

# Against the Marginalisation of Western Pedagogics in Postcolonial Zimbabwe

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## ABSTRACT

The current textual analysis juxtaposes Western pedagogics with Zimbabwe's instructional methodology as currently encapsulated in the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education for period 2015-2022. This framework is a principal document that continues to enshrine Zimbabwe's education system while it undergoes review. Thus, the reflection estimates the applicability of Western pedagogics (as informed by Western philosophies) to Zimbabwe's postcolonial education system. This undertaking comes against the background of Education 5.0 which occasioned the ongoing move by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development [Mo HTEISTD] in collaboration with the University of Zimbabwe [UZ] to scrap Western educational philosophies like idealism, empiricism, pragmatism, progressivism and social reconstructionism from Zimbabwe's teacher education syllabus. Hence, the author is explicitly perturbed by the imminent disregard of Western philosophies and their respective pedagogics as a result of the unmistakable over-exaltation of the heritage-based philosophy within Zimbabwe's new teacher education syllabus yet to be implemented. In the process of juxtaposing Western pedagogics with Zimbabwe's instructional methodology, the author observes strong congruence between the former and the latter. Notwithstanding a few points of divergence between Western pedagogics and Zimbabwe's instructional methodology, the former is applicable to the latter. The current reflection, therefore, demonstrates beyond doubt that the idea of peripherising Western pedagogics (on the grounds that it is informed by Western philosophies) is more emotive than rational. This article, thus, implores the MoHTEISTD and the UZ to revisit with due sobriety their position of wanting to excise Western philosophies and their respective pedagogics, and consider restoring the same to their rightful place in Zimbabwe's teacher education syllabus so that the country's entire education sector remains of global resonance.

**Keywords:** Marginalisation, Western pedagogics[1], postcolonial

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development [Mo HTEISTD], through the University of Zimbabwe [UZ], is at an advanced stage of reviewing and revamping Zimbabwe's teacher education syllabi with a view to re-aligning them to Education 5.0. (Wuta, 2022d). Education 5.0 is a blueprint designed in 2019 to inform Zimbabwe's Higher and Tertiary Education, it is an educational programme which encompasses the five Missions of Teaching, Research, Community Service, Innovation and Industrialisation. Though to some extent a noble cause, this reform process seems to be taking an unduly radical approach as it seems to over-emphasise the heritage-based philosophy, there by trivialising and de-emphasising the Western philosophies of education that include idealism, empiricism,

pragmatism, progressivism, and social reconstructionism. Wuta (2022d) observes that the Minimum Bodies of Knowledge and Skills [MBKSSs], which are in the process of being instituted by the University of Zimbabwe's Centre for Teacher Education and Materials Development [CTMED] for study particularly in Educational Foundations (Philosophy) at teachers' college, are devoid of Western philosophies which inform Western instructional methodologies. Hence, Western philosophies and their respective pedagogics are bound to disappear from Zimbabwe's teacher education syllabi. Therefore, the current reflection seeks to address this epistemic bigotry and the imminent invisibility of core Western philosophies and associated pedagogics within Zimbabwe's contemporary system of education. Thus, the author undertakes to estimate the applicability of Western pedagogics to Zimbabwe's system of education as encapsulated in the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education for period 2015-2022 [also known herein as Government of Zimbabwe or GoZ (2015) or simply Curriculum Framework 2015-2022].

## PROBLEM POSTULATION

The author is perturbed by the rising tide of thought currently dominating the educational space in postcolonial Zimbabwe, *id est*, the rise of a radically heritage-based philosophy which manifests the unmistakable contempt of Western philosophies that inform Western pedagogics. This development is worrisome because it is bound to see the perceivably traditional but phenomenally informative Western philosophies and associated pedagogics disappear from the country's teacher education syllabi. Yet the author is of the conviction that these Western philosophies and pedagogics continue to inform Zimbabwe's education system even in the postcolonial era. Therefore, the author seeks to unmask the glaring manifestations of Western pedagogics within Zimbabwe's instructional methodology as encapsulated in Curriculum Framework 2015-2022. This is hoped to serve as a scholarly exhortation for the MoHTEISTD and the UZ to revisit with due sobriety their position of wanting to expunge Western pedagogics, and consider restoring the same to their rightful place within Zimbabwe's teacher education (Educational Foundations) syllabus.

