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THE INFLUENCE OF REALISM ON MODERN EDUCATION: A HISTORICAL REVIEW

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Abstract:
Deriving its foundation from Aristotle, a student of the great idealist Plato, realism has exerted a significant influence on the philosophy of education. While idealism, pragmatism, and realism share a common goal—to nurture individuals who can succeed and contribute to the preservation of civilization—they diverge in their focus and methodology. The rise of realism was shaped by pivotal historical developments, including Gutenberg's invention of the printing press, the age of imperialism and colonialism, the Industrial Revolution, and subsequent technological advancements. These factors elevated realism as a guiding philosophy in designing educational programs that could respond to emerging societal challenges.This study explores the origins of educational realism and the contributions of prominent philosophers to its development. It traces the major historical milestones that enabled realism to become a lasting influence on modern education. The discussion encompasses key dimensions such as the aims of education, the concept of the learner and the teacher, curriculum design, methods of instruction, and the organization of schools. It also evaluates realism's role in shaping educational thought and practice, while highlighting the ideas of leading philosophers who advanced this tradition. Finally, the paper examines the continuing impact of realist philosophy on contemporary education systems, demonstrating how realism remains a vital framework for addressing the evolving needs of learners and societies.

Introduction:

Realism may be defined as a philosophical position that affirms the existence of an objective order of reality and recognizes the human capacity to acquire knowledge of this reality. Within the domain of education, many teachers support the realist philosophy, and the realist curriculum continues to hold significant value in contemporary educational systems. Realism emphasizes that an integrated and well-structured curriculum is essential for effective teaching and learning. According to Gutek, the educational objectives of realism involve the cultivation of human rationality through organized bodies of knowledge, enabling learners to make rational choices and to develop a coherent sense of self.

From a realist perspective, teachers are expected to provide appropriate instructional materials tailored to the developmental stages of their students. The design of the curriculum must therefore take into account students' readiness, maturity, and prior learning experiences. In this

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context, the realist teacher serves as a model of the ideal educator in today's educational landscape. Such a teacher is expected to employ a range of instructional strategies—including lectures, discussions, and experiments—while selecting methods that are most suitable for the learner's background and needs.

Significance of the Topic

From a philosophical standpoint, realism serves as a critical foundational doctrine, asserting that material existence and the objective reality of things constitute the primary truth, rather than subjective imagination or the absence of material objects. This philosophical tradition, with roots stretching from Aristotle's metaphysics to Bertrand Russell's logical realism, posits that the universe exists independently of human consciousness. Its profound significance lies in its application to human development: it mandates that progress—whether social, economic, or intellectual—must be aligned with the unyielding constraints and facts of the real world. This means constructing policies, educational systems, and societal structures that are grounded in an understanding of human nature, physical laws, and material limitations. For instance, the Marxist theory of historical materialism itself is a form of socio-economic realism, arguing that material conditions fundamentally shape societal evolution. Consequently, embracing a realist framework is not merely an abstract exercise; it is a vital prerequisite for elevating human value and dignity. It liberates individuals from the illusions of idealism and self-deception, directing collective energy toward solving tangible problems and enabling the genuine actualization of human potential. Thus, realism provides the essential compass for navigating a path to authentic and sustainable advancement.

Literature Review: The Philosophical Underpinnings of Realism in Education

Realism, as a major school of philosophical thought, posits that reality exists independently of human perception or consciousness. A substantial body of literature is dedicated to exploring its various dimensions and applications, particularly within the field of education. This review synthesizes key contributions from both Western and prominent non-Western scholars to outline the core tenets of realist epistemology and its implications for teaching and learning.

The discourse on realism is richly supported by foundational texts. Seminal Western works, such as those by Burns and Brauner (1962) in Philosophy of Education and Cohen (19XX) in Philosophical Perspectives in Education, establish the classical realist position, often tracing its lineage from Aristotle. This is complemented by analytical approaches, such as that of John Hospers in An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis, which applies the tools of logic and language to realist claims.

The perspective is broadened significantly by contributions from other scholars. Authors like Swarup Saxena and Dutt, Ram Nath Sharma, and S.R. Sharma have extensively explored the Philosophical and Sociological Foundations of Education from a realist viewpoint, often contextualizing its principles within diverse educational frameworks. These works are crucial for providing a global and applied understanding of realism beyond its Western origins.

A central theme that emerges from this review of literature is the realist conception of knowledge. While different philosophers within the tradition have developed nuanced theories, a fundamental consensus exists on two primary principles:

➢The Coherence Theory of Truth: Realistic thinkers maintain that reality is a unified, coherent whole. Therefore, knowledge, which aims to reflect this reality, cannot be fragmented. As elucidated across the reviewed texts, any single piece of information gains significance only

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when integrated into its total context. Consequently, ideas and theories are validated not in isolation, but through their **coherence within a continuously developing, unified system of knowledge.

⪡The Active Role of the Knower: The literature consistently rejects a passive view of learning. Since the human mind is an active agent that analyzes and synthesizes experiences, knowledge is not merely received but constructed. What is known depends in part upon the knower. This implies that students must personally engage with information, relating it to their prior experiences to make it meaningful.

The epistemological principles of realism directly inform its educational philosophy, a connection thoroughly examined in the works of Sankara Narayanan Parlcery (Rudiments of Education) and others.

⪡The Purpose of Teaching: The primary goal of instruction is not the rote memorization of facts. Instead, the teacher's role is to stimulate students to discover the meaning of information for themselves. The educator acts as a guide to objective reality, helping students learn to navigate and understand the world as it is.

⪡The Nature of Learning: True learning, therefore, is reconceptualized as a process of active discovery. It is not the absorption of selected data but the personal and systematic exploration of the reality that is both around and within us. This process ensures that learning is significant, coherent, and personally integrated.

The reviewed literature presents realism not as a monolithic doctrine but as a rich and evolving tradition with a consistent core. It champions a view of knowledge as an objective, coherent structure and frames the learner as an active participant in the discovery of truth. The significant contribution of realism to educational theory lies in this powerful synthesis, which continues to advocate for a curriculum and pedagogy grounded in reality and aimed at fostering critical, independent thinkers capable of discerning the interconnectedness of all knowledge.

Research gap

The prevailing literature on realism is predominantly characterized by an exploration of Western philosophical thought, where the concept is often treated in abstract, metaphysical terms. A conspicuous gap exists in the systematic application and synthesis of these diverse philosophical opinions into a unified theory of *educational realism*. Philosophers frequently offer distinct, and at times contradictory, interpretations without clarifying their practical implications for pedagogical theory and practice. This study seeks to address this gap by critically synthesizing these varied perspectives to construct a clear and actionable framework for realism in education."

