

## Importance of Educational Philosophy in Teacher Training for Educational Sustainable Development

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**Abstract:** The main purpose of the study is to discuss and propose a functional educational philosophy by comparing major education philosophies in terms of attitudes on significant questions with basic properties of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). For this purpose the major educational philosophies-perennialism, essentialism, existentialism, progressivism and reconstructionism are discussed in accordance with curriculum, teaching methods, classroom management, evaluation and the role of the teacher. Consequently, educational philosophies are discussed by depending on both the educational philosophy and basic properties and qualifications of ESD. In order to accomplish the purpose the way given here is followed: Firstly in order to draw a theoretical perspective the importance of philosophies in educational process is summarized. Later basic properties of education philosophies are expressed. Last of all from, by giving main properties of ESD, the situation is discussed.

**Key words:** Educational philosophies • Perennialism • Essentialism • Existentialism • Progressivism and reconstructionism • Education for sustainable development

### THE IMPORTANCE OF PHILOSOPHIES IN EDUCATION

Many different definitions of education can be made. Nevertheless, education is defined as a process the purpose of which is to construct desired behavior change of any individual in his or her way of slice of life [1]. In other words, education can be considered as teaching, learning measurement and evaluation process for desired behaviour changes of individual. In this respect, a curriculum can be said to consist of four components: They are arranged as goals (purposes), content, teaching and learning process, measurement and evaluation.

The importance or necessity of philosophy for any education process can be summarized as follows: Primarily, teachers and education philosophy are important components in any training process. Although there are social, economic, pedagogical factors effecting educational process and curriculum, educational philosophy can be defined as a pioneer variable for a teacher trainee. Because of these reasons, teacher training systems should be examined and revised for a sustainable development (SD). Depending on these facts, an education philosophy having some properties such as

practicability, applicability, usability should be well-known and taught in teacher training institute.

Philosophy is a critical element of any education process. An educational system can not be considered without any philosophical approach. Without philosophical approach, a person can be said to be deaf and blind. A teacher's personal philosophy of education is a critical element in his or her approach to guiding children along the path of enlightenment [2].

The philosophy of education plays a part in guidance. In other words, philosophy may be said to show how and why to get attained. "To define philosophy is the brain of educational process" is not wrong. It is as follows: a teacher or administer can draw a plan or use a method by using any education philosophy.

The philosophy of education is an aspect that all teachers, schools, and administrators mold themselves to, whether intentionally or not. Philosophy in the learning process gives learners and educators a basis on which to build knowledge [3]. Knowledge, philosophy and education are key aspects in producing and maintaining society.

Philosophy assists teachers and administers to have reasonable decision. Educational process covers many

different types of educational decisions and assessment that support them. Those may be classified as decisions before beginning teaching, during teaching, and after a teaching segment [4].

Philosophy can be uttered as the heart of purposeful in education system. It assists in answering many questions and making decisions from among many choices. Philosophies can serve curriculum leaders and teachers in many ways some of which can be explained as suggestion purpose in education, clarify objectives and learning activities in school; defining role of persons working in schools and guide the selection of learning strategies and tactics in the classroom [5].

During the educational process which educational philosophy or philosophies will be appropriate or applied is complicated and a difficult question to be answered. However, which one should society adhere to? The question may not have a right or wrong response. Some educators follow one philosophy, while others combine multiple theories and develop a derived philosophy. In reality, there may be many different philosophies. Mainly, six of philosophies which are generally called basic philosophies in education -perennialism, essentialism, existentialism, experimentalism, progressivism and reconstructionism- are discussed in the study.

### BASIC PHILOSOPHIES IN EDUCATION

In this section of the study, the main philosophies in education perennialism, essentialism, existentialism, experimentalism, progressivism, and reconstructionism are studied from point of view general properties and curriculum, teaching methods, classroom management, evaluation, the role of teacher.