### **Socratic idealist pedagogics and Zimbabwe's instructional methodology as encapsulated in Curriculum Framework 2015-2022**

The Socratic idealist pedagogics draws significantly from the philosophical ideas of Socrates [circa 470-399 B.C.]. Thus, "Socratic pedagogy encourages the love of learning and the desire to know and is thus worthy of our looking at for advice and wisdom" (George, 2015, p. 3971). Notably, the Socratic philosophy discourages the attachment of too much value on 'what to learn' (instructional content) and accentuates 'how to learn' (instructional methodology).

Socratic idealism maintains that knowledge is a natural endowment. Thus, when the human soul was in the spiritual world of perfection, it was pure and knew everything. When it got buried in the flesh, it got corrupted and forgot all the knowledge it used to have. Knowledge is hidden in the subconscious mind. Therefore, the child is born with the knowledge, only that it is not at the conscious level (Stumpf, 1975). This foreshadows the 'Socratic dialectic' – a method of instruction that Socrates considers supreme, with other methods supporting it. Tan and Wong (2008) equate this Socratic dialectic to a conversational mode of instruction. "Drawing on the aspirations and ambitions of the students, the Socratic dialectic sought to expose the students' ignorance in order to arouse in them a longing for knowledge of those things necessary to fulfil their ambitions" (Tan & Wong, 2008, p. 3). This translates to the intellectual midwifery (sometimes called the Socratic questioning / Socratic theory of knowledge / Socratic dialectic) – the systematic questioning through which the teacher triggers the mind to bring out the knowledge it already possesses (Akinpelu, 1981). Socrates "refers to himself as a midwife of the soul assisting in the birthing and examination of ideas" (*Theaetetus*, as cited in George, 2015, p. 3972). Thus, the teacher, in the capacity of a midwife, helps the child remember the forgotten knowledge, which constitutes the reminiscence theory of

education centred on bringing knowledge to reflective consciousness. According to Wuta (2022a), the Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 seems to have taken a leaf from the Socratic dialectic because it exalts inquiry-based learning, which is suffused with 'questioning'. Therefore, this questioning method of instruction owes its existence to the Socratic questioning or the intellectual midwifery.

With particular reference to *Philebus* (another Platonic treatise, as cited in George, 2015), "Socratic dialectic is a teaching tool...it is a method of constructing or deconstructing knowledge and understanding" (p. 3972). Thus, the Socratic dialectic is some *modus operandi* with which inconsistencies and phantoms in knowledge are exposed and uprooted, and truth is established and nurtured, as exemplified in the argument between Socrates and Euthyphro over the word 'piety' (*Euthyphro*, another Platonic dialogue, as cited in Stum pf, 1975)."We have set dialectic above all other studies to be as it were the coping-stone and that no other higher kind of study could rightly be placed above it" (Socrates, as cited in George, 2015, p. 3972). Socrates, thus, sets a premium on the dialectic method which he holds to be indispensable in pedagogy. To Socrates, "learning is achieved through questioning as opposed to didactic instruction" (*The Republic* and *The Lysis*, both Platonic treatises, as cited in George, 2015, p. 3972). This is endorsed by Tan and Wong (2008) who infer Socrates saying "pedagogy-wise, knowledge and virtues should not be taught in a didactic style. Rather, they should be delivered through a process of self-discovery, reflective inquiry and personal emancipation" (p. 5). Socratic learning is, thus, against telling the youths the information. Hence, it vehemently detests rote-learning and indoctrination. Importantly, this student-centred, thinking-driven and enjoyable Socratic dialectic harmonises strongly with recollection as a method to which Socrates was introduced by Diotima – his female mentor who, according to George (2015), was forced into oblivion by the masculine-centric scholarship of male classists.

In tune with Socratic learning as articulated above:

The Curriculum Framework stresses learner-centred approaches. The focus of learning revolves around learners as they engage in the search and discovery of new knowledge. The teacher acts as a co-explorer and facilitator in knowledge discovery in order to arrive at an objective understanding of content and demonstration of skills so acquired (GoZ, 2015, p. 41).

