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Paideia Schools as an Alternative Education

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Abstract

Purpose: The first known school concept in history is in Sumerians; the schools aimed to train clerks who would keep the records regarding the administration. Later, schools became cultural centers for many subjects. Reasons such as multiculturalism, rapidly advancing technology, and the opening of new business areas, social and individual competition arose the thought that schools could not fulfill their duties; this thought brought alternative schools to the agenda in the light of needs and deficiencies in countries such as the United States of America, Canada, the Netherlands, and Australia. This study was conducted in order to research Paideia Schools in detail. It was reached, it has been seen that paideia schools as an alternative school have not been examined in detail. With this study, it is aimed to contribute to the literature and to fill the gap in the literature about Paideia Schools.

Method: The research is a qualitative study based on a document analysis. This paper firstly focuses on the establishment, history, philosophy, and purpose of Paideia Schools; secondly it focuses on the lessons, classrooms, and curriculum of Paideia Schools and lastly it focuses on the management, school-environment relationship, financing, and prevalence of Paideia Schools.

Findings: Paideia Schools are for all children aged 3-18 and their families. The school system is based on making students think. Students are given information, and they are made to remember and understand the information. "Socratic dialogue" is the method used to get the desired thinking. It is believed that the questions that teachers ask students will improve their understanding, logic, reasoning, and deep-thinking skills.

Implications for Research and Practice: In the upcoming studies, researchers can focus on other alternative schools such as Waldorf Schools, Charter Schools, Magnet Schools, Small Schools, Virtual Schools, Summer Hill Schools, Sudbury Valley Schools, Cyber Schools, Free Gestalt and Democratic Schools in detail. Researchers can also analyze alternative schools comparatively.

Keywords: Alternative education, Paideia schools, perennialism

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Introduction

The first known school concept in history is in Sumerians. In the Sumerians, as understood from the clay tablets; at first, the school aimed to train clerks who would keep the records regarding the administration. Later, schools became cultural centers for many subjects. Schools have turned into bureaucratic structures in the historical process. For reasons such as the industrial revolution, capitalist order, and urbanization, governments have started to use the education system to educate citizens as good people, good citizens, good producers, good consumers, etc. (Bennet de Marrais & Le Compte, 1995; cited in Aydin, 2015). Although schools have been the solution to the problems faced by societies, some think schools are the source of the problems.

Reasons such as multiculturalism, rapidly advancing technology, and the opening of new business areas, social and individual competition arose the thought that schools could not fulfill their duties; this thought brought alternative schools to the agenda in the light of needs and deficiencies. The "school selection movement" has started in countries such as the United States of America, Canada, the Netherlands, and Australia. In this movement, the students and their families have the right to choose the public school the child will go to. The ones involved in education as teachers, families, children, administrators will plan and put forward the type of school. The dissatisfaction and inefficiency that occurred in traditional schools led people to look for alternatives and thus the ideas and needs of creating more open, student-centered, exploratory, creative schools have emerged. The first libertarian movement was the small school established for village children in Iasnaia Poliana between 1849 and 1859 by L.N. Tolstoy opposed the traditional school system (Noddings, 2013).

According to DeVore and Gentilcore (1999), the alternative education concept in Europe and America means schools that present philosophical alternatives with their educational approaches. In America, the concept was shaped as different education methods for children at risk between 1960 and 1980. There are many alternative schools; each of them has its philosophy, purpose, target audience, program, and functioning. There are various alternative school models such as Montessori Schools, Waldorf Schools, Charter Schools, Magnet Schools, Paideia Schools, Small Schools, Virtual Schools, Summer Hill Schools, Freedom Schools, Sudbury Valley Schools, Cyber Schools, Project schools, Free Gestalt Schools, and Democratic Schools.

