

# **PART I**

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## **HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION**

*“Philosophy is not saying big things. . . It’s just saying small things  
with a deep meaning”*

- *Palak Sharma*



*Plato (L) and Aristotle (R) with their students in Athens.*

## **Philosophy of Education**

The aims of education and its agencies, the content of curriculum and methods of instruction are tremendously influenced by philosophical thoughts, ideals, and wisdom which became bases of our educational system.

The historical epoch of Western Philosophy evolved from Ancient, Medieval, Modern, The Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment. The Ancient Era includes the works of the Pre-Socratic Philosophers and the age of the Great Classical Philosophies of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. The

Medieval focuses on the rise in dominance of Christianity. The Modern era is characterized by the break “*rottura*” from Christianity to the introduction of the age of reason. The Renaissance calls for the “rebirth” of the classical importance of philosophy and literature and its importance to the society of that time.

The **Ancient era** includes the work of the Greek and Roman thinkers, some of which were influenced by the early Egyptian and Mesopotamians era. The Greek philosophy was the most creative; this era falls into three (3) parts, *Pre-Socratic*, the *Socratic age*, and the *schools that followed these intellectual giants*. **Medieval education philosophy** made used of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy. This period was most heavily influenced by Christianity which started about 4<sup>th</sup> century with **St. Augustine** and ended in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. **Modern educational philosophy** represents in most respects a break with the thought dominated by Christianity. This fact coupled with the increase in scientific investigation. **The Renaissance**, the rise of humanism and the enlightenment laid the foundation for the way philosophy has developed since 1500.

## Did You Know?

*Thales predicted a solar eclipse accurately on May 28, 585 B.C.E.*



## ANCIENT ERA

In 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., the early Greeks from Asia Minor attempted to explain the nature of the universe and life on earth. These men were basically metaphysicians who were looking for the reality behind all appearances.

**Thales of Miletus** (6<sup>th</sup>- late 7<sup>th</sup> century) – He attempted to give an explanation of the world that does not depend on gods and mythology, but only on the natural causes. He decided that everything originated from water, on the basis of finding sea fossils inland far from the Mediterranean Sea. Water, therefore, is the prime matter of the universe.

**Anaximander** (6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.E.) – He explained the origin of the world on the basis of two contraries such as hot & cold, wet & dry. The cold part dried up leaving earth and its water; the hot turned some water into mist and air which created the sun, moon and stars. He called his prime matter as the '*apeiron*'.

**Anaximenes** (6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.) - He declared that air is the source or the prime matter of the universe. His major contribution, however was stating that nothing can be created out of nothing "*ex nihilo nihil fit*".

**Pythagoras** (6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.) – He thought that numbers are the basis of all the existing reality because the form and relations of things can all be explained numerically.

**Heraclitus** (late 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.) - He argued that the basic characteristic of the universe is change, permanence is only appearance! "*You cannot step into the same river twice*".

**Parmenides** (late 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.) – Permanence is real & change only an illusion.

**Anaxagoras** (5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.) – He taught that everything is made of infinitely small particles. Democritus and Leucippus carried this idea further by teaching that all matter is made up of atoms – not the atoms of today's physicist but similar tiny, invisible units.

**Sophist** (late 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.) – They were teachers of practical wisdom who took money for their lessons. Aristotle regarded them as “prostitutes of knowledge” and the 1<sup>st</sup> skeptics.

**Protagoras** (410 B.C.E.) – He said that “man is the measure of all things”, indicating the Sophists’ view that the real world is the one people live in and see.

*“ True wisdom comes to each of us when we realize how little we understand ourselves, and the world around us”*

- *Socrates*

## CLASSICAL GREEK PHILOSOPHERS

**Socrates** (430-320 B.C.E.) – Marked the shift of philosophical inquiry from the nature of the universe to the *self*. He challenged the sophists by pursuing the clear, common meaning of terms and raised some basic questions of knowledge and ethics. He did this by imploring his so called “*Socratic method of teaching*”. “*Know thy self* and *The unexamined life is not worth living*” are two of his famous ethical adages. The teaching of Socrates rested on two basic assumptions: a person is never to do wrong, either directly or indirectly, and no one who knows what is right will act contrary to it.