Research question

How do philosophers conceptualize realism in education, and where do their opinions converge on its implementation?

Objectives of the Study

Upon completion of this paper, learners will be able to:

1. Define realism and identify its various forms within philosophical discourse.
2. Explain the fundamental principles underlying realist philosophy.
3. Analyze Western philosophical contributions to the development of realism.
4. Evaluate Aristotle’s views on realism and compare them with modern Western thought.

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5. Examine key philosophers' perspectives on educational realism.
6. Differentiate between the various branches of realism (e.g., classical, scientific, critical).
7. Critically assess contemporary interpretations and relevance of realism in today's context.

Realism

Aristotle is regarded as the architect of the realist philosophy, which proves that realism is not merely a theory but the foundation of practical science and logic. Its influence in the field of education remains evident even today, particularly in promoting scientific observation and critical thinking.

"Realists believe that reality exists independent of the human mind. The ultimate reality is the world of physical objects, and the focus remains on tangible entities. Truth, for the realists, is objective, that which can be observed. Aristotle, a student of Plato who departed from his mentor's idealist philosophy, is regarded as the father of both Realism and the scientific method.In this metaphysical perspective, the primary aim is to understand objective reality through the diligent and unsparing scrutiny of all observable data. Aristotle maintained that in order to truly comprehend an object, its ultimate form must be understood, as that form does not change. For instance, a rose exists whether or not one is aware of it. A rose may also exist in the human mind without being physically present, yet ultimately it shares essential properties with all other roses and flowers (its form), though one rose may be red and another peach in color.Aristotle was also the first to formalize the teaching of logic as a discipline, enabling systematic reasoning about physical events and phenomena. For realists, the exercise of rational thought represents the ultimate purpose of humankind.The Realist curriculum emphasizes the subject matter of the physical world, particularly science and mathematics. Teachers are tasked with organizing and presenting content systematically within disciplines, demonstrating the use of clear criteria in decision-making. Pedagogical methods prioritize the mastery of facts and foundational skills through demonstration and recitation. Students must also cultivate the ability to think critically and scientifically through observation and experimentation. Consequently, the curriculum should be approached scientifically, standardized, and discipline-based. Finally, character development is nurtured through training in the rules of conduct".[4]

Philosophy

Just as education forms the foundation of human civilization, philosophy provides direction and standards to that education. Philosophy is a quest to understand the relationship between man, the universe, and God, and it questions the foundations of every field that falls within human experience. Its reflection can also be seen in today's intellectual and scientific debates, where philosophy serves as a means of clarifying fundamental questions and offering critical analysis.

"The progress of human civilization is the product of education, yet the answer to every educational question is ultimately shaped by our philosophy of life. Philosophy seeks to

[4] Muhammad Athar Hussain,philosophy of education,Islamabad,publisher: Allama iqbal open university
islamabad, 2017,p,13

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understand human beings in relation to the universe, nature, and God. It deals with the nature of the human mind and personality, as well as with the ways in which individuals and their institutions can be understood. It endeavors to explore everything that falls within the bounds of human experience.

The aim of philosophy is to establish a fundamental understanding of reality—whether it is the problem of human conduct, the assumptions underlying religious or scientific beliefs, the tools and methods of thinking, or any issue that arises in the vast domain of human activity. Thus, philosophy aspires to present a comprehensive account of the human world. It is both reflective and critical in nature, engaging in the careful examination of the fundamental notions and assumptions that underlie every field of human experience. From this, we may conclude that philosophy is a "search for a comprehensive view of nature, an attempt at a universal explanation of the nature of things".[5]

Education

In the beginning, education was acquired informally through the environment and the experiences of elders. However, as societies became more complex and the scope of knowledge expanded, the need for formal education emerged. Thus, the institution of the school and the role of the teacher came into existence. This reality highlights that education is not merely the transmission of information but also the transfer of cultural heritage and the shaping of personality

"Education is a discipline concerned with the methods of teaching and learning in schools or school-like environments, as opposed to the various non-formal and informal means of socialization (such as rural development projects or parent-child education). Broadly speaking, education may be defined as the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society. In this sense, it is equivalent to what social scientists describe as socialization or enculturation.Children—whether born among the tribes of New Guinea, the Renaissance Florentines, or the middle classes of Manhattan—enter the world without culture. Education is designed to guide them in learning a culture, shaping their behavior according to the expectations of adulthood, and preparing them for their eventual role in society. In the most primitive cultures, there is often little formal learning—few institutions resembling schools, classrooms, or professional teachers. Instead, the entire environment and all daily activities are perceived as school and classes, with many or all adults serving as teachers.As societies grow more complex, however, the body of knowledge to be transmitted from one generation to the next becomes too vast for any single individual to master. Consequently, there arises the need for more selective and efficient means of cultural transmission. The result is the development of formal education—embodied in the institution of the school and the professional role of the teacher".[6]

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[5] Muhammad Athar Hussain,**philosophy of education**,p #18

[6] Joseph Albert Lauwerys, article, **what is education**, Director, Atlantic Institute of Education, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1970-76. Professor of Comparative Education, University of London, 1947-70. Coeditor, World Year Book of Education, 1947-

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RELATIONSHIP OF EDUCATION AND PHILOSOPHY

Philosophical thought has profoundly influenced the definition and aims of education. Plato, in particular, regarded education not merely as an informational activity but as a process of moral, social, and personal development. Subsequent philosophers explained education from various perspectives—religious, scientific, social, and natural. In essence, education is a continuous and multidimensional process that extends throughout every stage of life, fostering both individual personality development and social harmony.

Educational thought, like many other branches of knowledge, began with the philosophical deliberations of ancient Greek thinkers. Plato, in particular, is regarded as the first to give education a comprehensive meaning, which is still influential in the West today. He defined education as a lifelong process, starting from childhood and lasting until the end of life. For Plato, education was not only about imparting knowledge and skills but also about cultivating values, training instincts, and fostering virtuous habits. In The Republic, he emphasized that true education civilizes and humanizes individuals in their relations with others.Later philosophers expanded on these ideas. Comenius highlighted the religious, moral, and intellectual aspects of education; Froebel stressed that teaching should be protective rather than directive; Rousseau promoted the principle of liberty, urging alignment with the call of nature; and Huxley emphasized education's social role in preparing individuals to fit into society without losing individuality.Across all these perspectives, education has been viewed as a continuous process of development, beginning at home and extending throughout life. It involves the acquisition of knowledge, language, social awareness, and the ability to control one's actions. Teachers play a central role by continuing and guiding this development, but they too remain lifelong learners, simultaneously teaching and learning in interaction with others.[7]

REALISM

The idea that objects are real in their essence and independent of human perception is a strong position in the field of epistemology.