### PERENNIALISM

Perennialism is considered the most conservative, traditional or inflexible education philosophy, a philosophy drawing heavily from classical definitions of education [5]. The most popular pioneers of Perennialism are Robert Hutchins, Mortimer Adler. Perennialists believe that the most important topics develop a person. Since details of fact change constantly, these cannot be the most important. Therefore, one should teach principles, not facts [6].

Some important properties can be mentioned as follows: Despite differing environments, human nature remains the same everywhere; hence, education should be the same for everyone. Education is not an imitation of life but a preparation for it [7].

From the point of view of curriculum, teaching methods, classroom management, evaluation and the role of the teacher, main properties of the philosophy can be given as seen in Table 1.

### ESSENTIALISM

Essentialist philosophy is emphasized on a traditional education; development of the mind; core curriculum; reality is based in the physical world; citizens of democracy need critical thinking skills and civic values; democratic society comes before individual; teacher-directed learning; appreciation of masterworks of art and literature. The pioneers of the philosophy are William Bagley, Herman Horne [8].

Essentialism is generally considered as a conservative philosophy that pertains to the ever-changing social, educational and technological aspects of

Table1: Basic properties of the perennialism

Curriculum	Teaching methods	Classroom management	Evaluation	The Role of teacher
Christian doctrine, history, foreign language, logic, literature (the great books), character training, moral development	Drill and practice, computation, recitation, induction, problem solving, discussion, debate, and dialogue	Training of will, rigid structure, time on task, precision, orderliness, regularity, prayer, and contemplation	Objective examination and essay examination	Trained in the liberal arts, authority figure, disseminator of truth, director of mental calisthenics, and scholar

Table 2: Basic properties of the essentialism

Curriculum	Teaching methods	Classroom management	Evaluation	The Role of teacher
Reading, Writing, Computing, History, Geography	Lecture, recitation, Socratic dialogue, Behavioral objectives, computer assisted instruction, audio/tutorial laboratory	Intellectual discipline, Moral discipline, certainty regularity and uniformity	IQ test, standardized achievement tests, diagnostic tests, performance based competency tests and mastery learning	Trained in the liberal arts, sciences, or humanities, intellectual, skilled communicator, and superior pedagogical skills

Table 3: Basic properties of the existentialism

Curriculum	Teaching methods	Classroom management	Evaluation	The Role of teacher
Student centered, individualistic, humanities, awareness of being and awareness of nothingness	Valuing, decision making, Socratic dialogue, self-reflection, nondirective, and humanistic	Open-classroom participation, privacy, nonpunitive, democratic and flexible	Subjective appraisals	Mediator, authentic, subjective, reflective enabler and introspective

Table 4: Basic properties of the experimentalism

Curriculum	Teaching methods	Classroom management	Evaluation	The Role of teacher
Improvement	Problem solving, inquiry format	Participative	Research,	Aid learners or consult learners who would be actively in discovering and experiencing the world

society. It stresses the importance of teacher is the authoritative figure in the classroom and subject matter as the center the curriculum [9].

According to Kneller [7]. basic properties of the philosophy can stated as follows: Learning, of its very nature, involves hard work and often unwilling application. The initiative in education should lie with the teacher rather than with the pupil. The heart of the educational process is the assimilation of prescribed subject matter. The philosophy should retain traditional methods of mental discipline.

From the point of view of curriculum, teaching methods, classroom management, evaluation and the role of the teacher, main properties of the philosophy can given as seen in Table 2.

### EXISTENTIALISM

Existentialism believes in the personal interpretation of the world. It is based on the view that the individual defines reality, truth and goodness. As a result, schools exist to aid children in knowing themselves and their place in society. Students learn what they want and discuss subjects freely [10].

From the point of view of curriculum, teaching methods, classroom management, evaluation and the role of the teacher, main properties of the philosophy can be given as seen in Table 3.

