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# **ADVANCED DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS (EDF)**

## **EDF 101: HISTORY OF EDUCATION**

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### **MODULE ONE: EDUCATION IN THE CLASSICAL ERA**

#### **Objectives for the whole module:**

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

1. state how children were educated during the classical (Greek and Roman) period;
2. analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the type of education during those periods;
3. discuss the contributions of the great educators of those periods;
4. discuss what we in the present era can learn from the educational systems and from the great educators of those periods.

#### **The plan of this module**

This module is made up of four units. In each unit, you will learn about the education practices of a specific place and time during the classical period and/or the educational ideas of great educators during that period. Each unit tries to spell out in as comprehensive a manner as possible ‘the what’ as well as ‘the how’ of the system being discussed or of the specific educator being presented. By ‘the what’ ‘the how’ we refer to how the system is operated.

However, the whole essence of our looking far back into these distant periods is to enable us deduce how the past has influenced or shaped the present, and indeed what we can still learn from the past. Thus, in each unit, we examine closely what we owe to these ancient periods and what we can still learn from them. We do this by leading you, mostly through questions and suggestions, to identify from both ‘the what’ and ‘the how’ those lessons we can learn.

## **UNIT ONE: EARLY EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS**

### **OBJECTIVES**

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

1. discuss the significant characteristics of early educational systems;
2. analyse their influences on later educational systems;
3. discuss what our own system has inherited from these early systems.

### **BACKGROUND**

History as an academic discipline, is interested in looking to the back, not just for its sake, but so that we can learn from the past, and how the past has influenced the present. In looking to the past, history likes to dig to the very origin, to the earliest period that is relevant to the issue at hand. In the present circumstances, we can say that education really started as soon as man was created. This is because the business of bringing up a young person involves his progressive education. Indeed, when we look at what we call education, we might not be wrong in describing it as the system by which one generation imparts the ideals and cultural practices of its society to the next generation in an unending process. In this first unit of our module on history of education, we try to examine the very origin of what we have and cherish today.

#### **Characteristics of the earliest educational systems**

The oldest known educational systems in history shared two characteristics in common: they taught religion, and they promoted the traditions of the people. In ancient Egypt, there were temple schools, which taught both religion and the principles of writing, the sciences, mathematics, and architecture. Similarly, in India, the business of education was carried out mostly by the priests. India was the source and fountain of the Buddhist doctrines that were taught in its institutions to Chinese scholars. In turn, they spread the teachings of Buddha to the various Asian countries in the Far East. Ancient Chinese education emphasized philosophy, poetry, and religion, in accordance with the teachings of their great ancestors and philosophers like Confucius and Laozi. Indeed, the Chinese invented a system of civil-service examination, more than 2,000 years ago and which was found to be effective up till the present era. It was used to select the best scholars for important positions in the government.

#### **ACTIVITY 1**

1. What would you say is the purpose of this first unit?
2. What are the two major characteristics of the earliest systems of education?
3. In what ways are these characteristics applicable to Nigerian traditional systems?
4. What can we learn today from these earliest periods?

## **Education in ancient Egypt**

In Egypt, the culture and education were preserved and controlled chiefly by the priests who formed powerful intellectual elite in the Egyptian theocracy and occupied vital political positions. The priests taught the humanities as well as such practical subjects as science, medicine, mathematics, and geometry in formal schools. However, the professionals taught vocational skills relating to such fields as architecture, engineering, and sculpture outside the context of formal schooling.

Egyptians developed two types of formal schools for privileged youth under the supervision of government officials and priests: one for scribes and the other for priests' trainees. At the age of five, pupils entered the writing school and continued their studies in reading and writing until the age of 16 or 17. At the age of 13 or 14, the school boys were also given practical training in offices for which they were being prepared. Training of priests began in temple colleges, which boys entered at the age of 17. The length of training depends upon the requirements for various priestly offices. It is not clear whether or not the practical sciences constituted a part of the systematically organized curriculum of the temple college. Method of teaching was rigid, and discipline was severe, the aim in most cases was to achieve uniformity in cultural transmission – deviation from the traditional pattern of thought was forbidden. Drill and memorization were the typical methods employed.

## **Education in Mesopotamia**

The civilization in Mesopotamia developed at about the same time as that in Egypt. So, Mesopotamia developed education quite similar to that of Egypt with regard to its purpose and training. It was practical and aimed to train scribes and priests. It was extended from basic reading, writing and religion to higher learning in law, medicine and astrology. Generally, youth of the nobles were trained to become scribes, who later functioned either as copyists, librarians or teachers. Schools for priests were said to be as numerous as temples, indicating the thoroughness and the supremacy of priestly education. Very little is known about higher education, but the advancement of the priestly work sheds light upon the extensive nature of intellectual pursuit.

As with Egypt, the priests in Mesopotamia dominated the intellectual and educational domain as well as the applied. The library formed the centre of intellectual activity, which usually operated in a temple under the supervision of renowned priests. Teachers employed memorization, oral repetition, copying of models, and individual instruction. The period of education was long and rigorous and discipline was harsh.

### **ACTIVITY II**

1. What similarities can you identify in the educational systems of Egypt and Mesopotamia? What dissimilarities can you recognize?
2. Why do you think these educational systems were dominated by the priests?
3. Discipline was rigid or harsh in both systems. How would you compare this with the systems today?

Civilization in North China began with the emergence of the Shang era. Thus, complex educational practices began from a very early date. In fact, virtually every character (or letter) of the Chinese orthography was already formed more than 3,000 years ago. Ancient Chinese education was mainly secular in nature, although it at the same time, aimed to improve the morals of the youth to develop a sense of moral sensitivity and duty toward people and the state. Even in the early stages of civilization, harmonious human relations, rituals, and music formed the curriculum. Formal colleges and schools probably existed by 1000 BC. Apart from the major centres in the provinces, there were less-organized institutions, such as halls of study, village schools, and district schools. As for the methods of education, ancient Chinese learned from bamboo books and obtained moral training and practice in rituals by word of mouth and example. Rigid rote learning, which became the norm in later Chinese education, did not seem to be used then. Education was regarded as the process of individual development from within.

### **The Hindu tradition**

India is the site of one of the most ancient civilizations in the world. From about 2000 BC the Aryans entered, captured the land, and founded powerful kingdoms. Before long, the Brahmins who were the intellectuals became priests and men of learning; the nobles and soldiers constituted the next class, the agricultural and trading class was called Vaisyas; and finally the dasas were absorbed as domestic servants. Such was the origin of the division of the Hindus into four classes. By about 500 BC, the classes became hardened into castes.

Religion was the mainspring of all activities in ancient India. It comprised of both prayer and worship as well as philosophy, morality, law, and government. Religion dominated educational ideals, too and the study of Vedic literature was very important in higher classes. There were clearly demarcated stages of instruction. During the first period, the child received elementary education at home. The beginning of secondary education and formal schooling was marked by a ritual, which was restricted to and compulsory for boys of the three higher castes: at age 8 years for the Brahmin boys, age 11 for boys of the next higher class, and age 12 for the boys of the third higher class. The boy then left his father's house for his preceptor's home. The preceptor would treat him as his own child, give him free education, and not charge anything for his boarding and lodging. The pupil had to tend the sacrificial fires, do the household work of his preceptor, and look after his cattle.

The study at this stage consisted of the recitation of the Vedic mantras, or "hymns," and the auxiliary sciences-phonetics, the rules for the performance of the sacrifices, grammar astronomy, prosody, and etymology. The characteristic of education, however, differed according to the needs of the caste. For a child of the priestly class, there was a definite syllabus of studies. It was compulsory for him to have knowledge of the most ancient of Hindu scriptures. During the whole course at school, or at college, the student had to wear a simple dress, live on plain food, use a hard bed, and lead a celibate life. Learning normally lasted for 12 years, but for those who wanted to go further, there was no age limit. After finishing their education at an ashrama, they went to a higher centre of learning or a university. Advanced students also improved their knowledge by taking part in philosophical discussions at an "academy". Women were not denied education, but normally girls were taught at home. The method differed according to the nature of the subject. Parables were employed in the

personal spiritual teaching. In higher learning, such as in the teaching of “righteousness science”, the most popular and useful method was catechism, with the pupil asking questions and the teacher discussing at length on the topics referred to him. Memorization, however, played the greatest role.

### **ACTIVITY III**

1. What major similarities would you recognise between the Chinese and Hindu systems?
2. Some that appears to be peculiar to the Hindu system is the class system. How do you think this affected the system of education there?
3. How much of the education in each of the two systems was utilitarian and how much of it was not.

### **THE JEWISH EDUCATION**

As in virtually all traditional societies, education in ancient Israel was predominantly familiar, that is, it is based on the family, with the mother playing a very significant role in the education of the very young. In most cases, girls followed their mothers' vocations while boys followed their fathers' professions. Thus, farmers brought up their sons invariably as farmers, shepherds as shepherds, fishermen as fishermen (realise that the brother Simon and Andrew were working as fishermen with their father when Jesus called them).

A very important aspect of the Jewish education involved providing moral and religious education. Consider what God commanded Moses to tell the people: ‘These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.’ (Deut. 6:6-7) In this task of bringing up children in the fear of God, parents were to regard their duty as never ending as they are to teach ‘their children and the children of their children’ (Deut. 4:9).

Education was rigid and exacting, as teaching was usually accompanied with corporal punishment. The book of Proverbs (13:24) indeed recommends this: ‘He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.’ This does not make the parent or teacher a wicked person, rather discipline is out of love for the child, (notice the wording of the last part of the quoted passage. The word ‘rod’ is the same used by the psalmist (Psalm 23) where the sheep is supposed to say that the rod of the Lord comforts it. Thus the rod is as much an instrument of discipline as it is of guidance and comfort.

Throughout this period, the discipline system was the norm. Each great master had a number of disciples who learnt from him. Thus, Elisha learnt from and modeled his ministry on, Elijah; Jesus Christ had his 12 disciples, each of whom later had his own followers etc. In most cases, these groups were not stationary in a formal institution, rather they moved from place to place, much like the Sophists, the itinerant teachers. The difference here was that this time they peddled religious morals rather than abstract philosophy.

**ACTIVITY IV**

1. From what has been presented here, do you think there was a formal school system as in the previously discussed systems?
2. Corporal punishment was the norm during the period discussed. To what extent did this differ from, or conform to earlier discussed system?

