George S. Counts and Theodore Brameld.
Reconstructionist ideas in one form or another have existed throughout history. In his book, The Republic, Plato forms a plan for a just state in which education is the building material for a new and better society. Equally, Augustine, a Christian philosopher, preached reconstructionist reforms to make possible an ideal Christian state. Robert Owen and Edward Bellamy were a part of the Industrial Revolution and appreciated the use of technology to improve humanity throughout the world other than as a means of producing wealth. Karl Marx received a doctorate in philosophy yet wrote extensively on economics and history. According to Marx, education has long been used to manipulate people into accepting the attitudes of the ruling class. However, the “hidden curriculum” in school life can be used to overthrow the interests of the ruling class. “Hidden curriculum” is defined as all activities that go on as students learn subject matter, and the “lessons” that those other activities convey about the value and the meaning of what the students are learning. John Dewey saw education as a tool for immediate and continuous change of individuals and societies. During the 1920s and 1930s, his philosophy became identified with radical social reform and directions.

### 8.1.1 Theodore Brameld

A philosopher and visionary educator who developed the reconstructionist philosophy of education, Theodore Brameld (1904 - 1987) spent a lifetime working for personal and cultural transformation through education (please refer to Figure 8.1). Much influenced by John Dewey’s educational philosophy, Brameld urged that schools become a powerful force for social and political change. He welcomed reasoned argument and debate both inside and outside the classroom when he was teaching at Long Island University, New York University, and Boston University in the United States of America.

George S. Counts also influenced Brameld deeply. Writing in *The Social Frontier*, a journal of educational and political critique, Brameld argued for a radical philosophy that analyses weaknesses in the social, economic, and political structure. From this analysis came constructive blueprints for a new social order that challenged social inequities like prejudice, discrimination, and economic exploitation. These issues were addressed in *Minority Problems in Public Schools*, published in 1945. Placing abundant faith in the common person, Brameld considered democracy the core of his educational philosophy. In 1950, he asserted in *Ends and Means in Education: A Mid-Century Appraisal* that
education needed a reconstructed perspective and suggested reconstructionism as an appropriate label to distinguish this philosophy. Many of Brameld’s ideas grew out of his experience in applying his philosophical beliefs to a school setting in Floodwood, Minnesota where he worked with students and teachers to develop democratic objectives. Brameld also insisted that controversial issues and problems ought to play a central role in education as he considered that no issue should be out of bounds for discussion and critical analysis.

Starting in 1950 with the publication of Patterns of Educational Philosophy: A Democratic Interpretation, Brameld developed his cultural interpretation of four philosophies of education: (1) essentialism, (2) perennialism, (3) progressivism, and (4) reconstructionism. He viewed essentialism as an educational philosophy concerned mainly with the conservation of culture; perennialism as centering on the classical thought of ancient Greece and medieval Europe; progressivism as the philosophy of liberal, experimental education; and reconstructionism as a radical philosophy of education responding to contemporary crisis. In his writings throughout the 1950s, Brameld maintained that reconstructionists - like progressivists - opposed any theory that viewed values as absolute or unchanging. Values must be tested by evidence and grounded in social consensus.

Brameld continued to refine his philosophy in his many publications. In 1965, a small but influential book, Education as Power, clearly and concisely outlines many of the major tenets of reconstructionism. Education has two major roles: (1) to transmit culture and (2) to modify culture. For instance, when American culture is in a state of crisis, the second of these roles - that of modifying and innovating - becomes more important. Reconstructionism, as Brameld affirmed, is a crisis philosophy; the reconstructionist is “very clear as to which road mankind should take, but he or she is not at all clear as to which road it will take.”

Above all, reconstructionism is a philosophy of values, ends, and purposes, with a democratically empowered world civilization as the central goal of education. Social self-realization (the realization of the capacity of the self to measure up to its fullest, most satisfying powers in cooperative relationship with other selves) is the capstone of reconstructionist theory and practice. Brameld also pays attention to politics, human relations, religion, and the arts in his philosophy. A commitment to existential humanism remains constant. Defensible partiality, a central concept in reconstructionism, suggests a search for answers to human problems by exploring alternative approaches and then defending the partialities that emerge from a dialectic of opposition.
Brameld’s abiding interest in the concept of culture led him to write a scholarly volume, *Cultural Foundations of Education: An Interdisciplinary Exploration* (1957), that demonstrated his debt to influential anthropologists. One of Brameld’s final books, *The Teacher as World Citizen: A Scenario of the 21st Century* (1976), provides a visionary outline and culmination of many of his lifelong hopes and beliefs. He wrote as if he was looking back from the eve of the year 2001, the teacher-narrator recalling global transformations of the preceding quarter century. Radical changes have occurred, especially the establishment of a “World Community of Nations” based on a global “Declaration of Interdependence”.

Brameld’s conception of the utopian spirit as a realizable vision of what could and should be achieved was influenced greatly by many scholars. However, some critics found that Brameld’s educational philosophy was too goal-centered and utopian while others were disturbed by his advocacy of teachers as social change activists. As others criticized his early interest in Marx, as well as his ongoing critique of the capitalist value system, Brameld’s unpopular commitment in intercultural education and education for a world community in the 1950s was more widely embraced as multicultural and global education a half century later.

(Text has been adapted from: http://education.stateuniversity.com)

### 8.1.2 George S. Counts

George Counts (1889-1974), another prominent thinker of the reconstructionist philosophy, recognized that education was the means of preparing people for creating this new social order (please refer to Figure 8.2). He is a leading spokesman for the social reconstructionist point of view in American education and also an authority on the Soviet Union educational system.
Apart from his concentration on Russian education, much of Counts’ teaching and research was devoted to understanding the school as a social institution, its relations to other social institutions, and its potential for fostering social betterment. *The Selective Character of American Secondary Education* (1922) and *The Social Composition of Boards of Education* (1927) were two other significant books published by Counts during the 1920s. The former argued that schools were partly responsible for the continuance of social inequality, and the latter pointed to the influence on American education of the existing power structure in society. In these and other works completed during the 1920s, Counts introduced themes that foreshadowed the social reconstructionism with which he was identified in the 1930s.

In 1932, at the depths of the Great Depression, Counts combined three speeches into a slim volume called *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* His speech titled *Dare Progressive Education Be Progressive?* articulated the anxieties and ambitions of professional educators during the Depression. He demanded that teachers should put their talents to work not only as educators but as economic reformers and political activists. He insisted that only education could advance the cause of social reform without revolution. Counts challenged educators to take an increased role in leadership and government and to impart to their students a sense of progressive politics. Moreover, Counts argued for the replacement of traditional capitalism with some form of democratic collectivism in order to avert social and economic chaos. He called for educators to shape the attitudes of children so that they would be receptive to the idea that collective control of the economy was necessary. Thus schools, according to Counts, could become the incubators of a great society dedicated to cooperation rather than to exploitation.

All of this enhanced Counts’ stature among the reconstructionists or the “frontier group”, as they were alternatively labeled, but also made him a prime target for the criticism of conservatives who viewed him as something of a communist sympathizer, bent on undermining the American way of life.

George S. Counts adhered to reconstructionism as a philosophy of education. He advocated the present and the future, not the classics of the past, in developing the curriculum. There are numerous serious problems in society presently which need identifying. Solutions need to be sought for these problematic situations. It
is necessary to achieve these solutions quickly, since time can run out in solving the identified problems: unemployment, housing, food for needy people, racial discrimination, and educational opportunities for all.

In addition, the school must reflect problems in society and take the lead in working towards solutions. Classroom teachers have the capacity and leadership to aid schools in taking the lead to improve society. The school curriculum must emphasize problem-solving involving problems inherent in society. Dividing the curriculum into traditional subject matter areas such as geography, history, reading, spelling, science, writing, geometry, algebra, and arithmetic (among others) is outdated. Life in society does not demand these divisions. Rather, subject matter is integrated and used to solve problems. George S. Counts opposed:

- Teachers solely selecting objectives, learning activities, and appraisal procedures for students.
- Teachers sequencing experiences and activities for students.
- The use of precise measurable ends in teaching-learning situations.
- A classical curriculum emphasizing great ideas of the past.
- A conservative course of study which stresses a stable and static curriculum.

(Text has been adapted from: http://www.encyclopedia.com)

**SELF-CHECK 8.1**

Summarise the main ideas of the following reconstructionists:

- Theodore Brameld
- George S. Counts

**ACTIVITY 8.2**

What role does reconstructionism play in society and school? Identify and discuss with regards to your society and school setting.
8.2 BEHAVIOURISM

Behaviourism is not considered a philosophy in the same vein as idealism, realism, or pragmatism. It is most often considered a psychological theory, a more specialized and less comprehensive theory than a systematic philosophy. Nevertheless, behaviourism has been given increasing attention and acceptance in the field of education, so much so that in many instances behaviourism has extended into areas ordinarily considered the domain of philosophy. These extensions include theoretical considerations dealing with the nature of the human being and society, values, the good life, and speculations or assumptions on the nature of reality.

Behaviourism asserts that the only reality is the physical world that we discern through careful and scientific observation. People and other animals are seen as complex combinations of matter that act only in response to internally or externally generated physical stimuli. We learn, for instance, to avoid overexposure to heat through the impulses of pain through our nerves that is sent to our brain. Human nature, according to behaviourism, is neither good nor bad, but merely the product of one’s environment. It is not human nature but defective environments that are responsible for harmful things that people do to themselves and others. To a behaviourist, there is no such thing as free will or the autonomously acting person; such ideas are only myths that may make us feel better but do not correspond to scientific observation.

Furthermore, behaviourist theorists believe that behaviour is shaped deliberately by forces in the environment and that the type of person and actions desired can be the product of design. In other words, behaviour is determined by others, rather than by the individual’s own free will. By carefully shaping desirable behaviour, morality and information is learned. Learners will acquire and remember responses that lead to satisfying after-effects. Repetition of a meaningful connection results in learning. If the student is ready for the connection, learning is enhanced; if not, learning is inhibited. Motivation to learn is the satisfying after-effect, or reinforcement.

Behaviourism is linked with empiricism, which stresses scientific information and observation, rather than subjective or metaphysical realities. Behaviourists search for laws that govern human behaviour, like scientists who look for patterns in empirical events. Change in behaviour must be observable; internal thought processes are not considered.
Behaviourism has its roots in the early 1900s in the work of the Russian experimental psychologist Ivan Pavlov (1848-1936) and the American psychologist John Watson (1878-1958). By refining and expanding their studies, Harvard professor B. F. Skinner (1904-1989) has emerged as the driving force behind the spread of behaviourism within modern American culture. Skinner developed the now-famous Skinner box which he used to train small animals through behavioural techniques (please refer to Figure 8.3).

(Text has been adapted from: http://www.slc.sevier.org and http://ksuweb.kennesaw.edu)

8.2.1 Ivan Pavlov

Ivan Petrovich Pavlov (1849 – 1936) is widely known for first describing the phenomenon of classical conditioning (please refer to Figure 8.4). Ivan Pavlov’s research on using the reinforcement of a bell sound when food was presented to a dog, and finding that the sound alone would make a dog salivate after several presentations of the conditioned stimulus, was the beginning of behaviourist approaches.

Learning occurs as a result of responses to stimuli in the environment that are reinforced by adults and others, as well as from feedback from actions on objects. Using Pavlov’s experiment, a teacher can help students learn by conditioning them through identifying the desired behaviours in measurable, observable terms, recording these behaviours and their frequencies, identifying appropriate reinforcers for each desired behaviour, and providing the reinforcer as soon as the student displays the behaviour. For example, if children are supposed to raise hands to get called on, we might reinforce a child who raises his hand by using praise, such as, “Thank you for raising your hand”.

(Text has been adapted from: http://www.slc.sevier.org and http://ksuweb.kennesaw.edu)
As Pavlov’s work became recognized in the West, particularly through the writings of John B. Watson, the idea of “conditioning” as an automatic form of learning became a key concept in the developing specialism of comparative psychology, and the general approach to psychology that underlie it, behaviourism. Bertrand Russell was an enthusiastic advocate of the importance of Pavlov’s work for the philosophy of mind.

Pavlov’s research on conditional reflexes greatly influenced not only science, but also popular culture. The phrase “Pavlov’s dog” is often used to describe someone who merely reacts to a situation rather than use critical thinking. According to a pure behaviourist, human beings are shaped entirely by their external environment. By changing a person’s environment, you will change his or her thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. Providing positive reinforcement whenever students perform a desired behaviour will help them learn to perform the behaviour on their own.

(Text has been adapted from: http://www.slc.sevier.org)

8.2.2 John B. Watson

John Broadus Watson (1878 – 1958), an American psychologist, established the psychological school of behaviourism after doing research on animal behaviour (please refer to Figure 8.5). He also conducted the controversial “Little Albert experiment”. Watson grew up in Greenville, South Carolina and attended Furman University there. He entered the University of Chicago to study philosophy with John Dewey, but claimed that he did not understand what Dewey was talking about. Then, Watson hunted for a different advisor and settled on functionalist psychologist, James Rowland Angell and a physiologist, Henry Donaldson. Watson had also worked on the physiology of the dog’s brain with Jacques Loeb, one of the most famous biologists in the United States at that time and a major proponent of the view that life and the behaviour of living organisms could be explained entirely through chemistry and physics without recourse to a supposed “vital force.” For that reason, Loeb assumed that all behaviour was dictated by instinct and learned responses to stimuli.

Figure 8.5: John B. Watson

Source: ftp.ccccd.edu
Through the combined influence of Dewey, Angell, Donaldson and Loeb, Watson developed a highly descriptive, objective approach to the analysis of behaviour that he would later call “behaviourism.” In 1924, Watson defined behaviourism as:

“Behaviourism ... holds that the subject matter of human psychology is the behaviour of the human being. Behaviourism claims that consciousness is neither a definite nor a usable concept. The behaviourist ... holds, further, that belief in the existence of consciousness goes back to the ancient days of superstition and magic... The great mass of people even today has not yet progressed very far away from savagery - it wants to believe in magic.... Almost every era has its new magic, black or white, and its new magician.” (Blumenfeld, 1984).