### EXPERIMENTALISM

Experimentalism believes that things are constantly changing. It is based on the view that reality is what you

experience. It believes that truth is what works right now and that goodness comes from group decisions. As a result, schools exist to discover and expand the society we live in. Students study social experiences and solve problems [10].

From the point of view of curriculum, teaching methods, classroom management, evaluation and the role of the teacher, main properties of the philosophy can be given as seen in Table 4.

### PROGRESSIVISM

Progressivists believe that education should focus on the whole child, rather than on the content or the teacher. This educational philosophy stresses that students should test ideas by active experimentation. Learning is rooted in the questions of learners that arise through experiencing the world. It is active, not passive. The learner is a problem solver and thinker who make meaning through his or her individual experience in the physical and cultural context. Effective teachers provide experiences so that students can learn by doing. Curriculum content is derived from student interests and questions.

Progressivism, leading theorists of which are John Dewey, William H. Kilpatrick, John Childs can be said to have those main important properties summarized as stated below. Education should be life itself, not a preparation for living. Learning should be directly related to the interests of the child. Learning through problem solving should take precedence over the inculcating of subject matter [7].

Table 5: Basic Properties of the Progressivism

Curriculum	Teaching methods	Classroom management	Evaluation	The Role of teacher
Experience-centered and relevant,	Project method, cooperative group activities, critical community-centered thinking, problem solving, decision making and networking	Democratic process, child-centered and and appraising skills.	Process oriented, monitoring progress	Teacher as facilitator, director of learning, guide supervisor of learning and collaborative partner

Table 6: Basic Properties of the Reconstructionism

Curriculum	Teaching methods	Classroom management	Evaluation	The Role of teacher
Cultural pluralism, human relations, sociology, politics of change, economics, political science, anthropology, psychology, futures, foreign languages, real life and global educations	Group process, problem solving, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, networking, simulation and gaming, internship, work-study experience, role planning, training of trainers	Conflict resolution, experimentation, optimism and flexibility	Formative evaluation, ongoing feedback and cooperative assessment	Shaper of a new society, transformational leader, change agent, tolerance for ambiguity, comfortable with change, trained in conflict, management, organizational, development, program evaluation, strategic planning

From the point of view of curriculum, teaching methods, classroom management, evaluation and the role of the teacher, main properties of the philosophy can be given as seen in Table 5.

## RECONSTRUCTIONISM

Reconstructionism, the name of which critical theory may be considered as a revolutionary philosophy. George Counts and Theodore Brameld are counted as the main representative of the philosophy. Social reconstructionism is a philosophy that emphasizes the addressing of social questions and a quest to create a better society and worldwide democracy. Reconstructionist educators focus on a curriculum that highlights social reform as the aim of education. They also recognize that education is the means of preparing people for creating this new social order.

Basic features of reconstructionism can be stated as follows: The main purpose of education must be creation of a new social order that will fulfill the basic values of our culture and at the same time harmonize with the underlying social and economic forces of the modern world. The teacher must convince his pupils of the validity and urgency of the reconstructionist solution, but he must do so with scrupulous regard for democratic procedures. The means and ends of education must be completely re-fashioned to meet the demands of the

present cultural crisis and to accord with the findings of the behavioral sciences [7].

From the point of view of curriculum, teaching methods, classroom management, evaluation and the role of the teacher, main properties of the philosophy can be given as seen in Table 6.

## BASIC PROPERTIES OF SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION AND A QUALIFIED TEACHER IN SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION

The concept of (ESD) has become a comprehensive idea spreading in contemporary world. Since ESD is a brand new concept for especially for developing countries, there should be difficulties to find out sufficient academic documents and researches on it. However, basic properties of sustainable education and its qualified teacher's features are summarized below.

**ESD is a Holistic Approach:** Sustainability is holistic view. Sustainability can be analyzed at the level of social systems, groups, and individuals. At the social level social, political, cultural, and economic subsystems and their regulations is considered. On the level of group and individuals, sustainability can be characterized in terms of certain values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors [11]. By depending on the given idea *ESD* can be considered to have different main systematic approaches; in other

words input out model, system approach (system- sub system), and dialectic system approach. It is also thought that the whole system is interaction holistically.