## **UNIT TWO: EDUCATION IN SPARTA**

### **OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, students should be able to:

1. state clearly who the Spartans were and the era in which they lived;
2. discuss the type of education they gave their children;
3. analyse factors that made them adopt this type of education;
4. discuss what lessons we can learn from the Spartans.

### **THE BACKGROUND**

#### **Who were the Spartans?**

Sparta was one of the ancient Greek city states. By ‘ancient’ we are referring to the era before the present epoch, especially the period before the birth of Christ some two thousand years ago. During the periods we are referring to, Greece as it exists today as a country did not really exist. Rather, there were several city states, most of them rising to cultural and/or military prominence. Among them were Sparta and Athens, two contiguous cities, but vastly different from each other in several ways as we shall see from this and the next units. Specifically, the era we are referring to is about 8 or 7 centuries BC, which was the period that Sparta really reached the height of her glory as a military force.

Sparta believed so much in military exploits and cared less for beauty and culture. There is a saying that Spartan parents owed their male children one thing: the shield, and that on handing over this military tool, they usually accompanied the act with the saying, ‘Go, and return with it, or on it.’ What does this terse saying mean? It signifies that the parent is sending off the son into the wide world with the shield to defend himself against all sorts of attack, and that he should either return in victory with it, or die and be brought home on it. Such was the military disposition of Sparta that it soon became a force among other states. Sparta subdued one after the other of the other states. First it was its neighbour, Messenia, which lost its independence to Sparta in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC and did not regain it until the 360s. Historians have asserted that it was this factor, of subjugating Messenia, ‘that determined the peculiar development of Sparta, because it forced Spartans to adjust their institutions to deal with a permanently hostile subject population’. Before long, Sparta sprang out to other states, conquering one after the other including Athens too. However, it was just this military might for which it was noted, but not for much else. So, there is not much of poetry, drama, sculpture, etc., that we can learn from Sparta. What we can learn is the type of education that prepared the citizens for warfare rather than for the arts, science, governance, etc. So, what is this type of education?



### **ACTIVITY I**

1. In which part of the world would you find the ancient Sparta today?
2. How long ago was the rise to glory of Sparta?
3. What does the statement to the Spartan boy tell us about Sparta?
4. Why do we not hear of Messenia today? What impact did the conquest of Messenia have on Sparta?

### **EDUCATION IN SPARTA**

Education in Sparta began from age 7 to 20 years. Before then, mothers brought up children, 'in an atmosphere of severity and harshness'. Throughout life, girls were given a type of education that prepared them for their role as wives and mothers; however in an atmosphere of severe discipline. Sickly or deformed children were eliminated through death or by simply throwing them away, since they would not be useful for the type of life that Sparta wanted. Although in the beginning of the state, Sparta encouraged some form of arts, music and culture as part of the education of children, these gave way almost totally to a type of education appropriate to a warrior state.

Boys in Sparta were enrolled into formations corresponding to successive age grade. These were divided into smaller units under the authority of comrades of their own age or of young officers. It was a collective education, which progressively removed them from the family and subjected them to garrison life. Everything was organised with a view to preparation for military service. Thus they were lightly clothed, had to sleep on the bare ground, and poorly fed. They were told to steal to supplement their rations, and subjected to rigorous discipline. Hardening them to blows developed their virility and combativeness. Besides, they were sent on nocturnal expeditions designed to train the future fighter in ambushes and the ruses of warfare. They were also directly apprenticed to the military craft, using arms and maneuvering in close formation. The sole norm of this puritanical education, proceeding in a climate of austerity, was the interest of the state. The Spartan was trained under a strict discipline to obey blindly the orders of his superiors. Curiously, the child was at the same time trained to lying, to theft, and to dissimulation, (i.e. to conceal one's real feelings, e.g. pretending to be happy and contented when in actual fact one was acutely sad and in discomfort). All these were virtues when directed toward the foreigner, toward whom distrust and Machiavellianism (i.e. cunning, deceit, and duplicity) were encouraged.

This type of rugged education enabled Sparta to remain for long the most powerful city, militarily and diplomatically, of the entire Greek world and to triumph over its rival Athens after the long struggle of the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC). However, this did not prevent Sparta's decadence. It was not that Sparta ever relaxed its tension. On the contrary, in the course of centuries, the rigour and ferocity were accentuated even as such behaviour became more and more unnecessary and out of date and without real use. Rites of initiation were transformed into barbarous tests of endurance, the boys undergoing flagellation and competing in enduring it, sometimes to the very death, under the eyes of tourists attracted by

the sadistic spectacle. This occurred in times of complete peace when, under the Roman Empire, Sparta was nothing but a little provincial city with neither independence nor army.

### **ACTIVITY II**

1. For how long was the Spartan boy educated? How would you compare this with the present system in Nigeria.
2. Mention at least three aspects of the education given to the Spartan boy.
3. Do you think the Spartan people had any respect for morality as it is known in our world today? Give reasons for your view.
4. The word 'Machiavellian' should tell us much about the values cherished by the people. Consult as many history books as you can to find out about the Italian statesman called Nicholi Machiavelli and his ideas.

### **WHAT IS THERE TO LEARN FROM SPARTAN EDUCATION?**

Education in Sparta promoted the city state to a position of military prominence. It was a type of education that promoted discipline, both of the body and of the mind. Citizens were brought up not to expect any life of opulence and of pleasure. In the process, the state grew in prominence and was able to dominate others. To this extent, we can say that if any country wants to make progress and achieve greatness, it has to train youths to undergo and imbibe a life of discipline and indeed some degree of severity. Even today, countries which have achieved military and/industrial greatness are known to engage their youths in a sort of training that hardens the body and the mind.

But then, there is very little to show for all the sagacity of Sparta today. While we have a lot of poems and drama pieces from ancient Rome and Athens, there is hardly any such thing from Sparta. Indeed, archaeology cannot find anything of substance from the ruins of ancient Sparta. We should learn from this that a nation that trains its citizens solely for war and for nothing else can hardly survive. Certainly, we need military greatness if our borders are to be secure against external aggression and internal dissension, but then, we need a calm atmosphere in which to settle down, think of development, inventions and manufacturing. These today are what make a truly great nation. Better a nation of thinkers and inventors than one of boxers and assassins.

### **ACTIVITY III**

1. In summary, state the major concepts of Spartan education.
2. Why does the writer stress that this type of education is not suitable for our present world? Would you agree with him? If so, why? If not, why not?
3. From your own point of view, what type of education would you prescribe for Nigeria of the twenty-first century? Give reasons for your answer.

## **SUMMARY**

- Spartan does not exist today as a country. Rather, it was just a city state in ancient Greece, just as other city states like Athens.
- Education in formal schools as we know it today did not exist in ancient Sparta. Rather, boys and girls were brought up to live a hardened life that prepared them for a military-like type of life. Indeed, invalids were intentionally killed or left to die since they were of no use to the state and might even be an encumbrance (an impediment, a hindrance; a burden, a useless addition) to the state.
- Life in the military dominated all aspects of Spartan life. Beside this, it did not matter if a boy grew up to be a robber. Indeed, boys were encouraged to imbibe those traits we would consider as immoral today, e.g. stealing, lying, cheating, etc.
- As a result of this highly regimented type of life, Sparta grew to become a military force among other city states. It was able to subdue all others and dominate them.
- However, this state of things did not really last, as the state experienced internal decay and fell gradually. In the end, it was destroyed in the fourth century AD.

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## **UNIT THREE: EDUCATION IN ATHENS**

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. state clearly who the Athenians were and the era in which they lived;
2. discuss the type of education they developed then;
3. analyse factors that promoted this type of education;
4. discuss what lessons we can learn from the Athenians.

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **Who were the Athenians?**

Athens was another Greek city-states, just like Sparta. Greece as we know it today as a country did not yet exist then. Rather, small city states like Sparta, Corinth, Megara and Athens were to be found in what is today the Greek peninsula. What bound these city-states today was the common Greek language.

#### **The origin of the Athenian education**

Originally, Athens was like Sparta in its approach to the education of the citizens, with a heavy orientation towards the military training. However, beginning at a date difficult to fix precisely (at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> or during the 6<sup>th</sup> century), Athens, gradually renounced the type of education oriented towards the future duties of the soldier. This did not mean that military life was totally excluded from the life of the Athenian youth. Rather, it meant that the military no longer dominated the life of the youth. 'The Athenian citizen was always obliged, when necessary and capable, to fight for the fatherland, but the civil aspect of life and culture was predominant: armed combat was only a sport.'

This shift reflected to large extent the shift in the city towards increasing democratization. More and more, the common people were being given a say in the affairs of the state; and all free citizens would gather together at a common centre to take vital state decisions. In short, democracy as we know it today was taking shape. This trend towards democratization, although relevant to just a minority of the people, since about 90 percent of the people remained disenfranchised, meant that the Athenian culture was continually oriented towards noble life. Thus, apart from some indulgence in the elegant sports such as horsemanship and hunting, military practices were drastically played down.

#### **Aspects of Athenian Education**

Athenian education was mainly for boys, as there was no specific type of education for girls who were entrusted to their mothers for moral and domestic training. So, unlike boys, girls did not attend school as such.

For boys, however, the whole educational system was structured. There were three types of schools for boys. These were:-

- (a) the letters school for reading and writing, analogous today's primary and secondary schools;
- (b) the music school for lyric, poetry and lyre, including learning and recitation of poems;
- (c) the gymnastic school for physical training.

The foregoing did not mean that a boy would attend just one type of school and specialize in it for life; rather, what obtained was that learners attended the letters and music schools in the morning and the gymnastic school in the afternoon. Thus, it was like having different institutions for different aspect of the same curriculum. From this explanation you would see that our schools today have merely combined all these functions under the same institutions.

However, whether in a letters school, a music school or a gymnastic school, the moral aspect of education was held in high esteem. 'The Athenian ideal was that of the *kalos k'agathos*, the "wise and good" man. The teachers were as much preoccupied with overseeing the child's good conduct and the formation of his character as with directing his progress in the various subjects taught him.' Besides, much of the morals were learned through poetry, as the content of the poems contained a lot of the intended moral lessons. Thus it was that the poetry of two great Athenians, Solon and Homer, became standard texts in the schools. Solon's poems had much to do with statecraft while Homer's poetry concerned itself with competition and heroic exploits.

Teaching was much more difficult than, and very different from what it is today. There were no texts as such, and only the teacher had his manuscript to teach from. The teacher in most cases dictated his lessons while the pupils wrote the notes down on their wax tablets for memorization. Meanwhile, apart from the teacher, there was the *pedagogue*, a man-servant employed by each rich parent to escort the boy to and from the school, and stay around to keep him from any mischief. In case the boy was disobedient or wayward, the *pedagogue* applied the whip.

