**Concept of Education**

Like philosophy, there are as many definitions as there are educators. “Education” is an umbrella word under which a large number of processes take place. There is no agreement as to whether or not some activities may be considered to be educational. Individual differences about education are more or less determined by their philosophical orientations.

Etymologically, the word “education” is derived from some Latin words like- ‘Educatio’ which means breeding, bringing up, rearing, instruction, indoctrination. Some theorist give a different explanation of the word ‘educate’ as ‘educo’ . ‘e’ means ‘out of’ and ‘duco’ means lead forth, take out, I raise up. To educate means to lead forth or to ‘extract out’ the best out of man. This explanation presumes that all knowledge is inherent in children. Only methods are to be found out to tap their brains and the knowledge will automatically flow.

Other theorists believe that we cannot draw out anything unless we put in something before. A child is like a bank where something must be put before we expect to withdraw. Unless Knowledge and experience is given to a child, we cannot draw out the best in him.

Whenever we hear the word “education” the first place the mind goes to is the school. Most of the time, we tend to think of education in terms of what teachers and their pupils do in school. We forget that what takes place in the school is only a small fraction of education. Indeed, education is a process that starts the very moment a person is born and ends whenever he finally dies.

**Process of Education**

The process of education is one which involves a number of activities on the part of several people, including the teacher, the pupil, parents, the government and every citizen of the country. They all participate in the process in one way or the other. As you are well aware, teaching is a key factor in education and learning is another. The first teacher a child ever has is his parents, and this learning process starts as soon as he enters the world. Since the teaching –learning process starts with the child’s parents, the mother in particular, the background of the learner matters a lot. If for instance, the mother of the child is an educated lady with a good means of livelihood, that is, a good earning capacity, one can be sure that the child will be well fed and taught a lot of things that another child from a less enlightened family is not likely to have. A child growing up in a home where both parents can find time to teach and interact with him, certainly has some advantages in terms of his education. This is even more when there are such things as books, newspapers, magazines, radio and television to stimulate his learning in the home and increase his chances of development in education.

As you can see, education begins at home with parents leading the way. At the school, the teacher continues the process of educating the child. You should understand that the teacher does not take over the education of the child. The teacher and the child’s parents are partners in progress as far as the child’s education is concerned. At the school level also, the responsibility of educating the child is shared by all the agencies of education which ensures that adequate facilities, books, furniture, materials and qualified staff are provided. It is also government’s responsibility to ensure the safety and health of the child through its various agencies.

The process of education therefore, involves different activities on the part of the parents, teachers, the community, the government and the child. The goal is to help him acquire knowledge, skills and morals. These components of education are essential to the making of the educated person. The educated person is one who can apply his knowledge and skill in such a way as to find solution to whatever problems that confronts him. Education indeed, is the practical way of attaining individual and social fulfillment.

**Meaning And Definitions Of Education**

Some philosophers attempt an etymological definition of education. They trace it to two opposite roots which originate from two opposing philosophical tenets. One view derives “education” from the Latin word “educo” which means “to lead out”. This group of philosophers, following the tradition of Plato and other idealists, believe that the learner has innate ideas which only need to be squeezed out, pulled out and expanded. The other opposing school of thought holds that education comes from the Latin word “educere” which means “to form” “to train”. This group follows the tradition of John Locke and other realists which holds that the child’s or the learner’s mind is a “tabula rasa” (an erased or blank sheet”) on which to write. External objects make impressions on the mind and feed it with information and knowledge. White Head defines education as the process by which people acquire the art of utilizing knowledge. It is guidance towards a comprehension of the art of life. Dewey says that education is the “reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience and increases the ability to direct the course of subsequent experience”. He asserts that “education is the fundamental method of social progress or reform”. And again “education is an intelligently directed development or the possibilities inherent in ordinary experience.” You should appreciate that for Dewey, education is a process of living not a preparation for future life. It is a continuous process of growth. Its purpose is the development of the intelligence in such a way that the experience one gets at one time can be carried over to a subsequent experience and used in solving one’s life problems. Moreover, education is meant to develop both the individual and his capacity for social living. R. S. Peters in his contribution defined education as a process of socializing, enculturation and transmission of what is worthwhile to those who are committed to it, be they children or adults. In view of all these, we can define education as a process of developing knowledge ability in learners in such a way that they use this knowledge to improve themselves and their society.