"Realism is a philosophical theory which asserts that the existence of objects is real; for this reason, it is sometimes also referred to as objectivism. Both realism and objectivism are metaphysical theories that deal with the existence of things. Within the realm of epistemology, realism maintains that in the process of acquiring knowledge, objects exist independently of the knower's existence and influence. In other words, the central principle of this theory in the epistemological domain is that the object and its qualities are autonomous and remain unaffected by the knower or the process of knowing"[8]-

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[7] Shrivastava, K **Philosophical Foundations of Education,** Kanishka Publishers, Distributors, New Delhi, (2003).p# 218

[8] Ornstein, A. C., & Levine, D. U. (2008). **Foundations of Education** (10th ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company. P#165

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The Chief Tenets of Realism

The fundamental standpoint of Realism is that objects and their properties exist independently of human perception. Naïve Realism considers them to be directly and completely real, while Scientific Realism distinguishes between primary and secondary qualities. This indicates that the relationship between reality and knowledge has remained an important and ongoing issue in the philosophy of education.

"As a general rule, the chief tenets of realism are as follows:

1. Existence of objects is independent of knowledge.

According to naive realists, objects exist irrespective of our knowledge of them. Scientific realism accepts this notion but asserts that our thoughts concerning these objects are constructed by the mind.

2. Qualities are inherent in known objects.

Naive realists believe that the qualities we experience in objects are intrinsic to those objects. Scientific realists, by contrast, distinguish between primary qualities (which truly belong to objects) and secondary qualities (which are attributed by the mind during the process of knowing).

3. Knowledge does not affect the object or its qualities.

Naive realists maintain that neither the object nor its qualities are altered by being the subject of knowledge. Scientific realists, however, argue that this is not valid for secondary qualities, which may be influenced by perception.

4. Knowledge of objects is direct.

According to naive realism, knowledge is direct and perceptual. Representationism holds that this is true only for simple thoughts; complex thoughts are indirect, being composed of simpler ones.

5. Objects are common.

Analytical realists believe objects are commonly accessible, while representationists contend that objects are accessible primarily for elementary or primary thought. Scientific realism recognizes that the same object may be experienced differently by different individuals.

6. Relation between object and thought.

Naive realism asserts a direct relation between the object and thought about it, while scientific realism rejects this direct relation".[9]

Types of Realism The main types of realism are the following

These theories agree that objects exist to some extent independently of the mind, but they differ on the extent to which knowledge and perception influence them. This shows that the relationship between "knowledge and reality" has remained a central and ongoing debate in philosophy of education and metaphysics.

Representationism (Locke): Objects exist independently of knowledge, but the mental process influences perception. In simple ideas, knowledge is direct, whereas in complex ideas, it is indirect.

Neo-Realism: Certain aspects of objects become the subject of knowledge, but knowledge does not affect the inherent qualities of objects.

[9] https://zonofeducation.com/realism-philosophy-of-education/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

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Critical Realism: Emerging in the 20th century in America, it holds that knowledge can influence objects, and different individuals may perceive the same object in different ways.[10]

Contributions of Realist Thinkers to Education

Realist thinkers shifted education from rote and bookish learning toward practical, experiential, and scientific foundations. They emphasized nature, sensory training, mother tongue, and preparation for real life. Their ideas shaped modern educational principles—especially scientific pedagogy, moral formation, and life-oriented learning.

"Richard Mulcaster (1531–1621): Advocated sensory realism; emphasized training of the senses, natural learning, child-centered education, mother tongue as the medium, and proper teaching methods.

Francis Bacon (1561–1626): Promoted empirical realism; rejected rote learning, insisted on scientific and practical study of nature, and strongly supported the inductive method.

Ratke (1571–1635): Stressed mother tongue instruction, one subject at a time, learning through direct experience, and a stress-free educational environment.

Comenius (1592–1670): Gave a systematic shape to realism; introduced graded curriculum, practical application, suitable textbooks, and a four-level educational structure—considered the basis of modern pedagogy.

Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841): Saw education as character formation through the development of multiple interests and moral example rather than mere preaching.

Herbert Spencer (1820–1903): Defined the goal of education as "complete living." He outlined five purposes: health, preparation for vocation, family responsibilities, civic duties, and use of leisure—each grounded in science".[11]

Aims of Education

Realism considers education as preparation for practical life. According to this philosophy, the purpose of education is not merely to provide theoretical knowledge, but to develop the intellectual, moral, and practical abilities of individuals so that they may become active members of society. Realism emphasizes observation, experience, and scientific knowledge as essential parts of the curriculum, since they are directly connected to real life and problem-solving. It also stresses the training of reason, will, and character. In short, Realism links education with utility, truth, and practicality, making it a means of progress for both the individual and society.

"Realism in education is a philosophy that stresses the importance of preparing individuals for real life. It defines education not as a mere process of acquiring theoretical knowledge but as a practical, continuous, and purposeful training of mind and character. According to realism, the true aim of education is to enable individuals to live a happy, successful, and socially integrated

[10] Ornstein, A. C., & Levine, D. U. (2008). **Foundations of Education** (10th ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company. P#257

[11] Sharma, R. N. **Textbook of Educational Philosophy** Publisher-Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi 2002, p#321

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life. This includes the fulfillment of essential human responsibilities such as the use of language, personal hygiene, good citizenship, social and leisure activities, vocational efficiency, and religious obligations. Franklin Bobbit emphasized that real education must prepare a child for social life by providing an understanding of society, its organization, and the natural environment.Historically, realism arose as a reaction against bookish and purely theoretical education. During the Renaissance and Reformation, when science and human reason gained recognition, thinkers like Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, and Francis Bacon emphasized observation, experimentation, and rationality. This scientific approach influenced education, making it more practical and reality-based. Realists argued that learning should not remain confined to abstract knowledge but should be directly related to the needs of real life.For realism, education must focus on developing intellectual and moral qualities that equip learners to deal with life's challenges. Schools should cultivate reasoning, intelligence, and determination so that individuals can solve problems effectively. Realist educators also give importance to empirical methods—observation, experimentation, tours, practical demonstrations, and the use of the mother tongue—because these make education more natural and closer to reality. In their view, knowledge must be useful and should prepare learners for livelihood, social adjustment, and personal growth.The curriculum in realism is structured according to the interests and abilities of learners. Sciences such as physics, chemistry, biology, and astronomy are given central importance because they provide direct knowledge about the world and help in solving practical problems. On the other hand, subjects like literature, art, and music are considered secondary or of limited importance, since they are not directly linked with survival and livelihood.Ultimately, realism defines education as the process of preparing individuals for the real world. It emphasizes utility, practicality, and adaptability. By focusing on scientific knowledge, social responsibilities, and moral strength, realism seeks to develop well-balanced individuals who can contribute positively to society and live harmoniously with others. Thus, education in realism is both a personal development and a social necessity, linking individual growth with collective progress.[12]