This study aims to research Paideia Schools in detail. The term "Paideia" in the culture of ancient Greece and later the Greco-Roman world means the upbringing and education of the ideal member of the state. It focuses on both practical, subject-based education and the socialization of individuals in the aristocratic order. Paideia is a liberal education system for students of all ages, including those who will not attend any university. Paideia has taken its current form as a holistic education of the child in terms of intellectual, artistic, and social aspects (Adler, 1998; Elsner, 2013; Rogers, 2005). This paper is divided into three parts. The first is about the establishment, history, philosophy, and purpose of Paideia Schools; the second is about lessons, classrooms, and curriculum of Paideia Schools; the third is about management, school-environment relationship, financing, and prevalence of Paideia Schools.

Establishment, History, Philosophy, and Purpose of Paideia Schools

There are four different educational philosophical approaches. These are generally used in education in the whole world. The educational philosophical approaches are Perennialism, Essentialism, Progressivism, and Reconstructionism. The educational philosophies focus on education material and the curriculum aspect in the main. Perennialism dates to Socrates and Plato. Perennialism aims at teaching great ideas about Western World because, with these ideas, students can solve any problems in any era. The everlasting ideas and seeking the never-changing truths are stable. Cultural literacy and developing minds are very important for human beings. As education materials, classic works of literature and art are used. Robert Maynard Hutchins and Mortimer Adler are developers of this educational philosophy. Paideia is based on the idea that children have different interests and learning styles and progress at different rates (Guclu, 2019; The Paideia School, 2020).

Mortimer Jerome Adler (1902- 2001) was born in New York to an immigrant family. At the age of 14, with the idea of dropping out of school to become a journalist, he started working as a secretary for the New York Sun Newspaper. He attended evening classes at the University of Colombia to improve his

writing skills. Meanwhile, he read about the British Philosopher John Stuart Mill, so it drew his attention to philosophers and thinkers. His interest in philosophy was strengthened by reading a book belonging to Plato, and he decided to study philosophy at Colombia University and he studied it on a scholarship. His interest in philosophy and classical works is so high that he interrupted the physical education course he had to accomplish to graduate from the department and failed this course. However, the university rewarded him with a doctorate in philosophy due to his dominance in the field and started to give lectures at the university within a few years and became a lecturer in 1920. During his teaching life at the university, he had the opportunity to work with famous American Pragmatists, Erskine and John Dewey. He emphasized the importance of reading and analyzing in detail the great classics and integrating philosophy with religion, literature, and science. His first study, Dialectical, about the philosophical foundations and religious ideas of Western Civilization was published in 1927 (Aydin, 2015; Hale, 1998)

He advanced his career at many universities and helped the establishment of philosophical institutes. He has given classics training to businessmen for about 40 years at Aspen University. He was appointed as an academic in the philosophy department at Chicago University in 1930. Adler aimed to teach the integrated philosophy approach that occurred in the reading, discussion, and analysis of the classics as a separate course. For this reason, he was appointed as a professor of legal philosophy to the Faculty of Law in 1931. Following his seminars on great books and great thinkers, his work progressed to a peak with the publication of the "Great Books of the Western World" by Britannica Encyclopedia Company in 1952. "Higher Education in America", "How to Read a Book?", "How to Think About War and Peace?", "Common Sense of Politics", "Six Great Thoughts" are Adler's other books. "Paideia Proposal: An Education Manifesto" was published in 1983. Adler focuses on a multidisciplinary approach in which religion, politics, law, education, and philosophy are integrated with his works (Billings & Roberts, 1998). The Paideia system was developed by Adler and Paideia Group in 1982. Details of the educational approach are given in Adler's book "Paideia Proposal: An Education Manifesto".

Adler explained in his book "Paideia Proposal: An Education Manifesto" (1984), by referring to John Dewey (1916), that education and democracy are tightly linked. Citizenship to all people, regardless of gender, race, or ethnic origin, must be granted. A democratic society should create equal educational opportunities not only by providing the same amount of public education to all its children, keeping the same number of years at school but also by giving this education to all of them at the same quality (Adler, 1982).