By keeping the basic property of ESD, teacher should be accepted to have a holistic view can be easily indicated. To sum up, teacher should think education system as the combination of teacher, goals, objectives, content, teaching and learning process, measurement, students, and environment. Teacher has the role to govern those elements in accordance with contemporary goals of education. Educational system tries to have gained students to balance and harmonious development with social, ecological, and cultural constraints.

**ESD Includes Lifelong Learning:** There may be many different definition of SD or ESD. In general, the basic concept for SD can given in there different dimension that is, economical and social welfare, ecological integrity, integrated approaches. The current discourse about ESD specifies there components- economical, political, and ecological- and their inner integrity. ESD also promotes emotional, spiritual and social development of a person [12]. Interrelation between the whole subsystems necessities a cyclical and balanced giving-taking process and it is also needed inner and outer development and renewal. For the protection and development in those concepts or dimensions, the necessity of sustainable teaching and learning processes is not only necessity but also obligatory. Because of this fact a lifelong education is said to be obligatory process.

**The Contexts of ESD Are Empowerment, Participation, Environmentally Responsible Behavior:** ESD process includes empowerment, participation and environmental responsibilities. It is generally pointed out that management has adopted empowerment in terms of devolution of authority and decision making from top level to workers in other words the delegation of power and authority to subordinates in any organization [13]. Empowerment is power sharing. Empowerment in any organization profits in many cases. Employees receive information, and have knowledge, skills, and power to make substantive decisions, and probably employees are rewarded on performance ([14]. By the term empowerment in ESD is meant not only self development but also social development. Empowerment may thus be also regarded as a developmental concept; both at the level of the individual and of the community [15]. SD means more than 'environmentally sounds'. It can be described as three main sub systems. The system of SD entails balancing the

economic, social and environmental objectives of society [16].

**Corporation of theory and practice:** The relationship between theory and practice is one of the most important questions in any education system or paradigm. The answer to the question, in one way or another will be acceptable or better if there is a link between *theory* and *practice*. In fact, one of necessities of SD is that the people's concerns obviously do not reach the political institutions and their action does not reach people [17]. Reasonably, it is expected that there should be a balanced between theory and practice to submit a sustainable economic, cultural, educational, political development in earth. Productivity and effectiveness necessitate a balance among theory, practice, teaching and learning methods, either.

Realization of corporation of theory and practice, teachers are considered to be trained having cognitive, affective and psycho-motor domain behaviors and using effectively. The reality causes that teachers have the ability gaining practical behavior as well as transferring theory.

Firstly it should be noted that it is too difficult to have or draw comprehensible unique framework indicating basic properties of a qualified teacher. However, it can be gathered some features accepted by majority of educational experts. Mainly, it is also accepted that teacher should have some properties or qualifications in three different areas, occupational area that is to say, teaching and training abilities in general, knowledge related private area, and general culture area. While each of the qualifications have been described separately, in reality they are often interconnected and closely related one to another. Indeed a teacher may take on simultaneously several roles. However, a good teacher need not be competent in all roles. It would be unusual to find, and unreasonable to expect, one individual to have all the required competencies. Basically, it is expected that a teacher should be trained in all these areas moderately.

By keeping basic properties a teacher should have in mind, some of the basic qualifications or features of a teacher can be settled on many qualities of a good teacher: A friendly attitude, patience, sense of humor, flexibility, generosity. Although those features of a qualified teacher are continually listed, repeated and rewritten, there is a difficulty if those are feasible and practicable. In the context, especially for a sustainable development, what qualifications a teacher should have and which educational philosophy or philosophies should

be followed or carried out in teacher training institutions. To give a reasonable answer to the question, the questions what an ESD should be answered.