Before that, in 1913, Watson published an article called *Psychology as the Behaviourist Views It* (occasionally called *The Behaviourist Manifesto*) describing the major features of his new philosophy of psychology termed “behaviourism.” The first paragraph of the article concisely explains Watson’s behaviourist position:

“The article became well-known to psychologists generally after it started to be widely cited in introductory psychology textbooks in the 1950s. The article is also notable for its strong defense of the objective scientific status of applied psychology, which at the time was considered to be much inferior to the established structuralist experimental psychology.

With his “behaviourism”, Watson put the emphasis on external behaviour of people and their reactions on given situations, rather than the internal, mental state of those people. In his opinion, the analysis of behaviours and reactions was the only objective method to get insight about human actions. This point of view, combined with the complementary ideas of determinism, evolutionary
continuism, and empiricism, has contributed to what is now called “radical behaviourism.”

Watson conducted the “Little Albert experiment” in 1920, reputed to be one of the most controversial experiments ever conducted in psychology (please refer to Figure 8.6). The goal of the experiment was to show how principles of, at the time recently discovered, “classical conditioning” could be applied to condition fear of a white rat into “Little Albert”, an 11-month-old boy. It is widely known that human beings are born with only two natural fears: fear of falling and the fear of loud noises. Albert was given a white rat and his reaction was noted to be playful.

He had no fear of the white rat and was even comfortable picking the rat up while playing with it. The next time the rat was given to Albert, he did exactly the same thing. However, this time, a loud noise using a metal pipe and a hammer was made. The noise was so sudden and loud that it made little Albert cry. They did the same thing many times. Finally, when they gave Albert the rat without the noise, the child would cry at the mere sight of the animal. Next, they introduced a white rabbit and as soon as Albert saw the animal, he began to cry. They gave him a Santa Claus mask which also made him cry. Little Albert was conditioned to cry at the sight of the white rat, but in the process, he made the connection that anything white and furry would lead to a loud noise. This experiment gives us much insight into the parameters of the human mind.

The “Little Albert experiment” made Watson announce that as far as behaviourists are concerned, there was nothing within the organism to develop. If one started with a healthy body at birth, he continued, it would be possible through proper behavioural conditioning to make a person “a genius, a cultured gentleman, a rowdy, or a thug.” This is encapsulated in Watson’s “twelve infants” quote:
Watson was even more materialistic than previous behaviourists. He thought that the major function of the nervous system is simply to coordinate senses with motor responses. Hence, the brain is only a part of the nervous system and not the seat of mind or consciousness or a self-active entity. He considered that the senses not only gain knowledge of the world but also are instruments in guiding activity. In denying mentalistic ideas of mind and consciousness, Watson also declined such concepts as purpose, feeling, satisfaction, and free will because they are not observable and as a result not capable of scientific treatment or measurement.

### 8.2.3 Behaviourism and Positivism

Watson’s desire for giving credibility only to direct observable things set a pattern for those who came after him in the field of behaviourism. E. L. Thorndike was inclined towards Watson’s viewpoint when Watson announced that anything that exists, exists in some quantity capable of being measured. Dazzlingly, this kind of thinking in psychology corresponds somewhat with philosophy, where positivism had given the same philosophical basis to Watson’s position.

According to the positivism principle:

> “All knowledge comes from ‘positive’ information of observable experience. Scientific methods are the best way of achieving this. All else is metaphysics.”

Positivism originated out of the French Enlightenment. It was established by a French philosopher named Auguste Comte who sought to replace the “brainpower approach” of rationalism by leveraging the principles of the natural sciences such as physics, chemistry and biology. At the time of Comte, science was having a huge impact and was steadily replacing religion as the key factor in understanding the world.
authority for knowledge about what was true or false. Even today, when something is pronounced “scientific”, it is generally held to be irrefutable.

The roots of positivism lie particularly with empiricism, which works only with observable facts, seeing that beyond this is the realm of logic and mathematics. The basic principle of positivism is that all factual knowledge is based on the “positive” information gained from observable experience; therefore, any ideas beyond this realm of demonstrable fact are metaphysical. Only analytic statements are allowed to be known as true through reason alone. For example, “roses are flowers” is analytic, whilst “roses are fragrant” is unreal and requires evidence.

Comte and positivism had influenced thinkers to use science in devising social policy, and behaviourists followed this tradition. Contemporary behaviourists are heavily influenced by Watson’s belief that through the use of scientific conditioning, virtually any kind of person can be produced from a reasonably healthy child.

The school of thought named logical positivism emerged when modern positivism began to show more interest in the logic and language of scientific concepts. Logical positivism attempted to make philosophy more rigorous by creating criteria for evaluating the truth or falsity of certain philosophical statements. Its main criteria for any statement is verifiability, which comes from two different sources: (1) empirical statements, which come from science, and (2) analytic truth, statements which are true or false by definition. Logical positivism heavily influenced the philosophy of science, logic, and the philosophy of language. Logical positivists include philosophers like Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead.

Ozmon and Craver (2008) assert that the connection of positivism and behaviourism is where the behaviourist seeks a language framework that more accurately reflects the facts of behaviour. Rather than using the concept of “self” to signify personal identity or the characteristics of an individual, behaviourists speak of the “conditioned” or “reinforced behaviours.” The behaviourist maintains that because so little is known about behaviour, people wrongly assign meaning to behaviour by reference to an “inner being”, a self, mind, consciousness, soul, or some such hidden entity that causes the behaviour.

Together with their concern for more linguistic accuracy, logical positivists have coined the principle of verification; that no statement should be taken as truthful unless it can be verified empirically or at least until it is capable of being verified. The behaviourist, mindful of careless linguistic and logical statements, also seeks to avoid such mistakes. Behaviourists maintain that observable, factual
behaviour and environmental conditions do exist, and they must be explained in objective, logical, and accurate terms.

(Text has been adapted from: http://changingminds.org)

### 8.2.4 B. F. Skinner

Burrhus Frederic Skinner (1904 – 1990) was an American psychologist and advocate for social reform (please refer to Figure 8.7). He was the Edgar Pierce Professor of Psychology at Harvard University from 1958 until his retirement in 1974. Skinner invented the operant conditioning chamber, innovated his own philosophy of science called “radical behaviourism”, and founded his own school of experimental research psychology - the experimental analysis of behaviour. Radical behaviourism is a philosophy developed by Skinner that underlies the experimental analysis of behaviour approach to psychology. Radical behaviourism proposes that all organismic action is determined and not free.

Radical behaviourism inherits from behaviourism the position that the science of behaviour is natural science, a belief that animal behaviour can be studied profitably and compared with human behaviour, a strong emphasis on the environment as cause of behaviour, and a desire for operationalizing. Its principal differences are an emphasis on operant conditioning, use of idiosyncratic terminology or jargon, a tendency to apply notions of reinforcement to philosophy and daily life and, particularly, an emphasis on private experience.

Radical behaviourism embraces the genetic and biological endowment and ultimately evolved nature of the organism, while simply asserting that behaviour is a distinct field of study with its own value. From this two neglected points emerge radical behaviourism. Radical behaviourism does not involve the claim that organisms are “tabula rasa” without genetic or physiological endowment.
Skinner’s psychological work focused on operant conditioning, with emphasis on the schedule of reinforcement as independent variable, and the rate of responding as dependent variable. Operant techniques have made extensive use of reinforcement. Roughly speaking, in operant conditioning, an operant is actively emitted and produces changes in the world, that is, produces consequences that alter the likelihood that the behaviour will occur again. Operant conditioning has two basic purposes: (1) increasing or (2) decreasing the probability that a specific behaviour will occur in the future, which are accomplished by adding or removing one of two basic types of stimuli: (1) positive or pleasant or (2) negative or aversive:

- If the probability of a behaviour is increased as a consequence of the presentation of a stimulus, that stimulus is a positive reinforcer: $R^+$;
- If the probability of a behaviour is increased as a consequence of the withdrawal of a stimulus, that stimulus is a negative reinforcer: $R^-$;
- If the probability of a behaviour is decreased as a consequence of the presentation of a stimulus, that stimulus is a positive punisher: $P^+$; and
- If the probability of a behaviour is decreased as a consequence of the withdrawal of a stimulus, that stimulus is a negative punisher or response cost punishment: $P^-$.

Negative reinforcement and punishment are often confused. It is important to note that a reinforcer is anything that increases the likelihood that a behaviour will happen again. A punisher will always decrease behaviour. Operant conditioning tells something about the future of the organism: that in the future, the reinforced behaviour will be likely to occur more often.

Skinner wrote *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* in 1971 that argued to facilitate entrenched belief in free will and the moral autonomy of the individual, which Skinner referred to as “dignity”, hinders the prospect of using scientific methods to modify behaviour for the purpose of building a happier and better organized society. Skinner attempted to promote his philosophy of science, the technology of human behaviour, his conception of determinism, and what he calls as “cultural engineering.” Skinner argues that a technology of behaviour is possible and that it can be used to help solve currently pressing human issues such as over-population and warfare:

“Almost all major problems involve human behaviour, and they cannot be solved by physical and biological technology alone. What is needed is a technology of human behaviour.”
Skinner also creates a more precise definition of freedom, one that allows for his conception of determinism; action that is free from certain kinds of control, and speaks to the conventional notion of freedom by disputing against “autonomous man.” Skinner notes that the forces of freedom and dignity have led to many positive advances in the human condition, but may now be hindering the advance of a technology of human behaviour.

According to Skinner, dignity is the process by which people are given credit for their actions and note that credit is typically a function of the conspicuousness of control. We give less or no credit, or blame, to those who are overtly coached, compelled, prompted or otherwise not appearing to be producing actions spontaneously. Skinner saw punishment as the logical consequence of an unscientific analysis of behaviour as well as the tradition of “freedom and dignity.” Since individuals are seen to be making choices they are then able to be punished for those choices. Skinner speaks to feelings about what is right, as well as popular notions of “good” and suggests that cultural evolution is a way to describe the aggregate of behaviour as a culture is a collection of behaviour, or practices. As a society, we can control and design the culture in such a way that good gets rewarded and bad gets extinguished. In short, with the right behavioural technology, we can design culture. To Skinner people are bodies displaying repertoires or ranges of behaviour:

“The picture which emerges from a scientific analysis is not of a body with a person inside, but of a body which is a person in the sense that it displays a complex repertoire of behaviour. . . What is being abolished is autonomous man - the inner man, the “homunculus”: very small human being, the possessing demon, the man defended by the literatures of freedom and dignity. His abolition has long been overdue. . . Science does not dehumanize man, it de-homunculizes him.”

Skinner asserted that positive reinforcement is more effective at changing and establishing behaviour than punishment, with obvious implications for the widespread practice of rote or repetition learning and punitive or corrective discipline in education. He also propose that the main thing people learn from being punished is how to avoid punishment. According to Skinner there are five main obstacles in learning: people have a fear of failure; the task is not broken down into small enough steps; there is a lack of directions; there is also a lack of clarity in the directions; and positive reinforcement is lacking. Using Skinnerian beliefs, a learner can be taught using five principles to deal with the learning problems, that are giving the learner immediate feedback; breaking down the task into small steps; repeat the directions as many times as possible; start
working from the most simple to the most complex tasks; and finally giving positive reinforcement.

(Text has been adapted from: http://en.wikipedia.org)

**SELF CHECK 8.2**

(a) What is behavior? How do behaviorists explain behavior?

(b) What is the difference between a reinforcer and a reward?

(c) “Behaviorists use a lot of punishment.” Do they actually do this? Explain.

**ACTIVITY 8.3**

In your opinion, is the Little Albert experiment ethical? Discuss.

## 8.3 EXISTENTIALISM

Although often treated like a philosophical school of thought, it would be more accurate to describe existentialism as a trend or tendency that can be found throughout the history of philosophy. Basically, existentialists focus primarily on matters such as choice, individuality, subjectivity, freedom, and the nature of existence itself. The nature of reality for existentialists is subjective, and lies within the individual. The physical world has no inherent meaning outside of human existence. Individual choice and individual standards rather than external standards are central. Existence comes before any definition of what we are. We define ourselves in relationship to that existence by the choices we make. We should not accept anyone else’s predetermined philosophical system; rather, we must take responsibility for deciding who we are. The focus is on freedom, the development of authentic individuals, as we make meaning of our lives.

In brief, existentialism is a twentieth century philosophy concerned with human existence, finding self, and the meaning of life through free will, choice, and personal responsibility. The belief that people are searching to find out who and what they are throughout life as they make choices based on their experiences, beliefs, and outlook without the help of laws, ethnic rules, or traditions. Existentialism then stresses that a person’s judgment is the determining factor for what is to be believed rather than by religious or secular world values. Among
the major philosophers identified as existentialists are Soren Kierkegaard and Jean-Paul Sartre.

### 8.3.1 Soren Kierkegaard

Soren Kierkegaard (1813 – 1855) was from a wealthy and prominent merchant family in Copenhagen, Denmark (please refer to Figure 8.8). His father was a firmly committed to a strict approach to faith and life and sought to ensure that his family would grow up within a firmly Lutheran household. His father also appears to have been personally endowed with intelligence, imagination, spirituality, melancholy and a tendency towards feeling a strong sense of guilt; where Soren, at least, inherited all these traits.

However, Kierkegaard chose not to follow the path in life to which he had seemed be directed; he decided that he would not put himself forward for ordination as a Lutheran minister. In his journal wrote in 1935, he said that: “...the thing is to find a truth which is true for me, to find the idea for which I can live and die.” Kierkegaard was primarily a philosopher who asked searching questions as to how best, that precious and rare thing, a human life, ought to be lived. He himself used the terms existential and existentialism in relation to his philosophisings, his heartfelt view was that life, existence, in all its aspects was subjective and ambiguous. Philosophy was seen as an expression of an intensely and courageously examined individual existence; an expression that was, hopefully, free from illusion. In his view individuals must be prepared to defy the accepted practices of society, if this was necessary to their leading, what seemed to that person, to be a personally valid and meaningful life.