**Definitions by other Philosophers**

**Mahatma Gandhi** - Education is an all-round drawing out of the best in man—body, mind and spirit.

**Swami Vivekananda** - Education is the manifestation of divine perfection already existing in man.

**Aristotle** - Education is the creation of sound mind in a sound body.

**Rouseau** - Education is the child’s development from within.

**Herbert Spencer** - Education is complete living.

**Plato** - Education is the capacity to feel pleasure and pain at the right moment.

**Pestalozz** - Education is natural, harmonious and progressive development of man’s innate powers.

**T.P. Nunn** - Education is the complete development of the individuality of the child.

**Froebel** - Education is enfoldment of what is already enfolded in the gene.

Education in its broadest and general sense can be described as the means through which the aims and habits of a group of people is sustained from one generation to the next. This occurs through any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels or acts.

However,in its narrow, technical sense, education is seen as the formal process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills, customs and values from one generation to another. This can be done in both formal and informal learning. Everybody has a right to education as it is recognized by some jurisdictions and the National Policy on Education. A proper description of education by Berg(2010), is that it is basically the process of becoming an educated person. This means that you have access to optimal states of mind regardless of the situation you are in. You are able to perceive accurately, think clearly and act effectively to achieve self- selected goals and aspirations. The key quality of an educated person is his ability to move from negative states of the mind to the positive states. Positive states are objectively the most productive states to be in and also provide the best quality to life as well. The process of becoming educated requires a practice of persistent disillusionment; a consistent method of having an on- going dialogue between the world and your mind so as to constantly reverse your concepts of what is really going on. Therefore, our moral responsibility in education is to align the bio-, psycho-, communo, socio- and eco- spheres as best we can to assist our youths and ourselves with the on- going mapping project.

**The Meaning of Educational Aim**

We can define educational aim as a statement of what we hope to do in order to achieve our goals of education. The word aim conveys some suggestion of an objective that is not too near at hand or too easy to attain. When we ask a headmaster of a school what he is aiming at, it is only one way of drawing his attention to what he and his teachers must be doing to raise the standard of education in his school. From the foregoing, the main points made about the aims of education are as follows: (1) we tend to ask about the aims in context where we think it important to get people to specify more precisely what they are trying to do. (2) Aims suggest the concentration on and the direction of effects towards an objective that is not too near or close to hand. (3) Aims suggest the possibility of failure or falling short. Having examined the suggestions that are generally associated with aim, we will now identify some aims of education and discuss them. The aims of education are as follows:

**The Minimum Skills**

They should provide men and women with minimum of the skills necessary for them:

1. To take their place in society and

2. To seek further knowledge

This is the least controversial of the listed aims. It is essential that everyone in our society should know how to read and write and calculate sufficiently to go through their ordinary daily business. You should know that it is irrelevant what a person is. He needs the skills in order to do his work well.

**Vocational Training**

At every stage in our adult life we should be able to use not only our heads but our hands as well. We cannot all be medical doctors, engineers, lawyers or teachers, some of us must be plumbers, carpenters, electricians and auto mechanics. No matter what vocation you have learnt, you should take interest in areas outside your own in order to be able to help yourself when you are in need. Our education should aim at making us useful not only to ourselves but to the society at large.