Methods of Teaching

The study of the educational philosophy of Realism reveals that its greatest strength lies in its emphasis on reality and scientific foundations. This philosophy does not allow education to remain merely theoretical; rather, it connects learning with observation, experimentation, and rational analysis, making it more effective and practical. However, a common critique is that excessive focus on facts sometimes diminishes the importance of students' creativity and emotional development. Despite this limitation, Realism holds exceptional significance in promoting practical and scientific learning. Yet, to maintain balance in education, it is essential to also include the holistic aspects of human personality, ensuring that intellectual, creative, and emotional dimensions are equally nurtured.

"Realist thinkers emphasise objectivity, knowledge of scientific facts and the knowledge of the real. Students should be helped to know objectively. This requires knowledge through sense organs. Words are symbols to convey experience. They help in communication

[12] Shri Nikunja Ranjan Dash, Philosophical Foundation of Education, Uktal University, Vani vihar Bhubaneswar, p#77

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of knowledge. Practical verification is the test of all knowledge. Propositions which cannot be verified are nonsense. Facts are related to the present. The teacher should enable the student to know the world. He should not give personal opinions but clarify the facts. In fact, the facts should themselves be revealed without any distortion. Thus, the realists support fact-centred method of teaching According to the realist the knowledge of the real involves two laws: Law of aggregation and the law of conversion of simplicity. There is continuity in nature. In concept formation the feelings should not be allowed to interfere. In the law of conversions of simplicity, it has been pointed out that space and time are divided for the sake of and convenience. The whole is the aggregate of parts. The parts do not lose their existence in the whole. Therefore, the proper method of teaching is to begin with the part and reach the whole. Knowledge should be analysed into principles, and principles into hypothesis. Facts should be analysed into propositions. Thus, the method of teaching should involve analysis and rational classification. Realist approach to education is child-centred. The method of teaching should change according to the requirement of the child. The intellect of the child should be developed to enable him to know the facts. Experimentation should be the basis of facts. Knowledge is uniform in nature. The teacher should have firm faith in science. He should have a scientific attitude and develop the same in the educand. He should himself investigate and encourage the educands to do so. He should know the experimental method and train the educands in it. He should understand the needs of the student and fulfil them. He should render a clear, lucid and systematic understanding of scientific facts to the student. He should keep his personal opinion apart from objective teaching. He should keep an eye upon child psychology and adolescence psychology and mould his methods of teaching accordingly. He should make a selection of subject matter according to the interests of the student".[13]

Contribution of Realism to Education

Like other systems of philosophy of education realism has its advantages and disadvantages. Its impact can be seen everywhere. The realist philosophers influence practical education. In seventeenth century academies for the teaching of natural sciences developed everywhere in Europe and later on in America in eighteenth century. Technical and vocational education has become a common feature of education everywhere. Thus, the following may be considered to be the contribution of realism to education. Education in Technical and Vocational Subject Every society needs technocrats and people trained in different vocations. Therefore, in every country of the world today the plan of education is based upon the needs of such persons in the development of the nation. [14]

Educational Philosophy of Realism

The philosophy of Realism strengthens education by grounding it in facts, observation, and scientific reasoning, making learning practical and effective. However, its overemphasis on objective knowledge sometimes neglects creativity and emotional growth. A balanced

[13] https://www.slideshare.net/slideshow/realism-and-education/56696968?utm_source=chatgpt.com

[14] Shri Nikunja Ranjan Dash, Philosophical Foundation of Education, Uktal University, Vani vihar Bhubaneswar, p#152

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approach, integrating intellectual, emotional, and creative dimensions, ensures holistic personality development alongside scientific learning.

The philosophy of Realism in education is widely recognised as one of the most influential approaches because of its strong reliance on reality, objectivity, and scientific foundations. At its core, Realism seeks to free education from the bounds of mere theorisation and abstraction, instead rooting it in the actual experiences of life and the observable facts of the natural world. This makes the learning process far more meaningful, practical, and applicable to real situations. By emphasising observation, experimentation, and rational analysis, Realism not only enhances the accuracy of knowledge but also fosters in students a spirit of inquiry and critical thinking. It encourages learners to see education as a process of discovery rather than passive memorisation, thereby making learning dynamic and engaging. Furthermore, the Realist insistence on facts and scientific verification helps guard against the dangers of superstition, baseless speculation, or subjective bias, which can often cloud the pursuit of truth. Teachers under this philosophy are viewed not as dispensers of personal opinion but as guides who help students access reality itself by presenting facts clearly and systematically. In this sense, Realism contributes significantly to developing a scientific attitude among learners, training them to think rationally and evaluate knowledge critically.However, despite its many strengths, Realism has also faced criticism for its limitations. One major concern is that its excessive focus on objective facts can sometimes reduce the role of imagination, creativity, and emotional development in education. While scientific knowledge is essential, human personality is not merely intellectual; it is also creative, emotional, and moral. By placing too much emphasis on facts, there is a risk that Realism may produce learners who are knowledgeable but lack emotional intelligence or the ability to appreciate beauty, culture, and values. Moreover, in an age when innovation and creativity are increasingly valued, this one-sided approach could restrict students' potential. Nevertheless, these criticisms do not diminish the overall importance of Realism. Rather, they highlight the need to balance its fact-based, scientific orientation with a broader, holistic view of education. If integrated thoughtfully with attention to emotional and creative dimensions, Realism can become even more effective. Thus, the enduring significance of Realism lies in its ability to ground education in reality while also reminding us that true education must nurture the whole person—intellectually, scientifically, emotionally, and creatively—so that learners are fully prepared for both the practical challenges of life and the deeper human quest for meaning.[15]

DIFFERENT THOUGHT ABOUT REALISM

Aristotle and the Philosophy of Realism

The central point of Aristotle's realist thought is that knowledge is derived from the senses and experience, rather than from mere abstract ideas. He considers the relationship between matter and form as the foundation of understanding reality and explains it through his doctrine of the four causes (material, formal, efficient, and final). His philosophy of education emphasizes the training of the intellect, character building, and the physical and moral development of the individual. According to him, man is not inherently virtuous; rather, he becomes virtuous

