TOWARDS A FUSION OF WESTERN AND TRADITIONAL AFRICAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS IN ZIMBABWE'S NATIONAL SCHOOL CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT:

This paper argues for the fusion of worthwhile elements of Western and African Traditional concepts of education in Zimbabwe's National School Curriculum. First, the paper notes that the concept of education is notoriously difficult to define because it tends to mean different things to different people. Second, the paper posits a case for the existence of traditional African education even before the coming of white colonial settlers in Zimbabwe in 1890. Third, the paper seeks to explore the impact of Western Education on traditional African education. Fourth, the paper tries to establish the similarities and differences between the two concepts of education. Using philosophical analysis, it shows that there are no significant differences between the two systems of education that justified colonial settlers' resolve to replace indigenous systems of education with Western education. Finally, the paper proposes a fusion of worthwhile aspects of these educational systems in Zimbabwe's National School Curriculum. Such an exercise would help Zimbabwe's current National School Curriculum to reflect worthwhile aspects of traditional African education while at the same time ridding it of aspects of Western education that are not relevant to local needs and requirements.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a concept that is notoriously difficult to give a precise and concise definition. It has tended to mean different things to different people. For example, the dominant understanding of the concept of education from the Western worldview is that education

must be formal and systematic, meaning that it has to be guided by well-defined and written syllabi and must be administered by people trained to impart knowledge to others. From the African worldview, education is seen as entailing more than attending schools. It is understood as a wholesome process of human learning by which knowledge is passed on and people trained in a number of arts and skills that are beneficial to them and others. However, the tragedy of the human race is that those who are materially, militarily and economically powerful have, throughout history, been at liberty to ascribe meanings to concepts such as education to the extent that they themselves consider what education is and what it is not. What is well captured is the belief among white colonial settlers in colonial Zimbabwe that indigenous people did not have a concept of education (Zvobgo, 1997; Kanyongo, 2005: 65), which justified the imposition of a colonial education that was not in line with the challenges and aspirations of the local people.

The controversy surrounding the legitimacy of traditional African education as an 'education' dates back to the coming of the white settlers into Africa under the guise of civilization (ter Haar, 1990: 16). White colonial settlers denied that Africans had a way of life, let alone a system of education, and if they had one, it was 'primitive' and 'informal'. It is in light of these misconceptions about traditional African education that Marah (2006: 15) remarked that:

> *Because there were no permanent school walls in traditional African educational systems, as in the case of the Western countries, some European writers on African education tended to be blinded by their own cultural paradigms and viewed traditional African educational process as mainly informal.*

As a result, the task was undertaken to 'educate' the untutored Africans by introducing what they termed 'formal

education'. However, the assertion that Africans had no concept of education is sterile and misplaced because it was predicated on a faulty and arbitrary assumption that education must be formal and universal for it to be education *per se*. It is our considered view that wherever there is a way of life, there is education that is an agent of its transmission and perpetuation. Therefore, the Western contention that what was going on among African societies prior to colonialism was not proper education is controversial and a subject of intense debate.

However, if one delves into the crux of the concept of education, one can note the key elements of education from a Western perspective, in some cases, are equivalent if not inferior to the traditional African systems of education (Gwaravanda and Masaka, 2008*a*; Gwaravanda and Masaka, 2008*b*). This paper, therefore, seeks to problematise the concept of education, highlighting how attempts to define it have tended to be either too wide or too narrow. The paper notes that some elements of both Western education and traditional African education are essential for post-colonial Zimbabwe's national school curriculum.

Understanding the Concept of Education

A number of attempts have been made to define the concept of education *albeit* without noticeable success because it has tended to mean different things to different people. Hence, it is notoriously difficult to come up with a universally appealing definition of education that is exhaustive and unalterably true (Makuvaza, 1999: 66). For this reason R.S. Peters (1966) contended that modern philosophers have since abandoned the attempt to define education (Schofield, 1972: 30; Frankena, 1973: 4). However, the failure of scholarship to come up with a precise definition that is universally

appealing does not mean that the process of education ceases to take place.