There were no distinct subjects as we know them today, but much of what we learn today was beginning to emerge and take shape. The curriculum consisted of reading, writing, music, poetry, mathematics and gymnastics. Such subjects as religion, social studies, government, etc., did not exist separately as they were taught in embedded form in writing, poetry, music, etc.

Schooling continued till the age of eighteen. Between that age and twenty years, the boys received military training, after which they were free to choose which career to specialize in. However, in most cases, the Athenian boys preferred a career in state affairs. This seemed logical enough since there were very few free educated people to start with, and since most of the students were the children of the noble who could afford such luxury as formal education.

### **ACTIVITY I**

1. What were the factors behind Athenian preference for civil rather than military education?
2. Describe in as precise a manner as possible, the curriculum in Athenian schools.
3. Why did most boys end up in politics rather than in other careers?

## **THE COMING OF THE SOPHISTS**

The word ‘sophist’ means a wise person, and is from the Greek word ‘soph’, meaning wisdom. Realising that the word ‘philosophy’ contains this word ‘soph’, i.e. ‘wisdom’, and other Greek word, ‘philo’. The latter word, ‘philo’ means ‘lover of; so the word ‘philosophy’ actually means ‘lover of wisdom’. So, what or who were the sophists and what significant role did they play in the education of Athenians?

The Sophists were itinerant teachers, mostly from outside Athens, who went about dispensing their knowledge to whoever was it that cared to listen and pay for such. In most cases, however, these were the nobles who had the time to listen, money to pay, and the knowledge to engage such itinerant teachers in discussions. Many authorities claim that the Sophists were few, but there are evidences that they numbered more than 30. For about 70 years, they until about 380 BC, ‘they were the sole source of higher education in the more advanced Greek cities. Thereafter, at least in Athens, they were largely replaced by the new philosophic schools, such as those of Plato and Socrates.’

Looking back, most authorities would tend to deride the type of education given by the Sophists, since these were like ‘hungry authors’ going about to sell knowledge. The exception of course is Socrates, of whom we shall learn more later, since this great philosopher did not sell his knowledge and taught out of genuine interest in the truth and knowledge. There is also the question of how these Sophists were trained, to start with. There are some evidences that some of them really underwent rigorous and genuine training, but there are also enough reasons to regard some of them as self trained and perhaps ‘fake’.

As most of the Sophists were not Athenians, how come they made Athens their centre of activities? There are three major reasons for this. First, Athens served as a geographic central point, through which most of the routes passed. It was thus a commercial focal point. Second, Athens was the most liberal of the city-states, the place where you could express your views without let or hinder. In other places, trying to express an opinion might land one in trouble. Third, there were many nobles there who were prepared to listen to, and engage in philosophical arguments and pay for these.

The Sophists taught men how to speak and what arguments to use in public debate. Most people, especially youths who needed skills of public speaking, increasingly sought after a Sophistic education. This was mainly because the changing pattern of Athenian society made merely traditional attitudes in many cases to be no longer adequate. Criticizing such attitudes and replacing them by rational arguments held special attraction for the young. Plato admitted that he learned at least one thing from the Sophists: that if the older values were to be defended, it must be by reasoned argument, not by appeals to tradition and unreflecting faith.

The Sophists left an enduring mark on the education of youths. It was the Sophists, for instance, who pointed attention to the grammar of the language. They taught such items as genders, tenses, moods and the like. In short, they established the fact that the language has structure which has to be mastered in order to speak, write, and think well. Besides, they improved the study of prose and thus helped the use of rhetoric as an art of public speaking. Remember that because of the development of democracy, public speaking was getting more

and more essential to intending politicians and practitioners in the courts. Thirdly, they developed the use of logic, the science of proper reasoning. When you think of these three contributions – grammar, rhetoric, and logic – you would realize that these early lovers of wisdom perhaps deserve their name.

This is not to say that they did not delve into some other areas. Of course, they engaged in the nature of virtue (arête) and the bases of morality; in the history of society and the arts; in poetry, music, and mathematics; and also in astronomy and the physical sciences, even though individual Sophists may specialize in one area and not in the other. In general, it is the general view today that these itinerant teachers initiated a method of higher education that in range and method anticipated the modern humanistic approach.

### **ACTIVITY II**

1. From the analysis of the words ‘philo’ and ‘soph’, try to think of some other words in modern English which have these root words. Then try to work out their meanings in the light of the explanations given.
2. Discuss factors that made the Sophists acceptable in ancient Athenian community. Suggest factors why they might not be equally acceptable to present day society.
3. Discuss the major contributions of Sophists to education.

### **SUMMARY**

The main thrust of this unit centres on the Athenian education. In the process, we learnt that:

- The Athenian education is drastically different from that of the Spartans. For former is more liberal and oriented towards the civil society, while the latter is fashioned for the development of military life.
- Girls are mainly educated at home for roles as wives and mothers, although their training also imbibes a lot of moral upbringing.
- For boys, education lasted till the age of 18 years, after which they received military training for two years.
- They received training in three types of schools: the letters school, the music school and the gymnasium. The curriculum of course included far more than is suggested by the mere names of these schools.
- The Sophists, itinerant teachers, influenced the education of youths greatly in that they contributed to the teaching of grammar, rhetoric, logic; and in the process they helped youths to develop their skills in public speaking and thus their preparation for public life.

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## **UNIT FOUR: EDUCATION IN SPARTA AND ATHENS COMPARED**

### **OBJECTIVES**

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

1. enumerate similarities and differences between the educational systems practiced in Sparta and Athens;
2. discuss the strengths and weaknesses inherent in each of the systems;
3. analyse what we can learn from each of the two systems.

### **BACKGROUND**

It is perhaps instructive to discuss the background factors responsible for the educational system in each of the two states. We can recall that Sparta aimed at military superiority over its neighbours. The pertinent question we need to ask is ‘Why was there a need for such an ambition?’ We can further ask if after achieving this ambition, Sparta was much happier for it. This should be a good starting point for the present exercise.

We should also recall that the Athenian city-state was the first to steer away from an over-emphasis on military superiority and military education. The instructive question here is ‘What motivated Athens to deviate from what had become the age-old philosophy of life?’ We should also further ask what the consequences of this type of new orientation were. Finally, we should like to ask why, in spite of its defeat and subjugation by Sparta, it is Athens as a state that survived while Sparta the conqueror was obliterated from the face of the earth.

#### **Fundamental bases for the differences between the two city-states**

Sparta chose the path of militarism as a way of life. But why? To start with, we should realise that it was not alone in doing this. Most other states did so because it was on that type of life that they could survive. The practice in those days was for each state to attack and conquer those they could. The conqueror could loot and plunder the conquered that were consequently turned into slaves. Life at that time was akin to ‘survival of the fittest’. Doomed were those states that did not develop their military forces, in time they would be attacked, conquered, and subjugated. To a great extent, the states that survived were those that conquered others and extended their boundaries to cover areas they had defeated, making the subjugated people part of their new states. So, Sparta was not doing anything much different from what was the norm in most states.

But then Athens chose the path of civility. Why? The fact is that Athens itself was not much different from others originally. Athens chose a new path only when it had sufficiently achieved military glory for a long time and thus had built up a large number of noble men who had fed fat on the returns from looted areas. The arrivals on the scene of many nobles created a need for a peaceful epoch so as to enable them enjoy their wealth. You cannot enjoy your riches if there is an unending war. Realise too that nobles who have more slaves

and attendants could have more time to think, to develop ideas. And one of the vestiges of this is thinking of governance. Thus, the seeds of democracy had been sown.

So, we had these two city states existing side by side, one believing so much in military exploits without thinking of morals, and the other believing in culture, morality, ideals, etc. Almost inevitably, there was a clash in which, after a lot of dingdong results, Athens was finally defeated. One would have thought that Sparta the victor would bestow a more enduring legacy for mankind. No, it has been the other way round. Sparta itself was later defeated by some other forces, and indeed was utterly destroyed. There was not much to learn from it since there were no moral lessons worth bequeathing to mankind. Athens, on the other hand, survived the holocaust.

The first thing we can realise about the two is that hardly can we refer to any great scholar or philosopher from Sparta today. There are no great writings, no great plays, no great poems from Sparta. On the contrary, there are countless scholars from Athens some of whom we shall be learning about in the next units. Think of poets, and there are those like Homer and Simonides; think of historians, and there are those like Thucydides and Melesias and when we think of mathematics, we reckon with people like Pythagoras and Euclid. Though some of these men may not have been Athenians as such, in most cases, they functioned as Athenians or were influenced by Athenian culture and life. Most of these men left writings or at least theories which are still cited today, almost three thousand years after they lived.

What do all these connote? It stands to reason from these that no civilization can thrive and survive for long on militarism alone. This is a sense in which we can assert that knowledge is superior to force, that the pen is mightier than the sword. Also, it shows that morality it is that can build up a nation, not lack of ideals. Robbers can thrive for a while, but their doom is certain.

### **ACTIVITY I**

1. Why did Sparta choose the path of militarism?
2. What factors influenced Athens to deviate from militarism and choose the path of civility?
3. What were the immediate and distant results of the two different ways of life?

### **LESSONS FOR OUR PRESENT DAY EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS**

Imperfect as the Spartan educational system was, it has some messages for us today. First, we need to learn that for excellence in athletics, there must be constant training and the earlier the youths are identified for such physically demanding roles, the better. For, in ancient Olympic competitions, Sparta usually defeated all other city-states, winning more than half of the laurels. Today, most families frown on letting youths fend for themselves, whereas there may be a point in letting youths try it if only to realise that survival depends on it.

However, there are very many things we should never learn from the Spartans. Lack of morality destroys society, as it finally did Sparta. Lying, cheating, stealing, etc., are vices that should be recognised for what they are. Besides, today, we know that killing or abandoning deformed or invalid children is evil. Good a thing today that rather than destroy or throw them away, our society caress for them in special institutions, for we now realise that some disabled children are indeed very useful to society.

From Athenian education, we have learnt and can still learn a lot. To start with, the development of subject areas is indirectly owed to them. Secondly, moral education which was the centre of Athenian education has influenced our own system today. Perhaps, we still need to stress more of this since our school subjects like literature, history, government, religious studies, etc., could still contain more of moral lessons.

