

# Philosophical Foundations of Education

## Part 1

Dr. Auxilie Aurora D. Salvosa  
Jose Rizal University



At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

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1. Define what philosophy of education is;
  2. Distinguish the various philosophies of education and their proponents; and
  3. Formulate your own philosophy and explain its basis.
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# What is Philosophy of Education

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- # All teachers have a personal philosophy that colors the way they teach
  - # Engaging in philosophy helps clarify what they do or intend to do, justify or explain why they do what they do in a logical, systematic manner
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# The meaning of Philosophical Inquiry

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- # “Whatever people choose to embrace, if their choices are made in a logical, rational manner, they are engaged in the process of ‘doing philosophy.’”



# Particular Philosophies of Education

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- # **Idealism**, the first systematic philosophy in Western thought...Socrates and Plato, the Socratic method was dialogue
  - # Generic notions: Philosophers often pose abstract questions that are not easily answered but are concerned with the search for truth
  - # World of matter in constant state of flux, senses are not to be trusted, continually deceive us
  - # Truth is perfect and eternal, but not found in the world of matter, only through the mind
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# Idealism

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- # The only constant for Plato was mathematics, unchangeable and eternal.
  - # Plato's method of dialogue engaged in systematic, logical examination of all points of view...ultimately leading to agreement and a synthesis of ideas...this approach known as the *dialectic*.
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# Idealism

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- # Plato believed education helped move individuals collectively toward achieving the *good*.
  - # The State should be involved in education, moving brighter students toward abstract ideas and the less able toward collecting data...a gender free tracking system
  - # Those who were brighter should rule, others should assume roles to maintain the state
  - # The philosopher-king would lead the State to the ultimate good
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# Idealism

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- # Evil comes through ignorance, education will lead to the obliteration of evil
  - # More modern idealists: St. Augustine, Descartes, Kant, Hegel
  - # Goal of Education: interested in the search for truth through ideas...with truth comes responsibility to enlighten others, “education is transformation: Ideas can change lives.”
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# Idealism

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## # Role of the Teacher:

1. to analyze and discuss ideas with students so that students can move to new levels of awareness
2. to bring out what is already in student's mind: *reminiscence*

# Methods of Instruction

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- # Lecture from time to time, but primary method of teaching is the dialectic ( the art of discussing the truth)...discuss, analyze, synthesize, and apply what they have read to contemporary society
  - # Curriculum - importance of the study of the classics and many support a back to the basics approach to education
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# Realism

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- # Aristotle was the leading proponent of realism, started the Lyceum, the first philosopher to develop a systematic theory of logic
  - # Generic Notions
    - only through studying the material world is it possible to clarify or develop ideas
    - matter is real independent of ideas
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# Philosopher's Concerns

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- # What is the good life?
- # What is the importance of reason?
- # Moderation in all things...balance in leading one's life: reason is the instrument to help individuals achieve balance and moderation



# Realists

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- # They believed that reason is the means of ascertaining or understanding truth, God could be understood through reasoning based on the material world...no conflict between science and religion
  - # The world of faith with the world of reason, contemporary Catholic schools
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# Goal of Education for Realists

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- # Notions of the good life, truth, beauty could be answered through the study of ideas, using the dialectical method.
  - # The goal of education is to help individuals understand and apply the principles of science to help solve the problems plaguing the modern world.
  - # Teachers should be steeped in the basic academic disciplines.
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# Pragmatism

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- # An American philosophy from the 19<sup>th</sup> century...Peirce, James, Dewey
  - # “By their fruits, ye shall know them.” Pragmatism encourages people to find processes that work in order to achieve their desired ends...action oriented, experientially grounded.
  - # Rousseau... “back to nature”, environment and experience...*Emile*, little regard for the education of women other than to be Emile’s companion
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# Dewey's Role for the Teacher

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- # Not the authoritarian but the facilitator...encourages, offers suggestions, questions and helps plan and implement courses of study...has command of several disciplines
  - # Inquiry method, problem solving, integrated curriculum
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# Existentialism

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- # Kierkegaard, Buber, Jaspers, Sartre, Maxine Greene...existentialists
- # How do one's concerns affect the lives of an individual...the phenomena of consciousness, perception and meaning in an individual's experience

# Existentialists

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- # Based on the earth alone, must make sense of the chaos one encounters
  - # “Existence precedes essence.” People must create themselves and create their own meaning...done through the choices people make in their lives, in a state of constant becoming...an individual can make a difference in a seemingly absurd world.
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# Existentialists

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- # Education should focus on the needs of individuals, include the non- rational as well as rational, the notion of *possibility*.
  - # Teachers should understand their own “lived world” and help students to understand their world.
  - # The need to be “wide awake”...the role of the teacher is intensely personal.
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# Naturalism

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- ⌘ Naturalism – most influential movement in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It stands for education in accordance with nature. It means the application of natural laws to the educational process – meaning education in accordance to human development.
  - ⌘ Jean Jacques Rousseau- champion of this view. His book *Emile* became an educational classic.
  - ⌘ He emphasized the necessity for the child to be free to develop according to his own natural impulses.
  - ⌘ Nature, fate, heredity shaped individual destiny, society and the future
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# More on Naturalism...

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- # Types: Training should not be for a definite vocation and a definite social position or class.
  - # Pupil had to be adaptable to changing times.
  - # It stood for a democratic and universal type of education.
  - # Rousseau said that education is a basic natural gift that everyone should be educated in the same way.
  - # It emphasized physical education and health training.
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# Still on Naturalism

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- ❖ Rousseau advocated moral training through natural punishment- meaning learning came as a result of the natural consequences of one's acts.
  - ❖ Intellectual education was the development of sense discrimination, free expression and acquisition of knowledge through natural curiosity.
  - ❖ Religious education should be postponed until the child could understand what was bad through nature and not through rituals and dogmas.
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# Cont.

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- # Curriculum- consisted of interests and activities manifested by the child in the process of growing up
  - # Education- the natural unfolding of the child's potential to meet his natural needs
  - # Instead of books and the traditional 3R's, Rousseau favored the informal exercises of the senses, the muscles, and the tongue
  - # Women had inferior education- no individuality, trained in domestic work, morals and religion, and trained never to think of herself
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# The End

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End of Presentation