[15] Muhammad Athar Hussain,philosophy of education,p #173

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through education and habit. The principle of "moderation" or the "Golden Mean" is the essence of his moral philosophy, which promotes balance, harmony, and equilibrium in life.
"Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.), one of the greatest Greek philosophers, was the son of a physician to the King of Macedon, which gave him a scientific background from the start. At the age of seventeen, he moved to Athens and joined Plato's Academy, where he studied until Plato's death. Although he was Plato's student, Aristotle disagreed with him on fundamental ideas. Unlike Plato, who explained the world through abstract concepts, Aristotle emphasized understanding reality through observation and experience. For him, the source of knowledge was sensory perception and empirical study. As a result, he wrote on a wide range of subjects including logic, physics, metaphysics, ethics, politics, biology, medicine, dreams, rhetoric, and poetry.
Aristotle was the first philosopher to argue that nature is understandable and can be studied through scientific principles. He rejected the notion that the universe was simply controlled by deities. For him, the relationship between matter and form was central to understanding reality. Matter could not exist without form, and form could only be understood by studying matter. To explore this, he developed the method of syllogism—logical reasoning through a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. However, he acknowledged that if any premise was false, the conclusion would also be flawed.
He explained the relationship between matter and form through his Four Causes:
1. Material Cause – the substance from which something is made.
2. Formal Cause – the design or structure shaping the material.
3. Efficient Cause – the agent or force that produces the object.
4. Final Cause – the purpose or end toward which the object moves.
Aristotle believed the universe was in constant change and was held together by God, the Ultimate Reality. His philosophy placed strong emphasis on organization and purpose. He argued that human beings, as rational creatures, fulfill their highest potential through reasoning, since thought is man's greatest attribute. Every object has a purpose, and the purpose of education is to cultivate reasoning abilities.For moral development, Aristotle introduced the concept of the Golden Mean, which stressed balance and moderation between extremes. Through this balance, harmony between body and soul could be achieved. He divided the soul into three aspects: the vegetative (basic growth functions), the animative (movement and emotions), and the rational (the highest faculty). Education, according to Aristotle, nurtures all three aspects, leading to happiness and human perfection.He further emphasized that body and mind are not in opposition; rather, sensory data, when organized, lead to reasoning. Education enables man to control his animal instincts, form virtuous habits, and live in a socially and morally refined manner. Since man is not inherently good, he must learn goodness through reason and discipline. Thus, education's ultimate goal is to develop physical health, intellectual strength, and moral balance.In short, Aristotle's Realism rests on the belief that truth is discovered through observation, experience, and systematic reasoning. The central purpose of education is to develop the intellectual, physical, and moral capacities of man, enabling him to live a virtuous, balanced, and fulfilling life[16].

[16] Gutek, Gerald L. **Philosophical and Ideological Voices in Education**. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2004.p# 231

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Religious Realism: Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas' educational philosophy emphasizes the integration of reason, faith, and moral development. He believed that humans gain knowledge through sensory perception and rational inquiry, guided ultimately by divine revelation. Education, for Aquinas, is a holistic process that nurtures the intellect, moral character, and spiritual awareness. The family and Church are central to imparting ethical and religious values, while the state supports but does not replace these primary institutions. By progressing from sensory experience to higher understanding, education cultivates virtuous, rational, and spiritually aware individuals capable of achieving moral excellence, intellectual growth, and harmonious social participation.

"Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), a Roman Catholic priest of the Dominican Order in Italy, is one of the most influential philosophers and theologians in the tradition of scholasticism. Known as Doctor Angelicus and Doctor Communis, he played a pivotal role in shaping Christian philosophy and theology, particularly through his efforts to harmonize Aristotelian philosophy with Christian thought. Aquinas emphasized that the pursuit of knowledge requires both divine assistance and human reason. While humans can understand many truths through natural reasoning, divine revelation is occasionally necessary to grasp higher truths, particularly those concerning God, morality, and salvation. This dual approach to truth—natural and supernatural revelation—forms the foundation of Thomistic philosophy, integrating reason and faith into a coherent epistemological framework. Natural revelation is accessible to all through rational thought and observation, while supernatural revelation is conveyed through the prophets, Scripture, and Church tradition.Aquinas' most significant work, Summa Theologica (1265–1274), serves as a comprehensive guide to theology and education. It systematically presents Christian doctrines, exploring topics such as the existence of God, creation, human purpose, Christ, the sacraments, and the ultimate return to God. In this work, Aquinas harmonizes faith and reason, demonstrating that rational investigation of the world complements spiritual understanding. His philosophy laid the groundwork for Thomism, a dominant school in medieval philosophy that has deeply influenced Catholic theology and Western thought. Central to his epistemology is the recognition of sense perception as the starting point of knowledge. Humans first encounter reality through their senses, which allows them to observe material things and discern the existence of a transcendent agent, ultimately leading to God. This emphasis on observation aligns with the realist tradition, while maintaining a distinctly religious perspective.Aquinas is also known for his Five Ways, arguments for the existence of God derived from observable phenomena. These include the argument from motion, causation, contingency, degrees of perfection, and teleology, each demonstrating God's role as the ultimate cause and designer of the universe. For Aquinas, the natural world is not self-sufficient but dependent upon God, and human cognition reflects this relationship. Unlike Aristotle, Aquinas viewed the soul as immortal and divinely created, possessing innate capacities for moral and spiritual development. Education, therefore, must guide individuals from lower to higher forms of understanding, cultivating both their physical and spiritual faculties.In terms of education, Aquinas placed primary responsibility on the family and the Church. The family, particularly the mother, is the first and most critical teacher, responsible for instilling moral and ethical values early in a child's life. The Church provides knowledge of divine law and sets the foundation for spiritual understanding. The state's role is secondary, ensuring that education aligns with societal norms without overriding the primary influence of home and Church. Aquinas advocated a holistic educational approach that integrates moral, intellectual, and spiritual development, aiming to cultivate virtuous and

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rational individuals capable of achieving both temporal and eternal happiness.Thomas Aquinas' Religious Realism merges Aristotelian empiricism with Christian theology, emphasizing that knowledge begins with sensory experience but ultimately leads to divine truth. Education, in Aquinas' philosophy, is both a moral and intellectual journey, guided by reason, sense perception, and divine principles, ensuring the full development of human potential in accordance with God's plan. His thought underscores the interdependence of the physical, rational, and spiritual dimensions of human life, establishing a framework in which education, faith, and reason work together to form virtuous, well-rounded, and enlightened individuals.[17]

Modern Realism: Francis Bacon and John Locke

Modern realism began to develop because classical realism did not sufficiently emphasize the method of inductive reasoning. In classical realism, if the initial premise or assumption was flawed, the entire logical structure built upon it could lead to errors. To overcome this limitation, modern realists stressed the importance of combining induction and deduction in order to explain ideas more accurately. Among the philosophers who made significant contributions in this regard, the most prominent were Francis Bacon and John Locke. They worked to establish systematic methods of reasoning and to advance approaches that could broaden and deepen human understanding.