Paideia schools, which aim to enable students to continue their lifelong learning, have three main objectives (Adler & Isaacs, 1983; Johnson, 1998):

- To ensure the personal development of all individuals in society,

- To ensure that individuals are the right citizens who know and fulfill their political responsibilities,

- To prepare individuals so that they can earn their living.

All the school or education systems have their own aims and they all want to grow up excellent individuals according to their goals. If Paideia Schools fulfill their main objects, students will be individuals know their responsibility socially, politically and individually. In many fields, people try to return to the classical. Because they think it is the best. This notion prevails at Paideia schools as well.

The principle of "Return to Classical Education" has been adopted. The following thoughts are at the core of this principle (Roberts, 1998):

- Transferring cultural heritage to all students with a clear focus and participation,

- Preparing a core program and a general program associated with it,

- Making children gain advanced skills in basic subjects such as communication, mathematics, adopting a solution-oriented approach, and group work,

- Adopting in detail the intellectual understanding that has kept oblivion in educational institutions.

In the global world, every country or society wants to protect its own culture and keep it alive. Schools are the most suitable places for the transfer of cultural heritage. Socially, education is a process of acculturation. With the core program schools transfer the local culture also. Localization has become an indispensable element in education today. With general and local culture transferring, students will be active in social life. This approach aims to make their students active users of basic skills.

Lessons, Classrooms and Curriculum of Paideia Schools

In Paideia Schools, it is aimed to make students adopt deep thinking through active learning. For this purpose, three types of teaching management are used: Didactic learning, academic coaching, and Paideia seminar discussions (The Paideia School, 2020). The purpose of the lesson is to know how it is done and why.

Didactic Learning

The didactic method, as a traditional teaching technique, is the basic teaching style. Its purpose is to learn organized knowledge and facts. According to Adler (1983), the information learned only with this method disappears over time and almost all of it is forgotten. However there are three components of effective didactic management:

Organizing. Access to information does not mean learning it. Giving information directly is not an effective form of teaching either. Students remember the information given between 5 and 10 percent. In 1956, educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom outlined the Thinking Skills Taxonomy: Knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. In the level of knowledge, the student cannot interpret, analyze, or apply to another course. It is the stage of organizing and planning the information to be taught. Materials such as note papers, concept maps and presentation outputs are used at this stage. Traditionally, didactic teaching consists of five classroom activities: Lecture, content reading, use of audiovisuals, performance, and demonstration (Roberts, 1998). The list can expand according to the use of technology and the internet.

Energy. The teacher should use techniques that will energize the lesson while teaching. Must be willing and active while presenting; must use body language actively. Adler (1983) says the conference is a method of transferring knowledge. The lecturer needs to include students in the process with energy, presentation of information in various ways, gestures and facial expressions, and the questions he/she asks the students (Chesser, 1998). The simplest way the presenter can activate didactic energy is to move. Movement stimulates the audience by requiring more active attention, and few things can draw a student's attention to something other than their teacher.

Mastering the knowledge will save the presenter from the need to connect to a series of notes on the table. While direct quotes from sources or important historical figures can be effective in a lesson, they should be kept short. The presenter must be able to move freely around the room so that they can stand next to a sleepy student or group while continuing to lecture or discuss directly. From a student's point of view, there is a striking difference between an active teacher who presents, questions, explains, and illustrates a lecture rather than listening from a fixed speaker (Cheeser, 1998; Rogers, 2005). Discussion is an indispensable part of the didactic method and, up to a point, is encouraged. The teacher never wants to miss the pursuit of a truly teachable moment; however, when the discussion distracts students from the topic at hand or extends the lesson to the point where the students begin to lose interest, and effective teacher delays the discussion and returns to the lesson.

Limitation. Didactic lessons should be limited in both duration and subject. Lessons should not be more than 30 minutes. It should be limited to the subject determined within the purpose of the course. Lessons should be short and direct. Students should engage directly with the teacher and the material so that they can understand the subject. The aim of the lesson should be explained in a simple sentence and the boundary of the lesson should be specified (The Paideia School, 2020). While a brief discussion about a topic can maximize a student's attention, prolonging it can distract that attention completely.