Besides, we need to learn to be more accommodating of other people's ideas. Recall that the Sophists who greatly influenced Athenian education were not Athenians themselves. But because they were accommodated, they contributed to the glory of Athens. We should learn to be more tolerant of others' ideas, though we need not swallow them hook, line and sinker.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we need to learn from the Athenians that it is only under a free atmosphere that education and civilization can thrive. An administrative system that gags the press and the school system cannot sow the seeds of growth.

## **ACTIVITY II**

1. What lessons can we learn from the educational system in Sparta? Which should be not learned?
2. What lessons can we learn from the educational system in Athens?
3. If you are to summarise the lessons learnt from the two city-states, how would you do it in just one sentence?

## **SUMMARY**

The main thrust of this chapter has been that:

- Force cannot build up an enduring civilisation.
- Morality is essential for the survival of any society or nation.
- Ideas are best nurtured under a free, democratic dispensation.
- A state that builds so much on militarism cannot produce great thinkers such as philosophers, writers, scientists, etc. On the other hand, these are the types of products we can expect under a civil society.

## **UNIT ONE: GREAT ATHENIAN EDUCATORS: SOCRATES, PLATO AND ARISTOTLE**

### **OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, students should be able to:

1. discuss who each of the three philosophers, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, is;
2. analyse the contributions of each of these three to education;
3. identify what our own educational system can learn from each of the three.

### **BACKGROUND**

In the annals of history, the three great Greek philosophers, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, stand out gigantically. The simple reason is that they made so much contribution to the development of human thought that they continue even today to be relevant to our world. Indeed, it is not just to the development of education that they made significant contributions, but indeed to so many other areas of human endeavour. For instance, Aristotle is considered one of the first biologists. Besides, both Plato and Aristotle wrote books which are still studied today. Finally, when you think of ideas and methods of logical thinking, it would be difficult to beat these three.

So, who are these idealists? In this unit, we devote each of the three sections to each of them. In each case, we first address ourselves to who the person is, and then go further by discussing what their ideas and contributions are. We start with Socrates, the teacher of Plato and end with Aristotle the student of Plato.

#### **Socrates and his ideas**

Born 469 BC, in Athens, the son of Sophroniscus, a sculptor, and Phaenarete, a midwife, Socrates was reportedly short and unattractive, but extremely hardy and self-controlled. He was to live till 399 BC. He was educated in literature, music, and gymnastics, and later in the rhetoric and dialectics of the sophists, the speculations of the Ionian philosophers, and the general culture of Periclean Athens. Initially, Socrates followed the craft of his father. He also served with the other male citizens of Athens in the Peloponnesian War with Sparta, acting bravely as an infantryman at several battles.

Unlike the Sophists, he was an Athenian, and he did not sell his services. There are various evidences that he was very close to Pericles, the ipso facto ruler of Athens, and those in authority in the city. So, it is logical to deduce that had he wanted power, he would have acquired sufficient power for himself. He had a brief stint in politics but soon withdrew to concentrate on philosophy and discussions. His wife was Xanthippe, an Athenian, with whom he had three children.

Socrates left no writings; we know of his ideas through his pupils' work, but the characteristic approach of the "Socratic dialogues" and his critical application of logical enquiry ensure his importance in later philosophy. The central idea of his philosophy was the

attribute of *arête* – usually translated as “goodness” or “virtue” – is an innate human quality and that virtue is self-knowledge.

Although Socrates claimed only to know that he was ignorant, he developed a number of distinctive ethical views in the form of paradoxes. These included the ideas that virtue was knowledge; that no one does wrong willingly, but only out of ignorance; and that it is better to be wronged than to wrong someone else. Socrates emphasized rational argument, concern with one’s soul, and the search for definitions of ethical ideas. Also important was his method of engaging in argument, which often involved an ironic stance towards the claims of his interlocutors, known as Socratic irony. This method has come down to us as the ‘Socratic method’ which involve posing a series of questions through which the partner in argument gets to realise the weakness of his stand and gradually accept that he is wrong and to accept the more correct notion.

Most of these were strange to most Athenians. Almost inevitably, he ran foul of the authorities’ interests and was arrested, charged with impiety and corrupting the morals of the youth of Athens. At his trial, he presented a justification of his life. He was convicted and sentenced to death unless he would admit that he was wrong in his ideas. He refused to do this and preferred to die. So, he accepted the hemlock poison that he was given.

Perhaps his greatest contribution to education is the use of the Socratic Method. With this method, the teacher can make the student sharpen his reasoning faculty, improve his own.

### **ACTIVITY I**

1. What would you think is the significance of the reference to Socrates as a short, ugly person in the light of his contributions to knowledge?
2. What does ‘arete’ mean and what is the important of Socrates’ use of it?
3. Discuss Socrates’s real contributions to education.
4. Why do you think Socrates was arrested and finally killed?

### **PLATO AND HIS LEGACY**

Plato, another Greek philosopher, was born at about 428 BC and lived till about 347 BC. He was one of the most creative and influential thinkers in Western philosophy. He was the first to use the term “philosophy”, meaning “love of knowledge”. He dwelt on a wide range of topics, chief among which was the theory of forms, which proposed that objects in the physical world merely resemble or participate in the perfect forms in the ideal world, and that only these perfect forms can be the objects of true knowledge. He held that the goal of the philosopher is to know the perfect forms and to instruct others in that knowledge.

He was born to an aristocratic family in the Athenian democracy. His father, Ariston, a descendant of the early kings of Athens, died when Plato was a child, and his mother Perictione married Pyrilampes, an associate of the statesman Pericles. Young Plato had political ambitions, but he became disillusioned with the political leadership in Athens. He eventually became a disciple of Socrates, who had pioneered the search for ethical truth

through dialectical questions and answers with anyone claiming to have knowledge. Plato witnessed the execution of Socrates by the Athenian democracy in 399 BC. Perhaps fearing for his own safety, he left Athens for a time.

In 387 BC Plato founded in Athens the Academy often described as the first European university. It provided a comprehensive curriculum, including such subjects as astronomy, biology, mathematics, political theory, and philosophy. Aristotle became the Academy's most prominent student. The concluding years of his life were spent lecturing at the Academy and writing. He died at about the age of 80 in Athens in 384 or 347 BC.

Plato's surviving writings are all in the form of dialogues, sometimes framed by a narrator. They depict philosophical ideas being advanced, discussed, and criticized in the context of a conversation or debate involving two or more people. The earliest ancient collection of Plato's work includes 35 dialogues and 13 letters. The dialogues are conventionally divided into the early, middle, and late dialogues. The earliest dialogues depict Socrates as Plato saw him at work, questioning leading citizens of Athens about their beliefs. Socrates, encountering someone who seems to know much about a particular ethical topic, professes to be ignorant and seeks enlightenment from the person claiming knowledge. As Socrates questions their definitions, however, it becomes clear that the one reputed to be wise does not really know what he claims to know, and Socrates emerges as the wiser person because he at least knows that he does not know.

Of all his several writings, *The Republic* is Plato's longest, most complex, and most ambitious. It is on the nature of justice in the soul and in the state. In it Plato tries to give a theoretical account of the perfectly just state. Many of the book's fundamental ideas are set forth through analogies. Consider for instance the analogy with the mathematical entity, the circle. A circle, he says, is a plane figure composed of a series of points, all of which are equidistant from a given point, yet none of which itself occupies any space. An ideal circle would be perfect, timeless, and the model for the circularity of all ordinary circles. In the same way, abstract concepts – such as Beauty and Good – are perfect, timeless entities.

*The Republic* is concerned with the question of justice. Starting with the question "Does justice pay for the individual, apart from any external rewards?" It argues that justice in the soul is linked to justice in the city. Both soul and city have three analogous parts: the id, the ego, and the super-ego – a desiring part, a spirited part and a rational part. Justice directs that each part should carry out its own function. Plato argues that this means that the two non-rational parts must be ruled by the rational part. Far from being a mere analogy, the relation between soul and the city turns out to mean that the two lower classes in society must be ruled by the highest class, the philosophers, who alone can use their reason to acquire knowledge of the forms.

The political structure of the just city would thus depend on a thorough educational programme, which selects the potential philosophers on the basis of merit, and trains them thoroughly. His scheme is such that education should be almost life long. The most brilliant pupils should be trained to become philosopher kings, i.e. the rulers, while those less gifted should be trained for the armed forces and other menial professions, depending on their capabilities. Throughout, the state should be responsible for the education of all citizens.

This would sound as a communistic policy in which the state runs everything and all citizens seem to exist for the interest of the state.

Once the philosophers are selected, their autocratic rule in the light of reason must be safeguarded from corruption. Therefore, they are to be deprived of private property and families, and forced to pay attention to civic affairs. Such drastic measures alone can ensure that their rule is for the sake of the city as a whole and not for their private interests.

Plato's influence on the later history of philosophy has been monumental. His Academy continued in existence until AD 529, when it was closed by the Byzantine emperor Justinian I for conflicting with Christianity.

### **ACTIVITY II**

1. Plato invented the word 'philosophy' although he was not the first philosopher. How would you reconcile these?
2. The academy of Plato is regarded as the first university, and it existed for about 800 years. Discuss what this tells us about the figure of the founder.
3. How would you sum up the real import of the philosophy of Plato?
4. What are the main educational ideas of Plato?

### **ARISTOTLE AND HIS LEGACY**

Aristotle (384-322 BC), the third of the trio of Greek philosophers, was born at Siagira, in Macedonia, the son of a physician to the royal court. An outstanding philosopher he was also a scientist. He moved at age 17 to Athens to study at Plato's Academy, remaining there for about 20 years, first as a student and then as a teacher. He shared his teacher's reverence for human knowledge but revised many of Plato's ideas by emphasizing methods rooted in observation and experience. Aristotle surveyed and systematized nearly all known branches of knowledge and provided the first ordered accounts of biology, psychology, physics, and literary theory. In addition, Aristotle invented the field known as formal logic, pioneered zoology, and discussed virtually every known major philosophical problem.

When Plato died in 347 BC, Aristotle moved to Assos, a city in Asia Minor, where a friend of his, Hermias, was ruler. After Hermias was captured and executed by the Persians in 345 BC, Aristotle moved to Pella, the Macedonian capital, where he became tutor to the king's young son Alexander, later known as Alexander the Great. In 335 BC, when Alexander became king, Aristotle returned to Athens and established his own school, the Lyceum. Upon the death of Alexander in 323 BC, strong anti-Macedonian feeling developed in Athens, and Aristotle retired to a family estate in Euboea. He died there the following year.