A cursory look into history shows that man has always possessed and imparted knowledge, skills and customs that are a result of deliberate teaching done both formally and informally (Wilson, 2003: 105; Nyota and Mapara, 2008: 190). Education is, therefore, as old as man. Education was used as a tool through which the young were inducted, socialized and integrated into the way of life of a community through, among others, the family, peers and the community at large. This form of socialisation had a functional dimension of passing on knowledge and skills that were regarded as worthwhile to the next generation. Such a form of education stabilised the society and ensured homogeneity among its ranks because it was primarily society-oriented (Ocitti, 1994: 22). Thus, education had both practical and theoretical dimensions that ensured that students were initiated into bodies of knowledge that were useful to themselves and others. For instance, in traditional Zimbabwean societies, well-defined roles were put in place commensurate with one's age, sex and position on the social scale. Home economics was the province of women while hunting and defense of the clan was the responsibility of men. In view of the above, it is illogical to envisage an epoch in the history of the human race which did not have a concept of education. Therefore, attempts by the white colonial settlers to bracket out Africans as an untutored race are futile and devoid of substance.

Plato defines education as a form of training that is given by suitable habits to the first instincts of virtue in children, when pleasure and pain are rightly implanted in non-rational souls (Schofield, 1972: 31). Education becomes a form of training which leads the student to hate and love what he ought to hate and love. Since Plato understood that education has a moral emphasis, it can be

universally appealing in that every human society inculcates virtues into children and adults and dissuades them from pursuing vicious acts. However, the shortcoming of this definition is that education cannot be properly said to be primarily concerned with inculcation of virtues only. Hence it can be dismissed for being too narrow.

Milton seemingly proposes a definition of education that is broader than that of Plato (ibid) in that it covers a significant number of humanity's efforts to comprehend the self and all dimensions of life. He defines education as that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully and magnanimously all the offices, both public and private, of peace and war (ibid; *see also* Peters, 1973: 85). This concept entails that education is the acquisition of substantial knowledge that can be put into use for the benefit of the self and others. Education should enable man to acquire both theoretical and practical knowledge for one to be called an educated person. Milton believes that a person who is educated is capable of executing his duties effectively and efficiently in various situations that are of importance to all and sundry (Schofield, 1972: 31). His view is also shared by Comenius who saw an educated person as a person who exhibits unparalleled knowledge (Schofield, 1972: 31). Although it is linguistically possible to speak of an all-around person in terms of having knowledge, it is logically impossible, since man is fallible, for one to be a "know-it-all." The position of Milton and Comenius could have been valid during their era since the body of knowledge was much smaller than it is today as a result of a monumental expansion of knowledge through, among other factors, globalization, improved technology and research.

Scheffler (1960) reflected on the controversy surrounding attempts to define education and noted that a number of definitions

have been proposed (Schofield, 1972: 34). For instance, there are both descriptive and prescriptive definitions. Descriptive definitions focus on that which has been standardized and accepted as explaining adequately what something is (ibid: 34). Thus, a descriptive definition tells us what we have to think and does not allow arbitrary ascription of meaning to terms. On the other hand, a stipulative definition arbitrarily states what a person considers to be the case (ibid). An instance of a descriptive definition is that which is prefixed with 'education is…' while a stipulative definition is often prefixed by the phrase 'education as we shall understand it…' Some misunderstandings, therefore, arise when education is defined descriptively and stipulatively as no consensus is reached. We argue that it is not profitable for humanity to expend much effort in trying to come up with a universally binding definition of education. Almost all definitions are either too narrow or too wide in that they may fail to capture all that which can be properly called 'education'. It is our contention that education permeates all human endeavours and therefore is present wherever there are a people.

        The failure of scholarship to come up with a universal definition of education is understandable because it is now a truism that the content of any educational system is, by and large, influenced by the aspirations and challenges that confront a given society. For Makuvaza (1999: 68), an African conception of education can only be meaningful and relevant if it is determined and influenced by its historical and existential situatedness in Africa. Therefore, the factors that inform any educational system are, to a greater extent, particular to individual societies, cultures, and nation-states as they gear themselves to respond to the challenges of their life situations. These factors, therefore, influence how the concept of education is to be understood. In this regard, education can defined as a process through which a people's way of life is made known, perpetuated,

reoriented, and transformed to meet the existing life situations of a given people. Such a characterization is broad enough to encompass African systems of education.