**Stimulating the Desire for Knowledge**

Our educational system wrongly emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge as a means to an end. While no one would quarrel over using acquired knowledge as a means to earning our living, quest for knowledge can be for its own sake. Education has an intrinsic value, that is, it does not have to be seen as something that must always bring material reward. For instance, when you read novels for your own personal enjoyment and not for the sake of passing any examination, it does not only give you some satisfaction but also builds up your vocabulary. Such will also improve your outlook in many ways. Our education should therefore, promote our quest for knowledge at all times because it is not only good for the individual but for the entire nation as well.

**Developing a Critical Outlook**

This aim of education is a very controversial one. Government officials and private proprietors of schools or employers in general do not always appreciate people who are critical of their actions. But criticism is essential in a democratic system. Our educational training must enable us read in between lines to detect possible areas of conflicts and point them out before it is too late. Although some people may be uncomfortable whenever such is done, it may prevent a lot of problems in the long run. Constructive criticism is usually better especially when the issue is a very sensitive one. Sound education therefore, develops in us a critical mind to enable us to detect flaws and disagree with even those we respect most. Being critical is a sign of being an educated person.

**Philosophy of Nigerian Education**

**Specific Philosophical Aims and Objectives of Education in Nigeria**

The National Policy on Education was published in 1977 and revised in 1981 and 2004. Various goals and aspirations were stated in the Policy which forms the basis of the Nigerian educational aims and objectives, which include the following:

**Nationalism**

The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity. You should know that which expressed in this statement is the determination to make every Nigerian aware, in the first place, of himself as a Nigerian, and in the second place, of the inseparable bond that exists among all Nigerians. You should understand that dedication to selfless service and the strength of the Nation may be derived from the statement.

**Value System**

The inculcation of the right type of value and attitude for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian Society is of paramount importance. You should understand that the emphasis here is on the development of habits and attitudes that may get the individual and the society to manifest worthwhile activities. You should understand that this means the determination to get things right, to find out the truth, to get to the bottom of things, and to take pride in finishing things, in shaping things with accuracy and precision with practical reference to Nigeria, for survival of the individual and the Society.

**Intellectual Formation**

Intellectual formation has to do with the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around. You should understand that the desire is to promote desirable state of mind that may help make the world look like a community of nations as well as make a person aware of realities around him.

**Skill Acquisition**

“The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and experiences both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society”. You should note that this statement of aim and objective seek to provide men and women with the knowledge and the skills necessary for them to take their place in the society and contribute to its development.

**Evaluating Nigerian Educational Aims And Objectives**

In restating the five main national objectives from the second National Development Plan as the foundation for the National Policy on Education, Nigeria has been criticized as being over-ambitious and utopian. I want you to know that this is particularly true that Nigeria is by no means near those ideals nor does it seem to take seriously the journey towards it. How near is Nigeria to its objectives of “building of

1. a free and democratic society
2. a just and egalitarian society
3. a united, strong and self-reliant nation
4. a great and dynamic economy
5. a land of bright and full opportunities for citizens”

To what extent have all the citizens felt integrated into sound and effective citizens with equal educational opportunities at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, both inside and outside the formal school system? Has the quality of instruction at all levels of education really changed? And are we in consequence achieving these glorious values of

1. respect for the worth and dignity of the individuals
2. faith in man’s ability to make rational decisions
3. moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations;
4. shared responsibility for the common good of society
5. respect of the dignity of labour and
6. promotion of the emotional, physical and psychological health of all children”. These and many other enunciated values may still be eluding us. But awareness of them and adoption of them is several milestones on the right part. There is no doubt that eventually committed citizens will rise to realise or carry out those dreams of the founding fathers of our political life. In piloting their journey towards a better Nigeria, they will have at least some clear aims and objectives to guide their courageous leadership. Now let us summarise this unit by taking note of the nature of education.

**Nature of education**

It is a life- long process.

It is a systematic process.

It is the development of individual and the society.

It is modification of behaviour.

It is training. It is purposive.

It is balanced development.

It is a dynamic process.

It is a three dimensional process.