In one of Kierkegaard’s earliest work in 1843, titled Either/Or, suggested that people might effectively choose to live within either of two “existence spheres”, that he called the aesthetic and the ethical spheres. Aesthetical lives were lives lived in search of such things pleasure, novelty, and romantic individualism. Nevertheless, Kierkegaard thought that such pleasure, novelty, and romantic individualism would eventually tend to decay or become meaningless and this would inevitably lead to much boredom and dire frustration. On the other hand, ethical lives mean as being lived very much in line with a sense of duty to observe societal and confessional obligations. Such a life would be easy, in some ways, to live, yet would also involve much compromise of several genuinely human faculties and potentials. Such compromise would inevitably mean that
human integrity would tend to be eroded although lives seemed to be progressing in a bourgeois-satisfactory way. Thus, what sort of person a person tended to become was very dependent on the life choices they made and the sort of lives they subsequently led.

In his later works he suggested that there was a third, religious, “sphere” where people accepted that they could “live in the truth” that they were “individual before the eternal” to which they belonged. By living in this truth people could achieve a full unity of purpose with all other people who were also, individually, living in the same truth. This is the choice that he made for himself in his own efforts to live a life which he considered to be valid. Kierkegaard ideas became controversies with the Lutheran Church in Denmark where he had formed the view that the church was at that time open to being seen as worldly and corrupt and he had made some blatant public criticisms known to all. Through Kierkegaard efforts, the word “existentialism” gained familiarity with increasing number of people take sides of this thought.

(Text has been adapted from: http://www.age-of-the-sage.org)

8.3.2 Jean-Paul Sartre

Jean-Paul Charles Aymard Sartre (1905 – 1980), commonly known as Jean-Paul Sartre, was one of the leading figures in French philosophy and existentialism (please refer to Figure 8.9). He was educated in his native Paris and at German universities; Jean-Paul Sartre taught philosophy during the 1930s at La Havre and Paris. He was captured by the Nazis while serving as an Army meteorologist, Sartre was imprisoned for one year before returning to his teaching position, where he participated actively in the French resistance to German occupation until the liberation.

Recognizing a connection between the principles of existentialism and the more practical concerns of social and political struggle, Sartre wrote not only philosophical treatises but also novels, stories, plays, and political pamphlets. Sartre’s philosophical influences clearly include Descartes, Kant, Marx, Husserl,
and Heidegger. Employing the methods of descriptive phenomenology to new effect, his *Being and Nothingness* in 1943 offers an account of existence in general, including both the being-in-itself of objects that simply are and the being-for-itself by which humans engage in independent action. Sartre devotes particular concern to emotion as a spontaneous activity of consciousness projected onto reality. Emphasizing the radical freedom of all human action, Sartre warns of the dangers of mauvaise foi (bad faith), acting on the self-deceptive motives by which people often try to elude responsibility for what they do.

In addition, in the lecture *Existentialism is a Humanism* of 1946, Sartre described the human condition in summary form: freedom entails total responsibility, in the face of which we experience anguish, forlornness – lonely and miserable, and despair; thus genuine human dignity can be achieved only in our active acceptance of these emotions. Sartre asked the question: “Are all humanists also existentialists?”; which then he answered that it is not necessarily since there is a close affinity between existentialism and humanism, but they are not quite the same thing. The easiest way to explain is to quote Sartre himself mentioned:

“I have been reproached for suggesting that existentialism is a form of humanism: people have said to me, “But you have written in your *Nausée* that the humanists are wrong, you have even ridiculed a certain type of humanism, why do you now go back upon that?”
In reality, the word “humanism” has two very different meanings:

“One may understand by humanism a theory which upholds man as the end-in-itself and as the supreme value. Humanism in this sense appears, for instance, in Cocteau’s story Round the World in 80 Hours, in which one of the characters declares, because he is flying over mountains in an airplane, “Man is magnificent!” This signifies that although I, personally, have not built aeroplanes I have the benefit of those particular inventions and that I, personally, being a man, can consider myself responsible for, and honored by, achievements that are peculiar to some men. It is to assume that we can ascribe value to man according to the most distinguished deeds of certain men. That kind of humanism is absurd, for only the dog or the horse would be in a position to pronounce a general judgment upon man and declare that he is magnificent, which they have never been such fools as to do - at least, not as far as I know. But neither is it admissible that a man should pronounce judgment upon Man. Existentialism dispenses with any judgment of this sort: an existentialist will never take man as the end, since man is still to be determined. And we have no right to believe that humanity is something to which we could set up a cult, after the manner of Auguste Comte. The cult of humanity ends in Comtian humanism, shut-in upon itself, and - this must be said - in Fascism. We do not want a humanism like that.”

Sartre added by revealing that:

“But there is another sense of the word, of which the fundamental meaning is this: Man is all the time outside of himself: it is in projecting and losing himself beyond himself that he makes man to exist; and, on the other hand, it is by pursuing transcendent aims that he himself is able to exist. Since man is thus self-surpassing, and can grasp objects only in relation to his self-surpassing, he is himself the heart and center of his transcendence."Besides, he said that: “there is no other universe except the human universe, the universe of human subjectivity. This relation of transcendence as constitutive of man - not in the sense that God is transcendent, but in the sense of self-surpassing, with subjectivity - in such a sense that man is not shut up in himself but forever present in a human universe - it is this that we call existential humanism. This is humanism, because we remind man that there is no legislator but himself; that he himself, thus abandoned, must decide for himself; also because we show that it is not by turning back upon himself, but always by seeking, beyond himself, an aim which is one of liberation or of some particular realisation, that man can realize himself as truly human.”
We find that Sartre rejects any connection between humanism and existentialism if humanism means putting humanity on a pedestal and declaring that, because of the achievement of a few individuals, all human beings are thereby exalted. This is not to deny those achievements or even to deny that any individuals could achieve similar things, on the contrary, this is merely the insistence that no one is made better by anything other than their own actions.

Finally, the key for existentialists is the ability of people to make the proper choices in their lives. There is no single human nature which limits us in what we can do and according to Sartre, we are all radically free and capable of doing whatever they want. It is the affirmation of humanity’s freedom which, for Sartre, is the only appropriate humanism existentialism should follow.

(Text has been adapted from: http://atheism.about.com)

(self-check 8.3)

Summarise the main ideas of the following existentialists:
- Soren Kierkegaard
- Jean-Paul Sartre

(activity 8.4)

(a) In your own words, define existentialism.
(b) Can we really live an authentic existential life? Analyse and explain.
(c) Jean-Paul Sartre said: “Man is nothing else but what he makes for of himself.” Discuss and elaborate on its meaning.
8.4 RECONSTRUCTIONISM, BEHAVIOURISM, AND EXISTENTIALISM IN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Finally, we will consider in this section how these various philosophies apply in the field of education. This section consists of:

- Reconstructionism in philosophy of education
- Behaviourism in philosophy of education
- Existentialism in philosophy of education

8.4.1 Reconstructionism in Philosophy of Education

Reconstructionism is the changing of society, education, and using educational methods to make a social change. Changes in society need to occur quite often to keep up with the demands of the world. People turn to education to assist them with making a change. Reconstructionists encourage others to make necessary changes that will be beneficial to their future. These are positive changes that will help make life better.

Table 8.1 explains the role of the reconstructionism philosophy with regards to education:

| Aims of Education | The idea of change for a better educational system. Goals are needed to achieve the desired change. These goals are flexible in that they can be modified to overcome road blocks and possible problems. The belief is that all plans should be thought out in its entirety before beginning the task. There is no conflict between knowing and doing in reconstructionism. Education should include individuals and the society. They should work together and use each other as a support system to achieve their goals. |
| Methods of Education | Children should be exposed to real life issues to make connection to textbook material. Textbooks should not be the only means of educating. The textbook should be a supplement to the real life lessons taught. The reconstructionist believes that the teacher is simply a puppet when teaching. They are given material and expected to teach directly from the text and not deviate. Teachers are required to teach the textbook, because it contains the proper material |
to prevent questionable issues. According to reconstructionists, the appropriate way to teach includes a combination of both the textbook and real-life experiences.

| Curriculum | The curriculum for the reconstructionism philosophy involves the students being active in the community. They benefit from interaction in society on specific matters. Learning should take place both in the classroom and out. Reconstructionists believe that the curriculum should emphasize truth, fellowship, and justice. They believe in incorporating world issues and stepping outside local community ideas. |
| Role of Teacher | The teacher should be aware of the world issues and be able to incorporate them into his/her teachings. The teacher needs to motivate the children to use their education to help solve the problems of society. The teacher is essential in informing the students of the problems, giving possible solutions, and assisting the students in trying to solve possible issues. It is important for a teacher to be actively involved as a social activist. |
| Critique of Reconstructionism in Education | Although wishing to change that area of society is a reconstructionist attribute, this attribute is not mutually exclusive with their other philosophies as to how they wish to change society. This creates an ambiguous division between pure reconstructionist and applied reconstructionists, that is those who do want the system changed but adhere to another philosophy on how to change it which is often the case. Pure reconstructionism is impractical. If one looks at history, all reconstructionists who have made great impact in society had done so in just one area under another philosophy. What just makes them reconstructionist is the fact that they wanted to change the system. For example, the Christian reconstruction gave rise to the Presbyterian Church. Reconstructionism is a way of thought that is best used in conjunction with other ways of thought. One wishes to change something about the system with respect with one’s beliefs and not just with the notion that change is needed. |

Source: [http://pangea.tec.selu.edu/~swoodson/edf607/reconstructionism.pdf](http://pangea.tec.selu.edu/~swoodson/edf607/reconstructionism.pdf)
8.4.2 behaviourism in Philosophy of Education

Behaviourist theorists believe that behaviour is shaped deliberately by forces in the environment and that the type of person and actions desired can be the product of design. In other words, behaviour is determined by others, rather than by our own free will. By carefully shaping desirable behaviour, morality and information is learned. Learners will acquire and remember responses that lead to satisfying aftereffects. Repetition of a meaningful connection results in learning. If the student is ready for the connection, learning is enhanced; if not, learning is inhibited. Motivation to learn is the satisfying aftereffect, or reinforcement.

Table 8.2 give details on the role of the behaviourism philosophy with regards to education:

| Aims of Education | Through behaviourism the aims of education is to develop appropriate behaviours in the classroom setting that are conducive to learning, having these consistent reward systems are crucial to obtain and continue desired, positive behaviours. Behaviourism is described as a developmental theory that measures observable behaviours produced by a learner’s response to stimuli. Responses to stimuli can be reinforced with positive or negative feedback to condition desired behaviours. Punishment is sometimes used in eliminating or reducing incorrect actions, followed by clarifying desired actions. |
| Methods of Education | Instruction should be designed to produce observable and measureable outcomes in students but do not believe that teaching should be directed toward strengthening the mind, but should be aimed at producing desirable outcomes in students key concepts as learning for its on sake, rational, intellectual, traditional knowledge. Educational effects of behaviourism are key in developing basic skills and foundations of understanding in all subject areas and in classroom management. |
### Curriculum
The behaviourist’s curriculum is based on science; thus, it is structured, researched, and can be measured to produce such quantifiable actions. The curriculum for behaviourism is designed with learning objectives that are small and easily manageable, and clearly states what is expected of the learner. Small amounts of information should be presented by lessons, and students should be reinforced positively when success at learning is demonstrated. For example, students should receive simple forms of motivation such as verbal praise, smiles, a touch on the shoulder, and candy.

### Role of Teacher
The teacher has control and students are raw material to be shaped. Teachers arrange reinforcements so that students come to behave as teachers want them to. Since the rewards are important to the learner in some way, students are more apt to work towards a goal. Teaching is the systematic shaping of a student’s behaviour views since the teacher acts as a manager, controller, predictor and director of learning. The role of the teacher is to determine the desired behaviour and to arrange the external contingencies which will reinforce the desired behaviour.

### Critique of Behaviourism in Education
Human rationality can only be accounted for in a universe in which immaterial abstract entities exist. Rationality presupposes abstract entities such as laws of thought, ideas, and mind. Skinner explicitly rejects the existence abstract entities because behaviourism is a materialist or physicalist view of the universe. Laws can only exist in a universe where non-material things can exist. Certainly, in a materialist’s universe, these things are excluded in principle since they are not matter, for no materialist would argue that a law of logic is composed of material substance. Behaviourism, thus, cannot adequately account for such things as unchanging, abstract, immaterial things like laws of logic. In addition, behaviourism undermines human experience by insisting that freedom, responsibility and novelty are illusions. However, the human experience valued by poets, musicians and educators is based on just such a world of freedom. These things are the subject of novels, films, and poetry. Finally, behaviourism is self-defeating.
because it is logically bound to material determinism. Material determinism is a description of reality which if true would mean every effect is produced by a material cause which is linked together in an unbroken chain, endlessly. In a behaviouristic world a person's behaviour as well as everything else is predetermined by this blind cause/effect series.


8.4.3 Existentialism in Philosophy of Education

Related to education, the subject matter of existentialist classrooms should be a matter of personal choice. Teachers view the individual as an entity within a social context in which the learner must confront others’ views to clarify his or her own. Character development emphasizes individual responsibility for decisions. Real answers come from within the individual, not from outside authority. Examining life through authentic thinking involves students in genuine learning experiences. Existentialists are opposed to thinking about students as objects to be measured, tracked, or standardized. Such educators want the educational experience to focus on creating opportunities for self-direction and self actualization. They start with the student, rather than on curriculum content.

Table 8.3 give explanation on the role of the behaviourism philosophy with regards to education:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8.3: Existentialism in Philosophy of Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aims of Education</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods of education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critique of Existentialism in Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**SELF-CHECK 8.4**

How do the following philosophies apply in philosophy of education:

- Reconstructionism
- Behaviourism
- Existentialism

**SUMMARY**

- Reconstructionism is a philosophical theory holding that societies should continually reform themselves in order to establish more perfect governments or social networks, thus social questions will emerge as there are quests to create a better society and worldwide democracy.
• Brameld urged that schools become a powerful force for social and political change.

• George S. Counts recognized that education was the means of preparing people for creating this new social order.

• Behaviourism asserts that the only reality is the physical world that we discern through careful and scientific observation.

• To a behaviourist, there is no such thing as free will or the autonomously acting person; such ideas are only myths that may make us feel better but do not correspond to scientific observation.

• Pavlov is widely known for first describing the phenomenon of classical conditioning.

• According to Pavlov, learning occurs as a result of responses to stimuli in the environment that are reinforced by adults and others, as well as from feedback from actions on objects.

• Watson put the emphasis on external behaviour of people and their reactions on given situations, rather than the internal, mental state of those people. In his opinion, the analysis of behaviours and reactions was the only objective method to get insight in the human actions.