A Vindication of traditional African Education

African Traditional Education refers to indigenous education systems before colonialism. During the colonial period, indigenous education in African societies was not seen as an education. The Westerners actually saw it as 'socialization' or 'child-rearing' (Ocitti, 1994:14) where apprentices were taught to conform to the way of life of their society. H. J. Baker (1913) aptly expresses this skepticism about indigenous education in Ocitti (ibid):

> The children of this land (Rhodesia) are nonentities. Nothing at all is done for them. They feed, sit about, and sleep and in this manner they grow until the time comes for themselves to do something…They have no nurseries, no tea parties, no birthdays and no instruction from their parents. They are there, and that is all. Their lives are one big nothing.

Ocitti calls this a myth because it is unrealistic to say that indigenous education is not education qua education. The basis for our case for traditional African Education is that education is found wherever there are a people. Since every society has a culture that is transmitted from generation to generation through the means of its education system, it is undeniable that Africans had a concept of education even before the coming of colonial white settlers in the 19th century. For Ocitti (ibid), education is the humanization of man in society and is a universal process and therefore part and parcel of every human society. Thus, understanding education as a universal process that existed in the past and still exists today will help in debunking the myth that indigenous education in colonial and post-

colonial Zimbabwe was/is not education. In light of this Westermann as quoted by Ocitti (ibid: 15) reflects that:

> *Education is not something which the African has received for the first time from the white man. The "primitive" African is not uneducated. Many Africans, men and women who have never been to school or in contact with Europeans, show such dignified and tactful behavior, and reveal so much refinement in what they say and do, that they well deserve to be called "educated…"*

Westermann's understanding of education transcends schooling to include all that helps one to be conversant about his surroundings and make use of this knowledge for his own benefit and that of his clan and society in general. Makuvaza (1996: 76) regards traditional African education as 'genuine and relevant' in that it was education for self-reliance and service to the community and that whatever was imparted to the learner contributed positively towards the survival of the community. It was an education that had social utility: its graduates employed the knowledge and skills learnt to live productively for the benefit of the learner, clan and society in general. For example, the one who was taught the art of hunting, basketry and carving always found such arts quite useful they helped him to improve his life, as well as that of his clan and society in general.

Peresuh (1999: 7) notes that traditional African education was both informal and formal and was a lifelong process. While the teachers who imparted knowledge did so outside conventional schools and were not salaried, there was a properly laid out practical and oral syllabi that was used to initiate the young and inexperienced into the way of life of their society. The initiation was gender and age-specific. The young were taught the values and skills that were commensurate with their stage of development. Marah (2006: 15)

concurs with Peresuh when he noted that the education imparted to the young:

> …fitted the group and the expected social roles in society were learned by adulthood. Girls were socialized to effectively learn the roles of motherhood, wife, and other sex-appropriate skills. Boys were socialized to be hunters, herders, agriculturalists, blacksmiths, etc., depending on how the particular ethnic group, clan or family derived its livelihood.

Traditional African education is, therefore, primarily a community responsibility and uses children's work experience gained from their parents and other members of their social group for the benefit of the community in general.

This type of education instilled purpose and direction into the lives of indigenous people of Zimbabwe as it properly situated them as part of their social group. Through this educational system, people were taught to extol the ontological primacy of the community as a whole. A typical African had a communalistic mode of production since the means of production as well as the products were collectively owned. More importantly, traditional African education was a community's responsibility and the knowledge and skills gained by the children from their parents and other elders were crucial for them to be able to play their part in society. Thus, it was an educational system that was able to meet the learning needs of all and of the society in general. On the other hand, Western colonial education was, by and large, an education meant to alienate and subjugate the African so that he became totally disconnected from the past that was disparagingly dismissed. Thus, unlike traditional African education, Western colonial education lacked utility and relevance for the present-day realities of the indigenous people of Zimbabwe because it sought to inculcate an attitude of self-denial

and, therefore, a lack of confidence in their traditional systems of education.

Western Education and its Impact on Traditional Education in Zimbabwe

When white colonial settlers came to Zimbabwe and elsewhere, they promoted the idea that indigenous people did not have a concept of education and if ever they had one, it could best be described as primitive and worst as archaic and redundant. They, therefore, banked on this misplaced view to justify the imposition of the Western educational system and to denigrate traditional African education as not education *qua* education. Since "the curriculum is a reflection of the power struggles which characterises all societies" (Zvobgo, 1997: xi), the colonial curriculum designed for indigenous Zimbabweans was meant to create a situation of helplessness and to encourage them to worship a way of life foreign to them thereof. The rejection of the presence of a system of education in Africa was a grave distortion of reality it was predicated on a narrow and arbitrary understanding of education leavingtraditional African education from the realm of education. Western colonial education was carried out in specially built institutions, such as schools, colleges, universities and vocational centers; what was taught was well structured, and teaching was often supervised by external administrative bodies (Farrant, 1964: 18). Comprehensive syllabi and timetables were important to give purpose and direction to the education of the students, and those who successfully completed given levels of education were awarded certificates and good paying jobs.