Mainly, the term ESD reminds life long having reasonable and pragmatic concept. To defend out and to clear up the explanation, as it is stated by Jamsa [18]. SE purposes improvement quality of life, sustenance natural resources, jobs, communities, industries, protection of health and ecosystems, meeting international obligation, and promoting equity. One in a hand, SE is interdisciplinary process which needs interaction relationships with different communities. Fundamentally, sustainability refers to our potential for sustaining supporting, maintaining, upholding-beneficial aspects of society or the environment. This framework is a strategy for helping the students focus their dialogue and viewpoints so they can begin connecting their understanding of the world, their values, and their hopes, dreams, and expectations for the future.

### **SOME CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

As it is noted before the article attempted to propose a functional education philosophical concept for sustainable development for teacher training institutions. The way to express concluding comments and suggestions is arranged as in the given order. Firstly whatever is needed for a sustainable education and development in any teacher training education system is revealed, the whole of the context is named as "problem". Secondly, for solution the concept indicated in the "problem" section, an appropriate education philosophical concept will be proposed. Some of problems of any teacher training institution which hasn't application of sustainable education for sustainable development and appropriate suggestions can be drawn as indicated below:

#### **Students Should Be Prepared for Future Not Only for Today:**

In traditional schools and teacher training institutions is seen that system is based on traditional methods and ways. The main purpose of the system is to transfer of knowledge and desired behavior. The situation, in that case, can be called as Perennial's. The samples are considered the most conservative, traditional or inflexible. Whereas, sustainable education is needed a person having a developing and seeing tomorrow not the conservative one. Lack of flexibility and adaptability in society and tomorrow's world probably cause problems. On depending the paradox, progressivist approach can be

firstly proposed since progressivist model should test ideas by active experimentation. Learning is rooted in the questions of learners that arise through experiencing the world. Secondly, reconstruction's can be stated as proposal. Because students are tried to be trained for the creation of a new social order that will fulfill the basic values of our culture and at the same time harmonize with the underlying social and economic forces of the modern world as indicated before.

#### **More Practice Teaching Rather than Theoretical**

**Transfer:** In teacher training institutions, another problem arises transferring the theoretical concept takes longer time than practice teaching. Education process can be said to be perceived only as means of transferring knowledge from the older to younger generation in order to control the material and anthropocentric environment[19]. However, it is believed that teacher training schools are the institutions which prepare the students for teaching profession. Simultaneously, education for sustainable development system can be counted that SD should be transformed from a slogan into a realistic principle of action by providing concrete and clear examples of successful cases and appropriate role models[11]. In one hand, the problem indicated here is caused acceptance of perennial's and idealistic philosophies. To solve the problems more practice teaching activities and functional relationship between teacher training institutions and infant, primary, and high schools can be said to be needed. Integration link between theory and practice is needed, too. That is why whatever social reconstructionists and critical theorists say, that is to say, curriculum focuses on student experience and taking social action on real problems can suggested as solution.

#### **Both Teacher Trainers and Trainees Should Have Flexibility:**

In some cases it may be difficult for some of the teacher training systems or teacher trainers and teacher trainees to show flexibility in teaching and management process. However, it is expected that management system and teachers in all levels might have flexibility in not only teaching – learning process but also management process in ESD program. Because of the fact, it will not be probably appropriate for application of perennialist and essentialist philosophies or concepts in any ESD process completely. The reason which is tried to be disclosed shows that progressivists social reconstructionist, existentialist, and experimentalist concepts will have opportunities to be used reasonably.

Because progressivists defend out active experimentation effective teachers providing students learn by doing in general. Since a genuine democratic society, whose major institutions and resources are controlled by the people themselves, is the main jargon of reconstructionists, reconstructionist paradigms or proposal can be used in any ESD processes. Having based on the view that the individual defines reality, truth and goodness, existentialist view can be proposed to have flexibility by depending on reality. On the other hand, some experimentalist applications are also used because of constantly changing principle of experimentalism.