It is growth

It is a by- polar process.

**The Meaning of Philosophy**

People think of philosophy in different ways because of differences in viewing the world. The various ways people see things have accounted for the arguments about the way things are and how man fits into the universal scheme.

The word philosophy came from the Greek words ‘philo’ and ‘sophia’.These Greek words are interpreted as follows – ‘philia’ refers to friendliness, affection or love. Then ‘sophia’ on the other hand, refers to the highest intellectual, especially philosophical excellence which the human mind is capable of and which is the result of studying nature for its own sake. The two concepts would combine to form philosophy which is literally translated as ‘love of wisdom’.

**Philosophy**

Although, contemporary philosophers do not parade themselves as ‘wise men’, wisdom is certainly an attribute of philosophy. But who is a wise man? What would make us refer to a person as wise in African society? To refer to a person as a wise man in Africa, the person must know the traditional practices and customs of his people. Such a person must also think critically and deeply about the world around him. It is only when a person has these qualities that you can refer to him as a wise man or a philosopher. In order words, how much schooling or paper qualification a man has does not account for his becoming a philosopher. Now, let us look at some definitions of philosophy. Philosophy has been defined as a mental attitude between science and religion. Like science, it is concerned about factual evidence about the world. Like religion, philosophy is not definite about anything said about the nature of God or man. 2. A way of simplifying complex ideas and statements about our experiences in life in order to make us understand them fully.

3. A study which examines the nature of the world and the reasons behind many things or events happening in it.

A sum total of what a person accepts as guiding principles to act in a particular way at different times, places and circumstances. In order to help you have a comprehensive view of the concept of philosophy, let us look at more descriptions of philosophy.

* The study of nature causes or principles of reality, knowledge, or values based on logical reasoning.
* The study of the theoretical underpinnings of a particular field or discipline.
* The study of ideas about knowledge, truth, the nature and meaning of life, etc
* A set of ideas about how to do something and how to live.
* Critical examination of the rational grounds of our most fundamental beliefs and logical analysis of the basic concepts employed in the expression of such beliefs.

**The Scope of Philosophical Inquiries**

Philosophical inquiry is about the following areas of study:

1. A comprehensive explanation of why man occupies a particular position in the world.
2. An explanation of the nature of knowledge and its relevance to human life.
3. A study of theories and principles which guide social behaviour which we call ‘good’ or ‘bad’, ‘right’ or ‘wrong’. Philosophy as a subject examines the question which affects human existence and the existence of other objects in the world. The subject also examines the question of the existence of God and other divine forces. The subject also examines and clarifies important topics like life, happiness and time, predestination, immorality among others. When we study such topics, we study an area of philosophy called metaphysics. A teacher should study this subject because it would help him to understand human nature better and, therefore, be better able to develop the knowledge of his learner. This is why you need to study it well.

Philosophy is also concerned with studying the nature of knowledge. Philosophers try to define knowledge. They try to identify the qualities of knowledge. They try to trace the origin and source of knowledge. While some philosophers believe that knowledge comes from reasoning, others believe that it comes from senses. Again, others believe that knowledge is determined by the person looking for it. The branch of philosophy concerned with knowledge is called epistemology. It is important to education because to be able to educate, we must have knowledge. Again, the process of education is the processes of making people acquire knowledge. As you read through, you are acquiring knowledge.

Philosophy is also concerned with the principles guiding our social actions. This is called ethics or moral philosophy. Again, philosophy interpret ‘good’, ‘bad’, ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ in many ways. This again depends on their background experience. To a person who is brought up in a period of war, the good life may be the life of peace. To those who suffer from ignorance, knowledge to them is good. Philosophers do not only try to define the good life, they also prescribe ways of attaining it. As an educator, you should know the ways of life that are valued to your people so that you can prepare your learner for good social relations.