This places the learner at the core of the instructional settings. Wuta (2022a), therefore, argues that Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 derives the learner-centred pedagogy, discovery learning and the notion of knowledge-generation (which is opposed to information delivery) from Socrates's intellectual midwifery.

"Socrates used common everyday situations and images to promote understanding and construct meaning through the use of analogies" (George, 2015, p. 3973). In this context, an analogy is a relationship of resemblance or equivalence between two situations, people or objects especially when used as a basis for explanation or extrapolation. For example, Socrates holds that "bees are different but each has the essence or nature that gives them the name bee" (*Meno*, another Platonic treatise, as cited in George, 2015, p. 3973). This reinforces the learners' understanding of the being of material things. In another example, Socrates "uses the image of smashing a plate into many pieces and explains that each piece is still a part of the plate" (*ibid*). This analogy demonstrates that the corporeal material things are in a state of flux and that it is the essential nature of these objects that are in the world of permanence. Therefore, the essential natures of things are the abiding elements that remain after the objects disappear. Socrates, thus, "advocates the use of analogies and visual images when teaching" (*ibid*). This is with a view to propagating clear thinking whereby learners are conditioned to defining the abiding elements of objects, which manifests understanding.

Likewise, the Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 aims to nurture clear thinking and reflection (GoZ, 2015), which incorporates the use of definitions. This seems to be informed by Socratic idealism, which, basing on

the instructional use of analogies and visual images, apotheosises the promotion of clear thinking through defining the abiding elements of objects.

Socrates also popularises the classic use of ‘allegory’ as a means of teaching. This is more fathomable through the Socratic Allegory of the Cave, according to which, “true education is the turning around of the soul from shadows and visible objects to true understanding of the forms” (Socrates, as cited in Plato’s *Republic Book VII*). Thus, the role of the teacher is to deliver the learner from the darkness of ignorance (conflating reality with objects and shadows) to the limelight of knowledge (knowing the ‘abiding elements’ or ‘forms’ as reality). To George (2015), allegory is an approach that builds understanding using prior knowledge and reflects the teaching strategy referred to as scaffolding – giving support to the learner as knowledge or understanding is under construction. An allegory is learner-centred in that it employs a variety of approaches to enact learning (George, 2015). Emphasis on learner-centred pedagogy is summed up by Socrates, who, basing on allegory, says “certain professors of education must be wrong when they say that they can put a knowledge into the soul which was not there before, like sight into blind eyes”(George, 2015, p. 3973). Therefore, Socrates vehemently detests rote learning and indoctrination. Moreover, he sounds dismissive of John Locke’s *tabula rasa* concept of realism.

Zimbabwe’s Curriculum Framework 2015-2022, which also welcomes the use of allegory, sets a premium on the learner-centred and learner-involving instructional methodology (Wuta, 2022a). Hence, the said framework seems to be informed by Socratic idealism since this philosophy is equally wary of the lecture method and rote learning.

### **Platonic idealist pedagogics and Zimbabwe’s instructional methodology as encapsulated in Curriculum Framework 2015-2022**

Platonic idealist pedagogics derives from the philosophical reflections of Plato [circa 427-347 B.C.]. Thus, Platonic idealism sets a premium on the learner-centered approach to instruction and Plato’ argues that, “the child’s mind, like his body, is immature and has to be developed. The real activity of learning is to be done by him” (Akinpelu, 1981, p. 135). The later part of the foregoing quote accentuates self-learning activity, placing the child at the center of the educative process. Hence, Platonic idealism amplifies the basic idealist thesis that, whichever method is used, self-learning must remain the core of education. Likewise, the Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 (GoZ, 2015) “stresses the learner-centred approach. The focus of learning revolves around learners as they engage in the search and discovery of new knowledge” (p. 41). In such a scenario, the teacher acts as a co-explorer and facilitator in knowledge discovery. This seems to have philosophical underpinnings from Platonic idealism.

