

A SUMMARY STATEMENT ON THE ANISA MODEL

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The Anisa Model represents a comprehensive educational system functionally defined by specifications which insure its replicability, evaluation, and refinement. The specifications set forth educational objectives pertaining to the actualization of human potential and explanations of how to achieve them. These objectives and explanations are derived from a coherent body of theory that has been deductively generated from a philosophical base and inductively validated to whatever extent possible by findings from empirical research.

The Philosophy Underlying the Model:

Defines man as a spiritual as well as a material being;

Explains his reality in terms of the process of his becoming (actualization of potentiality) and recognizes that the concept of process presupposes both creativity and potentiality;

Proposes that, because of man's ability to create further potential (a form of transcendence) through the cumulative effects of learning and culture (a reflection of immanence), his potentiality be regarded as infinite;

Derives the explanation of the process of becoming from a general ontological principle of relativity (i.e., man's relatedness to all other entities in the universe and the impossibility of understanding any being apart from the circumstances in which it becomes);

Accepts the principle of hierarchical structuring as primary expression of order and beauty in the universe;

Defines the basic order of the universe in terms of different hierarchically arranged ontological levels and places man at the apex of all living creatures;

Conceives of order as dynamic in nature (i.e., novelty perpetually emerges from new integration of prior entities) and upholds the thesis that man escapes the limitations of mere materiality by virtue of his ability to direct the process of his own becoming — patterning the use of energy available to him. — by consciously entertaining the infinite range of possibilities (potentialities) open to him;

Identifies the process of becoming with an intrinsic pressure to know and to love which impels conscious speculation about, and attraction to, unknowns and ultimate unknowables (in themselves forms of potentialities) and man's relationship to them;

Defines man's spirituality as the conscious capacity (1) to formulate and/or respond to non-actual realities (ideals, aims, purposes, theories) as a consequence of such speculation and attraction, (2) to accept them (ideals or theories) as substitutes for or manifestations of the unknowns/unknowables, and (3) to give them symbolic expression which helps to guide or give direction to the translation of potentiality into actuality, thereby facilitating their functioning as final cause;

Accepts the realization of beauty as the teleology of the universe and equates the self-actualization of potentiality in service of beauty (knowing and loving the ultimate unknowns underlying the ordering of the universe) as the highest expression of that teleology.

The body of theory derived from the philosophy includes theories of development, curriculum, pedagogy, administration, and evaluation, each of which is briefly outlined below.

The Theory of Development:

Defines development as the translation of potentiality into actuality and equates that translation with creativity;

Describes the nature of human potential and recognizes the impossibility of establishing its finitude;

Establishes two broad categories of potentialities — biological and psychological;

Identifies proper nutrition as the essential element in the development of biological potentialities and learning as the key factor in the release of psychological potentialities;

Affirms the importance of early experience in shaping subsequent developmental phenomena and enunciates the heuristic value of the concepts of critical or sensitive periods, stages and sequences;

Stresses the importance of learning how to learn (learning competence) as the ultimate source of independence and confidence;

Defines learning competence as the conscious ability to differentiate aspects of experience, integrate them into novel patterns, and generalize them to other situations and sets forth the proposition that differentiation, integration and generalization constitute a trio of interrelated processes that defines a developmental unit of change — a stage, (sequences of stages being the primary means by which increasing complexity of function and structure is built up and integrated through hierarchical organization);

Establishes five categories of psychological potentialities—psycho-motor, perceptual, cognitive, affective, and volitional;

Confirms interaction with the environment as the means by which development is sustained;

Accounts for the importance of the perpetual introduction of some novelty into the environment as a primary means of creating disequilibrium (or disparity) between developmental level and experience thereby compelling new patterns of interaction which in turn facilitates the actualization of psychological potentialities;

Categorizes interactions in terms of their power to facilitate the development of learning competence and the maintenance of biological integrity;

Fixes three basic categories of environment (physical, human, and the unknown) consistent with the ontological levels outlined in the philosophy and establishes the Self (personal identity) as the micro-cosmic reflection of the three environments and the most constant part of the environment it experiences;

Explains the emergence of personal identity (character development) in terms of value formation and defines values as the relatively enduring structurings of actualized potentialities (patterned uses of energy available to the organism);