Over the years, philosophy has assumed a more moderate role by confining itself to analyzing and clarifying concepts and statements. It also tries to resolve issues in human life. This is done in order to improve our understanding of the subject matter of life in general and discipline as well.

**The Functions of Philosophy**

The functions of philosophy are the uses of the subject to us as individuals and as members of a society. Some contemporary thinkers called the Analytic philosophers see philosophy as a study that essentially simplifies and analyses issues and statements pertaining to other subjects in order to enable us understand them better. The functions of philosophy are explained as follows:

**Analytical Function**

This has to do with the analysis and clarification of ideas, issues, and statements to enable us understand the subject matters of other disciplines. This analytical function is considered to be the primary function of philosophy.

**Speculative and Normative Function**

The mind is a very essential instrument for doing philosophy. The mind is one gift to man which enables him to think about himself, the people around him and the world in general. With it he can speculate about things he is not sure of; he can imagine things that are possible and even those that are not possible. It is to be noted however, that, when we think about things or speculate on issues it is done within the context of our social and cultural environment.

**Inspirational Function**

The educational process is constantly inspired by philosophers. Such works as Plato’s Republic and others like it have become the reference book for many educators because they obtain a lot of insight from these books to guide their activities. For one thing, every society has its ideal and thus, strives to attain it. Plato’s ideal in the Republic is one in which education serves as an important criterion for assigning social positions and responsibilities. It is therefore, believed that, people should be educated in order to enable them achieve self-fulfillment. Even though Plato’s society does not pretend to strive for equality of all people, it is still a model to inspire the Nigerian educator in his effort to bring about a measure of equality in society.

**Prescriptive Function**

Every nation has its problems which call for solution. It is expected that every one would contribute to the best of his ability. Although philosophy has a lot to contribute, philosophers are sometimes excluded from the decision making process. This appears to have made the situation worse. For example, before adopting a new educational or social policy in the country, one would expect that philosophers would be included in the planning. Such contributions would benefit all concerned. Some educational philosophers in the country hold the view that the poverty of Nigeria’s philosophical base is responsible for our technological under-development. They also blame the country’s social political instability on the weakness of its philosophical foundation. Philosophical prescription is therefore, made to help to overcome these difficulties. Indeed every society expects some guidance from its philosophers, especially in education. It is on this score that philosophy is made compulsory in all Teacher Education and Law Programs.

**Coordinating Function**

Since it is well known that all other disciplines are generated from philosophy, philosophy cannot be seen as competing with its offspring. In view of the fact that these disciplines have established their knowledge base solidly, philosophy has mapped out for itself other responsibilities. The fact that there exist at present such area as philosophy of science, philosophy of social science, philosophy of law and philosophy of education among others, shows the contribution that philosophy still makes to learning. Consequently, the coordinating role of philosophy in articulating the knowledge base of these disciplines should not leave anyone in doubt about the prescriptive function of philosophy.

**PHILOSOPHY AND EDUCATION**

**Relationship between Philosophy and Education**

You should know that the philosophical orientation apparent in the idea of making men “critical” is to make the teacher or the educator to be “self-critical”. This is to illustrate the passion for certainty which is perhaps innate in all humans. According to Aminigo (1999:11) “This strong tendency is in part, the source of all human achievements in inquiry and explanation from those of the scientists to the great explorers.” This fact brings philosophy into close relationship with education, which seeks to impart knowledge through an acceptable manner to the people. The critical attitude developed as a result, enhances human knowledge and creates an avenue for the building of principles of rational beliefs. It creates open mindedness in educational practices by practitioners (teachers and the educators) who allow their beliefs and decisions to be subjected to further study and examination. Philosophers look at theories, assumptions, postulations, statements and value judgments critically as to justify them. The logicalities and consistencies of any claim in education in the process become clarified. Philosophy equips the teacher to deal with educational problems by obtaining self-reflection, criticism and analysis. He reasons and assesses critically the validity of principles. Dewey (1966) describes the relationship as very close and remarks: “Philosophy of education is not an external application of ready-made ideas to a system of practice having a radically different origin and purpose. It is only an explicit formation of right mental and moral habits in respect to the difficulties of contemporary social life. The most penetrating definition of philosophy which can be given is that it is the theory of education in its most general phases.”