In agreement with his mentor Socrates, Plato argues that the process of education is “turning the eye of the soul from darkness to light” (Akinpelu, 1981, p. 30; Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2014, p. 118), by which he meant leading a person from the dark cave of ignorance into the limelight of knowledge. This, according to Akinpelu (1981), does not equate to putting knowledge into a person’s soul as one puts water into an empty pot, but rather it is aiding the individual to discover knowledge through his own reasoning process. In fact, it is more of the rediscovery of a previously acquired knowledge (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2014). This theme of education as rediscovery is based on a metaphysical philosophy held by Plato about man and his soul. The metaphysical position is articulated thus:

Each man’s soul has a previous existence in an ideal world, which Plato called the World of Ideas, in which it had perfect, first-hand knowledge of all that existed in this world. Our world is an imperfect copy of this world of ideas. When the soul was detached from the perfect World of Ideas and planted in the body of man, it lost the knowledge, and education is now that process by which the soul can be helped to regain it (Akinpelu, 1981, p. 30).

This expresses the reminiscence theory of pedagogy; which Plato seems to have adopted from his mentor – Socrates. In view of this rediscovery theme as embedded in the reminiscence theory, the educational process is not to feed the mind with new knowledge, but rather the awakening of the mind through well-framed, leading questions to elicit the right answers – a method of teaching which the modern world still uses, which is called the Socratic dialectic from its wide usage by Socrates, and which Plato adopted as well. Through its various subject syllabi, the Updated Curriculum 2015-2022 accentuates the Socratic method – a predisposition, which, according to Wuta (2022b), seems to have philosophical underpinnings from the Socratic but importantly Platonic idealism.

Since children are thinking beings, Platonic idealism emphasises the sharpening of the mind, which is considered to be the individual's real self. Hence, he recommends the Socratic method as “it particularly helps to develop the child's sense of judgement, since he is encouraged to reason out and infer correct answers by himself” (Akinpelu, 1981, p. 136). The inquiry-based learning emphasised by the Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 subsumes mainly the development of questioning, which seems to be of a Socratic-Platonic making.

Plato also extols the project method “in which the pupils singly or jointly initiate a learning task, pursue it by themselves, and, with the help of the teacher learn the principles behind their raw experiences” (Akinpelu, 1981, p. 136). To Plato, the learners' raw experiences involve their appreciation of and belief in images and shadows definitive of the world of appearances which could be misleading since they are in a state of flux. Thus, the principles behind the learners' raw experiences (which learners have to discover through the Platonic project-based method) are, in themselves, the ‘Ideas’ or ‘Forms’ or ‘Universals’, which, according to the Platonic Divided Line, are at the apex of the intelligible world and are constitutive of knowledge of the Good – the reality. Since the Inquiry-Based Learning (as emphasised by the Curriculum Framework) is “an approach that aims at nurturing thinking, reflection and problem-solving among learners” (GoZ, 2015, p. 42), it, therefore, seems to derive significantly from the Platonic project-based method.

Wuta (2022b) observes that Platonic idealism tolerates the lecture method. This finds substantiation in Plato (as cited in Akinpelu, 1981) who states that the lecture method capacitates the teacher to develop a point clearly, logically and systematically so that the pupils can understand the interrelation of the parts of a presented topic. Notwithstanding the preceding, this is where the Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 deviates from the Platonic idealist pedagogy because the said curriculum framework evidently detests the lecture method on the grounds that it usually degenerates into rote learning and indoctrination (Wuta, 2022b).

### **Aristotelian empiricist pedagogics and Zimbabwe's instructional methodology as encapsulated in Curriculum Framework 2015-2022**

Aristotelian empiricist pedagogics stems from the philosophical teachings of Aristotle [circa 384-322 B.C.]. “The mind,” argues Aristotle, “begins as an empty tablet” (Stumpf, 1975, p. 102). This Aristotelian empiricist mindset is confirmed by Akinpelu (1981) who submits that “for Aristotle, the mind of the child was like raw clay ready to be moulded into the fully rational adult” (p. 33). The foregoing is, therefore, a forerunner of the Lockean *Tabula Rasa* concept of viewing the child's mind as a blank slate waiting for inscriptions of knowledge upon it – knowledge gained through experience with the environment. In this context, the environment is the learner's corporeal world. Such an epistemological standpoint demonstrates Aristotle's inclination towards experiential learning, which John Dewey refers to as problem-solving or experientialism. Likewise, the Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 incorporates ‘inquiry-based learning’ as “an approach that aims at nurturing thinking, reflection and problem-solving among learners” (GoZ, 2015, p. 42). Thus, inquiry-based learning subsumes discovery learning, which “involves problem solving situations where learners tap from their past experiences and prior or existing knowledge to discover facts

and new knowledge” (GoZ, 2015, p. 42). Therefore, learners learn through interaction with the material environment, an ideal which seems to have Aristotelian empiricist underpinnings.

