

Philosophy of education and the Africanization of secondary school curriculum in Kenya

Mwinzi, Joe M. and Higgs, Leonie G.

Abstract

The essence of restructuring and Africanizing secondary school curriculum to accommodate the attributes of Kenyan philosophy of education together with African philosophical thinking is inevitable not only in Kenya, but also in the entire continent of Africa. Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST, 2004: 21) articulated that philosophy of education in Kenya is envisaged to prepare the students for social cohesion, human growth, and economic development. In tandem, African philosophy is founded of communalism, functionalism, perennialism, preparationism and holism (Mwinzi, 2006: 40) as the basis of transformation and reorientation of the students'™ consciousness. In this article, post primary phase of education in Kenya situates the students to take active roles in the society as educated Africans. These factors which define African philosophical thought are central in formulating the statements of philosophy of education, while secondary school curriculum is the model site for such philosophy of education. The concept of transformation and reorientation of the students is a process which is facilitated by education (Yamada, Bhalalusesa, Chege, Karega and Shibeshi, 2007: 28). As an important component, philosophy of education and African philosophical line of thought has been alienated in education practice at secondary school level. This article explored the dynamics of how secondary schools can refocus attention towards Africanizing the curriculum and allying academic activities to match the fundamental elements of social cohesion, human development, and economic progress portrayed in the statement of philosophy of education. These crucial attributes explain the magnitude of philosophy of education as it is deliberated in MoEST (2004: 21). The article emanated from the interviews conducted in secondary schools to substantiate that philosophy of education and African perception should determine how secondary schools can cope with societal expectations in terms of social cohesion, human growth and economic progress in juxtaposition with the tenets of African philosophy. Drawing on studies conducted using twelve interviews in sampled secondary schools, the article concludes that revision of material resources, altering teaching and learning tactics, restructuring evaluation strategies, and intensifying the value of knowledge transfer cannot be vilified if philosophy of education will recover the decisive African tenets of communalism, functionalism, perennialism, preparationism and holism (Mwinzi, 2006: 40) in secondary school curriculum in Kenya and outside.