• Watson conducted the “Little Albert” experiment in 1920, communicated to be one of the most controversial concern in psychology. The goal of the experiment was to show how principles of, at the time recently discovered, “classical conditioning” could be applied to condition fear of a white rat into “Little Albert”, an 11-month-old boy.

• Behaviourists preserve that observable, factual behaviour and environmental conditions do exist, and they must be explained in objective, logical, and accurate terms.

• Skinner invented the operant conditioning chamber, innovated his own philosophy of science called “radical behaviourism”, and founded his own school of experimental research psychology - the experimental analysis of behaviour.

• Skinner asserted that positive reinforcement is more effective at changing and establishing behaviour than punishment, with obvious implications for the
widespread practice of rote or repetition learning and punitive or corrective discipline in education.

- Existentialists focus primarily on matters such as choice, individuality, subjectivity, freedom, and the nature of existence itself. The nature of reality for existentialists is subjective, and lies within the individual. The physical world has no inherent meaning outside of human existence. Individual choice and individual standards rather than external standards are central. Existence comes before any definition of what we are. We define ourselves in relationship to that existence by the choices we make.

- Kierkegaard was primarily a philosopher who asked searching questions as to how best, that precious and rare thing, a human life, ought to be lived.

- Sartre devotes particular concern to emotion as a spontaneous activity of consciousness projected onto reality.

- According to Sartre, we are all radically free and capable of doing whatever they want.

- People turn to education to assist them with making a change. Reconstructionists encourage others to make necessary changes that will be beneficial to their future.

- Behaviourist theorists believe that behaviour is shaped deliberately by forces in the environment and that the type of person and actions desired can be the product of design. Learners will acquire and remember responses that lead to satisfying aftereffects. Repetition of a meaningful connection results in learning. If the student is ready for the connection, learning is enhanced.

- Related to education, the subject matter of existentialist classrooms should be a matter of personal choice. Teachers view the individual as an entity within a social context in which the learner must confront others’ views to clarify his or her own.
### KEY TERMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aesthetic spheres</th>
<th>Positive reinforcement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behaviourism</td>
<td>Positivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing for the better</td>
<td>Principles of verification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice</td>
<td>Radical behaviourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical conditioning</td>
<td>Radical freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empiricism</td>
<td>Reconstruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Reconstructionism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essentialism</td>
<td>Reconstructionism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical spheres</td>
<td>Reinforce behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existentialism</td>
<td>Reinforcer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free will</td>
<td>Religious spheres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom and dignity</td>
<td>Repetition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden curriculum</td>
<td>Rote learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human existence</td>
<td>Scientific information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner being</td>
<td>Scientific observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Albert experiment</td>
<td>Social inequities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live in truth</td>
<td>Social order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myth</td>
<td>Social self-realization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative reinforcement</td>
<td>Stimuli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operant conditioning</td>
<td>Stimulus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pavlov’s dogs</td>
<td>Transmit and modify culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perennialism</td>
<td>Twelve infant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1800/Brameld-Theodore-19041987.html#ixzz0PtBimkZt


Brameld, T. Archival Papers. Special Collections of the Bailey/Howe Library, University of Vermont, Burlington.


Introduction

Although Islamic philosophy represents one of the most important philosophical traditions in the world, it has only recently begun to receive the attention it deserves in the non-Islamic world. Since the growth of Islam as a religion, thinkers have sought to understand the theoretical aspects of the Islamic faith by using philosophical concepts. Islamic philosophy is a branch of Islamic studies, and is a long standing attempt to create harmony between philosophy - reason and the religious teachings of Islam - faith.

In this topic, we will begin by understanding of what we called an “Islamic philosophy”, Next, we examine the ways in which this Islamic philosophy principles has been manifested in education and practice, the aims of Islamic education and on Islamisation of contemporary knowledge.
Islamic philosophy as the name implies refers to philosophical activity within the Islamic milieu (Learman, 1998). As stated by Learman (1998), the main sources of classical or early Islamic philosophy are the religion of Islam itself - especially ideas derived and interpreted from the Quran, Greek philosophy which the early Muslims inherited as a result of conquests when Alexandria, Syria and Jundishapur came under Muslim rule, along with pre-Islamic Indian philosophy. Many of the early philosophical debates centered around reconciling religion and reason, the latter exemplified by Greek philosophy. One aspect which stands out in Islamic philosophy is that, the philosophy in Islam travels wide but comes back to conform it with the Quran and Sunna. Theoretical questions were raised right from the beginning of Islam, questions which could to a certain extent be answered by reference to Islamic texts such as the Quran, the practices of the community, and the traditional sayings of the Prophet and his Companions.

Al-Attas (1978) had provided a framework of important concepts of Islamic philosophy that can be explained as follows:

(a) From the perspective of Islam, a worldview is not merely the mind’s view of the physical world and of man’s historical, social, political and cultural involvement in it as reflected. The worldview of Islam is not based upon philosophical speculation formulated mainly from observation of the data of sensible experience, of what is visible to the eye; which is the world of sensible experience, the world of created things.

(b) Islam does not admit to the dichotomy of the sacred and the profane; the worldview of Islam encompasses both *al-dunya* and *al-akhirah*, in which the *dunya* - aspect must be related in a profound and inseparable way to the *akhirah* - aspect, and in which the *akhirah* - aspect has ultimate and final significance. The *dunya* - aspect is seen as a preparation for the *akhirah* - aspect. Everything in Islam is ultimately focused on the *akhirah* - aspect without thereby implying any attitude of neglect or being unmindful of the *dunya* - aspect.
(c) The Islamic vision of reality and truth, which is a metaphysical survey of the visible as well as the invisible worlds including the perspective of life as a whole, is not a worldview that is formed merely by the gathering together of various cultural objects, values and phenomena into artificial coherence.

(d) The representatives of Islamic thought of theologians, philosophers, metaphysicians have all and individually applied various methods in their investigations without reconsidering on any one particular method. They combined in their investigations and at the same time in their persons, the empirical and the rational, the deductive and the inductive methods and affirmed no dichotomy between the subjective and the objective.

(e) Islam is not a form of culture, and its system of thought projecting its vision of reality and truth and the system of value derived from it are not merely derived from cultural and philosophical elements aided by science, but one whose original source is “Revelation”, confirmed by religion, affirmed by intellectual and intuitive principles.

(f) The worldview of Islam is characterised by an authenticity and a finality that points to what is ultimate, and it projects a view of reality and truth that encompasses existence and life altogether in total perspective whose fundamental elements are permanently established. These are, to mention the most salient ones, the nature of God; of Revelation (that is the Quran); of His creation; of man and the psychology of the human soul; of knowledge; of religion; of freedom; of values and virtues; of happiness where all of which, together with the key terms and concepts that they unfold, have profound bearing upon our ideas about change, development, and progress.

(g) The nature of God as revealed in Islam is derived from Revelation. We do not mean by Revelation the sudden visions of great poets and artists claim for themselves; nor the apostolic inspiration of the writers of sacred scripture; nor the illuminative intuition of the sages and people of discernment. We mean by it the speech of God concerning Himself, His creation, the relation between them, and the way to salvation communicated to His chosen Prophet and Messenger, not by sound or letter, yet comprising all that He has represented in words, then conveyed by the Prophet to mankind in a linguistic form new in nature yet comprehensible, without confusion with the Prophets own subjectivity and cognitive imagination. This Revelation is final, and it not only confirms the truth of preceding revelations in their original forms, but includes their substance, separating the truth from cultural creations and ethnic inventions.
The nature of God understood in Islam is not the same as the conceptions of God understood in the various religious traditions of the world; nor is it the same as the conceptions of God understood in Greek and Hellenistic philosophical tradition; nor as the conceptions of God understood in Western philosophical or scientific tradition; nor in that of Occidental and Oriental mystical traditions. The apparent similarities that may be found between their various conceptions of God with the nature of God understood in Islam cannot be interpreted as evidence of identity of the One Universal God in their various conceptions of the nature of God; for each and every one of them serves and belongs to a different conceptual system, which necessarily renders the conception as a whole or the super system to be dissimilar with one another.

The essential message of the revelation was always the same: to recognise and acknowledge and worship the One True and Real God (*ilah*) alone, without associating Him with any partner, rival, or equal, nor attributing a likeness to Him; and to confirm the truth preached by the earlier Prophets as well as to confirm the final truth brought by the last Prophet Muhammad as it was confirmed by all the Prophets sent before him.

Religion consists not only of affirmation of the Unity of God (*al-tawhid*), but also of the manner and form in which we verify that affirmation as shown by His last Prophet Muhammad, who confirmed, perfected and consolidated the manner and form of affirmation and verification of Prophets before him. This manner and form of verification is the manner and form of submission to God. The test of true affirmation of the Unity of God, then, is the form of submission to that God.

The conception of the nature of God in Islam is the consummation of what was revealed to the Prophets according to the Quran. He is one God; living, self-subsistent, eternal and abiding. Existence is His very essence. He is one in essence; no division in His essence, whether in the imagination, in actuality, or in supposition is possible. He is not a locus of qualities, nor is a thing portioned and divisible into parts, nor is He a thing compounded of constituent elements. His oneness is absolute, with an absoluteness unlike the absoluteness of the natural universal, for while being thus absolute.

He is unlike the Aristotelian First Mover (that the first cause of motion initiated all the motion in the universe), for He is always in act as a free agent engaged in perpetual creative activity not involving change in Him or transformation and becoming. He is far too exalted for the Platonic and Aristotelian dualism of form and matter to be applied to His creative activity; nor can His creating and His creation be described in terms of the Plutonian metaphysics of emanation. His creating is the bringing forth of ideal realities that pre-exist in His knowledge into external existence by His
power and His will; and these realities are entities that he causes to become manifest in the interior condition of His being. His creating is a single act repeated in an eternal process, whereas the contents of the process which are His creation are non eternal, being originated in new yet similar guises in discrete durations of existence for as long as He wills.

(m) Change is not in the phenomenal things, as that would imply the persistence of existence in the things making them substrata for change to take place, but at the ontological level of their realities which contain within themselves all their future states. Change is then the successive actualisation, by means of the creative act, of potentialities inherent in the realities of things which as they unfold their contents in correspondence with the creative command preserve their identities through time.

(n) Islam affirms the possibility of knowledge; that knowledge of the realities of things and their ultimate nature can be established with certainty by means of our external and internal senses and faculties, reason and intuition, and true reports of scientific or religious nature, transmitted by their authentic authorities. Islam has never accepted, nor has ever been affected by ethical and epistemological relativism that made man the measure of all things, nor has it ever created the situation for the rise of scepticism, agnosticism, and subjectivism, all of which in one way or another describe aspects of the secularising process which have contributed to the birth of modernism and post-modernism.

(o) Happiness (saadah) as known in the experience and consciousness of those who are truly submissive to God and follow His guidance is not an end in itself because the highest good in this life is love of God. Enduring happiness in life refers not to the physical entity in man, not to the animal soul and body of man; nor is it a state of mind, or feeling that undergoes terminal states, nor pleasure nor amusement. It has to do with certainty (yaqîn) of the ultimate Truth and fulfilment of action in conformity with that certainty. And certainty is a permanent state of consciousness natural to what is permanent in man and perceived by his spiritual organ of cognition which is the heart (qalb).

Again, according to Al-Attas (1985), for a long time Islamic philosophy was under a cloud of doubt and uncertainty. Some people denied its existence while others affirmed it. This uncertainty continued all through the nineteenth century. Those who denied the very existence of an Islamic philosophy affected ignorance and maintained that the teachings of Islam opposed all free discussion and investigation, and therefore Islam has never risen to the aid of philosophy and science throughout the centuries of its existence. The only fruits Islam has borne for its followers have been intellectual absolutism and dogmatism, they said. Christianity, in comparison, has been the cradle of free thought and discussion,
they maintained, patronising art and literature, encouraging the sciences, and becoming a fertile ground for the germination of new philosophy and helping it to develop and bear fruit (Cousin, 1841). Utmost, Islamic philosophy always leads to main conclusion, that the power of God (Allah) was supreme and His words are the absolute Truth (Kaf al-Ghazal, 2007).

Figure 9.1: Men pray during the holy month of Ramadan at the tomb of John the Baptist, at the historic Umayyad mosque in the Old City of Damascus, 27 September 2006.  
Source: http://www.islamfortoday.com/beliefs.htm

ACTIVITY 9.2
(a) The Quran emphasises the “Unity of God”. Explore and explain.
(b) What is the nature of God’s existence in Islam?

9.2 BASIC PRINCIPLES OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION

Islamic education is exclusively different from other types of educational theory and practice largely because of the all-inclusive influence of the Quran. The Quran provides as a complete blueprint for both the individual and society and as the primary source of knowledge. The arrival of the Quran in the seventh century was quite revolutionary for the predominantly illiterate Arabian society; where the society had enjoyed a rich oral tradition, but then the Quran was considered the words of God and needed to be organically interacted with by means of reading and reciting its words. Hence, reading and writing for the
purpose of accessing the full blessings of the Quran was an aspiration for most Muslims. It shows that education in Islam is clearly derived its origins from a symbiotic relationship with religious instruction.

Islamic society is founded on the principles of belief and righteous conduct. This connection between values and practice lies at the very heart of the Islamic way of life. To be a Muslim requires that one’s faith be reflected in one’s practice and daily moral conduct with other people. So, what is Islamic education? Mudawi (1989) mentioned that the truth of the matter is that there are in fact two types of education which are simultaneously offered in the Muslim countries:

(a) secular education – recent and modern, founded by most Western colonisers, not really bound to the ideology of Islam; and

(b) Islamic education – the type of education which is based on the ideology of Islam and is the sum total of the educational and guidance policies, formal or informal, are directly related to the ideal of Islamising society and training the individuals and groups in the right fields with a view to facilitating development both material and immaterial.

On the whole, Islamic education is an independent education system which has its distinct basic aspects, objectives and methods, and inspired by fundamental philosophic principles of Islam (Yalqin, 1986).