Aristotle was a prolific writer who wrote a vast number of works on a wide range of topics. He was credited with having written more than 170 separate texts, although it is likely that many of these might be false attributions. Like Plato, Aristotle published philosophical dialogues, apart from summaries of the works of other philosophers, and is credited with works on topics as diverse as music and optics, and a book of proverbs. Of these, only a few

brief excerpts have survived. Still in existence, however, is a substantial body of unpublished writings, usually taken to be the material on which courses in the Lyceum were based.

The range of Aristotle's interest was vast, covering most of the sciences and many of the arts. He worked in physics, chemistry, biology, zoology, and botany; in psychology, political theory, and ethics; in logic and metaphysics; in history, literary theory, and rhetoric. His greatest achievements were in two distinct areas: he invented the study of formal logic, devising for it a finished system, known as Aristotelian syllogistic; and he pioneered the study of zoology, both observational and theoretical, in which his work was not surpassed until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Even though Aristotle's zoology is now out-of-date and his thought in the other natural sciences has long been left behind, his importance as a scientist is unequalled. But it is now of purely historical importance: he, like other scientists of the past, is not read by his successors. As a philosopher Aristotle is equally stupendous; and is still very much consulted today. Although his syllogistic is now recognised to be only a small part of formal logic, his writings in ethical and political theory as well as in metaphysics and in the philosophy of science are read and argued over by modern philosophers. Aristotle's historical importance is second to none, and his work remains a powerful component in current philosophical debate.

As for his contributions to education, Aristotle was in agreement with his master Plato on the division of education into stages, from the lowest to the highest. However, he clearly disagreed with the communistic stance Plato proposed. He thought that Plato's ideas were too ideal to be practical since it would involve indoctrinating both parents and children in order to make the system work. As a departure from Plato's ideas, he proposed freedom in education, that everybody should be given the opportunity to develop his talents to the fullest of his capacity.

He believed that the mind of the child was like pliable clay, which could be molded into any desired shape. Education it is that should do this. The ultimate goal of human existence should be individual happiness and this education should aim at. Education should enhance a person's reasoning capability, making him a wise individual that lives a good moral life. Teachers should thus strive to enable a learner achieve all these ideals in a person. We could end this section by asserting that Aristotle was one of the great thinkers who believed in the importance of teachers in society.

### **ACTIVITY III**

1. How would you justify the claim that Aristotle was a great generalist?
2. In what significant ways did Aristotle depart from his teacher Plato?
3. Discuss the main educational ideas of Aristotle.
4. How would you rate the contributions of Aristotle among the trio of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle?



## **SUMMARY**

In this unit, we have examined very briefly the lives and contributions of the trio of the Greek philosophers, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. In the process, we found that:

- Socrates was the teacher of Plato, who himself was the teacher of Aristotle.
- While not being a typical Sophist, Socrates adopted the techniques of the Sophists to a large extent. He adopted a style of engaging his listener in argument from the stance of one who is ignorant. But in the process of the argument, using a series of questions, he led his listener to realise that he (the listener) was really ignorant and needed to find out more. Thus, today the questioning technique is referred to as the Socratic Method.
- Plato wrote profusely, in most instances referring to the experiences and teaching of Socrates. Through his writings, especially through the greatest of his books, *The Republic*, we gather that the state, like a person, is constituted of three parts: the id, the ego, and the super-ego. He affirmed that the super-ego should rule the id and the ego, and at the state level that the philosophers should rule the state while others should be channeled into vocations for which their ability is suited. He thus advocated a state-run life-long education scheme through which the various individuals could be prepared for their roles in the state.
- Aristotle in his monumental contributions to learning wrote very many books, many of which are still consulted. He agreed with many of Plato's principles but disagreed with a communistic type of state-run education. He was the first great biologist and contributed to virtually all other science disciplines.

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## **UNIT TWO: EDUCATION IN ANCIENT ROME**

### **OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, students should be able to:

1. discuss the significant phases of the Roman system of education;
2. analyse the influence of Greek education on Roman education system;
3. discuss what our own system can learn from the Roman system of education.

### **BACKGROUND**

In the ancient Mediterranean world, the two civilizations that dominated others like colossuses were Rome and Greece. In military terms, these two civilizations swept through the Mediterranean world, although not at the same time, imposing their culture and ways of life on countries they subjugated. The first to so dominate others was Greece, under Alexander the Great, the young Macedonian king who, on discovering that there were no other states to fight and conquer, burst into tears. He died at the age of 33 years, leaving the immense territories to other less militarily competent leaders. In time, the empire disintegrated like a pack of cards. Shortly afterwards, the Romans under great military leaders like Pompey and Caesar, swept across the whole of the then known world, including the present Great Britain.

With Rome now as the masters of the world, i.e. with Greece as one of its subject states, one would have thought that Rome would be in a position to impose its civilization and educational system on Greece. But the reverse was the case. Rome, it turned out, had no educational system as such to pass on to Greece. Rather, it was Greece that had to pass on its system to Rome.

#### **Roman education before the advent of the Greeks**

We need to understand a few fundamental things about the traditional Roman sequel to the coming of the Greek influence. The first significant fact was that traditional Romans were predominantly agrarian, mostly farmers. Thus, much of the education for boys was geared towards farming. This involved learning about farming itself as well as farm management and direction of slaves in the farm work.

The second is that the family was the centre of life to the Roman. To this extent, the father and the mother matter much and they it was that handled the education of the youth, at least up to the age of 16 years when the boy was considered to have become a man. As the head of the family, the father was held in very high esteem and therefore had a great role to play in educating the child. Indeed, as Osokoya (1989), himself quoting Barclay (1959) claims, the father had the power of life and death of the child, and indeed, when a child was born, it was laid at the feet of the father. If the father picked up the child, he was demonstrating that the child was truly his; but if he turned away he was claiming that he had no hand in its conception and so the child was taken away to be killed. Both the father and the mother had a hand in the education of their child and indeed, the role of the mother extended beyond the

early years and was indeed life long. In most cases, boys followed the vocations of their fathers while in rich families boys went to important functions, including state affairs, with their fathers. This way, a senator's son, for instance, started to take interest in and indeed learn the affairs of the state.

Third is the fact that as opposed to the Greek education that was oriented towards the chivalry, as extolled in the poems of Homer, Roman education was geared to extol an unquestioned respect for the customs of their ancestors. We should bear it in mind that the traditional Romans were worshippers of very many gods, many of them family gods. Thus, the Roman child was brought up to respect and learn about these ancestral figures. At the larger level, the youth was taught to give this loyalty and devotion to the state and were taught to revere great national ancestors. The interests of the state were supreme. The ideal set before youth was that of the great men of history who, in difficult situations, had by their courage and their wisdom saved the fatherland when it was in danger.

Fourth, and perhaps as carry-over from the last point, 'education had a strong moral aspect, aiming at inculcating rural virtues, a respect for good management of one's patrimony, and a sense of austerity and frugality. Even sons of nobles were taught to live a prudent life rather live like young lords, while those of commoners were taught to make the best of whatever they had.

Finally, although Rome was a nation of small farmers, it was equally a nation of soldiers. Physical straining was very much a part of the boys' education. This was oriented not towards self-realization or competitive sport but towards military preparedness. Boys were trained in the functions and use of arms, while exercises meant to tough of the body and the mind were embarked upon, e.g. swimming across cold and rapid streams, horsemanship, involving such performances as mounted acrobatics and cavalry parades under arms.

The education at home for boys ended at 16. This was when the youth was regarded as having come of age. He had become a man, and a ceremony was held for this. Henceforth he would wear an adult's dress, the pure white woolen toga virilis. Thereafter, he would devote one year to an apprenticeship in public life, no longer at his father's side but under the care of an old family friend, an elderly man advanced in politics and highly respected.

Then followed service in the military. Military service commenced, first as an ordinary soldier during which he learnt to be commanded and to obey orders. He was in the process introduced into real battle, thus given an opportunity to distinguish himself by courage. Soon thereafter, he functioned as a staff officer under some distinguished commander. Real career has commenced.

Whether in civil or military life, however, the Roman was to regard the family as the focal point of his life. When he had fully weaned himself from his parents, he had his own family which now constituted the centre of his life.

### **ACTIVITY I**

1. Discuss the major differences between traditional Roman education and that of the Athenians.
2. In what ways are the traditional Roman education and that of Nigerian traditional communities similar?
3. Discuss the statement that it was possible for the Roman citizen to rise to the highest position in society without being able to read and write.
4. There is a slight inference in the write-up that the average Roman family had slaves. Discuss where these slaves were likely to have come from, and the circumstances that made this possible.

### **ROMAN EDUCATION UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE GREEKS**

Rome grew in military might, conquering one nation after another around it. The more nations Rome conquered, the larger the empire became. Slaves were brought to Rome in large numbers, made to work for families, communities, and the state as a whole. In process, Rome was developed at a very rapid rate and many of the roads and physical structures many of which are still found were constructed. One of the nations conquered was Greece. However, we should bear in mind that the Greece we are referring to is not exactly the country called Greece today. Rather, there were various Greek states like Macedonia, Athens, Sparta, etc., which were just coalescing into a nation. By the year 146 BC, the whole of the east Mediterranean countries were under Roman rule.

Here then was the Roman nation without a formal school system, now having to rule a nation like Greece with its highly structured educational system and high civilization of the conquered Greeks and stamp out its educational system (as the Barbarians did in some later ages), or accept this new educational system and its civilization, perhaps a case of the conquered becoming the conqueror. Happily for the Greeks and for the world today, the Romans chose this latter course. As the Roman poet, Horace, stated, 'Captive Greece captivated her rude conqueror and introduced the arts to rustic Latium'.

In a rather large-hearted, matured manner, the Romans, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica, 'quickly appreciated the advantages they could draw from this more mature civilization, richer than their own national culture. The practical Romans grasped the advantages to be drawn from a knowledge of Greek, an international language known to many of their adversaries, soon to be their Oriental subjects, and grasped the related importance of mastering the art of oratory so highly developed by the Greeks.'

The process of adaptation was very gradual; it did not come as an instant phenomenon. What happened was that as some slaves, many of whom were well educated, Roman nobles who bought them found them useful and made them to educate their children. As such children displayed their knowledge and skills, more and more families realised the worth of the Greek teachers, so more people went in for them, brought them to Rome and made them teach their children. Realise that before then, the Greek language was widespread in the whole of the

Mediterranean area because of the previous military might of the Greeks. So, these new teachers actually taught in Greek, which had become a sort of an international language. Indeed, it was claimed that some Roman children were able to speak the Greek language before being able to speak the Latin language, that is, in homes where the Greek slaves/teachers actually brought up the children. In time, there was another development – children were actually sent to Greece to learn! It was light going abroad to receive enlightenment.