Didactic teaching presents a twofold problem. First, since didactic teaching is related to knowledge, so it never goes beyond the lowest thinking skill (memorization). Therefore, a classroom dominated by didactic teaching is a classroom in which children's thinking skills are not properly questioned and developed. Second, unlike the traditional one, didactic teaching is not a one-dimensional, natural skill (Cheeser, 1998).Good didactic teaching requires teachers to have a wide range of complex skills acquired only through education and experience.

Academic Coaching

Intellectual coaching accounts for 60 to 80 percent of the taught time in the Paideia classroom (Elsner, 2013). In the coaching, the teacher encourages students to produce quality products in their individual or group work and projects. Johnson (1998) stated that there are 12 principles of intellectual coaching:

- Students build their projects according to their perceptions from design to evaluation,

- Students use their power of choice with increasing responsibility and maturity,

- Students predict the future by building on the past,

- Students define how they were both in the group and individually in the process,

- Students question their control and competence while meeting and questioning their expectations of success,

- Each assignment or project in the process is individually related to the student and has an important value in the world outside of the classroom,

- Tasks in the process are both current and demanding,

- Students are not motivated by negative emotions such as competition,

- Students communicate and collaborate,

- Students behave kindly and respectfully, emphasizing that they are valuable and unique to each other,

- Individual and cultural differences are not only accepted but also valued,

- Students periodically review the process; evaluates whether they have learned or not.

Students feel positive emotions when they think themselves as doing a project in the Paideia class with their teacher, namely their coach. When we teachers do this practice in their classroom, they see a libertarian atmosphere in which there is no competition and we do not interfere with students' own perceptions. Especially today, although free learning/practice environments are at the forefront, in countries such as Turkey that prepare students for the exam, this situation turns into an act of solving test questions after a while and thus a competition. However, the society will develop more with individuals who know their own responsibility, can produce products, and most importantly, can cooperate, reflecting their past experiences to the future.

Seminar Discussion

The seminar is an understanding that leads to the development of abstract thinking and problem-solving skills in collaboration with others, which are rare in any classroom. The seminar is not a special teaching method. The seminar is a discussion in which the leader asks open-ended questions based on a text / problem / map / photo / video. In the seminar, students should carefully examine the material, for example, the text, listen to others' comments, and evaluate both their own and someone else's views. For students to maximize their learning, effective seminar leaders are aware of two goals: The first is to ask all participants to practice traditional communication skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking). This is done by all teachers in all lessons so that students are more prepared for natural learning life. Before a successful seminar, students are required to read and evaluate the text several times. Second, the seminar leader asks students to summarize, analyze, synthesize, compare, and logically defend their own and others' ideas (Adler, 1983; Roberts, 1998). Thus, high-level thinking in students will be reinforced.

Seminars are a valuable process for teachers and students for works that they might not otherwise read in-depth. Teachers should constantly look for any text that will involve students in the learning process, bearing in mind that "classics" are often discovered or rediscovered years after they were created. Good seminar text:

- It is thought-provoking; it is not easy to dispose of it intellectually,

- Deals with the ideas and values of some complexities,

- It is mnemonic and, in a sense, open-ended; there is more to discuss

- Addresses issues of concern for targeted participants,

- Compatible with the curriculum of the school or classroom.

Teachers, administrators, and other adults need to be part of a continuous series of seminars designed to increase their appreciation of historical documents, literature, mathematics and science, drama, and the visual arts. Thus, children see that adults modeling lifelong learning. Adler (1984) proposed a curriculum framework in which each state or school district could change. The curriculum of Paidea Schools is divided into five categories, the first three of which are traditionally intellectual. The fourth category includes manual skills (not for a professional purpose but to gain the mental agility of learning with one's hands) and the fifth category introduces students to the business world:

- Language, Literature and Fine Arts;

- Mathematics and Natural Sciences;

- History, Geography, and Social Sciences;

- Physical Education (12 years) and Manual Training (6 years) including cooking, sewing, typing, machine repair;

- A general introduction to the business world (last 2 years).

