

Philosophy as a Key Instrument in Establishing Curriculum, Educational Policy, Objectives, Goals of Education, Vision and Mission of Education.

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Abstract

This research is about the contribution of philosophy to education. Philosophy is the foundation of knowledge and it is the theory about education. Education is the practical component of this theory. Because of this relationship philosophy is foundational in all aspects of education. This research will expose a strong link between philosophy and education which has all along been watered down. While philosophy has a critical component, education has been underscored in this research as the continuous revitalization of learning about life. Intellectually, education means the formation of understanding as a response to the calling of being which is the end of our knowing. In other words, to know is to comprehend being in its totality. The researcher goes ahead and demonstrates that in order for us to comprehend various issues in education; we need to embrace philosophy for it is the foundation of all knowledge. Secondly, philosophy underpins education as it is its critical and theoretical component. All the problems and dimensions of education can only be understood properly through philosophy and they are of philosophical nature.

Introduction

The term philosophy is derived from the Greek word *Philein* meaning to love, to strive after or search for and from the word *Sophia* which means wisdom. Therefore, Philosophy is the search for wisdom by philosophers. Philosophy is the foundation, the mother and engine of all other disciplines. It is wide since it involves all other studies. Philosophy is a systematic, vigorous, critical objective study of the reality. Philosophy recognizes three kinds of realities namely God, Universe and Man. Education borrows from philosophy and puts that knowledge into practice. In this regard, philosophy is the theory about knowledge while education is the practice of the said knowledge. Philosophy is closely related to education. For example, all educational programs are generally philosophical in nature hence any educational theory is related to philosophy.

1.0 Philosophy as a Foundation of Educational Curriculum

Philosophy refers to the beliefs that make up the society and constitute the meaning of educational philosophy. It points out to the society what they aspire to be achieved through education. Education is an act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual. It is also the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another through institution.

The term curriculum is from a Latin word for 'race-course' referring to the course of deeds and experiences through which children grow to become mature. Curriculum is all the selected activities done in the society which are used in the learning process. It is a race experience, planned learning and instruction which requires a learner to know things taught in class producing and understanding language used, solving problems and making their own decisions.

According to John Franklin Bobbit (1918), a curriculum constitutes various deeds and experiences which are intentioned and directed or otherwise that a child undergoes as he develops to an adult in a society. For him, curriculum is a social engineering arena. He realized that curricular formation must have two important notable features. First, the curriculum must be tailored in such away that it constitutes deed- experiences that a student ought to have to become the adult he or she ought to become. Second, those who design the curriculum must have knowledge of the desirable qualities in an adult society. This knowledge of the good in the society is rightly estimated by philosophy. This makes curriculum to have intimate relation with philosophy. It is philosophy that discovers and unfolds the good that all men should aspire and project in all their purposeful education.

On the same note, and in respect to philosophy, curriculum is prescriptive in that it gives the general guidelines or specifies what kinds of courses or topics that must be covered so as to achieve a given level of grade or standard. This is really to say that curriculum is normative in the sense in which philosophy is. This is because its ultimate aim is to set the required standards, principles, values, knowledge and skills to be attained in

any particular field of study. Ideally speaking, curriculum is not a concrete reality but an ideal. It is not more on the actual deeds or experiences that form people. It is designed to fit school set up. These are deeds and experiences which are purposeful and intentional to help students master and gain a certain required standards for a given grade (Bobbitt, 1918). Curriculum involves range of courses from which students choose what subject matter to study. Further, it captures a specific learning program whereby it collectively describes the teaching, learning and assessment material available for a given course of study (Bobbitt, 1918)

Curriculum in its entirety has a philosophical, historical, psychological and social foundation. The field of curriculum has its set of principles and theories. For example, the term curriculum itself is a concept describing very complex ideas. In learning, there are principles such as educational philosophy, curriculum goals and learning objectives which are applied in developing school programs, colleges, training centers and universities. This field has its own body of knowledge and skills e.g. in the selection of content making it rely on the principles knowledge and skills from psychology, philosophy and sociology.

Curriculum planning involves the decision about the philosophy of education. Having decided on the philosophical beliefs then curriculum goals and objectives are derived from there. These are later translated into the classroom as desired learning outcomes. Philosophy probably has more influence on curriculum access and development in that it provides educationists, teachers and curriculum makers with framework for planning implementation and evaluating curriculum in school. It also helps in answering what schools are for what subjects are important, how students should learn and what materials and methods should be used. Philosophy provides the starting point and heuristic dynamism in decision making about education in its totality.