Explains how information about the environments, held as beliefs, affects the structuring;

Identifies developmental universals which provide a framework for the planning and implementation of educational programs cross culturally;

Identifies three value sub-systems (material, social, and religious/aesthetic) each of which is associated with a category of the three basic environments;

Explains three analogous higher-order competencies (technological, moral and spiritual/philosophical) which rest on the value sub-subsystems;

Defines the structural and functional reality of personal identity—the Self—as the three value systems combined into an integrated totality on which depends the personal effectance of the self—'self-competence', analogously defined as the combination of the higher-order competencies;

Explicates the relationship between culture and personality formation, particularly as it is transmitted by parents and the family;

Provides a general scheme for understanding the nature of pathology and its etiology (both biological and psychological), sets forth the conditions for the prevention of mental illness, character disorders, delinquency, and criminality, and is generative of testable propositions concerning therapy and rehabilitation.

The Theory of Curriculum:

Defines curriculum in terms of educational goals and what children do (with or without the assistance of teachers) to achieve them;

Fixes the overarching goal of education as the actualization of human potentialities and their structuring into identity around those ideals which guarantee survival and perpetually improve its quality;

Differentiates the main goal into process goals and content goals;

Identifies two categories of process goals: (1) development of biological potentialities (facilitation of normal maturational processes) and (2) actualization of psychological potentialities (psycho-motor, perceptual, cognitive, affective and volitional);

Specifies two categories of content goals analogous to the process goals: (1) requisites for physical health (proper nutrition, pure water, clean air, sunlight, optimum temperature, etc.) and (2) information about the world in which we live organized around the categories of the three basic environments (e.g., physical/botanical/zoological/anthropological, and theological/philosophical, facts and/or beliefs and their applied counterparts, e.g., electronic engineering, agriculture, medicine, etc.) and information about the Self as an integrated microcosmic reflection of the other three environments;

Emphasizes the need for and means whereby process may be used to reduce error in the information (content) assimilated and how accumulated content may be applied to render process more efficient;

Accounts for the kinds of interactions a child must have with the different environments in order to achieve the process and content goals which results in an integrated Self characterized by values (patterned uses of energy-actualized potential) and related competencies that not only guarantee the continual release of potentialities but also improve the quality of survival;

Identifies three basic symbol systems which help to mediate or facilitate interaction with the three different basic environments and give direction to the structuring of actualizing potentiality: mathematics and symbolic logic, language (speech, reading, writing), the arts;

Indicates the role of evaluation in relating the degree of goal achievement to particular interactions prescribed, encouraged or permitted.

The Theory of Pedagogy:

Defines teaching as arranging environments and guiding the child's interaction with them for the purpose of achieving the educational objectives specified by the curriculum;

Views educational facilities as a particular case of arranging an environment and establishes the process by which specifications for facilities are derived from the total body of Anisa Theory;

Affirms the necessity of individualizing instruction and provides the means for doing so by (1) establishing diagnostic and speculative methods for ascertaining the child's developmental status and (2) setting forth related prescriptive and experimental approaches to arranging environments and guiding interaction so that the experience provided "matches" the developmental status of the child on any given dimension pertinent to any particular educational objective specified by the curriculum;

Defines the "match" as optimal disparity (appropriate novelty) between internal schemata (structures whose functioning reflects developmental status) and the activity or learning experience to be engaged in;

Explains the improvisational nature of teaching (arranging environments and guiding the child's interactions with them) in terms of the ability to apply theory in any situation at any time for the purpose of achieving curriculum goals;

Designates the planned introduction of appropriate novelty at an optimal rate for each child as an essential obligation of sound pedagogy;

Identifies curiosity as the primary manifestation of the tension inherent in optimal disparity and regards it as one important source of intrinsic motivation to be fostered by teachers;

Acknowledges that much of the behavior of the human organism is modified in directions related to the consequences or anticipated consequences of its actions evaluated in terms of its subjective aim (thereby accounting for the phenomenon of "conditioning" within the broader context of organismic (philosophy));

Exploits the pedagogical advantages to be gained by treating those consequences as cases of arranging environments and/or guiding interaction;

Stresses the importance of providing evaluative feedback of an explanatory nature on performance at the time of performance;

Suggests a grading and record-keeping system consistent with the achievement of curriculum objectives;

Recognizes the powerful influence of the teacher as model, a proposition from which criteria for the selection of teachers, for determining the effectiveness of their preparation, and for their certification are derived;

Makes provision: (1) for the coordination of staffing patterns and teaching activities (including parental involvement) so that children have several adults who know them well to assist them at any one time, (2) for continuity of experience with several adult teachers over a three or four-year period of time, and (3) for more experienced children to teach less experienced children throughout the system, thereby exploiting the axiom that teaching consolidates learning.