In time, Rome fully adopted Greek education. Thus, a Roman was considered truly refined only when he had the same education, in Greek, which a native Greek had. On the other hand, there progressively developed a parallel system of instruction that transposed into Latin the institutions, programmes, and methods of Greek education. Of course, as we can expect, only the children of the nobles had the privilege of receiving the complete and bilingual education. The result of the bilingual education was that an enlightened Roman could operate in the two leading languages of the world, and indeed many educated Romans wrote well in the two languages.

There were of course significant modifications and adaptations. For instance, the Romans, rather shocked by Greek athleticism, did not adopt this aspect without serious modification. Thus, while gymnastic exercises entered into their daily life, it was under the category of health and that of sport – so it was like studying the theory but not practicing it. Similarly, on moral grounds, music and dance were not adopted totally, they being reserved for slaves and not for freeborn.

With time, what had blossomed at the level of individual families soon became a state affair. Schools were soon started on a formal level, mostly for sons and daughters of the nobles. This was a result of social pressure, since most families wanted education. Thus, as in Greece, public education developed at three levels: elementary, secondary and higher, although these did not emanate at just the same time.

Osokoya recognizes these as *ludus*, *grammaticus*, and *rhetoric* schools. The *ludus*, meaning ‘play’ in Latin, is like an infant school where children learn mostly through play. It is the equivalent of our own primary school, and specializes in the teaching of the 3R’s, i.e. reading, writing and arithmetic, whose teaching relied very much on the abacus.

The *grammaticus*, is the equivalent of our own grammar school, or the secondary school. Children entered at the age of 12 and attended school for about three or four years, learning reading, writing, poetry, arithmetic. The grammar taught was that of Greek. The subjects taught were most utilitarian, not liberal. The dominance of Greek remained for a long time until Cicero, the famous Roman poet and orator, advocated that Latin should be used for educating Roman children.

Higher education was available in *rhetoric* schools. Here, mature learners studied history, philosophy, literature, science and some other subjects. Most of these were geared towards producing orators, since statecraft which was the ultimate aim of most people required a lot of oratory. *Rhetoric* schools were run mostly by Greek teachers in Rome or were available by sending learners straight to Greece.

Is this system not similar to what obtained in Nigeria for a long time, where for so long a time we had teachers from abroad for both the secondary and tertiary levels and many people simply went abroad to receive higher education? This is just one of the areas of comparison; you should be able to recognize many other areas.

**ACTIVITY II**

1. Discuss the real meaning and implications of the statement credited to Horace.
2. Why did the writer claim that the Romans were large-hearted in adopting Greek education after having conquered the Greeks?
3. Trace the development of Greek education in Rome from the family level to the state level.
4. Describe the three levels of education in ancient Rome.

## UNIT THREE: GREAT EDUCATION THINKERS: QUINTILIAN

### OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, students should be able to:

1. discuss the significant phases of the Roman system of education;
2. analyse the influence of Greek education on Roman education system;
3. discuss what our own system can learn from the Roman system of education.

### BACKGROUND

It is significant that Rome, which readily embraced the superior educational system of Greece after overcoming the latter, should produce a number of intellectuals whose works have continued to influence the shaping of ideas over the ages. One of these is a man called Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, known to the present world simply as Quintilian. Who was this man? What were his ideas? In what ways have they been of importance over the ages? These, and some other related issues form the focus of this unit.

#### Quintilian's contributions

A great man of letters, Quintilian left to posterity a voluminous book publication in 12 books. Entitled *Institutio oratoria*, (or, 'The Training of an Orator') it was published shortly before the end of his life. The *Institutio* was the fruit of Quintilian's wide practical experience as a teacher. According to him, his purpose was not to invent new theories of rhetoric but to judge between existing ones. He stressed that he was conscious of the fact that theoretical knowledge alone is of little use without experience and good judgment. Although not primarily a book on how to bring up and educate a child, that in effect is its main import. The main basis of his argument through the book is that the entire process of a child's education was the determining factor for his training and career as an orator. (Realise that the word 'orator' by then meant more than just a good speaker but also a statesman). In Book I, he dealt with the stages of a boy's education before entering the school of oratory. In Book II, he discussed the boy's career through the school of oratory. These two form the foundation of the long work. They also contain his general observations on educational principles, some of which are still valid today.

#### ACTIVITY I

1. According to the writer here, what does the fact that Quintilian was able to produce such a significant work tell us about the attitude of Romans to education borrowed from the Greeks?
2. Quintilian was trained as a legal practitioner, not a teacher; yet he was able to write about the education of a youth. What does this tell us about the system of education in that era? What does it also tell us about the man himself?
3. The meaning of the word 'orator' has changed over the time. What does it mean then and what does it mean now?

The greatest part of the work, from Books III to XI are on the five ‘departments’ of rhetoric; these are invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. He also dealt with the nature, origin, value, and function of rhetoric as well as with the different types of oratory. He gave far greater attention to forensic oratory, the type used in legal proceedings than to other types. This should not be surprising, given that he was a legal person. In Book X, he discussed the great Greek and Latin authors, praising their contributions and recommending them to younger orators. Finally, in book XII, he dealt with the ideal orator in action, after training: his character, the rules that he should follow in argument, the style of his eloquence, etc.

The main import of the work to educational practice is the emphasis on the moral training of the orator. Throughout, his purpose was to mould the student’s character as well as to develop his mind. He held that, first and most important, a good orator must be a good citizen, who lives a virtuous life. This is the most crucial, no matter how eloquent he might be. Second, he stressed that the orator should be a thoroughly professional, competent and successful public speaker. To this end, the student should be carefully and thoroughly prepared for this task. It would appear that he believed that the more careful the training of a student was, the more successful he was likely to be as a practitioner.

He had some severe criticism for some of the teachers of his day for encouraging superficial cleverness of style. This would seem to apply today to those teachers who were very clever in looking competent without really mastering the subject matter, teachers who impressed their learners without really contributing much to their mastery of the subject. According to him, while this type of cleverness might give an immediate effect, at least in the eyes of their pupils, he stressed that they in the long run did not help the future orator.

He believed that teachers should not unduly hasten their students. So, while teachers could encourage their students to produce their best, they should at the same time let them go on at their pace. He supported individuality and individual attention, and recommended that students should be encouraged to find out on their own through self effort.

He was against corporal punishment, claiming that it was greatly counter-productive. He stressed that the whipping a learner in effect generates fear in him, fear for the teacher as well as fear about the subject matter. Besides, when a teacher has used the method, subsequent recourse to it becomes ineffective – since the learner would have lost the fear originally entertained. Against this, he writes, “Pupils,” he writes, “If rightly instructed regard their teacher with affection and respect. And it is scarcely possible to say how much more willingly we imitate those we like.” What does this imply? It implies that with the right approach, a learner would develop a genuine and natural respect for the teacher whom he would love to imitate.

In all, the greatest lesson we as teachers learn from Quintilian is that the student should be brought up first and foremost as a law abiding, morally sound person, over and above his intellectual competence although this too is very crucial.



**ACTIVITY II**

1. Analyse the various characteristics of the young learner as specified by Quintilian?
2. Which of these would you say are still valid to recommend today?
3. What is your own attitude towards corporal punishment as a teacher? Give studied reasons for your stand.

## **UNIT FOUR: EDUCATION IN THE FIRST CENTURIES OF THE MODERN ERA**

### **OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, students should be able to:

1. discuss the development of education in the middle ages, i.e. the period 500 – 1500 AD;
2. identify Educational institutions in the Middle Ages and their role in the development of education during the period;
3. trace the founding and development of Universities in Europe during the Medieval period and beyond, spanning the modern period and their changing roles.

### **BACKGROUND**

From early in the Christian era, the spread of education continued rapidly across the continent of Europe. We would be correct to say that with the spread of Christianity and growing trade, education also continued to spread across the length of the continent. But then, the coming of the Barbarians reversed what would otherwise have been a positive development. For the Barbarians destroyed most of what they found in the lands they occupied. The Barbarian invasions started sometime around AD 259 in the present day Switzerland and continued to spread progressively across the continent for about the next two hundred years. During those dark years, (actually referred to in history as the ‘dark ages’) much of the learning and scholarship that had been built up were destroyed or suppressed. The only flickers of light were to be found in the Catholic monasteries, the Jewish temples and among the Arabs. There it was that the monks continued to hold up the light of knowledge, passing on whatever knowledge there was from one unsteady era to another. This way it was until the beginning of the Middle Ages (usually referred to as the renaissance).

#### **Education in the middle ages**

The middle ages is usually recognized as that period between AD 500 to AD 1500, a long period of a millennium. During the early middle ages, knowledge was preserved by the monasteries; and, although the monks did little more than copy Greek and Latin manuscripts and especially of the Church Fathers, they educated the few people who were privileged to be close to them. It is surprising that whereas the Greeks and Romans produced very substantial amounts of literature some 700 to 600 years before this era, nothing of note came out throughout the long period between the first and sixth centuries after Christ. Really, it takes very little effort to destroy an edifice, but far more than double the effort to rebuild.

Perhaps, the slow but steady spread of Christianity during the first centuries after Christ would have helped the spread of learning, but this was not really so since most of the early adherents were poor and illiterates. St. Paul himself observed this (in 1 Corinthians 1:26). However, during the second century AD and thereafter, it began to appeal to more and more members of the higher and educated classes. This group of people wanted as good a type of

education for their children as they themselves had. These obtained their education from the few available, Greco-Roman, non-Christian, grammar and rhetoric schools.

This trend put the Christians in a sort of dilemma. Here were institutions that were purely secular and which did not teach their ethics and whose teachings in some cases conflicted with the stand of the church. Several Christian leaders were opposed to sending youths to school, but there were others too who felt that there was nothing wrong in doing so, and some indeed who felt that there was no real conflict between the stand of the church and the knowledge taught in the Greco-Roman institutions. In the vast majority of cases, the choice was to seek knowledge wherever it could be found. Things became much better when the Christians themselves started the catechetical schools, the most notable of which was in Alexandria in Egypt. Others too followed, and with time, it was not just religious education that was given as the curriculum was soon much broadened. However, during most of the early centuries AD, up till the middle of the middle ages, there were no universities, which would be surprising since Plato had founded one century earlier and which was destroyed during this period. For the founding of the modern universities, the world had to wait until about the end of the first millennium AD.