Realising the need to understand better Islamic education, Al-Nadawi (1969) presented six ideologies that can be used to provide a framework of the principles of Islamic education. The principles of Islamic education are:

(a) Closely related to the content of the texts of the Holy Quran and the Traditions of Prophet Muhammad and the intellectual research based on them;

(b) That it is an active interaction between two parties: teacher and learner, where the teacher influence and guide the student;

(c) That it is in most cases a goal-oriented activity, though it can sometimes take place without full intention;

(d) That is comprehensive – covering the individual’s growth in various sides: spiritual, biological, intellectual, psychological, and social;

(e) That it is continuous or life-long, covering the individual’s life-span from birth to death; and

(f) That it is directed to the aim of enabling the individual to carry on the various activities which are conducive to the building of Islamic society and Islamic civilisation.
As a consequence from the principles of Islamic education, effective Islamic teaching and learning must then be meaningful. Students should feel that the content of the curriculum is worth learning, because of its meaningful and relevant to their lives. When learning is meaningful and relevant, students are intrinsically motivated to learn. Furthermore, students must be led to discover the larger connections between the knowledge and skills they are learning - rather than memorising isolated bits of information. The Muslim children must be trained to always to keep their eye on the whole picture, or macro-view, whenever studying. This, partially, is the meaning of taufhid. Islamic teaching and learning must therefore focus on examining major themes and important topics, rather than superficial coverage of many different topics. This approach advocates that the Islamic Studies curriculum be structured coherently around the concept of powerful ideas.

Most important of all, effective Islamic teaching and learning must be value-based. By focusing on values and considering the ethical dimensions of topics, Islamic education becomes a powerful vehicle for character and moral development, hence achieving its real purpose. Educators have to realise that every aspect of the teaching-learning experience conveys values to students and provide opportunities for them to learn about values. From the selection of content, materials and activities, up to the arrangement of the classroom, class rules and management style, students are exposed to and learn values. Therefore, teachers should develop a better awareness of their own values and how those values influence their behaviour as role models and what students in the end learn from these experiences about themselves, others and Islam.

Effective Islamic teaching and learning should also be challenging where students have to be challenged to thoughtfully examine the topics that they are studying, participate assertively in group discussions, work productively in cooperative learning activities, and to come to grasps with controversial issues. Such activities and experiences will help to foster skills needed to produce competent Muslims who are capable of presenting and defending their beliefs and principles successfully.

As a final point, effective Islamic teaching and learning ought to be active. The teacher must be actively and genuinely engaged in the teaching process - making lesson plans, choices, and curriculum adjustments as needed and required. An effective teacher of Islamic education must be prepared to continuously update his or her knowledge base, adjust goals and content to meet students’ needs, take advantage of unfolding events and teachable moments, and to develop examples that relate directly to students. Moreover, learning should also be active by emphasising hands - on and minds - on activities that organise students to react to what they are learning and to use it in their everyday lives in some meaningful way.
In Islam, education is viewed as dynamic, not static. This view is rooted in the belief that the mission of Islam is to positively affect and transform the world, and the fact that the purpose of Islamic education is to prepare young men and women who are capable of carrying out this mission - emotionally, morally, and intellectually.

### 9.3 AIMS OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION

Education in the context of Islam is regarded as a process that involves the complete person, including the rational, spiritual, and social dimensions. As noted by Al-Attas (1979), the comprehensive and integrated approach to education in Islam is directed toward the “balanced growth of the total personality...through training Man's spirit, intellect, rational self, feelings and bodily senses...such that faith is infused into the whole of his personality”. One of the goal of Islamic education is that people be able to live as how Prophet Muhammad had lived. Nasr (1984) said that while education does prepare humankind for happiness in this life, “its ultimate goal is the abode of permanence and all education points to the permanent world of eternity”. According to Islam, to ascertain truth by reason alone is restrictive because spiritual and temporal realities are two sides of the same sphere. In short, education in Islam is two fold: acquiring intellectual knowledge through the application of reason and logic and developing spiritual knowledge that derived from divine revelation and spiritual experience.

Islamic philosophy of education has three distinct kind of educational aims. Broadly, the general aims of Islamic education are divided into (Abdullah, 1982):

(a) Physical aims (*ahdaf jismiyah*);
(b) Spiritual aims (*ahdaf ruhiyyah*); and
(c) Mental aims (*ahdaf `aqliyyah*).

Again, according to Abdullah (1982), fundamentally these aims are taken together are very much concerned with ensuring that education results not merely in Platonic goal of “a sound mind in a sound body” but rather in a thoroughly integrated personality grounded in the Quran and in Quranic morality, because “a person who truly accepts the message of Islam should accept all the ideals embodied in the Quran”.

For that reason, as stated by Reagan (2005) the aims of Islamic education:

(i) Should be concerned with developing the unique characteristic of the individual human beings in such a way as to allow them to adapt to the standards of their society which would share the ideals of Islam;
(ii) Should be both realistic and idealistic. In other words, Islamic education must take into account biological needs, while at the same time not accepting the individual’s yielding to temptation;

(iii) Since the Quran and its ideals are timeless and unchangeable, so too much educational ideas grounded in the Quran be seen as timeless and unchanging. The aims of Islamic philosophy of education are thus universal in nature;

(iv) Should be concerned both with preparation for this life and with the preparation for the Hereafter; and

(v) Should be translated into observable behaviours.

In brief, the aims of education in Islam is to develop a person intellectually, spiritually, and emotionally that brings he or she closer to his or her Creator and advances he or she into a responsible social being. Drawing inspirations from the aims of Islamic education mentioned above and from the richness of Islamic traditions, the curriculum are suppose to produce Muslims who are:

- Moral individuals, responsible towards their Creator and to all His creations;
- Imbibed or absorb with taqwa, self-monitored (muraqabah) and conscientious;
- Active and responsible partners in human endeavours participating in community and nation building, and as global citizens;
- Able to explain and communicate with others the teachings of Islam in an informed and logical manner; and
- Practicing Muslims, committed to the betterment of human life.

SELF-CHECK 9.1

(a) Is Islamic education against modern education? State and explain your opinion.

(b) Which is more important: “education of Islam” or “education of science”? Decide and discuss.
Perhaps, our real challenge is the problem of the corruption of knowledge. This has come about due to our own state of confusion as well as influences coming from the philosophy, science, and ideology of modern Western culture and civilisation. Intellectual confusion emerged as a result of changes and restriction in the meaning of key terms that project the Islamic worldview derived from Revelation.

The phrase “Islamisation of knowledge” was first used and proposed by a Malaysian Muslim scholar, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas in his book titled “Islam and Secularism” in 1978. For example, “Torah Umadda” is a philosophy concerning the interrelationship of secular knowledge and Jewish knowledge.

Dr. Usman Muhamad Bugaje in his writings, “Contemporary Response to the Challenge of Knowledge”, expressed that “in any case, knowledge, whether of religion or of nature is nothing more than the data we perceive as we interact with the texts of religion and the text of nature. The Islamisation of knowledge can, therefore, create the impression that all Muslims really need to do is to Islamise knowledge that others produce and not produce it themselves, as if the world of knowledge was going to wait for them”.

Islamisation of knowledge is a term which describes a variety of attempts and approaches to synthesize the ethics of Islam within various fields of modern thought. Its end product would be a new *ijma* – consensus among Muslims on an appropriate *fiqh* – jurisprudence and a scientific method that did not violate the Islamic ethical norms. However, some Muslims both liberal and traditional are sceptical of this approach, viewing that the construction of fields such as Islamic science and Islamic economics largely as propaganda created to further the Islamist view that Islam is an all-encompassing social system.

The notion of Islamisation of knowledge was also proposed by a Palestinian philosopher but live in United States of America, Ismail Al-Faruqi, in 1982, in response to what he identified “*the malaise of the ummah*” - faithful. Al-Faruqi (1982) argued that by using tools, categories, concepts, and modes of analysis that originated wholly in the secular – Western, like Marxism, there was a disconnect between the ecological and social reality of Muslim nations, and worsely, a total inability to respect or even notice violations of ethics of Islam itself. In his view, disputes or disagreements between traditionalist *ulema* - Muslim scholars trained in Islam and Islamic law and reformers seeking
to revive Muslim society with modern science and professional categories, were inevitable without the strong ethical constraints that applied to methods of early Muslim philosophy. Al-Faruqi proposed, therefore, to revive those methods, restore *ijtihad* and integrate scientific method within Islamic limits. The term "*ijtihad*" means to derive and deduce religious opinion about some matter that is not mentioned in the sources of Islam, keeping in view the spirit and overall framework of Islam.

As a result, a body of modern knowledge that had been "Islamised" would not offend the traditionalists, since it would place ethics before knowledge or curiosity or power, and provide for limitation of scientific or professional activities that offended those ethics. Al-Faruqi died in 1986, but his thoughts has had a profound effect, especially on Islamic economics, which operates under traditional zero-interest, participatory labour - capital structures, and supports stronger community control of land - as in the traditional practices of *haram* and *hima* - the equivalent of the modern watershed protection and wilderness reserve laws. Moreover, in the world of finance today, "Islamic banks" is one of the major forces in the world’s business system.

As we are living in a world where knowledge is the greatest capital, Burgaje urged the Muslims to look back and try to understand the challenge of knowledge that they are trying to respond to. Today, more than ever before, the battle for survival and control is the "battle of the brain" and as Muslims ought to know; in a battle of the brain nothing will do but the brain. So, this is a challenge of knowledge, in the articulated words of Al-Attas (1978):

> "not as against ignorance; but knowledge as conceived and disseminated throughout the world by Western civilisation; knowledge whose nature has become problematic because it has lost its true purpose due to being unjustly conceived, and it has brought about chaos in man’s life instead of, and rather than justice; knowledge which pretends to be real but which is productive of confusion and scepticism, which has elevated doubt and conjecture to the ‘scientific’ rank in methodology and which regards doubt as an eminently valid epistemological tool in the pursuit of truth; knowledge which has, for the first time in history, brought chaos to the Three Kingdoms of Nature; the animal, vegetal and mineral” (p.36).

Al-Attas (1978) pointed out that the heart of the concept of Islamisation is the concept of an Islamic metaphysical worldview; a worldview that gives meaning and purpose in our actions; it gives the answers to questions dealing with why and how we exist and defines what ethical or moral values that we should partake in, and what type of behaviour or actions we should consider as right or wrong. Linking to Islamisation, the Islamic metaphysical worldview is found in
our *aqidah* (theology and cosmology), *tasawwuf* (psychology) and *syariah* (jurisprudence) that derived from the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah. As such, Al-Attas (1978) calls for the reformation of the educational philosophy and institutes of the Muslims based on the metaphysical worldview of Islam: the reformation of the philosophy of education and sincerity in the pursuit of knowledge as well as the recognition of the proper authorities of knowledge.

Another salient feature of the Al-Attas (1978) concept of Islamisation is his careful analysis and usage of language, since language is an exposition of one’s worldview. In other words, language being the vehicle or medium which expresses the meaning of things is ultimately tied to the worldview from which it is developed from. Hence, he insists on for careful definition of terms, and as such defines specific terms using Quranic terminology as understood by the classical scholars. Science according to the Islamic worldview is not the same as that which is understood by the Secular West. The same way goes for other terms like justice which is somewhat equated to equality in the West but is not understood the same way from an Islamic perspective. The Muslim world’s understanding of democracy is different from the West, because the existence of the concept of *syura* – consultation does not treat the learned’s vote and opinion the same way as that coming from the ignorant.

Yet again, in the process of Islamisation of contemporary knowledge Al-Attas (1978) identify the need for the recognition of the proper authorities of knowledge. This means that since the West are at the forefront of science and technology as well the current authorities in the field, Muslims are urged to learn from the West. The only thing that the Muslim should possess is the metaphysical worldview necessary to filter out those theories that are not in line with our *aqidah* and *tasawwuf*. For instance, the Muslim should display particular sensitivity towards modern psychology that denies the existence of “spirit”. This does not mean that modern psychology should be rejected in totality, rather this would mean that the Muslim should acquire some form of intellectual mechanism that would filter out those theories that are not in line with the Islamic metaphysical worldview and accept those that are within the boundaries of truth. In fact, the pursuit of knowledge does not just stop at the reinterpretation of secular knowledge but the Muslim should also possess the ability to form new theories and solutions that support the Islamic metaphysical worldview. The Muslim should realised that the ultimate purpose of knowledge is spiritual and immaterial in nature, not one that is done for employability motive only.

Conclusively, Islamisation is done at a deep philosophical and epistemological level (Al-Attas, 1995). It is preposterous to consider Islamisation as a physical, superficial process, performed by incorporating certain Islamic features to make
it appear Islamic; Islamisation deals with the mind and the heart’s attitude towards knowledge, truth and reality (Hasnul Arifin, 2009). Islamisation starts from within, by disciplining the heart, mind, and soul with the correct philosophy, values and actions, and with the careful usage and treatment of language. Islamisation deals with the unity of knowledge and all knowledge should always relate to its metaphysical foundation and to its ultimate spiritual goal (Al-Attas, 1995). For this reason, there exists no dualism or no dichotomy between religion and science.

Text has been adapted from:

**SELF-CHECK 9.2**

(a) Explore the importance of knowledge in both realm: the Islamic and the modern world.

(b) Reflect on this statement: “From Islamisation of knowledge to Islamisation of education”. Define and comment.

**SUMMARY**

- Islamic philosophy is a branch of Islamic studies, and is a long standing attempt to create harmony between philosophy - reason and the religious teachings of Islam - faith.

- The main sources of classical or early Islamic philosophy are the religion of Islam itself - especially ideas derived and interpreted from the Quran.

- From the perspective of Islam, a worldview is not merely the minds view of the physical world and of man’s historical, social, political and cultural involvement in it as reflected.

- Islam does not admit to the dichotomy of the sacred and the profane; the worldview of Islam encompasses both *al-dunya* and *al-akhirah*, in which the *dunya* - aspect must be related in a profound and inseparable way to the *akhirah* - aspect, and in which the *akhirah* - aspect has ultimate and final significance.

- The Islamic vision of reality and truth, which is a metaphysical survey of the visible as well as the invisible worlds including the perspective of life as a whole.
• Islam is not a form of culture, and its system of thought projecting its vision of reality and truth and the system of value derived from it are not merely derived from cultural and philosophical elements aided by science, but one whose original source is “Revelation”, confirmed by religion, affirmed by intellectual and intuitive principles.