It is, however, doubtful whether Western colonial education was really education in the proper sense. For Rodney (1982: xii), Western colonial education was aimed at the subjugation and exploitation of Africans as well as under-developing Africa for the

benefit of Europe. In this regard, Peresuh (1999: 15) notes and, rightly so, that formal Western colonial education, aided by military subjugation, has successfully alienated African societies from their own ways of life. This was possible because colonial education was meant to promote and perpetuate the doctrine of white supremacy (Braman, 2000) where by the African was taught to be a good worker, uncritical, loyal and subservient to the whims of colonial masters. So, Western colonial education primarily aimed at dehumanising the African so that one lost a sense of self-esteem and direction in life. Mazrui (1978: 4) describes it as cultural imposition. Pre-colonial traditional African education was quite in sync with the life situations of learners thereby making learning effective, and the method of instruction that included riddles, proverbs and folk tales sharpened the intellectual abilities of learners (Gwaravanda and Masaka, 2008a; Gwaravanda and Masaka, 2008b). Since every member of society was an instructor or a teacher, traditional African education was all-inclusive, free and, therefore unavoidable for all in a society.

Colonialism, however, commercialised education, mystifying the acquisition of knowledge through, among others, restrictive enrolment procedures, such as the need to rationalise the teacher-student ratio as well as screening based on intellectual abilities. This tended to bracket out the majority of learners who were regarded as not 'good enough' from the school system. For Southard (1997: 1), colonial education was a form of mental control "…through a central intellectual location, the school system" and which, therefore, aided the process of political subjugation and alienation of Africans. The school system of colonial education alienated the African from his pre-colonial past that extolled his culture. Since the process of traditional African education was "…intimately integrated with the social, cultural, artistic, religious and recreational life of the ethnic group" (Marah, 2006: 15), Western colonial education estranged the African from his way of life through a well-calculated move to

denigrate all that was part of the African's culture and to extoll the virtues of a culture that was alien and foreign to him. Traditional African education was dismissed as a vestige of a primitive life that needed to be urgently wiped out in preparation for a 'civilised life.'

Though Western colonial education severely denigrated and falsified traditional African education, it is futile for African countries to think of completely doing away with Western colonial education in their school syllabi since it had some positive contributions to traditional African education and way of life in that it, among other things, led to the docketing of traditional African knowledge and belief systems for posterity. Thus, there is a sense in which certain worthwhile aspects of traditional African education can be integrated with certain worthwhile aspects of Western colonial education in post-colonial Zimbabwe's National School Curriculum.

Comparison: Western and Traditional African Education

The feature that is cited as paramount in showing the superiority of Western colonial education over traditional African education is that the formal was formal with properly structured syllabi, schools and objective ways of recognizing the performance of students by awarding them certificates, diplomas and degrees (Peresuh, 1999: 7; Marah, 2006: 210). On the other hand, traditional African education had a peculiar method of education that emphasized the involvement of everyone in the community in the transmission of knowledge. In the current system of education, only formal schools are the agents and reservoirs of knowledge. We would agree with Bantock (1970: 88) when he says that "schools are doing for society what society should do for itself." As a result, we can easily aim for more and accomplish less than our grandparents". In the traditional set-up, the concepts of 'educated' and 'half-educated' are unheard of since everyone received functional education and was expected to do what he could for the

benefit of himself and the community. Scanlon in (Marah 2006:17) argues that "the education of the African before the coming of the European was an education that prepared him for his responsibilities as an adult in his home, his village and his tribe."

Education, however, does not necessarily mean attending schools (Farrant, 1964: 18). Most people would like to equate education with schooling, but the two are not the same. A person need not have gone through formal schooling to be said to be educated because they can gain education even without going through one. At the same time, it does not follow that all those who have attended schools are educated. Therefore, there are no monumental differences between the virtues of Western colonial education and traditional African education that could have justified the colonial white settlers' resolve to obliterate the traditional African education and replace it with their own. It can, therefore, be contended that it was illegitimate for colonial settlers to deny the presence the presence of education among the indigenous people of pre-colonial Zimbabwe because education is present wherever there is a people with a way of.