Nweke (1995:25) was of the view that “philosophy gives education the thought and education gives it an outlet in practice”. This means that philosophy and education are complementary disciplines to each other and they are mutually re-constructive. They are not only a process but also a product in terms of the child maturation, moral and intellectual development.

Burus and Brauner (1976) maintain that: “Philosophical activities serve pedagogical purposes as analytic, evaluative, speculative and integrative process”. Finally, philosophy and education work for the harmonization of education policies, theories and practices, evaluation of possibilities in educational practices and benefit to the recipients.

Philosophy and education has a common mode of thought and action that is thinking and acting strategies in educational context.

**Conceptions of Philosophy of Education**

Philosophy of education is referred to as the use of philosophical tools, theories, methods, and principles for the explanation and solutions of educational problems. It is an applied philosophy. However, many philosophers see it in different ways.

**Schools of Thought in philosophy: Implication to junior secondary education**

**An Historical Background Socrates (470-399 BC)**

Socrates was born about the year 470 BC. His father was a sculptor while his mother was a midwife. His goal in life was to be a philosopher (teacher) and he indeed later became one of the first Athenian teachers. He did not put his thought into writing. But most of what was known about him is from the writing of two of his disciples - Xenophon and Plato. Socrates lived a humble, disciplined and upright life. As Plato wrote about him, he was “the best of all of his time that we have known and more over the most wise and just”. You can see that his students liked him. He was a man who holds strongly to what he thinks is right and without changing his opinion.

**Socrates Major Educational Ideas**

The teachings of Socrates were based on ethics or moral philosophy aimed at solving the problems created in Athens then by the teaching of the Sophists (non-Athenian teachers who taught for some wages). But his teachings are important to us today.

**Socrates Theory of Knowledge**

The Sophists had taught that people come to know the truth by mere sense feeling or impression that knowledge is attained by perception. The Sophists would say “whatever seems to me right is right”. But Socrates' theory of knowledge asserts that knowledge is derived through concepts and that since reason is the source of concept, it follows that reason is the source of knowledge. You should understand that what he was teaching here is that, since reason is a common quality of all men, people should no longer depend on what they ‘feel’ in trying to come to the truth. They should rather depend on ‘reason’ which is the closest source of all knowledge of truth.

**Concept of Virtue**

Socrates taught that “virtue is knowledge”. He believed that a man cannot act right unless he first knows what is right, that is, unless he appreciates the concept of right. Moral action (action that is right) is thus based on knowledge. He went on to say that if a man possesses knowledge, he cannot do wrong because all wrong doings spring from ignorance. He also said that ‘no man intentionally does wrong’. It is good you know the weakness of this theory. Many people’s actions are governed not by reason, but by emotions (or feelings). People also deliberately do wrong, even when they know the right thing.

Related to the above is another teaching of Socrates that virtue can be taught. This idea received support from Plato who said that all we need is to have knowledge of what virtue is, and it could be passed on to others by teaching.

The third aspect of his teaching on virtue is that “virtue is one”. Ordinarily, we talk of many virtues such as courage, justice, kindness, honesty, faithfulness etc. But Socrates believed that all these individual virtues have one source - knowledge. Therefore, knowledge itself that is wisdom is the sole virtue which embraces all others.

The Dialectic Method (Socratic Method) - In passing on his ideas to people, he used one method - dialectic method which has come to be known as the Socratic Method. It is a method of seeking knowledge by question and answers. It involves the skillful use of leading questions. It has been used all over the world as an effective method of teaching.