• The worldview of Islam is characterised by an authenticity and a finality that points to what is ultimate, and it projects a view of reality and truth that encompasses existence and life altogether in total perspective whose fundamental elements are permanently established.

• The nature of God as revealed in Islam is derived from Revelation.

• The nature of God understood in Islam is not the same as the conceptions of God understood in the various religious traditions of the world.

• The essential message of the revelation was always the same: to recognise and acknowledge and worship the One True and Real God (ilah) alone, without associating Him with any partner, rival, or equal, nor attributing a likeness to Him.

• Religion consists not only of affirmation of the Unity of God (al-tawhid), but also of the manner and form in which we verify that affirmation as shown by His last Prophet Muhammad, who confirmed, perfected and consolidated the manner and form of affirmation and verification of Prophets before him.

• The conception of the nature of God in Islam is the consummation of what was revealed to the Prophets according to the Quran.

• There are two types of education which are simultaneously offered in the Muslim countries: secular education and Islamic education.

• The principles of Islamic education is: closely related to the content of the texts of the Holy Quran and the Traditions of Prophet Muhammad and the intellectual research based on them; that it is an active interaction between two parties: teacher and learner; that it is in most cases a goal-oriented activity; that it is comprehensive; that it is continuous or life-long, and that it is directed to the aim of enabling the individual to carry on the various activities which are conducive to the building of Islamic society and Islamic civilisation.

• The aims of Islamic education: should be concerned with developing the unique characteristic of the individual human beings in such a way as to allow them to adapt to the standards of their society which would share the ideals of Islam; should be both realistic and idealistic, since the Quran and its ideals are timeless and unchangeable, so too much educational ideas grounded in the Quran be seen as timeless and unchanging, should be
concerned both with preparation for this life and with the preparation for the Hereafter; and should be translated into observable behaviours.

- Islamisation of knowledge is a term which describes a variety of attempts and approaches to synthesize the ethics of Islam within various fields of modern thought.

- Islamisation is done at a deep philosophical and epistemological level.

- Islamisation deals with the mind and the heart’s attitude towards knowledge, truth and reality.

- Islamisation starts from within, by disciplining the heart, mind, and soul with the correct philosophy, values and actions, and with the careful usage and treatment of language.

- Islamisation deals with the unity of knowledge and all knowledge should always relate to its metaphysical foundation and to its ultimate spiritual goal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY TERMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absolute Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolutism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims of Islamic education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-akhirah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-dunya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certainty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogmatism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamisation of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic thought</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


V. Cousin, V. (1841). Cours de l'histoire de la philosophie. Paris


Philosophising is not unique to the West alone. Great thinkers in other parts of the world have developed sophisticated arguments about philosophical issues, and have by their ideas shaped politics, cultures, and the lives of many. For example, Eastern ideas are among the oldest religious beliefs. These ideas have a long varied history that have had a significant historical impact on Western thought and influenced Judaism and Christianity.
Have you ever wanted to learn what non-Western peoples have thought about the basic questions of life? How differently do they think about issues? Understanding Eastern philosophy provides an accessible critical introduction to how some of the key philosophies of the East compare with those in the West. In this topic, you will be introduced to some major traditions of Eastern philosophy such as Indian thought and Chinese thought. We will also look into the National Education Philosophy of Malaysia, a developing country in Southeast Asia.

**ACTIVITY 10.1**

"Knowing the philosophies of many societies makes you a better teacher."

What do you think of the above statement?

## 10.1 INDIAN THOUGHT ON EDUCATION

Indian thought is a brilliant, consistent assessment of a huge body of religious thought. Indian philosophy, along with Chinese philosophy, is one of the foremost Eastern traditions of abstract inquiry that was expressed in the Indo-European language of Sanskrit; comprises many diverse schools of thought and perspectives and includes a substantial body of intellectual debate and argumentation among the various views.

Classical Indian philosophy extends from approximately 100 B.C. to 1800 A.D. which marks the beginning of the modern period. Ancient Indian thought, which is also philosophic in a broader sense, originated as early as 1500 B.C. and appears in scriptures called Veda. Ancient Indian philosophy also includes the mystical treatises known as Upanishads and the Sanskrit poem Bhagavad-Gita (Song of the Lord). Classical Indian philosophy is less concerned with spirituality than ancient thought; rather, it concentrates more on questions of how people can know and communicate about everyday affairs.

In the ancient period of Indian philosophy, philosophy and religion cannot be meaningfully separated, primarily because of the cultural integration of religious practices and mystical pursuits. For example, ceremonies celebrating birth, marriage, and death, performed with recitations of Vedic verses (mantras), were important for bonding within ancient Indian societies. Later, in the classical Indian philosophy, different social practices were developed. Thus, the orthodox classical schools of thought are distinguished from non-orthodox classical schools by their commitment to established forms of social practice rather than to the doctrines of the Veda.
Besides, in ancient India, religion did not entail a system of belief, but rather a way of life that permitted a wide range of philosophic positions and inquiry. Mysticism, the claim that ultimate truth is only obtainable through spiritual experience, dominates much of ancient Indian philosophy. Such experiences are thought to reveal a supreme and transmundane (beyond ordinary experience) reality and to provide the meaning of life. As a result, mysticism shapes much classical and modern Indian thought. Through meditation and the meditative techniques of yoga (please refer to Figure 10.1), it is believed that one discovers one’s true-self (atman), or God (Brahman), or enlightenment (nirvana).

### 10.1.1 Vedas

_Veda_ (meaning “knowledge”) is the most ancient sacred literature of Hinduism, or individual books belonging to that literature. This body of ancient literature consists primarily of four collections of hymns (religious song or song of praise), detached poetical portions, and ceremonial formulas. The collections, named as the _Four-Veda_, are called the _Rig-Veda_, the _Sama-Veda_, the _Yajur-Veda_, and the _Atharva-Veda_. They are also known also as the _Samhitas_. The four Veda as a group came to be viewed as sacred in Hinduism.
Most of the poems of the Veda are religious and tend to be about the activities of various gods (please refer to Figure 10.2). Yet, some Vedic hymns and poems address philosophic themes that became important in later periods, such as the *henotheism*, the key to much of Hindu theology. *Henotheism* is the idea that one God takes many different forms, and that although individuals may worship several different gods and goddesses, they really revere but one Supreme Being.

The first three Samhitas are primarily ritual handbooks that were used in the Vedic period by three classes of priests who officiated at ceremonial sacrifices:

(i) The Rig-Veda contains more than 1000 hymns, composed in various poetic meters and arranged in ten books. It was used by the hotri (reciters) who invoked the gods by reading its hymns aloud;

(ii) The Sama-Veda contains verse portions taken mainly from the Rig-Veda. It was used by the udgatri (chanters) who sang its hymns or melodies;

(iii) The Yajur-Veda consists of two recensions where both of them partly in prose and partly in verse and both containing roughly the same material, sacrificial formulas. It was used by the adhvaryu (priests) who recited appropriate formulas from the Yajur-Veda while actually performing the sacrificial actions; and

(iv) The Atharva-Veda (the fourth veda), in part attributed by tradition to a rishi named Atharvan, consists almost exclusively of a wide variety of hymns, magical incantations, and magical spells. Largely for personal and domestic use, it was not originally accepted as authoritative because of the deviant nature of its contents.
To the Vedic believer, the following were the fundamental spiritual truths of the Vedas (Ozmon and Cravers, 2008):

- An Ultimate Reality is all pervading and is the final cause of the universe;
- This Reality is an uncreated, self-luminous, and eternal spirit;
- Religion, or Dharma, consists of mediating on this Spirit and leading a life of virtue and righteousness; and
- The human soul is divine, with the entire universe a manifestation of the Supreme Spirit.

Humans are viewed as spirit and not merely body or mind where they are divine in essence. Humans can realized their divinity because God is within them. People cannot see this when lust, anger, or greed motivate them; thus these evils must be removed and the heart and mind purified. The purification process may take several lifetimes of reincarnation.

### 10.1.2 Upanishads

Indian philosophy was more decisively established with the Upanishads - secret doctrines where the first of which may have been written in the 7th century B.C. Early Upanishads were key to the emergence of several classical philosophies. In the Upanishads, the views about *Brahman* - the Absolute, or God and *atman* - one’s true self were proposed (please refer to Figure 10.3).

*Figure 10.3: Brahma*

*Source: rinita.com*
Upanishads, a Hindu esoteric and mystical writings grouped in the Aranyakas, which are part of the Veda. The philosophical concepts contained in the Upanishads served as the basis of one of the six orthodox systems of Hindu philosophy, Vedanta. The underlying concern of the Upanishads is the nature of Brahman, the universal soul; and the fundamental doctrine expounded is the identity of atman, or the innermost soul of each individual, with Brahman. Formulations of this doctrinal truth are stressed throughout the Upanishadic writings. Other topics include the nature and purpose of existence, various ways of meditation and worship, eschatology – doctrines about death, salvation, and the theory of the transmigration of souls.

10.1.3 Epics

Mahabharata (the great epic of the Bharata Dynasty) is the longer of the two great epic poems of ancient India (the other is the Ramayana). Although both are basically secular works, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana are ritually recited and are thought to confer religious merit on their hearers.

The central theme of the Mahabharata is the contest between two noble families, the Pandavas and their blood relatives the Kauravas for the possession of a kingdom in northern India. The most important segment of the poem is the Bhagavad-Gita, a dialogue between Krishna, the eighth incarnation of the god Vishnu and the Pandava, hero Arjuna on the meaning of life. It has influenced devout Hindu believers for centuries. The Mahabharata was composed beginning about 400 B.C. and received numerous additions until about 400 A.D. It is divided into 18 books containing altogether about 200,000 lines of verse interspersed with short prose passages.
The lengthy poem *Bhagavad Gita*, part of the 2000-year-old Sanskrit epic Mahabharata, is considered the most important text in the Hindu religion. The poem takes the form of a dialogue in which the god Krishna advises the human hero, Prince Arjuna before a great battle (please refer to Figure 10.4). When Arjuna sees friends and relatives on the opposing side, he is reluctant to fight, and Krishna reminds him of his duty as a warrior to engage in battle.

According to the *Bhagavad Gita*, the goal of life is to free the mind and intellect from their complexities and to focus them on the glory of the Self by dedicating one’s actions to the divine. This goal can be achieved through the *Yogas* of meditation, action, devotion, and knowledge. In the sixth chapter, Krishna describes the best *Yogi* as one who constantly meditates upon him; which is understood to mean thinking of either Krishna personally, or the supreme Brahman. Krishna summarizes the *Yogas* through eighteen chapters, however three yogas in particular have been emphasized by commentators: (1) *Bhakti Yoga* or devotion, (2) *Karma Yoga* or selfless action, and (3) *Jnana Yoga* or self-transcending knowledge.

While each path differs, their fundamental goal is the same - to realize Brahman - the Divine Essence as being the ultimate truth upon which our material universe rests, that the body is temporal, and that the Supreme Soul or Paramatman is infinite. Yoga’s aim or moksha is to escape from the cycle of reincarnation through realization of the ultimate reality. There are three stages to self-realization enunciated from the *Bhagavad Gita*: (1) *Brahman* - the impersonal universal energy, (2) *Paramatma* - the supreme soul sitting in the heart of every living entity, and (3) *Bhagavan* - god as a personality, with a transcendental form.

The Ramayana tells of the birth and education of Rama, a prince and the seventh incarnation of the god Vishnu, and recounts his winning of the hand of Sita in marriage. Displaced as rightful heir to his father’s throne, Rama goes into exile, accompanied by Sita and by his brother Lakshmana. Sita is carried off by the demon king Ravana. With the aid of the monkey general, Hanuman and an army of monkeys and bears, Rama, after a long search, slays Ravana and rescues Sita. Rama regains his throne and rules wisely. In the probable addition, Sita is accused with rumours of adultery during her captivity. Although innocent, she
bears Rama’s twin sons in exile, sheltered by the hermit Valmiki, said to be the author of the poem. After many years, Rama and Sita are reunited.

Although basically a secular work, the Ramayana incorporates much of the sacred Vedic material. Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, and Hanuman are widely revered as ideal embodiments of princely heroism, wifely and brotherly devotion, and loyal service, respectively. Reciting the Ramayana is considered a religious act, and scenes from the epic are dramatized throughout India and Southeast Asia. In addition, the Ramayana exerted enormous influence on later Indian literature.

10.1.4 Modern Hinduism

Mahatma Gandhi, a pious Hindu, was the most important figure in understanding modern Hinduism. His life well illustrates what it means to be a modern Hindu. Although Gandhi was educated in England, Gandhi’s politics were based less on jurisprudence and more on religion. The title by which Gandhi was known in India and throughout the world emphasizes the spiritual foundation of his life. He was called Mahatma, the “great soul”, a title that is reserved for the most spiritually accomplished Hindus. Yet, Gandhi was not a Brahmin or a Kshatryia, he was of the Vaisha varna. He was also not a theologian or a systematic religious thinker. His political vision and practice, however, was rooted in his understanding of sacred scriptures from many of the world’s religions, especially Hinduism’s Bhagavad Gita and Christianity’s New Testament.

This kind of openness to spiritual truth regardless of where it is found is the characteristic of much of Hinduism. Indeed, Gandhi had an appreciation of all the major religious traditions. Gandhi called his philosophy Satyagraha, a term that meant grasping forth and holding on to the truth. It might also mean “grasping forth and holding on to God”, because for Gandhi, God is truth. Gandhi believed that truth is more important than political expedience. While others in the independence movement argued that India’s freedom from Britain should be gained through armed conflict or other means, Gandhi maintained that
just ends could never be attained through evil means. This conviction spurred the development of his philosophy and practice of non-violent resistance, and non-harming of living things – *ahimsa*.

One of the biggest controversies with Hinduism today is its “caste system.” The caste system is in contrast with the assumption of Western democratic ideals: that all people are created equal. From the classical Hindu perspective, it is apparent that people are born with different intellectual and spiritual qualities and capabilities. Thus, these differences dispose different people to different sorts of occupations and responsibilities in society. The innate differences with which people are born derive from how they acted in previous lives. This is the law of *karma*. How we act now determines who we will become, and who we are now has been determined by how we have been in the past.