1.1 Educational Philosophies in Relation to Curriculum

Perennialism – Here the focus in curriculum is classical subjects literary analysis and considered curriculum as constant. The curriculum must emphasize enduring, long lasting, skills, values and knowledge.

Essentialism – Here the essential skills of the 3 R'S and essential subjects of English, Science, History, Mathematics and Foreign language is the focus of the curriculum.

Progressivism – The curriculum is focused on students' interest human problems and affairs. The subjects are interdisciplinary, integrative and interactive.

Re-constructionism – Here the focus of the curriculum is on present and future trends and issues of national and international interest.

Educational philosophy lays a strong foundation of any curriculum in that a curriculum specialist, implementer of evaluator anchors their decision making process on a sound philosophy.

The following curriculum theorists contributed their views on curriculum:

Franklin Bobbit (1876-1956) presented curriculum as a science that emphasizes on students' need. It should be tailored in such a way that it constitutes deeds and experiences the student ought to have to become the adult he or she ought to become.

Werret Charters (1875-1952) considered curriculum also as a science which is based on student's need and the role of the teachers plan the activities.

William Kilpatrick (1871-1965) viewed curriculum as purposeful activities which are child centred.

Harold Rugg (1886-1960) emphasized social studies in the curriculum and the teachers plan the lesson in advance.

Hollis Caswell (1901-1989) sees curriculum as organized around social functions of themes and organized knowledge and learners interests.

Robert M. Hutchins views curriculum as permanent studies where the rules of grammar, rhetorics and logic and mathematics for basic education are emphasized. He advocated a theory that basic education must emphasize 3Rs while college education should be grounded on liberal education.

Aurthur Bestor understood curriculum to be a tool to fulfill the mission of the school which he regarded as intellectual training. He propagated essentialist theory of the curriculum where by he emphasized that curriculum should focus on the fundamental intellectual disciplines of grammar literature and writing. It should also include essential disciplines like maths, science, history and foreign language.

The philosophy of education has guided the development, management, organization and delivery of education. Philosophy has philosophical schools of thoughts such as naturalism which is the basis of the curriculum, idealism which on the nature of the learner and recommends the learning activity of the learner and the positive influence of the teacher, realism which is important in forming curriculum that stresses the acquisitions of information about culture and pragmatism which recommends the change of knowledge because it is not permanent. This school of thought emphasizes on continuous construction and reconstruction of curriculum.

1.2 Psychological Foundation of Curriculum

Psychology provides basis for the teaching and learning process in that it unities element of learning process and some of the questions which can be addressed by psychological foundations. The following are

major groups of learning theories:

1.2.1 Behaviourist psychology

Considers that learning should be organized in order for the students to experiences success in the subject matter hence method of teaching step by step with proper sequencing of task.

1.2.2 Cognitive psychology

Focus their attention on how individuals process information and how to monitor and manage thinking. Here learning constitutes a logical method for organizing and interpreting learning. Learning in this group is rooted in the tradition of subject matter where teachers use a lot of problem and thinking skills in teaching and learning. These are exemplified by practices like reflective thinking, creative thinking, intuitive thinking, discovery learning among others.

1.2.3 Humanistic psychology

Concerned with how learners can develop their human potential based on Gestalt psychology where learning can be explained in term if the wholeness of the problem and where the environment is changing making the learner continuously recognized his/her perceptions.

Schools exist within the social context societal culture affects and shapes schools and their curricula. The relationship of curriculum and society is mutual and encompassing. Hence to be relevant the curricula should reflect and preserve the culture of the society and it's aspirations equally society should take in the changes brought about by the formal institution called schools.

2.0 How Philosophy has influenced the Establishment of Educational Policy

Education policy refers to the collection of laws and rules that govern the operation of education systems. Education occurs in many forms and for many purposes through many institutions, that is, early childhood education, kindergarten, primary level, secondary level, college and adult education. Education policy therefore can affect directly that is, the education that people are engaged in at all ages. The policy can address or debate on the size of the school, class number of learners, the teacher's profession and their pay, teaching methods applied among others. Education policy analysis is the scholarly study of education which seeks answers from philosophical thinking.

The education policy also looks into the purpose of education, the objectives and goals to be achieved, the research to be carried out in order to come out with the best system and all this requires philosophical thought. Philosophy which is a discipline that is concerned with the aims and goals of education provides techniques required for setting proper rules and laws that are suitable in a given situation. In so doing it contributes a lot to the deeper study of the educational policies that are relevant in a given educational set up. It also looks into forms, methods or results of the process of educating or being educated.

Philosophy addresses stressful questions facing educational policy by creating a smooth ground (atmosphere) of getting solutions in a more logical way. It also contributes a lot in the upbringing of education as a whole. It practices the limits and legitimization of education as an academic discipline and relationship between educational theory and practice.

