

The pragmatic education philosophy

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Pragmatism emerged from the writings of John Dewey who believed that experimentation was the best approach for educating young minds. For example, pragmatists feel that field trips, educational excursions etc are more effective in teaching students about the world instead of audio-visual aids. Pragmatism includes such as thoughts as futurism, and educational humanism and Reconstructionism. Pragmatic education philosophy doesn't assign a traditional role to the teachers who are only seen as guides and not exactly more knowledgeable beings.

George R. Knight in his book on education philosophies explained that pragmatism focuses on real life experiences as the main source of knowledge and education. They give the example of field trips as he says that for a child to learn about dairy products, it's better to take him to a barn and let him experience the whole thing himself instead of showing him a movie on the subject. (p. 75) Idealism is an important philosophy that gained greater influence over education in the 20th century and was not so popular prior to that.

It has been present in the educational field for a long time emphasizing the reality of ideas, thoughts, and mind over material and matter. William E. Hocking who is a modern thinker in this area maintained that due to emphasis on ideas; this philosophy should have been called "idea-ism" instead of idealism. This is because idealism is more concerned with intrinsic values such as honesty, truth, courage etc while idealism in the case of education stresses the importance of ideas, thoughts and mind precisely.

Educationists working on idealistic philosophies would concentrate more on the development of ideas instead of more physical things believing that this would lead to action automatically. Students are taught that they create or produce what they think and they are told to strive for perfection. Realism is more or less a reaction to idealism. This philosophy maintains that material and physical world exists independent of ideas and thoughts. Whether we think about a mountain or not, it does exist.

It will exist even if we don't think about it or have never had an idea of what a mountain is like. Realist educationists would want students to learn through their senses of smell, feel, and taste since they believe in the existence of the natural world. They also maintain that the best way is to learn through experiencing the physical world. Nature plays an important role here as educationist would prefer to teach through observation of natural order. The teachers with realistic bend of mind would want students to develop judgment and ethics by experiencing and observing the world.

Behavior psychology is also one of the important branches of study for realist educationists. Existentialism philosophy focuses on emotions more than the intellect. The person, his values, beliefs, ideals, and identity are of greater importance than his intellectual capacity and for this reason it views education in slightly negative light. This is because they feel that a student learning through traditional educational means would become nothing more than a pawn in capitalist world.

To become a whole and healthy human being who has a unique personality and thinking capacity, it is important to allow the students to explore the world

on their own. " Existentialism is not a philosophy but a label for several widely different revolts against traditional philosophy. Most of the living " existentialists" have repudiated this label, and a bewildered outsider might well conclude that the only thing they have in common is a marked aversion for each other. (Kaufmann: 75)

The teacher in this case would be seen as a facilitator instead of an authoritarian figure. Existentialism supports the idea of allowing students all possible answers to a question instead of handing them down one answer as the only and final solution. Existentialism has something in common with pragmatism as both advocate a curriculum based on individual needs instead of fixed theories and ideas.