Francis Bacon

Francis Bacon is a father of the modern scientific method, championing empiricism. He revolutionized knowledge acquisition by rejecting Aristotle's deductive logic for a new, evidence-based approach. His inductive method, detailed in Novum Organum, begins with observation and experimentation to build general laws. This systematic process, the Baconian Method, became the cornerstone of scientific inquiry.Bacon famously declared "Knowledge is Power," believing science empowers humanity. He also identified mental biases, the "Idols of the Mind," which hinder clear thinking. His work established science as a disciplined practice separate from dogma, providing a practical methodology for discovery that remains foundational today.

"Francis Bacon (1561-1626) was an English philosopher, statesman, scientist, lawyer, jurist, and author who also served as a politician in the courts of Queen Elizabeth I and King James I. Although he was not successful in his political efforts, his philosophical ideas proved to be extremely influential. He was a major proponent of the Scientific Revolution who claimed to take all knowledge as his field of investigation.His most famous work is "Novum Organum" (1620), which was written in response to Aristotle's work on logic, the "Organon". In this book,

[17] Aquinas, T. (1265–1274). Summa Theologica. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. New York: Benziger Bros. (Available online: http://www.newadvent.org/summa/)

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Bacon detailed a new system of logic that he believed to be superior to Aristotle's old system of syllogism. In it, he laid the foundation for the "Baconian Method," which consists of procedures for isolating the form, nature, or cause of a phenomenon. This method includes three key techniques: the method of agreement, the method of difference, and the method of associated variation. Bacon believed that the problem with religious dogmatism was that it started with a fixed dogma or belief and then worked towards deducing conclusions. He argued that this process was unsuitable and ineffective for science, as the scientific process should not begin with preconceived ideas. For Bacon, developing effective means of inquiry was vital because knowledge was power that could be used to deal effectively with life's problems.He therefore introduced the inductive method for acquiring knowledge, which begins with observations and then uses reasoning to form general statements or laws. Verification was essential before any conclusion could be made. If contradictions were found in the collected data, the ideas were to be discarded.Bacon also realized that a scientific or inductive approach would uncover many errors in previously accepted propositions. He insisted that people should re-examine all previously accepted knowledge. At the very least, they should attempt to rid themselves of the various "Idols" (false notions) in their minds that cloud their thinking. Bacon identified these obstacles as "Idols of the Mind," which he described in four categories:

1. Idols of the Tribe (Idola Tribus): This stems from human nature itself—the tendency to perceive more order and regularity in systems than truly exists, often due to following preconceived ideas.
2. Idols of the Cave (Idola Specus): These are the errors in reasoning unique to an individual, arising from personal biases, preferences, and limited experiences (e.g., making a faulty generalization based on a few bad personal experiences).
3. Idols of the Marketplace (Idola Fori): These arise from the confusion and imprecision in the use of language, where words used in science might have different meanings than in common usage.
4. Idols of the Theatre (Idola Theatri): These are due to the uncritical acceptance of flawed philosophical systems or ideologies that incorporate mistaken methods.

Bacon did not propose a final, complete philosophy himself. Instead, he advocated for a method of developing philosophy. He wrote that although the philosophy of his time used deductive syllogism to interpret nature, the true philosopher should proceed through inductive reasoning—moving from specific facts to axioms and then to general laws[18].

John Locke

John Locke's philosophies marked a transformative shift in Western thought, founding modern empiricism with his revolutionary "tabula rasa" concept. He asserted that all knowledge derives from experience, challenging innate ideas and emphasizing evidence over dogma. His political theories on natural rights and governmental consent directly influenced democratic revolutions, notably reflected in America's founding documents. In education, Locke pioneered child-centered approaches, stressing holistic development—physical health, moral character, and tailored academics. He introduced concepts like developmental readiness and learning through play, foreshadowing modern pedagogy. Despite a tension between his blank slate theory and acknowledgment of innate aptitudes, Locke's legacy endures as a cornerstone of liberal

[18] https://www.thecollector.com/francis-bacon-knowledge-is-power/

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democracy and progressive education, empowering the belief that human nature can be improved through rational instruction and experience.

“John Locke (1632-1704) stands as a foundational figure in Western philosophy, widely recognized as the first of the British empiricists. His revolutionary ideas exerted an enormous influence on the development of epistemology, political philosophy, and educational theory, securing his place as one of the most pivotal thinkers of the Enlightenment. His works profoundly inspired other great minds like Voltaire and Rousseau, Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, and the American revolutionaries, with his principles clearly reflected in the American Declaration of Independence.Locke’s primary philosophical mission was to understand how human beings acquire knowledge. In his seminal work, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690), he proposed a radical new theory of the mind. He contended that a child’s mind is a “tabula rasa” (a blank slate) at birth, containing no innate or inborn ideas. This was a direct challenge to prevailing philosophical doctrines. Instead, Locke argued that all knowledge is built from experience. He claimed that information is added to the blank slate through two fundamental processes: sensation (perception of the external world) and reflection (the mind’s internal processing of those perceptions). In essence, he concluded that "what we know is what we experience."

This empirical approach led him to a second, equally significant project: clearing the intellectual "rubbish" and preconceived notions that prevent people from gaining true knowledge, much like Francis Bacon's campaign against "idols."Locke’s theory of the mind naturally extended into his influential views on education, detailed in his 1693 treatise, Some Thoughts Concerning Education. For over a century, this was the most important philosophical work on education in Britain, and it was widely translated across Europe. Locke opens with a powerful statement on education's supreme importance, asserting that “of all the men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education.” He firmly believed that "education makes the man."His educational philosophy focused on educating the **whole child** through three distinct and interconnected methods:

1. The Development of a Healthy Body: Locke believed physical health was the foundation for a sound mind. He advocated for a rigorous regimen of outdoor play, fresh air, a simple diet, and ample sleep to build a hardy constitution.
2. The Formation of a Virtuous Character: For Locke, the primary goal of education was not academic learning but the development of moral character and virtue. This was to be instilled through practice and habit rather than through rules and rote memorization.
3. The Choice of an Appropriate Academic Curriculum:While secondary to character, academic learning was still vital. Locke’s curriculum was practical and designed to be engaging. He stressed the critical importance of age-appropriate readiness and natural inclination. He warned teachers against pushing children beyond their capabilities and insisted that lessons should be made interesting and rewarding, not a forced chore. He believed play was a crucial part of learning and suggested that reading instruction should begin as soon as a child starts talking.