The Aristotelian method of learning is “to seek new light from what is already known and observed, proceeding to the unknown by means of induction and syllogism” (Ladikos, 2010, p. 79). This is a lucid expression of the Aristotelian concentric model within which instruction radiates from the core (the known) to the periphery (the unknown). Aristotle, thus, recommends *epagoge* or the ‘inductive methods of teaching’ and ‘learning by demonstration’ (Hummel, as cited in Wuta, 2022c). The former proceeds based on particular cases and the latter on universal principles. In this epagogic pedagogy, demonstrative learning or deduction which unpacks the causes of things or universals builds on induction which yields a host of experiences or particulars. The Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 (GoZ, 2015), therefore, seems to adopt the Aristotelian concentric model of learning, as entrenched in *epagoge*, where it maintains that “learning is designed to focus from lower to higher levels of cognition” (p. 41). In this case, the lower levels of cognition are inductive whereas the higher levels of the same are deductive.

Moreover, the Aristotelian inductive logic portrays truth as subjective and multi paradigmatic. This sets a premium on the interactive instructional methodologies like, for instance, debate, which promote diversity in thought and multiple realities. In line with this Aristotelian kind of thought, the Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 (GoZ, 2015) adopts the “interactive pedagogy” (p. 41), which accentuates classroom interaction and participation. Aristotle also had a deep concern for the objective element, as evidenced by his great intellectual curiosity and his careful observations (Ladikos, 2010). Therefore, to him, truth reveals itself objectively in the facts of nature, which intimates the importance of scientific experimentation as the deductive instructional methodology. Therefore, the STEM rhetoric peddled by the Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 seems to be informed by the Aristotelian deductive pedagogy (Wuta, 2022c). Furthermore, Aristotle places emphasis “upon the concrete embodiment of ideas as against the conceptualism and the universals of Plato” (Ladikos, 2010, p. 79). This is the epicentre of Aristotelian empiricism which puts primacy on matter not ideas. Likewise, the Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 (GoZ, 2015) accentuates “active, hands-on learning opportunities for learners” (p. 42), which calls for the physical manipulation of objects in the educative process.

Aristotle recognised the importance of the teacher’s role in guiding the child’s intellectual and moral development. However, he emphasised that this was not enough. Hence, he argues that, in order to acquire practical wisdom, “the child must also be involved in the action; he must practice what he has learned repeatedly until it becomes part of him” (Aristotle, as cited in Akinpelu, 1981, p. 34). Aristotle, thus, exalts heuristic learning. Hence, he proclaims, in his dialogue *Nicomachean Ethics*, that “we become just by doing just acts; temperate by doing temperate acts; brave by doing brave acts..., States of character are formed by doing corresponding acts” (Akinpelu, 1981, p. 34). This Aristotelian method of habituation is key to moral education or education for character building and civic virtue. Consequently, “it is not enough to tell a child what he should know or do, but the teacher needs to make him do the good act repeatedly until he cultivates the habit of doing it naturally” (Akinpelu, 1981, p. 34). In this context, habituation does not mean monotonous repetition, but active learning (Hummel, as cited in Wuta, 2022). Therefore, as Wuta (2022c) further argues, the fact that the Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 stresses participatory and heuristic instructional methodology demonstrates the same curriculum’s compatibility with the Aristotelian habituation thesis.

### **Deweyan pragmatist pedagogics and Zimbabwe’s instructional methodology as encapsulated in Curriculum Framework 2015-2022**

Deweyan pragmatist pedagogics is informed by the philosophy of pragmatism, advanced mainly by John Dewey [1859-1952 A.D.]. Dewey (as cited in Wuta, 2022d) urges the curriculum to bring disciplines together to focus on solving problems in an interdisciplinary way, which manifests the integrated approach

to instruction. Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 incorporates this pragmatist cross-disciplinary approach through the principle of 'coherence' which refers to the clustering and sequencing of learning experiences to provide for holistic comprehensive learning and effective links between general academic and vocational education (Wuta, 2022d).