**Plato** (428 – 348 B.C.E.) – Famous students of Socrates who recorded and compiled the teachings of his master in a series of *dialogues*. He developed philosophy of knowledge “*epistemology*”. He said that there are two worlds “the sense” which is imperfect, i.e. our present world and the “ideas” which is perfect world. He mentioned also that man is dualistic in nature i.e. matter & form. He founded a school of thought called “*academia*”.



*Socrates (C) delivered his last lecture before his execution by drinking a poison (hemlock).*

**Aristotle** (384 – 322 B.C.E.) Student of Plato, though he departed from most of Plato’s teachings, he maintained some of it. He was regarded as the greatest mind in the ancient world, for his works was vast and comprehensive. He contrasted Plato by saying that the material world is real and not the creation of eternal forms. In his ethic “**Nicomachean Ethics**” he said that the *summum bonum* of a person is to be happy, to achieve the *eudaimonia*, and you can achieve it by living the law of moderation.

### Did You Know?

*Socrates was not born into nobility and received only a basic Greek education, learning his father's stone masonry skills while still quite young.*



*“Credo Ut Intelligam, non itellego ut credem, Credo per comprendere,  
non comperedere per credere”*

- Augustine



*Saint Augustine wrote his famous philosophical/theological work entitled “Confessions”.*

## **MEDIEVAL PERIOD**

**Christianity** became the dominant religion of the Roma Empire early in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The chief philosophers were the churchmen, especially the theologians. Platonism and Neo-Platonism were absorbed by the church and blended it with the biblical doctrines.

**Augustine of Hippo** (430 – 354 A.D.) – He identified the eternal ideas of Plato with truth that comes from God. This divine world of truth is encountered by turning the mind towards God’s revelation. He proposed the

predestination of man. His major work is known as the “**confession**”.

**Thomas Aquinas** (1225 – 1274) – He Christianized the ***Aristotelian Philosophy*** and used it to defend the Christian faith. He used both ***fides et ratio*** (faith & reason) to arrive at the truth. He is most remembered for his natural proof on the existence of God. In this era (12 century) the writings of Aristotle were translated in Latin by the Muslim philosophers like **Averroes and Avicenna**, which make them accessible to the church scholars. Aquinas major work is called the ***summa theologica and summa contra gentiles***. Medieval theologians who sought to reconcile the doctrines of Christianity with rational explanations of the world were called the “**scholastics**”.

### Did You Know?

***Aristotle found the Lyceum in 335 B.C.E. It was famously known as Peripatetic school; it is considered as the world's 1<sup>st</sup> great libraries.***



## MODERN EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

From 15<sup>TH</sup> educational philosophy took so many twists and turns that it cannot be defined by any one approach. It found itself in a world characterized by growth of cities, new inventions, and the refusal to accept God or supernatural explanations for reality. The invention of printing press and the emergence of capitalism, and the birth of the Reformation that spilt the churches in **Europe**.

**Renaissance** (15<sup>th</sup> century) – Focused on the fascination on mathematics and natural sciences.

**Enlightenment** (17<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> century) – Attention turned to the nature of the human mind and its abilities to master the natural world. The two main philosophical points were rationalism & Empiricism. **Immanuel Kant** tried to bridge between the two opposing schools.

**Modern Rationalism** originated in the work of the French Philosopher Rene Descartes "***Cogito Ergo Sum***". He proceeded deductively to build a system in which God and mind belong to one order of reality and nature to other.

**Empiricism** – John Locke was one of its pioneers, in his theory of knowledge he stated the "***Tabula Rasa***" or blank sheet, nature of Humanity and property, and the social contract.

**19<sup>th</sup> century** – Hegel was one of the philosophical giants in this era, he formulated a logic that he believed accounts for evolution in nature, history and human thought.

**Existentialism** – Jean Paul Sartre was the leading icon at this stage, his famous adage was “*existence precedes essence*”. People become what they will be, they are not determined from birth by a nature that determines it from them.

**Pragmatism** – It was the principal contribution of the American thinkers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It focuses on the concept of change and flux; the leading figure was John Dewey. He said that philosophy should be geared to human needs.



*Rene Descartes is considered as the father of Modern Rationalism*

## RENAISSANCE

It was a great cultural movement that began in Italy during the early 1300's. it spread to England, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, and other countries in the late 1400's and eventually came to an end about 1600.