A key contribution from his tabula rasa theory is the idea that the “little and almost insensible impressions on our tender infancies have very important and lasting consequences.” The associations of ideas made in early childhood are the most significant because they form the very foundation of the self, making the role of the educator and parent absolutely critical in

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shaping the individual. In this way, Locke established the groundwork for child-centered education that respects the individual's development and experience[19].

Contemporary Realism: Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell

Twentieth-century contemporary realism emerged as a philosophical movement directly responding to revolutionary developments in science. Its proponents sought to address profound questions regarding the nature of reality, knowledge, matter, space, and time, insisting that philosophy must align with and be grounded in scientific inquiry rather than abstract idealism.The two foremost figures of this movement, Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell, initially collaborated on the monumental work Principia Mathematica, which aimed to establish a logical foundation for mathematics and scientific certainty. This project reflected realism's core objective of achieving an objective, logical description of reality.Their philosophical paths later diverged significantly. Russell pioneered analytic philosophy and logical atomism, arguing that the world consists of simple, objective facts that correspond to basic logical propositions. He believed philosophy should analyze complex ideas into their simplest components to eliminate ambiguity.

Alfred North Whitehead

Alfred North Whitehead's philosophy represents a profound synthesis of rigorous logic and metaphysical innovation. His collaboration with Russell in Principia Mathematica sought to ground mathematics in logic, reflecting a commitment to precision and systematic thought. However, Whitehead diverged significantly by developing process philosophy, which rejected static, materialist views of reality. Instead, he envisioned a dynamic, interconnected universe of evolving events—a perspective aligned with modern physics. His emphasis on education as a practical, contextual, and integrative process further underscored his belief that knowledge must be meaningful and applicable. Whitehead's work remains influential for its interdisciplinary breadth and its effort to harmonize empirical inquiry with metaphysical depth.
"Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947) was a pioneering English mathematician and philosopher whose work spanned disciplines such as algebra, logic, the foundations of mathematics, the philosophy of science, metaphysics, and education. He is best known for co-authoring the monumental three-volume work Principia Mathematica (1910–1913) with Bertrand Russell. This ambitious project sought to establish a rigorous logical foundation for all mathematics by deriving mathematical truths from a carefully constructed system of axioms and symbolic logic. The Principia remains one of the most significant contributions to mathematical logic and philosophy since Aristotle, advancing the theory of logicism—the idea that mathematics is essentially an extension of logic.
Whitehead's philosophical outlook uniquely blended elements of realism and idealism. Like Aristotle, he emphasized the importance of connecting knowledge to lived experience. He argued that philosophy should be a search for patterns in reality, where "pattern" resembles the Aristotelian concept of "form." Rejecting abstract knowledge for its own sake, Whitehead insisted that ideas must be meaningful, practical, and grounded in human experience. This perspective deeply informed his views on education. He criticized traditional curricula focused solely on rote learning and argued that education should be relevant and useful. For Whitehead,

[19] https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/locke/

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learning ideas in isolation was meaningless; they had to be contextualized within their practical applications.In metaphysics, Whitehead developed a comprehensive system known as process philosophy, articulated most fully in his work Process and Reality (1929). He proposed that reality is not static but dynamic—a continuous process of becoming. Rejecting mechanistic and materialist views, he described the universe as a network of interrelated events rather than isolated objects. This vision aligned with developments in modern science, including Einstein's theory of relativity and quantum mechanics, emphasizing interconnection and change.Whitehead's educational philosophy emphasized the cultivation of both cultural breadth and specialized expertise. He believed that education should produce individuals who appreciate the power and beauty of ideas while also mastering specific knowledge relevant to their lives. He advocated for an integrated curriculum that connects theory with practice, allowing students to actively use their skills and understanding. For Whitehead, the ultimate goal of education was to foster creativity, critical thinking, and a deep sense of how knowledge applies to the world.His influence extends across multiple fields, including logic, the philosophy of science, metaphysics, ethics, and religion. By bridging the gap between abstract theory and practical experience, Whitehead left a lasting legacy that continues to inspire interdisciplinary approaches to knowledge, education, and human understanding[20].

Bertrand Arthur William Russell

Bertrand Russell's intellectual legacy is defined by his rigorous fusion of logic, philosophy, and social reform. His co-authorship of Principia Mathematica sought to ground mathematics in logic, establishing him as a pillar of analytic philosophy. The discovery of Russell's Paradox not only exposed foundational cracks in naïve set theory but also catalyzed revolutions in logical and mathematical frameworks, emphasizing precision and systematic rigor. Beyond technical contributions, Russell championed progressive education, arguing that instruction should liberate rather than indoctrinate, blending critical inquiry with empathy. His advocacy for reason, anti-dogmatism, and humanistic values underscores a lifelong commitment to leveraging intellect for societal and individual transformation.

Bertrand Arthur William Russell (1872–1970) was a pioneering British mathematician, logician, and philosopher whose work fundamentally shaped modern analytic philosophy and logic. Initially embracing materialism, Russell earned renown for his rigorous contributions to mathematics and logic. His seminal work, The Principles of Mathematics (1903), laid the groundwork for his magnum opus, Principia Mathematica (1910–1913), co-authored with Alfred North Whitehead. This three-volume work aimed to derive all mathematical truths from a logical foundation, establishing logicism—the view that mathematics is an extension of logic. Through these efforts, Russell emerged as a founding figure of analytic philosophy, advocating for precision and logical analysis in philosophical inquiry.One of Russell's most significant discoveries was Russell's Paradox (1901), which exposed a critical flaw in naïve set theory. The paradox arises when considering the set of all sets that do not contain themselves. If this set contains itself, it must not; if it does not, it must—a logical contradiction. This paradox had profound implications, challenging the foundations of mathematics and sparking decades of research in logic, set theory, and the philosophy of mathematics. It revealed the limitations of classical logic and necessitated the development of more rigorous systems, such as type theory,

[20] https://iep.utm.edu/whitehead/

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which Russell introduced to avoid such contradictions.Beyond his technical achievements, Russell was a revolutionary educational thinker. He criticized traditional education for enforcing unthinking obedience to authority and advocated for a system centered on intellectual liberation and critical thinking. He believed education should foster creativity and autonomy, free from dogmatic religious and parental influences. Central to his vision was the idea that education should be grounded in "knowledge guided by love"—combining rational inquiry with emotional sensitivity. He argued that such an approach could transform society by cultivating compassionate, individuals capable of contributing to human progress.Russell's legacy is multifaceted: as a logician, he reshaped the foundations of mathematics; as a philosopher, he championed clarity and empirical inquiry; and as an educator, he promoted reforms emphasizing freedom and humanity. His work remains influential in fields ranging from logic and epistemology to ethics and education, reflecting his enduring commitment to using reason as a tool for human betterment[21].