Philosophy unifies pedagogy, curriculum, learning theories and the purpose of education and this is grounded in a specific metaphysical epistemology and axiological assumptions upon which educational policy is formulated. Philosopher by name Plato contributed a lot on the structure of educational policy whereby he advocated for the children to be separated from their mothers care and raising them in a separate place. He also contributed on talent building which is included in educational policy. The educational curriculum allows sports in institutions which require students to involve themselves in promoting talents.

Philosophy projects that higher education helps the soul to search for truth. This will make a person to think critically and respond to issues and such will lead to the formulation of ideas such as policy in education. Through philosophy, elementally education is introduced and strengthened and it may become an important aspect in education policy. Educational policy spells out the duration each curriculum takes which is clearly borrowed from philosophy. This is well supported by setting curriculum that suits all ages of people.

Different philosophers focus on education differently but in a more logical way for example Kant's view is based in education different from training and thinking. He also supported learning by doing which is one of the set rules and laws of education. Learners acquire more by doing and touching rather than listening from the teachers. Aristotle on his part supports educational policy by considering human nature, habit and reason to be so important forces that should be cultivated in education.

3.0 Philosophy as key in Establishing Educational Objectives

Educational Objectives are targets that are intended to be achieved at the end of the course. They are operational statements that describe the desired outcomes of the program. The objectives are derived from the goal statements and are the action statements used to translate the goals into a working educational program. The

core of curriculum development is an educational philosophy that aids in answering the values-laden questions and thereby establishing curricular choices. The philosophy is essential in order to give meaning to any curriculum development effort. Curriculum planners are forced to consider their values as pertaining to education. The decisions that affect the scope of curriculum will have an important impact on the structure and content of school programs. The curriculum developers must therefore be aware of their own beliefs about education learning and teaching in order to make better decisions.

In absence of an educational philosophy and the direction it provides, a curriculum will include nearly everything. A philosophy that accurately reflects the beliefs and values of the curriculum developer can accomplish the following

- Provide the intent and purpose of existence of the program.
- Define the roles of the persons directly associated with the program and school.
- Clarify the objectives of the program.
- Clarify the learning activities in the program.
- Direct the selection of the learning strategies and tactic to be used in the classroom.

Philosophical beliefs and attitudes are important before attempting to work with other curriculum planners, instructors and administrators. Common values that overlap individual beliefs form most fertile ground for curricular collaboration and development of successful projects and programs (Wiles and Bondi 1993 p. 40). The clarification of purpose involves identifying a philosophy, such as, perennialism, idealism, realism, experimentalism, existentialism etc.

Philosophy provides a logical vigor, envisaging transcendence and disciplined imagination which helps in the formulation of educational objectives. It also contributes a great deal to education in that it makes one being critical and have self conscious reflection of the realities which education wants to display which plays a key role in building educational objectives.

Philosophy assists the educators in formulating beliefs, arguments and assumptions and in making value judgments. It also promotes advanced and interdisciplinary studies which provide a forum for creation accumulation and utilization of knowledge. Philosophy develops a broad outlook flexible adaptability and creativity and a rousing desire for self enlightenment and study hence getting the required abilities for doing research and development.

4.0 Philosophy as a Tool in Establishing Educational Goals

Goals are statements pertaining to the outcomes of education. Goals are derived from the philosophical viewpoints of the school departments and community. Goals like the statement of philosophy are a foundation of curriculum planning. Goals range from broad statement to specific for example the mission statement of a college which usually serves as the philosophical statement will be supported by the broad educational goals.

4.1 The Goals of Education

Expand early childhood care and education: - This goal calls for the support of young ones in the way they should grow, that is, physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually. This is build from the philosophy of Maria Montessor who is known for her philosophy and method of education of children from birth to adolescent.
Provision of free and compulsory primary education for all: - This was developed from philosophy of Jean Jacque Rousseau. This was out to make the parents and learners to see the importance of gaining basic education.
Promotion of learning and life skills for young people and adult: - This places emphasis on learning and is developed from the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner who build a philosophy of education known as Anthroposophy.
Increase adult literacy by 50%:- This calls for certain level of improvement of adult literacy by 2015. This came from a philosophical theory of philosophy.

Achievement of gender parity by 2005 and gender equity by 2015:- This goal calls for an equal number of girls and boys in education process.

Improve the quality of education: - This calls for improvement in the equality of education in all aspects. This was developed from the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner.