Dewey devastatingly attacks the discipline-centred and teacher-dominated traditional education (Akinpelu, 1981). He, thus, emphasises the child-centred approach to learning where the teacher does not control learners but acts as a guide (Ozmon & Craver, 2003; Wuta, 2022d). Therefore, the child is at the centre of all educational activities in a pragmatist class, which considers "the present needs, interest and ability of the child" (Akinpelu, 1981, p. 151). Correspondingly, Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 (GoZ, 2015) stresses learner-centred approaches since the focus on learning revolves around learners as they engage in the search and discovery of new knowledge.

Deweyan pragmatism emphasises learning by activity or action-oriented education (Cohen, as cited in Wuta, 2022d). Thus, Dewey (as cited in Akinpelu, 1981) urges involvement of the child in the activity and practical application of the child's theoretical knowledge as abstracted from problem-solving. Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 embraces this heuristic method of teaching-learning through the emphasis that it places on participatory and hands-on methodology.

The Deweyan pedagogy treasures readings, lectures, presentations, field trips, videos, internet connections, dramatisations, role play which incorporates play way, and model-building (Ozmon & Craver, 2003). Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 seems to accommodate the above methodologies, which are compatible with the highly cherished learner-centred approach. But the said framework seems to have misgivings with the lecture method.

Pragmatists believe that real-life situations encourage the growth of problem-solving ability in a practical setting (Ozmon & Craver, 2003). Hence, "the Deweyites stress problem-solving as the most effective method for directing change toward desired outcomes" (Philos, Undated, p. 398). Thus, each time a human experience is reconstructed to solve a problem, a new contribution is added to humanity's fund of experience. Likewise, Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 exalts the problem-solving method elucidated above, which it also refers to as problem-based learning (Wuta, 2022d).

Pragmatists stress project methods (Patsanza, 1987), they accentuate the project-method as developed further by William Kilpatrick [1871-1965 A.D.] (Ozmon & Craver, 2003). Dewey in particular advocates collaborative learning projects (Cohen, as cited in Wuta, 2022d), which incorporate group work for social intelligence, social skills development and enhanced cooperative living. Consequently, Dewey (as cited in Akinpelu, 1981) argues that "the group method or cooperative learning should be encouraged. The project method, in which problems to be tackled are set for groups, is the best method of encouraging group-learning" (p. 151). Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 adopts this pragmatist approach through inquiry-based or project-based learning, which "involves learners working for an extended period of time investigating and responding to complex questions, problems or challenges" (GoZ, 2015, p. 43). It should also be pointed out that the said framework advocates this project-based learning method in conjunction with group work.

Dewey (as cited in Ozmon & Craver, 2003) extols discovery learning which progresses from simple impulses to careful observation of the environment. This pragmatist doctrine of discovery is endorsed by Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 (GoZ, 2015), according to which, "discovery learning involves problem-solving situations where learners tap from their past experiences and prior or existing knowledge to discover facts and new knowledge" (p. 42). This manifests the concentric model of teaching which progresses from the known to the unknown.

Deweyan pragmatism is against rote learning and it de-emphasises textbooks in favour of varied learning resources, approaches and methods (Patsanza, 1987; Ozmon & Craver, 2003). Correspondingly, Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 urges "the use of a wide range of methods adapted to the learner's situation and needs in the context of interactive pedagogies" (GoZ, 2015, p. 44). Thus, in sync with pragmatism, the said framework detests subject-centred and didactic learning because it manifests the Baconian 'idol of the the atre' which is indoctrination.

Pragmatists believe that, rather than passing down organised bodies of knowledge to new learners, learners should be enabled to apply their knowledge to real-life situations through experimental inquiry (Cohen, as cited in Wuta, 2022d). Pragmatists are, therefore, in favour of inquiry-based learning and education with praxis. Zimbabwe's curriculum Framework 2015-2022 manifests the ideal of 'inquiry-based learning' through project-based education and 'education with praxis' which is manifest in the principle of 'relevance' -which exhorts education to be a tool for promoting competencies for life and work locally, and even globally (Wuta, 2022d).