The Doctrine of Reminiscence (Remembering): Socrates said that people learn by remembering or recalling what they knew previously but had been stored up in the mind. The function of the teacher, therefore, is to bring out such knowledge by making the learner to think through questioning. In others words, students should be encouraged to think for themselves.

**The Relevance of the Thought of Socrates to Nigerian Education/Junior Secondary School**

1. Socrates teaching on moral agrees with what is contained on National Policy on Education 1981 and 2001 editions on “character and moral training and development of sound attitude”.
2. The dialectic or Socrates method is used in teaching and learning today in Nigeria. You can observe that you must have come across this method of teaching somewhere along the line in your educational career.
3. Reasoning which is an important part of education as you know is extensively used in our school system today. This is one of the important discoveries of Socrates. In junior secondary school, this has been employed in the area of organization of debates on different subject matter. It has helped in helping students to meaningfully critique a motion or opinion. Thus assisting in reaching logical conclusions.
4. We will want you to emulate the disciples of Socrates who displayed their love for him in writing that Socrates was humble, disciplined and upright. These virtues you should also encourage.
5. In junior secondary schools the doctrine of Reminiscence i.e. remembering has played its part in preparation of lesson plans with the use of previous knowledge and introduction. Students are helped to remember or recall what they knew previously about a subject or topic but had been stored up in their subconscious mind.

**Idealism**

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.

Idealists conceive of people as thinking beings that have minds capable of seeking truth through reasoning. They see people as beings that breathe, eat, and sleep, but above all as thinking beings whose thoughts can range from the ridiculous to the sublime.

**Platonic Idealism PLATO (427–347 B.C.E.)**

Plato was a Greek philosopher who started as a disciple of Socrates and remained an ardent admirer of him throughout his life. Plato is largely known for his writings in which Socrates is the protagonist in a series of dialogues dealing with almost every conceivable topic. Two of his most famous works are The Republic and Laws. After Socrates’ death, Plato opened his own school, the Academy, where students and professors engaged in a dialectical approach to problems. According to Plato, people should concern themselves primarily with the search for truth. Because truth is perfect and eternal, it cannot be found in the world of matter, which is imperfect and constantly changing. Mathematics demonstrates that eternal truths are possible. Such concepts as 2 2 4 or that all points of a perfect circle are equidistant from the center are said to have always been true (even before people discovered them), are true, and always will be true. Mathematics shows that universal truths with which everyone can agree may be found, but mathematics constitutes only one field of knowledge. Plato believed that we must search for other universal truths in such areas as politics, society, and education; hence, the search for absolute truth should be the quest of the true philosopher. In The Republic, Plato wrote about the separation of the world of ideas from the world of matter. The world of ideas (or forms) has the Good as its highest point—the source of all true knowledge. The world of matter, the ever-changing world of sensory data, is not to be trusted. People need, as much as possible, to free themselves from a concern with matter so that they can advance toward the Good. This can be done by transcending matter through the use of the dialectic (or critical discussion), in which one moves from mere opinion to true knowledge. The dialectic can be described as follows: All thinking begins with a thesis, or point of view, such as “War is evil.” This view can be supported by pointing out that war causes people to be killed, disrupts families, destroys cities, and has adverse moral effects. As long as we encounter only people of beliefs like our own, we are not likely to alter our point of view. When we encounter the antithesis (or opposite point of view) that “War is good,” however, we are forced to reexamine and defend our position. Arguments advanced to support the notion that war is good might include the belief that war promotes bravery, helps eliminate evil political systems, and produces many technical benefits through war-related research. Simply put, the dialectic looks at both sides of an issue. If our antagonists are philosophers who are seriously interested in getting at the truth of the problem of whether war is good or evil, then they will engage in a dialogue in which both advancement and retrenchment—or the giving up of ideas—might occur. Plato believed that given ample time to argue their positions, the two discussants would come closer to agreement, or synthesis, and therefore closer to truth (which might be that war has good and bad aspects).