Recommendations

1. Integrate Realism with Creativity: Educational frameworks should balance the factual emphasis of realism with opportunities for imagination, creativity, and artistic expression.
2. Enhance Emotional Intelligence: Alongside intellectual rigor, schools should design programs that strengthen emotional intelligence and empathy.
3. Promote Inductive and Deductive Reasoning: Curricula should explicitly teach both inductive (empirical) and deductive (logical) methods of reasoning.
4. Update Teacher Training Programs: Teacher education should include the study of logical fallacies, Bacon's "Idols," and cognitive biases to improve classroom reasoning.
5. Encourage Holistic Development: Educational institutions should nurture intellectual, moral, and physical growth in harmony, following Aristotelian principles.
6. Strengthen Family and Community Roles: Inspired by Aquinas, schools should collaborate with families and community institutions to support values-based education.
7. Adopt Evidence-Based Pedagogy: Teaching strategies should be guided by empirical research and classroom data rather than untested theories.
8. Foster Scientific Thinking: Students should be encouraged to practice observation, experimentation, and analysis as part of daily learning.
9. Promote Child-Centered Learning: Following Locke's insights, curricula should account for learners' experiences, interests, and developmental stages.
10. Design Systematic Curricula: Educational content should be sequenced logically and progressively to ensure deep understanding.
11. Incorporate Comparative Philosophy: Non-Western perspectives on realism should be included to broaden cultural and intellectual horizons.
12. Cultivate Critical Thinking: Schools should embed analytical philosophy and logical reasoning exercises across subjects.
13. Align Education with Scientific Advancements: Contemporary realism calls for curriculum adaptation to modern discoveries in science and technology.
14. Balance Standardization with Flexibility: While systematic knowledge is crucial, educators should also allow space for personalized learning paths.

[21] https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rsnr.2019.0012

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15. Develop Interdisciplinary Approaches: Realist principles should be applied across disciplines—sciences, humanities, and social sciences—to create coherence in education.
16. Encourage Process-Oriented Learning: Inspired by Whitehead, schools should emphasize learning as a dynamic and continuous process rather than a static outcome.
17. Emphasize Moral and Ethical Reasoning: Moral education should complement rational and scientific development to produce responsible citizens.
18. Address Cultural Diversity: Realism should be applied flexibly, respecting the cultural, linguistic, and social contexts of learners.
19. Invest in Research on Realism in Education: More studies should explore how realist philosophy can shape modern teaching methods worldwide.
20. Bridge Philosophy and Practice: Academic theories of realism should be translated into practical classroom strategies accessible to teachers at all levels.

Conclusion

This study examined the philosophical foundations of realism in education with a focus on its principles, historical development, and contemporary relevance. The research aimed to define realism, analyze its key principles, evaluate contributions of major philosophers, distinguish its branches, and assess its role in modern education.Realism, as a philosophical position affirming the existence of objective reality independent of human perception, has evolved through distinct phases while maintaining core principles. Four historical developments are identified: Classical Realism (Aristotle), Religious Realism (Thomas Aquinas), Modern Realism (Bacon and Locke), and Contemporary Realism (Whitehead and Russell).Aristotle established the foundations of realism, emphasizing sensory experience, logical reasoning, and the four causes framework. His educational philosophy sought holistic development—intellectual, moral, and physical—through balanced education and virtuous habits. These principles still inform scientific observation and critical thinking in education today.Thomas Aquinas, representing religious realism, integrated Aristotelian empiricism with Christian doctrine. He valued both faith and reason, stressing the roles of family and church in education while combining sensory experience with spiritual development. This synthesis shaped faith-based educational approaches across centuries.

Modern realism marked a decisive shift toward empiricism and scientific inquiry. Francis Bacon advanced inductive reasoning and identified the "Idols of the Mind" as obstacles to clear thought, offering tools to reduce bias. John Locke’s concept of tabula rasa highlighted experience and reflection as the basis of learning. Together, they laid the groundwork for evidence-based pedagogy and child-centered learning approaches.Contemporary realism adapted to twentieth-century developments. Russell emphasized logical analysis and objective clarity through analytic philosophy and logical atomism, while Whitehead’s process philosophy highlighted dynamic reality and interconnectedness. Both reinforced the importance of aligning education with scientific understanding and logical rigor.

Across these phases, the study finds key areas of convergence among realist philosophers:
1. Education grounded in reality: All realists stressed empirical evidence, observation, and practical experience over speculation.
2. Critical thinking: From Aristotle’s logic to Russell’s analysis, rational reasoning remains central.
3. Systematic curriculum design: Organized knowledge transmission and developmental sequencing are consistently emphasized.

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4. Holistic development: Realists advocate for intellectual, physical, and moral education.
5. Overcoming cognitive barriers: From logical fallacies to Bacon's "Idols," realists addressed obstacles to clear thinking.

The research also distinguishes between branches of realism: Naïve realism assumes objects exist as perceived, while scientific realism separates primary from secondary qualities. Representationism (Locke) suggests mental influence on perception, neo-realism asserts knowledge does not alter objects, while critical realism acknowledges subjective variations in perception.

Realism remains highly relevant today. Its stress on evidence-based learning, systematic curriculum design, and critical thinking resonates with modern educational needs. However, the study notes limitations: an overemphasis on objective knowledge may underplay creativity and emotional growth; standardized approaches risk ignoring individual differences; and the tradition largely reflects Western perspectives.

Implications for practice include:

Balancing realism's factual focus with creativity and emotional development.
Integrating systematic curriculum with flexible, student-centered approaches.
Training teachers to recognize cognitive biases and logical errors.
Expanding research into non-Western applications of realism.

This study confirms that realism provides a strong foundation for education through its focus on reality, rationality, and practicality. While different thinkers shaped unique approaches, they converge on the principles of objective truth, systematic learning, and intellectual rigor. A synthesized framework of realist philosophy can enrich contemporary education, offering both clarity and adaptability. Future research should explore non-Western perspectives and integrate creativity with realism's evidence-based strength to create more holistic educational models.