### **ACTIVITY I**

1. How did the coming of the Barbarians influence the spread of knowledge?
2. In what ways did the Christian monasteries help to preserve and spread education? Suggest why they did these.
3. Suggest reasons why the early Christians could not help the spread of education as much as they would have liked.

### **THE COMING OF THE UNIVERSITIES**

Just as it had sustained knowledge during the dark ages, Roman Catholicism equally was responsible for the founding of the European universities. These came mainly after 1200. These institutions were stimulated by the learning of Arabic scholars, through whom Europeans became acquainted with the philosophy of Aristotle and produced the learning of Scholastic philosophy and theology. The cultivation of literature and the arts in the 15<sup>th</sup> century flourished under the patronage of the papacy and Catholic princes and prelates.

What we can safely call the earliest Western university was a famous medical school in Salerno, Italy, in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, which had students from all over Europe. It however remained just a medical school, not a university in the broad sense. The first real university was at Bologna, founded in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, rising to a highly respected school of canon and civil law. The first university to be founded in northern Europe was the University of Paris, founded between 1150 and 1170. It became noted for theology, and served as a model for other universities in northern Europe such as that of Oxford, England, which had well established by the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

The universities of Paris and Oxford were composed of colleges, which were actually endowed residence halls for scholars. These early universities received their charters from

popes, emperors, and kings. They were free to govern themselves, so long as they taught neither atheism nor heresy. Students and masters together elected their own rectors. As the price of independence, however, universities had to finance themselves. So teachers charged fees from students, whom themselves had a lot of power in the governance of the university.

Universities in those days had no permanent buildings, nor did they have substantial corporate property. Besides, they could lose their students to other universities if the students were for any reason dissatisfied. This was how the University of Cambridge began in 1209 when a number of dissatisfied students moved there from Oxford; and 20 years later Oxford in turn profited by a migration of students from the University of Paris.

From the 13<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. from AD 1200, universities were established in many of Europe's principal cities. Thus, we had universities springing up in Montpellier (1220), Aix-en-Provence (1409) both in France; in Padua (1222), Rome (1303), and Florence (1321) all in Italy; at Salamanca (1218) in Spain, at Prague (1348) and Vienna (1365) in central Europe, at Heidelberg (1386), Leipzig (1409), Freiburg (1457), and Tubingen (1477) in what is now Germany, at Louvain (1425) in present-day Belgium, and at Saint Adrews (1411) and Glasgow (1451) in Scotland.

### **ACTIVITY II**

1. The writer states that the Catholic Church itself was stimulated in the founding of the first universities by the contacts they had with the Arabs, presumably Moslems. Discuss what this tells us of the nature of knowledge.
2. The medical school in Salerno is not given the full title of a university. Why?
3. Discuss what the writer means by referring to the Universities in Oxford and Paris as being made up of colleges.
4. Some of the universities in Europe, according to this account are older than the first university in Africa by about 1,000. What does this tell us about the differences between the two continents?

For so long, till late in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the curriculum in most universities included the seven liberal arts: grammar, logic, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and music. After the initial studies, students then proceeded to one of the professional faculties of medicine, law, and theology. Final examinations were arduous and taxing; so many students failed. During the Protestant Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the ensuing Counter-Reformation the ongoing struggles affected the curriculum and administration of the universities in several ways. In the countries which became staunch Protestants, the universities became Protestant while some new Protestant universities were founded. In some cases, those nations which remained Catholic resisted change, especially in the sciences. There, the new learning was discouraged, and thus many universities underwent a period of relative decline.

The founding of new universities continued during this time. Among these were the ones at Edinburgh (1583), Leiden (1575), and Strasbourg (1621). The first modern university was at Halle, founded by Lutherans in 1694. It was a progressive-minded school, the first to

renounce religious orthodoxy of any kind, preferring instead to pursue a rational and objective intellectual inquiry. It was the first where lectures were in German (i.e., a vernacular language) rather than in Latin. The innovations were later adopted in the university of Gottingen, founded 1737, and subsequently by most German and many American universities.

In the later 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, religion was gradually replaced with secular curriculum and objective pursuit of knowledge, as the universities became institutions of modern learning and research. Typical in these trends was the University of Berlin (1809), in which laboratory experimentation replaced conjecture; theological, philosophical, and other traditional doctrines were examined with anew rigour and objectivity; and modern standards of academic freedom became the norm. The typical German university was thus one that embraced several graduate schools specialising in advanced research and experimentation.

Across the Atlantic, in the new world, the first universities were established by the Spaniards. These were the University of Santo Domingo (1538) in what is now the Dominican Republic and the University of Michoacan (1540) in Mexico. The earliest institutions of higher learning in the USA were in Harvard (1636), William and Mary (1693), Yale (1701), Princeton (1746), and King's College 1754; now Columbia). Most of these were established by the religious denominations, and most eventually evolved into full-fledged universities.

### **ACTIVITY III**

1. Consider the seven commonest subjects in the curriculum of that period. Comment on this curriculum vis-à-vis that of today.
2. Discuss the ways in which the reformation and counter-reformation affected the growth of universities.
3. Consider the fact that for along time, indeed for centuries, universities in Europe continued to use Latin as the medium of instruction until the German universities started a new trend of using their own national language. Discuss this in the light of developments in Nigerian universities.
4. Discuss the roles which you would want to see Nigerian universities performing in national development.

## **UNIT FIVE: GREAT EDUCATION THINKERS**

### **OBJECTIVES**

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

1. identify some of those great educators who have influenced the course of learning over the centuries;
2. discuss their significant contributions to our present day educational practices;
3. discuss what each classroom practitioner can learn from each of them.

### **BACKGROUND**

The practice of education has passed through several phases over the course of time. Each theory of education did not just get there by chance; rather one or the other of the great educators has proposed it, borne out of experience, and others have found it worth practicing. Some of the educators had to work closely with young learners, observing them at play and at work, and through this were able to formulate theories, which have stood the test of time. Some of them were great psychologists, some great philosophers, and some in some other walks of life which had to do with learning. What we can confidently say was common to them all was their love for learning and for learners, their concern for human progress.

There are scores of them, but we cannot possibly take on all of them in a publication of this nature. We have carefully selected just seven of them, selected not because these were the greatest there were, but in a way to reflect a different age during the period from the 14<sup>th</sup> century to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As you read and learn about each of them, notice carefully how each of them lived and developed, what theory each of them proposed, and with what result. You have to read actively, i.e. you should read with your mind open, questioning each of the educators' viewpoints, asking yourself how valid that point is.

### **VITTORINO DA FELTRE (1378 – 1440)**

Vittorino was an Italian born in the town of Feltre in 1378. Considered the greatest humanist schoolmaster of the Renaissance because of his dedication to the teaching profession, he was educated in Padua University where he also became a lecturer. In 1423, he was asked to become a tutor to the children of the wealthy Gonzaga family, the rulers of Mantua. He accepted on one condition: that he would found a school for the children of the family as well as for other children, away from the palace. He started that school and called it the 'House of Joy'. Apart from the royal children, there were some other 60 children.

He operated a fairly wide curriculum, which included the languages and literature of Rome and Greece, arithmetic, geometry, music, physical education, introduced on the basis of the Greek ideal of the development of the body and mind. He believed in education as promoting a Christian way of life. Thus, he believed in, and practiced, love for his pupils for whom he had never used corporal punishment. He believed in individual attention and the adaptation of the teaching to the level of the learner. He held that the teacher should care for the health and all round needs of learner. His school, apart from educating children of nobles

and poor alike, also taught future rulers and professionals; he taught Latin to Greek to scholars from the East so that they were able to translate Greek works, making them available to more people. Thus, through him, knowledge was spread far and wide.

### **Jan Amos Comenius (1592 – 1670)**

Known properly as Komensky, he was a Czech educationist, theologian, reformer and politician. Orphaned from an early age, he began learning only from the age of 16. The efforts he made to learn later enabled him to turn attention to education and to teaching methods for which he became very famous. In his several books, which were more than 80, he showed that he favoured the learning of Latin, whose teaching he revolutionized. Trained as a priest, he grew to believe that salvation could be achieved here on earth, and through science, perhaps as a result of his study of the works of Francis Bacon, the English scientist.

Comenius believed that educational reform should involve revolutionizing the methods of teaching in order to make learning rapid, pleasant and thorough. He advocated that teachers should ‘follow the steps of nature’, i.e. that teachers should pay attention to the way a child naturally learns. Besides, he believed that in order to make European culture available to all, children should learn Latin, but not in the way it had been taught for ages, rather in ‘nature’s way’, i.e. by learning the names of things and not about the grammar; this reflects the natural way a child learns.

Like Vittorino da Feltre, Comenius believed that a school should be a place of joy rather than a place of tedium. To this end, he believed that the school room and its environments should be pleasant; there should be several good pictures and other learning aids available to the learners. These should make the learning environment very conducive for the teaching – learning exercises.

Comenius believed that learning should be carefully graded in order to fit the learning abilities of children. Learning materials should be graded from the simplest to the complex, from the known to the unknown. In line with this, teachers should make their lessons fit the different levels of learners. In accordance with his belief that there should be careful grading of learning, he divided the child’s education into four main stages: (a) the infancy stage from 0 to 6 years; (b) the childhood period from 6 to 12 years; (c) boyhood from 12 to 18 years; and (d) 18 to 24 years. Infancy should be spent at home with the mother who should help to develop the senses and impart the language to the child. The childhood years should be spent in the primary school where the curriculum should consist mainly of elementary literacy and numeracy. The boyhood stage should be spent in the secondary school which should teach some of the core subjects and help the learner make sound judgment of things and events. The last stage should be spent in the university, which should enhance the learner’s acquisition of knowledge and wisdom.

### **ACTIVITY I**

1. If you were to propound a theory of teaching and learning, what are the necessary conditions and procedures that this would entail before it comes into reality?
2. Suggest reasons why Vittorino insisted that his school should be founded away from the palace.
3. The issue of corporal punishment is contentious today. What is your opinion about it? Give reasons for your stand.