Students' interactions with all these topics must be increasingly difficult and more complex from 1st to 12th grade. The Paideia curriculum sees and teaches disciplines as part of the human experience, not as individual disciplines (Hale, 1998). It can be said that Paideia education is a marriage of two seemingly contradictory ideas - equal access to intellectual truth and quality education - and Thomas Jefferson's "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, it expects what is never and what will not." draws attention to his word. The basic curriculum of proper liberal education empowers a school's students, faculty, and staff to achieve the ultimate goals of education: Virtue, generosity, and right action, not just employability or high-test scores.

The daily plan and schedule of the school are done together by the students and teachers. The aim is to see high-quality lessons that participate in the lesson personally and make projects (Adler, 1983). Teachers can redesign weekly schedules to meet their teaching needs. Moreover, the program includes enough flexibility to meet the needs of teachers and students, with individual study and practice areas (Johnson, 1998). Paideia programs do not have any special teaching material. Schools provide their materials. It is recommended to use classics in literature, art, and music. Besides, printed materials are preferred to be of high quality and original (Hale, 1998).

Paideia schools have portfolio assessment that follows individual development rather than standard assessment and traditional grading system (Billings & Roberts, 1998). The three pillars of the Paideia class, didactic, coaching, and seminar are expected to result in all three: Knowledge, skill, and understanding.

Figure 1

Evaluation Cycle
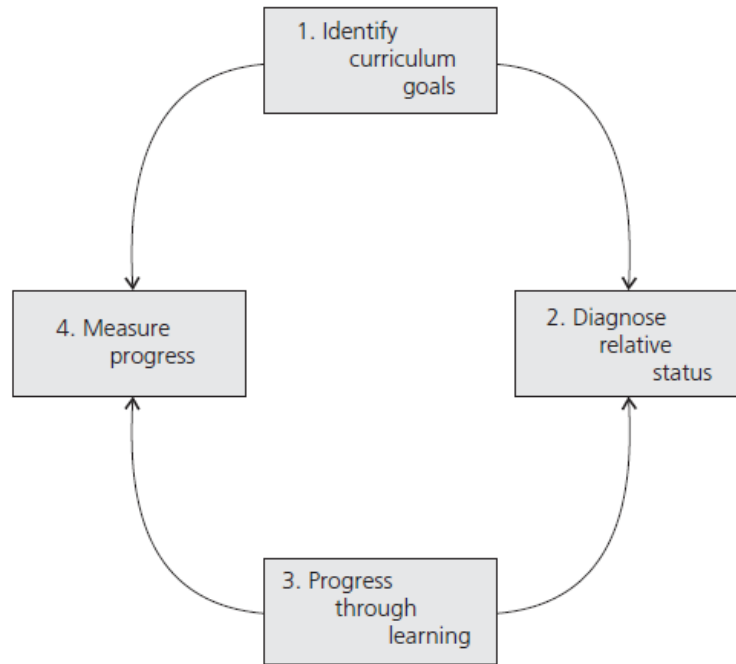
Source: Adopted from "The power of Paideia schools: Defining lives through learning." by Billings & Roberts, 1998. T. Roberts (Ed.) Assn for Supervision & Curriculum.

When Figure 1 has been analyzed, it has been shown that the teaching-assessment cycle includes four steps: Determining the goals and objectives (1), determining the status of students according to the goals (2), progress towards the goal (3), measuring progress (4). At the end of the cycle, teachers and students set new goals (Billings & Roberts, 1998). Also for each course column checklists are used.