The word renaissance come from the Latin term "*renascere*" and refers to the act of being reborn. During the Renaissance, many Europe scholars and artists, especially in Italy, studied the learning and art of ancient Greece and Rome. They wanted to recapture the spirit of the Greek and the Roman cultures in their own artistic, literary, and philosophical works. The culture of ancient Greece and Rome are often called "classical antiquity". The renaissance thus represented a rebirth of these cultures and is therefore also known as the revival of antiquity of revival of learning.

### Did You Know?

*Aquinas was bullied by his classmates; he was called the "dumb ox" because he was a lumbering man who was reserved and shy.*



## HUMANIST SCHOOLS

The most celebrated humanist school was at Mantua (Man-choo-uh) in northern Italy. *Athletics* were very important, not as part of military training or as entertainment but as **art**. The invention of movable printing by *Johann Gutenberg*, it facilitates the accessibility of books by the scholars since during early modern times that book had to be chained to the shelves as protection from thieves,

**Italian Humanism** – Renaissance began in Italy; its city states were first to prosper from the crusades in trade and industry. Acquiring vast wealth and prestige, they able to freed themselves from the domination of the holy Roman Empire especially in ecclesiastical matters. Besides, Italy was the home of the Greco-Roman culture and the tradition of this culture and persisted more in Italy than in other parts of Europe. Furthermore, bankers and rulers of many city-states in Italy were ardent patrons of humanism. Supporting literary studies in the universities, the establishment of libraries, and maintenance of courts schools.

### **Aims of Italian Humanism**

- Academic Freedom – To free the individual from demands imposed by institutions such as the church, guilds, lords and monasteries.

- Abundant living – To develop a versatile individual capable of getting the most possible out of life so that he could have an abundant life.
- Liberal Education – To have a well-rounded and to enhance individual excellence, the mind, body and moral sense are being developed.

**Northern Humanism** – It manifested to the following characteristics: (1) the piety of the brethren as represented in the work of Thomas A. Kempis (1380-1471), (2) the broad literary spirit found in the work of another *Heironymian* scholar, Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536). He was a Dutch priest and scholar who became a leading Christian humanist and ardent critiques of the church, he often attacked religious superstition and abuses he saw in the church, his famous work is entitled the “praise of the folly”.

#### **Aims of Northern Humanism**

- Social – They wanted to reform society by improving social relationships, eliminating greed, selfishness, hypocrisy and exploitation by Church and political leaders.
- Religious & Moral – The Northern humanist wanted to develop piety ahead of learning and morality ahead of manners.

- Literacy – To wipe out the ignorance of the people.
- Democratic – To democratize education and to make education accessible to all classes of society.

**Reformation** – It was a religious movement of the 1500's that led to Protestantism. It had a tremendous impact on the social, political, and economic life of Europe. The movement began in 1517 when Martin Luther, a German monk protested against certain practices of the Roman Catholic Church especially on the "*indulgence*."

**Counter-Reformation** – Is the name generally given to the renewal movement in the in the Roman Catholic Church during the 1500's and 1600's. Scholars prefer the terms Catholic Reformation or Revival to avoid the implication that the movement was merely a reaction to the protestant Reformation.

### **Did You Know?**



*Francesco Petrarca, is considered the father of the renaissance period.*

## STUDY GUIDE

### A. Concepts to understand

Liberal Ideas	Humanism
Metaphysics	Fides Et Ratio
Existentialism	Reformation
Empiricism	Pragmatism
Enlightenment	Scholastics
Dialogues	Renaissance

### B. Check your facts

1. Why did humanism become a strong movement in education in Europe?
2. What are the outstanding contributions of the Ancient Greece to world civilization and education?
3. Expound the viewpoints of Aristotle, Socrates and Plato with regards to the ultimate goals of education.
4. What are the aims of Italian humanism and Northern Humanism?
5. How did the influx of liberal ideas from abroad influence the educational scheme in the Philippines?
6. Why is philosophy of education as a field of study important?
7. What are the primary aims of education during the medieval time?
8. Is philosophy a science? Explain your answer.

9. Why is the invention of printing press by Johannes Gutenberg an important event in the progress of educational system?
10. What important educational event happened during the Renaissance epoch?

### C. Phenomenological Reflection

*"The unexamined life is not worth living"*

#### Did You Know?

*Descartes performed a pre-Pavlov experiment on a dog. He whipped the dog repeatedly while a violin was playing. He discovered that, after a while, the sound of the violin was enough to frighten the dog.*