### **JOHN LOCKE (1632 TO 1704)**

John Locke was an English philosopher, the initiator of the enlightenment movement in England and France. Raised up in a village near Bristol, John Locke was educated, through his father's influence, in Westminster School. The training there was thorough, though discipline was firm. He later entered Oxford University but found the curriculum there rather uninspiring; so he busied himself with studies outside the formal curriculum, particularly science and medicine. He obtained the bachelor and masters degrees in quick succession, later gaining a place as a teacher there. However, because of an insistence that a teacher there should also be a priest, he left his position after only four years. He then found a place in diplomatic service for a while, later delving into several other fields, particularly studying to broaden his mind. He was indeed a well educated man with a very broad base in learning.

To John Locke, a good education should build up both the physical and the mental sides of a person. He believed that the body should be toughened through exercises, play, and a lot of sleep. He held that young children should be allowed to express their feelings and should not be restrained from their environment. With regard to mental training, character should come first before learning, and the purpose of education should be to instill virtue, wisdom and good breeding. Like Comenius too, he believed that in learning a language, the rules should be played down while usage should be paramount. In this too, reading should come before writing.

Locke believed so much in giving examples to the child, and so the parents have a big role to play. They should be at hand as often as possible and should interest themselves in the affairs of their children. He believed in teaching the various subjects to the child and stressed the importance of mathematics as the 'powers of abstraction develop'.

### **Jean-Jacques Rousseau**

Born in 1712, Rousseau was rather unique in the sense that he was of Swiss, French and Italian background, although born and brought up in Switzerland. His mother died shortly after he was born, so his watchmaker father brought him up. He had no education for many years until his father fled Geneva to Nyon and placed him in the care of a pastor. Even then, his education was not of regular type we are familiar with today. In the main, he received his education mostly incidentally from the people he lived or worked with. We can say that this was a man mostly self educated, becoming a great musician, a writer, and an idealist. As far



as education is concerned, Rousseau would be reckoned with as the writer of the *Emile*, a treatise in the form of a novel.

Through this work, he made the case clearly that the ideal education is one offered by nature, i.e. that a person would be best educated without really learning from books or in a formal school setting. He argued that one should protect the child from the corruption of civilization. To him, nature was the best teacher and to learn from it was to avoid the unhealthy traits associated with modern civilization. He held that the young learner, in this case 'Emile', should be saved from any contact with books until the age of 12. The book showed Rousseau as a proponent of physical education.

He argued in the book that feelings should come before thinking, and that the child should be controlled not by adults' wishes but by things around him, that the child is not a miniature adult who should be judged with adults' yardsticks. He stressed that each child is an individual that is different from any other child and should be understood and treated as such.

Therefore, the curriculum to be used for the child should reflect the interest and standards of the child rather than revolve around the interest of the adult world. In teaching the child, the state of its readiness for learning should be taken into account.

Rousseau believed in discovery, especially from the environment, through a process of problem-solving. He believed that a good teacher should study the child he is teaching and seek to understand him thoroughly. In all, we can realize that Rousseau's ideas do conform to very thorough psychological principles.

## ACTIVITY II

1. In what ways the contributions of John Locke and Rousseau are they similar?
2. Discuss what John Locke owes to Comenius.
3. What is '*Emile*' all about?

## JOHANN HEINRICH PESTALOZZI

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi was a Swiss reformer whose theories laid much of the foundation of modern elementary education. As a champion of the underprivileged, he established in 1774 an orphanage in which young ones were trained to become self-sufficient by mastering rudiments of agriculture and trading. Although the venture failed, Pestalozzi put down his ideas in a book, *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children*. This book, as well as another titled *Leonard and Gertrude*, was addressed to sound methods of teaching. He later founded a boarding school which was attended by pupils from all over Europe.

One of the areas in which Pestalozzi contributed much to education is in audio-visual education. He was one of those early educators who believed that pictures, demonstrations and other audio-visual means are effective tools for teaching and who advocated the use of sensory materials to supplement teaching. In this regard, others like him during these early days include Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and John Locke.

Pestalozzi believed that ‘The art of education must be significantly raised in all its facets to become a science that is to be built on and proceeds from the deepest knowledge of human nature. By this he meant that the business was serious enough to be taken very seriously and studied thoroughly and conscientiously. To this end, created a new methodology for elementary education which was introduced into teacher education both in Europe and America. He, through his personal example, gave teachers a new philosophy for their profession. He stimulated teaching and learning theory and practice to a very great extent. He was particularly a supporter of the poor and took various measures to help the poor to learn. He was much distressed by the extent of the misery existing in the world and advanced ideas that this should be altered. His bid to help the poor tallies neatly with his ideas on ending the misery around us, mostly through an improved educational system. Unfortunately, most people of his time thought of him as merely a theorist, although at the same time he had a lot of following.

### **Frobel and the Kindergarten movement**

Another 19<sup>th</sup> century great educator after Pestalozzi was Froebel who founded the kindergarten movement. His major contribution to education was his theory on the importance of play and self-activity in early childhood. After several attempts at other professions, he finally ended up in teaching, in the course of which he met Pestalozzi whose ideas clearly influenced him to start his own school on sound psychological basis. This became in 1816 the Universal German Educational Institute at Griesheim, although it was transferred to Keilhau in 1817.

His major written work was ‘The Education of Man’, a work that stood him out as a person opposed to reforms, although it has a number of major ideas. Later, he was in Switzerland where he opened another school for orphans, along with a section for teacher training courses. But it was his pioneering work later in Keilhau where he opened the first kindergarten for which he is noted today. He called it kindergarten, i.e. ‘garden of children’, thus suggesting the type of institution he had in mind – one which would be like a beautiful garden, and thus lovely for children, one where children would be able to grow up much like flowers in a garden would grow. Because of the success of this experiment, other similar kindergartens soon started and flourished.

### **John Herbert**

John Herbert was born in 1776 in Germany. He was a philosopher of the Realism school of philosophy and an educator who was considered one of the founders of modern scientific pedagogy. Like Froebel, he was also acquainted with Pestalozzi from whom he must have definitely learnt a few ideas. He was for several years a professor of philosophy in the University of Konigsberg and later of Gottingen. His standing as a philosopher is due mainly to his contributions to the philosophy of mind, on which he wrote several books.

It was in line with his philosophical theories and ideas that he developed a theory of education as a branch of applied psychology. His theories of education, which were later to be known as Herbartianism, were set out in two books. In these, he advocated five formal steps in teaching which are summarised here:

- (1) *preparation*, which is a process of relating new materials to be learned to relevant past ideas so as to give the pupil a vital interest in the topic;
- (2) *presentation*, i.e. the process of presenting new material by means of concrete objects or actual experience;
- (3) *association*, thorough assimilation of the new idea through comparison with earlier held ideas and consideration of their similarities and differences in order to implant the new idea in the mind;
- (4) *generation*, which is a procedure especially important to the instruction of adolescents and which is designed to develop the mind beyond the level of insight and the concrete; and
- (5) *application*, i.e. using acquired knowledge not in a purely utilitarian way, but in a way that every learned idea becomes a part of the functional mind and for every day purposes. This step will be possible only if the student immediately applies the new idea, making it his own.

Herbart held that a scientific study of education was possible, and that education should be a subject for university study. His ideas were accepted in Germany in the 1860s and later spread also to the United States. By 1900, however, the five steps had become less important in the light of new theories.

### **ACTIVITY III**

1. Discuss the specific contributions to education of Pestalozzi.
2. What does each of Frobel and Herbart owe to Pestalozzi?
3. Discuss the current worth of Herbart's five steps in teaching.

### **JOHN DEWEY (1859 – 1952)**

John Dewey is the most popular and influential name in American educational history. Son to a village shop keeper, Dewey was born in Vermont, New England and spent his early life there. He attended the University of Vermont where he studied philosophy and after graduation in 1879 had a brief teaching period before moving to John Hopkins University. His thirst for knowledge took him to the names in several American Universities and took other degrees in psychology and history. He also had teaching experiences in the Universities of Minnesota and Michigan. It was however, at the University of Chicago that his ideas gained full maturity. Hence he became at different times Head of the Department of Philosophy and Directing the School of Education. It was here that he established his famous Laboratory School in 1896 where he researched and experienced new ideas and methods. John Dewey was a prolific writer with over 500 journal articles and numerous books, the most outstanding being Democracy and Education (1916).

The typical rural community Dewey grew up in very influential in shaping his thoughts. In such an environment as compared to the urban life of his later years, he found out that

individuals had more intimate contact with the natural environment and this made learning easier and meaningful. Not only that, the sense of community which took place in rural life Dewey found out was more favourable to learning and human life than the extreme formality and individuality that is the lot of urban life. Dewey transferred these key ideas to education by claiming that if the school is to play any useful social function it must encourage such contact with the natural environment as well as promote a sense of community.

John Dewey was also influenced by the type of problems and difficulties he thought people faced in America at the time. He realized that to survive in a world of pressing problems such as the one he grew up in, one needed to be resourceful, energetic and practical. These concrete conditions were reinforced with ideas gained from Charles Peirce and William James, Dewey improved upon the philosophy of pragmatism.

Dewey believed that the educational process has two sides, psychological and social, and neither can be subordinated or neglected. On the psychological side, he maintained that because learning depends on the psychological nature of the child, teachers must explore the child's nature, needs and interests in teaching. But even more than this is his belief that genuine education is only possible through the participating of the individual in interactive relationships with others. This made him to have faith in the project method of teaching. Socially, he held that the school is never an institution which is separate from the outer society. Rather, it is continuous with it. In this regard whatever is taught in schools must draw from and illuminate experiences which learners have at home.

It is this belief in the indissoluble link between school and society that Dewey believed the school must be a formative agency for the sustenance of democratic civilization. To achieve this goal, he saw the teaching of civic and vocational education as guarantee. The school, according to him can only achieve this social function if it is set as a democratic institution whereby the values of co-operation are fostered both in teaching and in living.

An area where Dewey seems to exert the greatest influence is in his pedagogy. He criticized formal methods which begin with definitions and in which teachers present materials from their points of view. According to him the most useful methods are those which engage pupils in active work. It is only after this that teaching can be organized. Always keeping the learner at the centre of the educational process, he believed that teachers should not set out with definite aims, nor schools do the same. He believed that education cannot have aims because such aims are always external to the process of educating. In his opinion education can only be conceived as the constant reconstruction of experience rather as a process of transmission or of getting already synthesized knowledge. In this way past knowledge is only useful as a tool in reconstructing experience or in overcoming a present problem.

**ACTIVITY III**

1. Discuss the relationship between the social conditions Dewey grew up in and the educational ideas he developed.
2. To what extent do you think Dewey's educational ideas are useful in the Nigerian system?
3. Discuss the implications of the psychological and social sides of the educative process, according to Dewey.