### **Progressive pedagogics and Zimbabwe's instructional methodology as encapsulated in Curriculum Framework 2015-2022**

Progressive pedagogics derives from the philosophy of progressivism, which originated in the USA mainly through the works of John Dewey who is regarded as the leader of the progressive movement. To begin with, "the use of group work is a progressive teaching approach based on the interests and needs of the child" (Siyakwazi & Siyakwazi, 2012, p. 40). This is endorsed by Teaching Academy (as cited in Wuta, 2022e) who argue that progressives emphasise on group activity and group problem-solving so that the students learn through cooperative learning strategies. Thus, group work is instrumental in the development of social skills. According to Wuta (2022e), Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 affirms the progressivist notion of group work because it provides for learners to work collaboratively with classmates and others beyond the school.

Progressives (most prominently Dewey) strongly emphasise the project approach to instruction (Chennault, 2013), wherein learners are allocated into groups each with a task and the teacher serves as a resource facilitator. Working with each group individually, the teacher would suggest sources and help students discover ways of pursuing the project and solving targeted problems. Thus, the "inquiry-based learning" (GoZ, 2015, p. 42), on which Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 sets a premium, manifests this Deweyan progressive project method. As the curriculum document in question says "teacher is facilitator and coach" (GoZ, 2015, p. 42), it correspondingly views the teacher as a resource facilitator.

Progressives also stress learner-centred instruction, *id est*, "to move the child to the centre of the educative process" (Francis Parker [1837-1902 A.D.], as cited in Siyakwazi & Siyakwazi, 2012, p. 35). This is endorsed by Samkange and Samkange (2013), who hold that "the child should be the centre of educational planning" (p. 454). In line with the foregoing, Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 (GoZ, 2015) argues that "the focus of learning revolves around learners as they engage in the search and discovery of new knowledge" (p. 41). Thus, the said curriculum document, which commits to placing the learner at the centre of learning and teaching, manifests strong progressivist tendencies.

Progressives place emphasis on learning by doing, hands-on projects, experiential learning (Zahid et al., as cited in Wuta, 2022e), and field trips (Akinpelu, 1981). According to Teaching Academy (as cited in Wuta, 2022e), experience represents the core concept of Dewey's theory of progressivism. Correspondingly, Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 accentuates discovery learning which involves problem-solving situations where learners tap from their past experiences or existing knowledge to discover facts and new knowledge. This includes "active hands-on learning opportunities for learners" (Castronova, as cited in



GoZ, 2015, p. 42). Thus, the said curriculum's inclination towards heuristic learning is of a Deweyan progressivist making.

Progressivism recognises favourably the 'experimentalist' approach to education – “placing more explicit emphasis on learning through solving real-life problems central to the Tuskegee curriculum – what could be called a project approach”(Chennault, 2013, p. 127). Hence, progressivism identifies strongly with the four stages of experimentalism that include identification of a problem, coming up with a hypothesis, experimental testing and inductive argumentation (Samkange & Samkange, 2013). Progressivism, thus,” stresses that students should test ideas by active experimentation. Learning is rooted in the questions of learners that arise through experiencing the world”(Teaching Academy, as cited in Wuta, 2022e, p. 49). This experimentalist outlook is reiterated by Samkange and Samkange (2013), who say “according to the philosophy of John Dewey, experimentation by children as they learn allows them to try new ideas” (p. 454). This connotes that the Deweyan experimentalist approach to instruction is abundantly positioned to harness the learners' inherently inquisitive minds.

In the same vein, Samkange and Samkange (2013) submit:

Children should be allowed to discover answers to problems through their interaction with the physical and social environment. Such an approach is seen as developing thinking and problem-solving skills in children. Progressivism in education is seen as promoting creativity and freedom among children. Children should be able to use different tools that support their education. It is not the books that determine what children learn, but rather children have the power to decide (p. 454).

Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 manifests the above-stated progressive experimentalist outlook of education as it places emphasis on discovery, problem-solving, reflective thought (critical thinking) and creativity. However, the said framework deviates from progressivism as it seems to constrict the learner autonomy implicated in the above quote.

Progressivism recognises understanding and action as the goals of learning as opposed to rote learning, this theory also condemns exclusive reliance on bookish methods of teaching and passive memorisation of factual data (Zahid et al., as cited in Wuta, 2022e). Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework 2015-2022, therefore, harmonises with this progressivist exaltation of 'education with praxis', which concurs with Lipman's reflective paradigm of education. Hence, the said Framework (GoZ, 2015) says “the focus will thus be on knowledge generation not just information delivery and treating learners as empty vessels ready to be filled with information” (p. 41). In other words, both progressivism and Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework are wary of the lecture method and indoctrination tendencies.