**Participation Is an Important Property for Sustainability:**

there is of course a sustainable necessity for a successful management in other words governance. It is also necessary to have participative administration and management not only at school but also in class. Those necessities participative applications in both at schools and classrooms fur a sustainable education so that students can have democratic, participative social skills. In summary, an ESD regulation should acquire participative management and teaching learning and evaluative subsystems. Since progressivists believe that the learner is a problem solver and thinker and learners can improve the way of life of citizens through experiencing freedom and democracy in schools, the philosophy or similar one reconstructionst approaches probably have opportunity to be applied.

**Environmentally Responsible Behavior Is Another Important Aspect of SE:**

Environmental responsibility is described as a difficult concept. The difficulty originates from that thereis no a clear definition on what environmental responsibility is. However, environmentally responsible citizen regards herself as apart of nature and society and also is conscious of her environmental values [20]. In one a hand, educational program needs courses content of which includes how to create and protect environment functionally and for sustainability of course, for a SD, Creating and protection of environment is too important nowadays. Knowing that education process, in contemporary concept, cannot be perceived only as means of transferring knowledge from the older to younger generation, practice and environmental issues should be considered important. The necessities pointed out here require progressivists and reconstructionist values will be more appropriate for ESD. As it is indicated before, progressivists show partiality for learning through problem solving. According to Reconstructionists,

education must be completely re-fashioned to meet the demands of the present cultural crisis and to accord with the findings of the behavioral sciences.

## CONCLUSIONS

Philosophy is considered one most important component of both education system and curriculum. In historical perspective, different education philosophies having different aspects from the point of view curriculum, teaching methods, classroom management, evaluation and the role of the teacher can be seen. As a matter of fact, the education philosophies reflect social, economical and political aspects of society in which they are applied. Therefore, it is possible to discuss education philosophies with social, economical and political orders and properties.

The basic properties of ESD and SD, as discussed in the article can be summarized as given below: ESD is a holistic approach, ESD includes lifelong learning, The contexts of ESD are empowerment, participation, environmentally responsible behavior, Corporation of theory and practice, Students should be prepared for future not only for today, More practice teaching rather than theoretical transfer, Both teacher trainers and trainees should have flexibility, Participation is an important property for sustainability, Environmentally responsible behavior is another important aspect of SE. In short, ESD and ED are said to be having environmentally responsibility, lifelong struggle for humanistic values, holistic, complex process.

In fact, all schools are designed to promote an education design of school curricula differ just as philosophies differ. Major education philosophies are basically based on the the main social, economical and political view. Therefore, it is too difficult to propose only one unique philosophy for ESD. Since it is considered that perennialism is conservative, traditional and inflexible education philosophy, perennialism cannot be suggested for ESD schools or process. It can be noted that essentialism is not appropriate philosophy because it is considered having teacher be authoritative figures the classroom and subject matter as the center the curriculum, certainty, and conservative aspects.

The answer to the question which philosophy is the best one for ESD is more complicated. By remembering all discussion made in the article, the mixture of and existentialism, experimentalism, progressivism, reconstructionism are probably used in any ESD process. The reason for usage of existentialism is that it is based on the view that the individual defines reality, truth and

goodness. Experimentalism can be proposed since it is based on the view that reality is what you experience. Progressivists preference stems from its focus on active experimentation, acceptance of learner as problem solver and thinker.

Because of the fact that reconstructionist educators focus on a curriculum that highlights social reform as the aim of education, it is another proposal philosophy for ESD.

The last proposal can be stated that many different researches can be done education philosophy in order to have curriculum to see the context better, and make decision scientifically. As Wiles & Bondi [5]. stated there is a strong need search for a philosophical attitude although there had been a steady in interest in educational philosophies. Those researches are also helpful not only curriculum specialists but also schools administers, teachers to govern education process.

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