Management, Financing, School-Environment Relationship and Prevalence of Paideia Schools

For the Paideia program to be implemented, at least 80% of the school staff must agree to the secret ballot (Aydin, 2015). NPC (National Paideia Center) prefers to work with an average of 3-15 schools in one school area. NPC visits each staff member of the school for an average of 30 days of in-service training, assistance, and application support per year. They especially teaches teachers on subjects such as the application of the Socratic Method, material development, and resource use. Training is given not only to teachers and school administrators but also to families. NPC holds meetings with teachers and administrators during their monthly visits, and they also make classroom observations and write evaluation reports (Elsner, 2013). Financing of Paideia schools varies according to the location, size of the school, the number of teachers and students. The full implementation of the Paideia system in a school takes an average of three to four years and occurs in 3 stages (Aydin, 2015):

- First Stage: Paideia Socratic Seminars ($ 50-70,000)

- Second Stage: Intellectual Coaching ($ 40-50,000)

- Third Stage: Evaluation (30-40,000 $)

These are calculated considering the number of teachers as 35. A school that progresses towards becoming a Paideia Creative Thinking School passes the stages with NPC training, and except the first stage, the other stages start with a comprehensive needs assessment and continue with adaptation according to the school community, and monthly evaluation (National Paideia Center, 2020). As a

school wants to adapt the system to their school, it is not free also money is not the only necessity. The school-environment relationship is an integral part of the Paideia system. In the afternoons, there are activities planned for child-family participation. Community-oriented seminars are also organized so that issues such as the development of democracy and civic participation in the school community are discussed (Elsner, 2013).

Paideia schools can be successfully implemented in every urban or rural region and for students from all groups. All 50 states in the United States have schools using Paideia. It has schools in Canada and Greece. It has one school each in Chile, Sweden, Spain, Ireland, and Saudi Arabia. Certified and Accredited Schools are as follows: There are four schools in North Carolina, two schools in South Carolina, two schools in Tennessee, one school each in New York, Kentucky, Indiana, Texas, Colorado, and Arizona. However, the list is for schools that have been certified or accredited within the last two years. There are 18 more schools in the process that they will have certification and/or accreditation for 2021 (Spielman, 2020). The presence of Paideia schools in many countries shows that they are very beneficial. Implementing the system with its certificate and fee may be difficult for countries and public schools that implement the centrally prepared program as Turkey. However, schools can use Paideia system in some courses or teachers in some subjects, and this practice can be carried to the classrooms.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper, Paideia Schools are analyzed in detail as an alternative school. The Declaration of Principles created by the Paideia Program National Center, which summarizes the mission, method, and vision of the Paideia Program, is as follows (Adler and Van Doren, 1988): All children can learn; for this reason, they deserve the same quality of education, not just the same quantity; the best education they deserve is the best education for everyone; a good education is the education of the child's whole life (lifelong education) and schools should be classified according to these characteristics; three characteristics that education should --bring to children are (a) getting a good livelihood, (b) being a good citizen of the nation and the world, and (c) establishing a good life for themselves; the necessity of seminar discussion in our schools, which includes didactic subject teaching, coaching that produces learning skills and Socratic questioning; the results of these three types of teaching will lead to (a) the acquisition of organized knowledge, (b) the formation of skill habits in the use of language and mathematics, and (c) an understanding of the basic ideas of the mind; each student's success should be evaluated within the framework of their own competencies; a school principal is not just an administrator; that the school should always be a leading teacher, who should cooperate with the teaching staff in planning, reform, and reorganization as an educational community.

School principals and educators should be actively involved in learning; thus, it is believed that the main motivation of those who devote their lives to the teaching profession should be their own desire to continue learning (Stephan, 2016). Paideia Schools are for all children aged 3-18 and their families. Students from every region can come to Paideia Schools. The school system is based on making students think. Students are given information, and they are made to remember and understand the information. "Socratic dialogue" method is used to get the desired thinking. "Socratic dialogue" or "elenchus", in the definition of Socrates, "cross-question" is to test the thoughts and beliefs by adding new questions to the point where the problem is knotted. Teachers at Paideia Schools are experts in this field (Elsner, 2013). It is believed that the questions that teachers ask students will improve their understanding, logic, reasoning, and deep-thinking skill.

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