Use of realia is central in the progressive class (Samkange & Samkange, 2013). This finds testimony in Maria Montessori [1870-1952 A.D.] (as cited in Patsanza, 1987) who “used sensori-motor materials and reality-oriented experiences to accelerate early cognitive development” (p. 52). Moreover, the playway methods were advocated by Montessori and popularised significantly by Friedrich Froebel [1782-1852 A.D.] (as cited in Patsanza, 1987) “whose major aim of education was the social and individual development of the youngster through directed self-activity that emphasised cooperation, spontaneity, creativity, and joy – the free unfolding of the child's nature” (p. 53). Correspondingly, Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 (GoZ, 2015) incorporates the progressivist use of realia as it urges the use of “multiple forms of media” (p. 42), and manifests progressivist play way methods in the infant education cycle where it [Curriculum Framework 2015-2022] says “learners achieve outcomes through play and exploration” (p. 30).

## Social reconstructionist pedagogics and Zimbabwe's instructional methodology as encapsulated in Curriculum Framework 2015-2022

Social reconstructionists, most prominently Theodore Brameld [1904-1987 A.D.] and George, S. Counts [1889-1974 A.D.], are also wary of bookish learning and they advocate active learner participation. Hence, they are characteristically opposed to indoctrination, learner passivity and teacher dominance (Ozmon & Craver, 2003; Wuta, 2022f). In congruity with this social reconstructionist position, Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 (GoZ, 2015) is sharply opposed to the lecture method, as it puts primacy on learner-involvement, discovery learning, experiential learning, experimental learning, problem-solving, Socratic dialectic and inquiry-based learning, *inter-alia*.

In addition, social reconstructionists set a premium on creativity, objectivity, evaluative skills and critical thinking (Ozmon & Craver, 2003). Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 seems to adopt this social reconstructionist instructional methodology as it purports to promote creativity through Continuous Assessment Learning Activities [CALAs], uphold objectivity and evaluative skills through its commitment to raising a level-headed individual capable of reasoning logically, and cultivate critical thinking through the study of History and Literature (Wuta, 2022f).

Social reconstructionists also welcome learning through attachment (Ozmon & Craver, 2003). Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 seems to manifest this social reconstructionist tradition through the Life-Skills Orientation Programme which encompasses the general and specific life-skills training through placement in the various work-related programmes in the private and service sectors, and outward bound the uniformed forces for a period of five months (GoZ, 2015). This is designed to afford learners some exposure to the work and enterprise environment whilst they wait for either Ordinary Level or Advanced Level results (Wuta, 2022f).

To social reconstructionists, democratic principles should pervade the educative process (Philos, undated; Ozmon & Craver, 2003). Zimbabwe's Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 seems to manifest this social reconstructionist standpoint through *Unhu/Ubuntu* (its underpinning philosophy), which, according to Wuta (2022f), exalts democratic leadership and citizenship. Citizenship, in itself, incorporates issues to do with democracy.

## CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding a few points of divergence between Western pedagogics and Zimbabwe's instructional methodology, the former is on the whole applicable to the latter. As emerged from the outgoing reflection, there is close propinquity between Western pedagogics as informed by the Occidental philosophies of education and Zimbabwe's instructional methodology as encapsulated in Curriculum Framework 2015-2022. The outgoing reflection has demonstrated that the agenda for marginalising Western philosophies and associated pedagogics (the agenda currently being pursued by the Mo HTEISTD through the UZ) is more emotive than rational. The article, thus, implores the MoHTEISTD and the UZ to revisit with due sobriety their position of wanting to expurgate Western philosophies and associated pedagogics, and consider restoring the same to their rightful place within Zimbabwe's Educational Foundations Syllabus for teacher education. The outgoing reflection on the whole recommends the continued but contextualised study of Western philosophies and related pedagogics. This is in the best interests of Zimbabwe's education especially within the current world order driven by globalisation.

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## FOOTNOTE

[1] Terms 'Western pedagogics' and 'Western instructional methodology' are used interchangeably, as 'pedagogics' and 'instructional methodology' are taken to be two synonymous terms.