The hierarchy of caste system is not based on wealth. It is founded on purity. Those at the top of the social ladder are regarded as more spiritually pure than those at the bottom. The entire system is thus a gradient of purity. The term “caste” refers to what Hindus call *Varna* and *Jati*. These two terms designate two different but related systems of organizing Indian society; *varna* means color and *jati* means birth, or more specifically, birth group.

The caste system is comprised of the four categories:

(i) **Brahmins**: The class of priests and intellectuals who comprise about 6% to 7% of the population.

(ii) **Kshatriyas**: The warriors and administrators.

(iii) **Vaishyas**: The merchants, farmers, and artisans.

(iv) **Shudras**: The peasants or the common folk.

The first three castes are known as the twice-born, because as children their members undergo a ritual initiation compared to a second birth. The shudras, however, have no such ritual initiation, so they are known as the once-born. However, outside of the Varna system, there are also those who have no caste. These are people known variously as *outcastes, untouchables*, and *harijans*, the word used by Gandhi meaning the “children of god.” Today, members of this group prefer to call themselves *dalits*, meaning “the oppressed ones.” People in this class are the handlers of leather, the body burners, and the toilet cleaners. In short, these people are the ones who perform the dirty work in Indian society since other Hindus regard this kind of work as so highly polluting that they cannot remove the impurity with standard procedures of purification.
The *untouchables* both are and are not Hindus. Up until the advocacy of Gandhi, they were forbidden from entering Hindu temples. They lived outside the villages and towns and could not use public facilities such as the well. The Indian constitution outlawed untouchability when the nation gained its independence from Great Britain. They did so by making the untouchables a part of the shudra varna. Despite this theoretical abolition of untouchability, its practice remains very real and present as part of Hindu life today.

**10.2 CHINESE THOUGHT ON EDUCATION**

Chinese philosophy is philosophy written in the Chinese tradition of thought. The “Hundred Schools of Thought” (770 to 221 B.C.E.) are considered the golden ages of Chinese philosophy since there were many philosophers and schools of thought developed during that time. The intellectual society of this era was characterized by itinerant scholars, who were often employed by various state rulers as advisors on the methods of government, war, and diplomacy.

Early Chinese thought, by and large, was sociopolitical philosophy; it was not concerned with abstract, theoretical matters such as ontology, epistemology, or even logic. It was very much a practical affair. So many different philosophies developed during the late “Spring and Autumn” and early “Warring States” periods where the era is also often known as the “Hundred Schools of Thought.” From the Hundred Schools of Thought came many of the great classical writings on which Chinese thought and practices are presently based. The body of thought that have had the most enduring effect on Chinese thought were Buddhism and Confucianism.
10.2.1 Buddhism

Buddhism, a major world religion, was founded in northeastern India by Siddhartha Gautama (563 B.C.E. – 483 B.C.E.), who is known as the Buddha, or “Enlightened One” (please refer to Figure 10.6). Originating as a monastic movement within the dominant Brahman tradition, Buddhism quickly developed in a distinctive direction. The Buddha not only rejected the significant aspects of Hindu philosophy, but also challenged the authority of the priesthood, denied the validity of the Vedic scriptures, and rejected the sacrificial cult based on them. Moreover, he opened his movement to members of all castes, denying that a person’s spiritual worth is a matter of birth.

Siddhartha Gautama, born in Lumbiní, Nepal, near the present Nepal-India border, was a son of the ruler of a petty kingdom. The young prince was raised in sheltered luxury, until at the age of 29, he realized how empty his life up to that point had been. Renouncing earthly attachments, he embarked on a quest for peace and enlightenment, seeking release from the cycle of rebirths. For the next few years he practiced Yoga and adopted a life of radical asceticism.

Eventually, Gautama gave up this approach as it is fruitless, and instead adopted a middle path between a life of indulgence and self-denial. Sitting under a “bo tree”, he meditated, rising through a series of higher states of consciousness until he attained the enlightenment for which he had been searching. Once having known this ultimate religious truth, the Buddha underwent a period of intense inner struggle. He began to preach, wandering from one place to another, gathering a body of disciples, and organizing them into a monastic community known as the sangha - the way he spent the rest of his life.
At the core of the Buddha’s enlightenment is the realization of the Four Noble Truths:

(a) **Life is suffering.** This is more than a mere recognition of the presence of suffering in existence. It is a statement that, in its very nature, human existence is essentially painful from the moment of birth up to the moment of death. Even death brings no relief, for the Buddha, accepted the Hindu idea of life as cyclical, with death leading to further rebirth.

(b) **All suffering is caused by ignorance** of the nature of reality and the craving, attachment, and grasping that result from such ignorance.

(c) **Suffering can be ended by overcoming ignorance and attachment.**

(d) The path to the suppression of suffering is the **Noble Eightfold Path**, which consists of right views, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right-mindedness, and right contemplation. These eight are usually divided into three categories that form the cornerstone of Buddhist faith: morality, wisdom, and samadhi, or concentration.

Buddhism analyzes human existence as made up of five aggregates or “bundles” (skandhas): the material body, feelings, perceptions, predispositions or karmic tendencies, and consciousness. A person is only a temporary combination of these aggregates, which are subject to continual change. No one remains the same for any two consecutive moments. Buddhists deny that the aggregates individually or in combination may be considered a permanent, independently existing self or soul (atman). Indeed, they regard it as a mistake to conceive of any lasting unity behind the elements that constitute an individual. The Buddha held that belief in such a self results in egoism, craving, and hence in suffering. Thus, Gautama taught the **doctrine of anatman**, or the denial of a permanent soul. He felt that all existence is characterized by the three marks of anatman (no soul), anitya (impermanence), and dukkha (suffering). The doctrine of anatman made it necessary for the Buddha to reinterpret the Indian idea of repeated rebirth in the cycle of phenomenal existence known as samsara. To this end he taught the **doctrine of pratityasamutpada**, or dependent origination. This twelve-linked chain of causation shows how ignorance in a previous life creates the tendency for a combination of aggregates to develop that cause the mind and senses to operate. When sensations resulted, it lead to craving and a clinging to existence. This condition triggers the process of becoming once again, producing a renewed cycle of birth, old age, and death. In this causal chain, a connection is made between one life and the next. What is imagined is a stream of renewed existences, rather than a permanent being that moves from life to life - in effect a belief in rebirth without transmigration.
Closely related to this belief is the doctrine of *karma*. Karma consists of a person’s acts and their ethical consequences. Human actions lead to rebirth, in which good deeds are inevitably rewarded and evil deeds are punished. Thus, neither undeserved pleasure nor unwarranted suffering exists in the world, but rather a universal justice. The *karmic* process operates through a kind of natural moral law rather than through a system of divine judgment. One’s karma determines such matters as one’s species, beauty, intelligence, longevity, wealth, and social status. According to the Buddha, *karma* of varying types can lead to rebirth as a human, an animal, a hungry ghost, a denizen of hell, or even one of the Hindu gods.

Although never actually denying the existence of gods, Buddhism denies them of any special role. Their lives in heaven are long and pleasurable, but they are in the same predicament as other creatures, being subject eventually to death and further rebirth in lower states of existence. They are not creators of the universe or in control of human destiny, and Buddhism denies the value of prayer and sacrifice to them. Other than the possible modes of rebirth, human existence is preferable, because the deities are so engrossed in their own pleasures that they lose sight of the need for salvation. Enlightenment is possible only for humans.

The ultimate goal of the Buddhist path is release from the round of phenomenal existence with its inherent suffering. To achieve this goal is to attain *nirvana*, an enlightened state in which the fires of greed, hatred, and ignorance have been quenched. In other words, nirvana is a state of consciousness beyond definition. After attaining nirvana, the enlightened individual may continue to live, burning off any remaining karma until a state of final nirvana (*parinirvana*) is attained at the moment of death. In theory, the goal of nirvana is attainable by anyone, although it is a realistic goal only for members of the monastic community.
10.2.2 Confucianism

Confucianism, an intellectual, political, and religious tradition, or school of thought, had developed a distinct identity in the 5th century B.C. from the teachings of a Chinese philosopher, Confucius (please refer to Figure 10.7). In Chinese, the name for this tradition is Rujia, meaning “School of the Scholars.” Confucianism advocates reforming government, so that it works for the benefit of the people, and cultivating virtue, especially in government officials. It encourages respect for elders and legitimate authority figures, for traditional beliefs, for ritual practices, for education, and for close family bonds.

Confucius saw himself as a “transmitter and not a creator.” He believed that he was merely teaching the dao (tao, or way) of China’s ancient sages. The Analects is the earliest Chinese text that stresses the concept of ren (jen). Ren has been translated as benevolence, humaneness, or simply goodness. For Confucius, ren is the summation of human virtues. Ren is a quality that every human should strive to achieve, but it is so exalted that Confucius is cautious of attributing ren to anyone. Thus for Confucius, the good life is an endless aspiration for ethical perfection.

Confucius also stressed the rites or rituals. These include everything from funeral ceremonies, to offerings of food and wine to ancestral spirits, to public performances of music and dance, to how to greet a guest, eat, or dress. Practicing rituals with reverence leads to being virtuous and results from virtuous behaviour, because it teaches us to focus on something more important than ourselves.
Then again, Confucius saw disorder within society, where he believed that the way out was to reaffirm a code of living as first presented by the ancients. His axioms are familiar to many and his one-sentence, concise statements seem to confront every point of human conduct. Later Confucianists esteemed their lists of rules for human conduct, breaking these down to include even dress, posture and the way one might carry on a conversation with another. One who is adept at rule-keeping was a “Superior Man” where such people lived out the “Five Constant Virtues” which include:

(i) **Right Attitude:** This includes a heart that seeks to be in harmony with other people. All people have the seed of this within them but it must be helped to develop fully. This attitude is also one of inner self control.

(ii) **Right Procedure:** Such a person has studied the rules of conduct and seeks to implement them in his life.

(iii) **Right Knowledge:** Memorized rules must become right behaviour. The Chinese classics are the basics of education in China. They teach history and literature and such education is thought to develop cultural refinement. Leaders, especially, were encouraged to develop a strong moral example for the people.

(iv) **Right Moral Courage:** The “Superior Man” has to be faithful to himself, developing an inner sense of moral courage and virtue.

(v) **Right Persistence:** Doing one’s duty must be sustained. Because the Superior Man is at harmony with himself, he can be at harmony with all humanity and with the universe. Right behaviour has become ingrained within one’s character. This must be lived out faithfully.

These virtues, if practiced, would lead to a new society based on the principles of justice and wisdom. Though Confucianism is condemned for some of its views, nevertheless it remains highly influential in Chinese life.
Eastern ways of thinking include the interconnectedness of all life and objects in the universe. Collectivism is encouraged as opposed to individualistic actions and study. Eastern philosophy “speaks of a concern for education” (Ozmon and Craver, 2008, p. 105), while Western education is viewed as a means to an end, such as getting a job or for social advancement.

Eastern philosophy focuses on speculation and mysticism while Western philosophy focuses on material concerns (please refer to Figure 10.8 and Figure 10.9). The secularism and neutrality of Western thought is a reaction to such speculative thoughts and ideals of Eastern philosophies.
Western philosophy focuses on rationalism and realism and encourages individualism. Western philosophies and education are linear in nature and move the person toward the achievement of a goal instead of lifelong learning. Western philosophy is concerned with rationalism in all aspects of life. This rationality translates into the importance of scientific research and experimentation in improving the quality of human life. Education focuses on acquiring knowledge to get into a respected university or achieving a certain job; as a result, people stop learning once they attain their educational goals. Western education increases the ability to conduct rational thought in children in their path toward adulthood. Table 10.1 discusses Eastern thought and philosophy of education:

Table 10.1: Eastern Thought and Philosophy of Education

| Aims of Education | Has no one goal of education. Schools of thought (such as Confucianism) lasted long periods of time and influenced large numbers of people, including emperors. Placed a greater emphasis on the teacher-student relationship and see great change coming up from this relationship. The student is changed as a result of contact with the guru, the master, the prophet, or the spiritual leader. Change is very important because most Eastern philosophies emphasize that one cannot live a good life without thought that can bring change. Education takes on a spiritual quality because it is necessary for salvation. The emphasis is on transformation since the individual must be transformed to be able to face life or suffering with equanimity. Attitude shaping is also important in its education since Eastern philosophers believe that the attitude one holds toward life is often the deciding factor. The individual seeks and is changed, and as many individuals are changed, so too will society be changed. Another aim of education in Eastern philosophy is to put humanity in tune with nature. |
| Methods and Curriculum | Uses many educational methods as diverse as oral traditions and today’s modern methods of communication. The Eastern philosophy provides a variety of approaches in education for the purpose of living-well, alleviating suffering, achieving enlightenment, or reaching nirvana. Emphasizes on oral tradition and the reading of sacred literature. In the Indian philosophy, yoga is used as a method of teaching. Through yoga, the mind is liberated from the body and achieves an inner freedom that transcends the material world of the senses. Chinese philosophy also emphasizes yoga, as well as attention to the teaching of rules of right conduct and to attitude shaping. |
Role of the Teacher

Promotes the importance of a guru, or teacher, who has already obtained knowledge and can lead the students along the true path. To be a guru might take several decades of preparation. The potential guru is to be selected carefully, through a variety of techniques, and properly educated. The guru occupies a central place in the student’s life and is revered for the wisdom he provides. Sometimes, the guru may ask the students to do things that seem meaningless and absurd to them but which ultimately lead to enlightenment. Thus, students must be able to place great confidence in their teacher.


ACTIVITY 10.3

“Eastern philosophy speaks of concern for the education of a person, while Western education is viewed as a means to an end, such as getting a job or for social advancement.”

Evaluate and discuss the above statement.

10.4 CRITIQUE OF EASTERN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Understanding Eastern philosophy provides us an accessible and critical introduction to how some of the key philosophies of the East compare with the West. It encourages people to question seriously both philosophy’s basic commitment to science, materialism, nature, religious traditions, and education, as well as the meaning of progress and the good life.