The Theory of Administration:

Defines administration in terms of service qualified by the purposes and goals of the group or educational institution as specified in the theory of curriculum—a service that explicitly calls for administrators to have extensive knowledge about the goals and how they are to be achieved so that they can be both helpful and credible (and therefore not an embarrassment as models);

Identifies two basic functions of administration which must remain in dynamic equilibrium: leadership and management—the former arising from dealing with the present in terms of future possibilities (an expression of transcendence) and the latter having roots in negotiating the present by organising and coordinating the resources represented by past achievements, accumulated knowledge, and expertise (immanence as the heritage of the past);

Explicates the necessity for leadership and management to collaborate in the establishment of priorities, assessing needs, identifying resources, determining feasibility, and allocating resources to achieve objectives as efficiently as possible;

Provides the rationale for defining tasks to be achieved by the educational institution so that personnel may be recruited on a rational basis and the staff can be differentiated (matching talents, interests, abilities and skills with institutional needs) and integrated around purpose;

Explains how differentiation and integration of the staff around purpose functions as the primary means of releasing the institution's potentialities as a social organism;

Recognizes the unifying advantages of hierarchical administrative structures while guarding against their potential rigidities by establishing consultation as an indispensable procedure through which arbitrariness is removed from decision-making power by distributing it throughout the system at loci of authority legitimized by expertise and knowledge;

Stresses the importance of information dissemination both horizontally and vertically and relates the rate of information flow to efficiency and morale;

Affirms the necessity for direct feedback on performance and endorses a circumscribed counseling function as an important element in performance evaluation;

Emphasizes the rational basis for institutional self-renewal by making the results of research and evaluation mandatory input to the decision-making process at any given level;

Affirms the importance of morale and defines it as: a pervasive willingness to comply with reasonable policy, to work cooperatively and make sacrifices when the system is under stress; a wide-spread conviction that everyone's energy is constructively utilized in the achievement of the shared purposes and ideals of the system—purposes and ideals which themselves relate to the perpetual release of the potentialities of the group as a social organism and which generate a climate of hope and opportunity for growth; satisfaction with the compensation received for efforts made; a sense of security that derives from trust that confidences will not be broken or injustices committed; and, a sense of unity and belonging that derives from the acknowledgement and appreciation of contributions made;

Reflects the ontological principle of relativity in its emphasis on the participation of community and home so that the children are rescued from the fragmenting discontinuities and conflicting loyalties that impair the release of their potentialities;

The Theory of Evaluation:

Defines evaluation in terms of the purpose of the activity or program being evaluated;

Seeks to relate means to ends, distinguishing efficient from final causes;

Conceptualizes evaluation as an on-going process which examines every aspect of program operation (including process and product or impact) and provides immediate feedback for its timely modification, including modification of the evaluation scheme itself;

Recognizes that data collected rarely speak for themselves, but require interpretation which takes into account (1) the probable accuracy and weight or significance of data as determined by the type of data, their source and the time and means of collection, and (2) the purpose for which the data and their interpretation is to be used (i.e., question of relevance);

Stresses the value of longitudinal studies and cautions against the ready acceptance of short-term effects as proof of significant impact;

Designates comparative analysis of children's interactions with particular environments and their developmental consequences as the focal point of inquiry;

Affirms the indispensability of recognizing internal states of the organism (such as subjective aim, intentions, or memory) as causal influences on behavior;

Admits the ineffability of many vital aspects of human experience (thereby avoiding possible inadvertent biases preceding from an unrecognized assumption that whatever is not measurable is not important);

Allies the purpose of evaluation with the heuristic, explanatory, and predictive functions of research and science;

Employs evaluation results as an important stimulus to the re-examination and refinement of the philosophy underlying the model and the body of theory on which its operationalization depends.

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