5.0 Philosophy as Projection of the Vision and Mission of Education

Vision is what is intended to be achieved e.g. to have quality education and training for development. Mission is the way to achieve the vision e.g. to work with other education stakeholders to provide, promote and coordinate quality training and research for Kenyans sustainable development and responsible citizenly. The vision and mission of education statement set towards realizing better results of education in given system. The ideals values and beliefs are the beginning of powerful vision. Mission statement give education stronger motivation and provides parents with clear picture of what school values are.

The mission and vision of education provide detailed expectations for administrators, teachers and other stakeholders. They provide essential overview goals and what they want to be in the future. Philosophy provides

skills and knowledge of identifying and training and then developing educational vision and mission. It also created logical ways of identifying the existing vision and mission viewing and determining their relevance and accuracy to education. Philosophy provided skills to administration to ask probing question which will guide the staff in developing and establishing (SMART) goals. It helps administrators to come up with a plan which will involve the staff in revising the existing vision and mission statement or creating new ones.

Philosophy supported innovations, striving to address the training needs for high quality services and seek ways to achieve the stated goals that will lead to the attainment of the mission and vision. It also prepared the administrators in developing skills which guide them in carrying out proper research in the required vision and mission of a given educational institution. It is philosophy that points out to the society of what they aspire. This is critical in the curriculum development process.

6.0 Philosophy Underpins All Educational Ideals

All of us are familiar with the extrapolated debate on how philosophy is related to education. My familiarity with the debate is that it is carried out by people who have learnt how to memorize and state various positions and theories word by word. For them to be educated is to state theories which have so far been constructed in their realm or discipline. To us as philosophers, this doesn't amount to what we call education. This conclusion needs to be strongly defended. Let us start by stating basic facts about philosophy and education.

Essentially, education and philosophy, are two disciplines, however they are two sides of the same coin. This reason behind this assertion is not far from what we have already considered. Education is the dynamic side of philosophy. Philosophy and Education are the two flowers of one stem, the two sides of one coin. One can never be thought of without the other. The presence of one is incomplete without the other. The art of education cannot be completed without philosophy and philosophy cannot convert others to its aims and values without education. There is a close interaction between the two; one without the other is unserviceable.

Philosophy is a discipline whose method is pedagogical (Lonergan, 1957 :398) Because of this, there is virtually no issue in education which is more fundamental than philosophy of education. The importance of philosophy to education cannot be denigrated in any open discussion. Philosophy is what has given education its vision and direction, without which education loses its social significance. For this simple reason that philosophy endeavors to inculcate in us, through a habit of committed thinking, to discover our being in ourselves, one can competently say that philosophy is heuristically and metaphysically pedagogical (methodical). In a general sense, though not totally exclusive, education is the lifelong process of coming to know the truth of who we are. This reminds us of the greatest maxim which has been cherished since antiquity; Socratic maxim 'know thy self'. This captures the complex meaning and mission of education to man. To be educated is to know thyself, that is, being able to reach a responsible self awareness where responsible self awareness suggests the ethical injunction: be thyself in truth, freedom, and goodness.

Philosophy is a way of life. In a wider sense philosophy is a way of looking at life, nature and truth. It sets up the ideals for an individual to achieve them in his life time. Education on the other hand is the dynamic side of philosophy. It is the active aspect and the practical means of realising the ideals of life. Education is a sacred necessity of life, both from the biological and sociological point of view.

Perhaps, each one of us is familiar with the simple science in our secondary school where it was said that catalyst speeds up a given process. Similarly, it is true that education works like a catalyst for a better life, a social desirable life. As a pot is made out of clay and a finished product comes out of raw material, so also from the immature child comes out the civilized man through education. From a technical sense, education renews and re-builds the social structure in the pattern of philosophical ideals. A human being, who is born and grows up with inherited propensities, determines the basic trails of man, but education paves a long way for his success in life.

The weight of this imperative, which we have identified to be central to education basically lies in its transformative character to effect a radical change in the way we see ourselves, others and the world. This is what has been captured by the title of this book, which is that authentic education is characterized by conversion, intellectually, morally, and religiously. This is to say that the purpose of education is really to bring about integral transformation of the human situation through habituation of critical reflection. In his *Lectures on Education in Cincinnati*, Lonergan says:

Philosophy is a reflection on the human situation at an ultimate level. It is a fundamental thinking about the human situation. And education is the great means for transforming the human situation. It changes people's minds and wills. Consequently, philosophy and education are interdependent (Lonergan, 1997:4).

They are interdependent on the sense that philosophy is the reflective component and education is the active component, at the ultimate level of reflection and action in human life. Education is practical in nature and philosophy is theory. It is not vague to say that theory and practical are identical. The educator, who has to deal

with the real facts of life, is different from the arm chair theorist who is busy in speculation. But a close observation of the various interpretations of philosophy will prove that these two are nothing but the one and same thing seen from different angles. Philosophy is the study of the realities, the pursuit of wisdom.