Table 10.2 provides a summary of the differences, arguments, or contradictions and its basic explanations that arise from both philosophical thought:
Table 10.2: Differences between Eastern philosophy and Western philosophy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Eastern philosophy</th>
<th>Western philosophy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Thought</strong></td>
<td>• Buddhism.</td>
<td>• Christianity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Confucianism.</td>
<td>• Rational.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hinduism.</td>
<td>• Scientific.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Islam.</td>
<td>• Logical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Principle</strong></td>
<td>• Cosmological unity.</td>
<td>• Feeling oneself as an element of the Divine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Life is a journey towards eternal realities that are beyond the realities that surround us.</td>
<td>• Life is service - to God, money, business, and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Circular view of the universe, based on the perception of eternal recurrence.</td>
<td>• Linear view of the universe and life, based on the Christian philosophy where everything has its beginning and the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Inner-world dependant.</td>
<td>• Outer-world dependant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Self-liberation from the false “Me” and finding the true “Me.”</td>
<td>• Self-dedication to the goal - success, happiness, and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Behavioural ethics.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The “Me” Concept</strong></td>
<td>• Eternal reality of the universal truth: self-liberation through getting rid of the false “Me” and discovering the true “Me.”</td>
<td>• “Me” is here and now. The true “Me” in every human being is a part of the Divine that needs to become apparent. True “Me” is given and does not have to be cognizable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with Religion</td>
<td>• Integration</td>
<td>• Opposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search for Absolute Truth</td>
<td>• Systemic approach – all events in the universe are interconnected.</td>
<td>• More focused on individual events and the role of the person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Searching inside yourself – through meditation and right living.</td>
<td>• Searching outside yourself - through research and analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “Though he should live a hundred years, not seeing the Truth Sublime; yet better, indeed, is the single day’s life of one who sees the Truth Sublime.” - Buddha</td>
<td>• “The truth that survives is simply the lie that is pleasantest to believe.” – H.L. Mencken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search for Truth &amp; Fundamental Research</td>
<td>• The truth is given. It does not have to be proven.</td>
<td>• The truth needs to be proven.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The philosophic base for and culture of fundamental research is weaker.</td>
<td>• The philosophic base for and culture of fundamental research is stronger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>• Future is predetermined by one’s own deeds today.</td>
<td>• Future is unknown, one’s destiny has been predetermined by God and depends very little on one’s own deeds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “Study the past if you would like to divine the future.” - Confucius</td>
<td>• “You can never plan the future by the past.” - Edmund Burke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs and Values</td>
<td>• The true key is inside. What is valuable - is the inner world of the human being and his natural ability to control and develop it.</td>
<td>• The main values are success and happiness, that can be achieved in different ways, but rarely through developing one’s inner strength.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The way ahead - is through self-development (inside intervention).</td>
<td>• The majority of the criteria for success and happiness have an outer nature (money, faith, popularity, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “The superior man understands what is right; the inferior man understands what will sell.” - Confucius</td>
<td>• The way ahead - is through active outside intervention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “By chasing desires you will meet only the outer surface.”</td>
<td>• “Happiness lies in virtuous activity, and perfect...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualism / Collectivism</td>
<td>- Lao Tzu</td>
<td><em>happiness lies in the best activity, which is contemplative.</em> - Aristotle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualism</td>
<td>A human being is an integral part of the universe and the society.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism</td>
<td>People are fundamentally connected and duty towards all others is a very serious matter.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collectivism is stronger.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement / Evolution</th>
<th><em>Cyclic</em> development.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evolution</td>
<td>Improvement has no limits and is an ultimate goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Linear</em> development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Radical Innovation / Revolution</th>
<th>The fundamentals of the <em>status quo</em> should not be questioned.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revolution</td>
<td>The culture of considering and introducing radical changes is weaker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The fundamentals of the status quo can and should often be questioned.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passion / Venturing</th>
<th>Entrepreneurial creativity and venturing is contained by the habit to control one’s passions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Desires are the cause of suffering. If desire, which lies at the route of all human passion, can be removed, then passion will die out and all human suffering will be ended.” - Buddhism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entrepreneurial venturing is encouraged emotionally.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passion / Venturing</th>
<th>“Nothing is ever achieved by reasonable men.” - J. Fred Bucy of Texas Instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm ... Always do what you are afraid to do ... Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.” - Ralph Waldo Emerson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement and Winning</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Winning is inside yourself.</td>
<td>• Winning is outside yourself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Though he should conquer a thousand men in the battlefield a thousand times, yet he, indeed, who would conquer himself is the noblest victor.” - Buddha</td>
<td>• “Life affords no higher pleasure than that of surmounting difficulties, passing from one step of success to another, forming new wishes and seeing them gratified.” - Samuel Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “He who conquers others is strong; he who conquers himself is mighty.” - Lao Tzu</td>
<td>• “It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that they are difficult.” - Seneca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “The Three Armies can be deprived of their commanding officer, but even a common man cannot be deprived of his purpose.” - Confucius</td>
<td>• Pragmatic and emotional approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Winning is outside yourself.</td>
<td>• “The supreme accomplishment is to blur the line between work and play.” - Arnold Toynbee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Life affords no higher pleasure than that of surmounting difficulties, passing from one step of success to another, forming new wishes and seeing them gratified.” - Samuel Johnson</td>
<td>• “Since most of us spend most of our lives doing ordinary tasks, the most important thing is to carry them out extraordinary well.” - Henry David Thoreau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Life affords no higher pleasure than that of surmounting difficulties, passing from one step of success to another, forming new wishes and seeing them gratified.” - Samuel Johnson</td>
<td>• Pragmatic and emotional approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “The supreme accomplishment is to blur the line between work and play.” - Arnold Toynbee</td>
<td>• “Since most of us spend most of our lives doing ordinary tasks, the most important thing is to carry them out extraordinary well.” - Henry David Thoreau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pragmatic and emotional approach.</td>
<td>• “Since most of us spend most of our lives doing ordinary tasks, the most important thing is to carry them out extraordinary well.” - Henry David Thoreau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pragmatic and emotional approach.</td>
<td>• “Since most of us spend most of our lives doing ordinary tasks, the most important thing is to carry them out extraordinary well.” - Henry David Thoreau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pragmatic and emotional approach.</td>
<td>• “Since most of us spend most of our lives doing ordinary tasks, the most important thing is to carry them out extraordinary well.” - Henry David Thoreau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pragmatic and emotional approach.</td>
<td>• “Since most of us spend most of our lives doing ordinary tasks, the most important thing is to carry them out extraordinary well.” - Henry David Thoreau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pragmatic and emotional approach.</td>
<td>• “Since most of us spend most of our lives doing ordinary tasks, the most important thing is to carry them out extraordinary well.” - Henry David Thoreau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pragmatic and emotional approach.</td>
<td>• “Since most of us spend most of our lives doing ordinary tasks, the most important thing is to carry them out extraordinary well.” - Henry David Thoreau</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Goals and Key to Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spiritual.</th>
<th>Materialistic.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Virtuous life and adherence to performing your duties.” - Confucianism</td>
<td>“The secret of success in life, and subsequently of making money, is to enjoy your work. If you do, nothing is hard work - no matter how many hours you put in.” - Sir Billy Butlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If you really want everything, then give up everything.” - Lao Tzu</td>
<td>“Success is that old ABC – ability, breaks, and courage.” - Charles Luckman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“He is able who thinks he is able.” - Buddha</td>
<td>“Flaming enthusiasm, backed by horse sense and persistence, is the quality that most frequently makes for success.” - Dale Carnegie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Living Principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Virtue.</th>
<th>Ethic.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Be satisfied with whatever you have, and enjoy the same. When you come to know that you have everything, and you are not short of anything, then the whole world will be yours.” - Lao Tzu</td>
<td>“Refrain from doing ill; for one all powerful reason, lest our children should copy our misdeeds; we are all too prone to imitate whatever is base and depraved.” - Juvenal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The thought manifests as the word; the word manifests as the deed; the deed develops into habit; and habit hardens into character. So watch the thought and its ways with care, and let it spring from love born out of concern for all beings.” - Buddha</td>
<td>“There is no real excellence in all this world which can be separated from right living.” - David Starr Jordan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Establishing Control Over Your Emotions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Through meditation.</th>
<th>Through analysis.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“A man can separate his/her mind from his/her emotions and control them.” - Taoism</td>
<td>“I can control my passions and emotions if I can understand their nature.” - Spinoza</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ozmon and Craver (2008) believe that despite the criticism against Eastern philosophy, it has remained a fascinating area of study since it emphasizes a wide variety of views. Besides its historical significance and large number of followers, Eastern philosophy is valuable because it forces people to reexamine, in a new way, the meaning and the purpose of life.

### Leadership

| Spiritual; | Hands-on. |
| Walking behind people. | Walking ahead of people. |
| Silence is golden. | Speech is golden. |
| “In order to guide people, the leader must put himself behind them. Thus when he is ahead they feel no hurt.” - Lao Tzu | “Leadership is done from in front. Never ask others to do what you, if challenged, would not be willing to do yourself.” - Xenophon |

### SELF-CHECK 10.2

How can Eastern and Western philosophy and wisdom help our understanding of life nowadays? Explain.

#### 10.5 NATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

During the British colonization, the education system in Malaysia was not synchronized and very much left to the discretion of the major ethnic groups, the Malays, Chinese, and Indians. As a result, there were different types of schools that catered to particular ethnic groups, using mediums of instruction that varied with each of these ethnic groups. The differences in the various vernacular schools gave rise to a particular way of thinking or mentality in each ethnic group.

After World War II, the education system in Malaysia was pretty much in shambles but when Malaysia achieved its independence in 1957, it began to map out a new education system for the nation. Efforts began with the introduction of a new, national education system with English as the one and only medium of instruction initially. Eventually, a new education system was formed in which Malay became the main medium of instruction. Malay is considered the main and official language of Malaysia.
Realizing the need for having a well-defined philosophy of education as the core of the country’s educational system, the National Education Philosophy of Malaysia states the following:

“Education in Malaysia is an on-going effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards and who are responsible and capable of achieving high levels of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the family, society and the nation at large.”

(Curriculum Development Centre, Ministry of Education of Malaysia, 1990)

The National Education Philosophy is the Malaysian idea of what education must do for students. Fundamentally, the essence of the National Education Policy is to develop the potential of Malaysian citizens in a holistic and integrated manner so as to be intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically balanced based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. The Malaysian government also wants to produce students who are smart, physically fit and healthy and have positive emotions like courage and kindness (please refer to Figure 10.10). The citizens of Malaysia must also have respect and love for their parents, family, teachers, leaders, and the country. When students in Malaysia have these qualities, they will become winners in life and also make the country a successful nation.

The Malaysian National Education Philosophy is designed to help students achieve a holistic and balanced development of the self. A wide scope of integration of knowledge, skill, values, and correct use of language across the
curriculum has been instituted. A curriculum was designed vigilantly with intended learning outcomes explicitly stated for different levels of abilities, ensuring that all students have equal access to quality learning, and allowing for self-paced learning across grades.

Malaysians must equip themselves with knowledge, skills, and attitudes across a wide range of disciplines to cope with the Information Age. Students educated under the influence of the National Education Philosophy will develop critical and creative thinking skills, inculcated with values, and are encouraged to improve their language proficiency. With holistic learning promoted and implemented, children in Malaysian schools are allowed (to some extent) to progress at their own pace of learning according to their capabilities, interests, and needs.

Indian philosophy is one of the most ancient schools of thought ever developed by Eastern civilization. Some of the sources of Indian philosophy include:

(i) Vedas
(ii) Upanishads
(iii) Epics
(iv) Modern Hinduism

SUMMARY

- Indian philosophy is one of the most ancient schools of thought ever developed by Eastern civilization. Some of the sources of Indian philosophy include:

  (i) Vedas
  (ii) Upanishads
  (iii) Epics
  (iv) Modern Hinduism

SELF-CHECK 10.3

According to Barbara Wilt: “A teacher’s personal philosophy of education is a critical element in his or her approach to guiding children along the path of enlightenment.”

With the knowledge of philosophy that you have acquired, develop a personal statement of education philosophy with regards to your environment and the education system of your country. Your philosophy should be reflected in various aspects of the field of education.
• Chinese philosophy tends to have very practical applications to human affairs. Schools of thought under Chinese philosophy include:
  (i) Buddhism
  (ii) Confucianism

• Eastern thought in education emphasises spirituality, life-long learning, and the need to learn under a guru.

• Eastern philosophy focuses on speculation and mysticism while Western philosophy focuses on materialism and individualism.

• The National Education Philosophy of Malaysia aims to produce Malaysian citizens who are balanced physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually who are capable of coping with the challenges of the Information Age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY TERMS</th>
<th>Mahabharata</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ahimsa</td>
<td>Ancient Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancient Indian</td>
<td>Atman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atman</td>
<td>Bhagavad-Gita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhagavad-Gita</td>
<td>Bhagavan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhagavan</td>
<td>Brahman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahman</td>
<td>Buddhism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>Caste system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caste system</td>
<td>Classical Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical Indian</td>
<td>Confucianism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confucianism</td>
<td>Cycle of rebirth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle of rebirth</td>
<td>Dalit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalit</td>
<td>Dharma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharma</td>
<td>Divine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine</td>
<td>Doctrine of Pratityasamutpada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctrine of Pratityasamutpada</td>
<td>Enlightened One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlightened One</td>
<td>Epics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epics</td>
<td>Five Constant Virtues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Constant Virtues</td>
<td>Malaysia National Philosophy of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modern Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mysticm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nirvana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Noble Eightfold Path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paramatma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parinirvana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ramayana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samhitas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samsara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sangha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Satyagraha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School of the Scholars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Superior Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supreme Being</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Four Noble Truths       | Supreme Spirit
---|---
God is truth            | Ultimate Reality
Good life               | Universal soul
Great soul              | Untouchables
Henotheism              | Upanishad
Hymns and poems         | Veda
Indian philosophy       | Vedic verses
Karma                   | Yoga
Karmic process          | Yogi

**REFERENCES**


Should you have any comment or feedback, you are welcomed to:

1. E-mail your comment or feedback to modulefeedback@oum.edu.my

OR

2. Download and fill up the feedback questionnaire from
   URL: http://lms.oum.edu.my/ via myLMS
   and
   e-mail to modulefeedback@oum.edu.my

Thank you.

Centre for Instructional Design and Technology
(Pusat Reka Bentuk Teknologi dan Pengajaran)
Tel No.: 03-27732273
Fax No.: 03-26978702