**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 systematization and subjectivism. Some major features of modern idealism are:

(a) That which is distinctive of human nature is mind. Mind is more than the physical entity, brain;

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

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

(d) 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

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

**Idealism in Philosophy of Education**

**Aims of Education**

Emphasis is placed on developing the mind, personal discipline, and character development. A person should be literate and of good moral character**.** Idealism believes in character development because the search for truth demands personal discipline and steadfast character. This aim is prevalent in the writings of Kant, Harris, Horne, Gentile, and others. What they want in society is not just the literate, knowledgeable person, but the good person as well.

**Methods of Education**

Idealist education involves depth of learning, a holistic approach that involvesteaching the whole rather than its parts. The best method of learning for Plato was the dialectic , a process where ideas are put in to 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-realization and self-education are very important in idealism.

**Curriculum**

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.

**Role of Teacher**

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 skillful 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 on example of a self-directed learning activity where learning can occur without a teacher's presence.

**Realism in Philosophy of Education**

More generally, realism is any philosophical theory that emphasizes 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. 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 Betrand Russell have contributed much to realism ideology.

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.

**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 no-nonsense 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-realization 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 organized 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.

**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 organized and systematic approach.

**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 summarized by the phrase whatever works, is likely true. Because reality changes, whatever work 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).

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.

**Pragmatism in Philosophy of Education**

**Aims of Education**

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.

**Methods of Education**

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.

**Curriculum**

The curriculum focuses on learning experiences in a syllabus that is diversified and problem centered, 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.

**Naturalism**

Naturalism as a philosophy of education was developed in the 18th century. It is based on the assumption that nature represents the wholeness of reality. Nature, itself, is a total system that contains and explains all existence including human beings and human nature. Education must conform to the natural processes of growth and mental development. It should be pleasurable.

This readiness for specific kinds of activity is evidenced by their interest. Education should engage the spontaneous self-activity of the child. The way to do this, Spencer advised, is to tell the learner as little as possible and induce him to discover as much as possible.

**AIMS OF EDUCATION**

• Education is for the body as well as the mind; and this should not be forgotten. The naturalist, as Herbert Spencer represents them, first regards the pupil from the physical side. He has a body, or, to be more accurate, he is a body one of his first requirements therefore is that he be healthy, a vigorous animal, able to stand the wear and tear of living.

• According to Spencer this can be achieved by “that education which prepares for direct and indirect self-preservation; that which prepares for parenthood; that which prepares for citizenship; that which prepares for the miscellaneous refinements of life.” Thus the school’s most important job as an educational agency is to see to it that the child learns how to preserve his own physical health and well-being. Preparation for citizenship and leisure time activities appear at the end of the list and are of lesser importance.

• “Complete living” is the general aim which includes

i. Self-preservation

ii. Securing the necessities of life.

iii. Raising children.

iv. Maintenance of social and political relations

v. Enjoyment of leisure.

**The Role of Teacher**

• The teacher’s role is to remain in background. The natural development of child should be stimulated. Since, Nature is considered to be best educator.

• According to naturalists the teacher is the observer and facilitator of the child’s development rather than a giver of information, ideas, ideals and will power or a molder of character.

• In the words of Ross “teacher in a naturalistic set up is only a setter of the stage, a supplier of materials and opportunities, a provider of an ideal environment, a creator of conditions under which natural development takes place. Teacher is only a non-interfering observer”.

• For Rousseau, the teacher, first of all, is a person who is completely in tune with nature .He has a profound faith in the original goodness of human nature. Naturalists are of the view that teacher should not be one who stresses books, recitations and massing information in literary form, “rather he should give emphasis on activity, exploration, and learning by doing”.

**Mine-Rene Descartes**

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 a as 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 A 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 skepticism wne 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

\*Get socratic school and continue with

Naturalism,idealism,pragmatism,existentialism,realism,Africanism

Contributions of these philosophers to the practical methodology of junior secondary school education