Ideally speaking, philosophy guides education. It is the guide and the inspiration of education. It clarifies and sets goals, trains the mind to think and to be critical, opens the mind to major concerns, thus vindicating the desire to know. Education too does a great deal to philosophy. Education is the verification, that is, the pragmatic justification of philosophy. Furthermore, another intrinsic relation that is exhibited by philosophy is the concern with social action. It is a critical engagement in the practice of truthful living. It deals with issues pertaining to man while living with others in the society and the meaning they make of all these things.

Moreover, education is viewed as an integration of the theoretical and practical dimension of learning. As such, education is an existential horizon and this can only have significance only within a horizon of meaningful integration. This requires a philosophy which is methodical, critical and integral. Nyerere on "Education; A Commentary" while emphasizing Education for Self Reliance held:

The education given to the young must be geared to making them an integral and more useful part of the society in which they live and which they must serve..... education is to be made an instrument of liberation, and for it to have that quality it must strive to integrate the school system (Nyerere, 2004: 5).

By methodical we mean that philosophy as the reflection of the ultimate level should attempt for the viability of an intelligent course of action. Also, philosophy is described to be critical, in so far as it ascertains the veracity of statement and is integral, insofar as philosophy proposes a unity of vision.

Education, is as we have noted, a process of learning to come to self-knowledge. This kind of learning does not depend upon someone or something else other than ourselves. It is something that we do in ourselves and for ourselves in conscious freedom.

Admittedly, the basic relationship between philosophy and education can be analyzed as follows. It is philosophy, that provides the purpose or the aim and it is education which makes it practical. Philosophy shows the way and education moves on in that direction. This to my honest estimation is why a course in philosophy of education is not only important but essential and necessary to all students doing education, both arts and sciences. When we define education as the modification or behaviour, the direction in which, modification to be carried out is determined by philosophy. Thus philosophy deals with the end and education with the means. In fact, we can observe that the great philosophers of all times have been also great educators. For example, Socrates and Plato, the great philosophers, were also famous educators.

It is philosophically true to say that a teacher is not a teacher, in true sense of the term, if he/she is not able to discover the relationship between philosophy and education. According to Thomson, every teacher should realize the importance of philosophy in education. For instance, a good philosophy thus would, not only conceive the philosophy which is authentic in the society, but also, the type of good life, good education, good social and political life which is needed in the society. This is because the philosophy of the people determines what their estimation is about the totality of life.

The choice of students' academic, social, moral, life must cater for the principles and purposes of philosophy that he has been socialized to generally and technically. Choice of curriculum needs philosophers or leaders of thought. With the change of time and circumstances, the curricula also changes and this change can be brought out by philosophers alone.

In this regard, the learning process is an active way of doing things; hence the curriculum for the child should concern itself with the realities of life. As far as the methods of teaching are concerned, it can be said that the child is influenced; to give a particular shape to his life by the way he is taught. The philosophy of the teacher is reflected in the child by his method of teaching. So the course of life of the child is definitely influenced by philosophy. Here comes the utility of philosophy.

According to Alfred Weber, Philosophy is a search for comprehensive view of nature, an attempt at a universal explanation of the nature of things a person who searches into the reason and nature of things, who tries to arrive at a general principle, and who attempts to apply those principles to daily conduct of life, acts like a true philosopher. According to John Dewey, philosophy is critical reviewing of just those familiar things.

Education is a laboratory where philosophical theories and speculations are tested and made concrete. Education may, therefore, be rightly called applied philosophy. Philosophy is wisdom; education transmits that wisdom from one generation to the other. Philosophy is in reality the theory of education. In other words, education is the dynamic side of philosophy, or application of the fundamental principles of philosophy.

Philosophy formulates the method, education process it. Philosophy gives ideals, values and principles, those ideals, values and principles help education to stitch its results together. A philosopher tries to live in accordance with those aims and values and also wants others to be converted to his beliefs and live according to

them. This he can achieve through education which is the best means for the propagation of his philosophy.
Conclusion

Through different philosophical schools of thought curriculum, education policy, educational objectives, educational goals and vision and mission of education have been established. These philosophies have guided the development management organization and delivery of education making philosophy closely related to educational programs are generally philosophical in nature hence any educational in nature hence any educational theory is linked to philosophy. Philosophy assists in formulating policies, beliefs and arguments, objectives, goals vision and mission. Philosophy points out to the society what they aspire to be achieved through education.

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