Towards a Fusion of Traditional African Education and Western Colonial Education

Though colonial Western education had considerable negative impact on traditional African education, it is important to note that it also contributed positively to the refinement of the methods of preserving and imparting knowledge among Africans. Content to be learned became, to a larger extent, uniform. The uniformity of the content imparted to students was important in that it promoted objectivity in assessing what had been learned. The syllabi were well documented and lasted for a long time in the same form unlike the

oral syllabi of traditional African education that was prone to distortion as a result of misrepresentations through oral transmission. However, no civilization, whether of the written word or an oral tradition, is immune from distortions and misrepresentations. From Vansina (1981: 142):

> *It would be wrong to reduce the civilization of the spoken to a merely negative absence of writing and to perpetuate the inborn contempt of the literate for the illiterate which is found in so many sayings such as the Chinese 'The palest ink is to be preferred to the strongest world'. To do so would show total ignorance of the nature of these oral civilizations.*

The introduction of formal schools where reading and writing was the core helped in the preservation of vital African oral literature for the sake of posterity. It also meant that aspects of African culture were properly docketed with a higher degree of accuracy and minimal chances of corruption since Africans themselves were involved in the process of writing their own history.

Though traditional African education also had some problems, notably being overly conservative, as Gatawa (1990), Zvobgo (1994) and Ocitti (1994) would argue, it nevertheless had some positive attributes such as inculcation of unhu (humanness) that ensured that graduates of indigenous education exhibited commendable character traits, such as faithfulness, obedience and loyalty. Despite the lapse of time, we argue that these attributes should still be included in the Zimbabwean educational system because of their positive contribution to a stable social order. Another crucial aspect of traditional African education is African Traditional Religion (ATR). Religion permeates all aspects of life of the African to the extent that it is dehumanizing to strip him of his religion through Christocentric religious teachings at formal schools. Therefore, it is a

tragedy for the Zimbabwe National School Curriculum to trivialise the centrality of ATR in favour of Christianity or other religions in the intellectual development of an African student in the contemporary school system.

Though it is undeniable that Christianity can contribute positively to Zimbabwe's education system through, among others, its sound ethical teachings, it is also crucial that its apprentices give precedence to a thorough study and understanding of their own local religion and its worthwhile attributes that would help in the development of responsible African citizens. Only by so doing can we have school graduates who are not alien to their own way of life, but who are appreciative of the worthwhile aspects of their culture. Marashe, Ndamba and Chireshe (2009: 38-39) argue, and rightly so, that ATR "…as a cardinal cultural tenet of [Zimbabwean] society could be used to champion and consolidate a genuine Zimbabwean identity." Since Western Colonial Education syllabi had a prominent Christocentric flavour, it tended to downplay the importance of ATR in the African way of life. For this reason we call upon post-colonial Zimbabwe's educational system to show a positive attitude towards ATR at both the curriculum planning and implementation stages. In this endeavour to fuse worthwhile aspects of both Western Colonial Education and African Traditional Education, we have to recognise that traditional African Education has its own faults and limitations (ter Haar, 1990) that must be discarded in the design of a postcolonial school curriculum in Zimbabwe.

An instance of the faults of traditional African education was its rigidity and dogmatism in knowledge acquisition and generation whereby the elderly are regarded as the fountains of knowledge from which the less knowledgeable must 'drink'. This system tended to dampen innovation and critical thinking among the less knowledgeable beyond the boundaries of experiential knowledge of

the sages. Thus, the fusion of only those worthwhile aspects of the two educational systems is essential if Zimbabwe is to create a powerful educational system that is inclusive of the valuable aspects of the two.

Farrant (1964: 34) notes that there is a confusing mixture of Western and African educational systems in most African states. Every country that was formerly colonised inherited a colonial pattern or system of education that more often than not conflicted with and contradicted the local systems of education. Emphasis was on the history of great poets of the West such as Homer and Shakespeare and extolling the virtues of battles, wars and figures of Western countries while neglecting all that was part of their way of life. For one reason or another, local systems of education were degraded and vilified so much that Western Colonial Education in colonial Zimbabwe was an agent of alienation because it entrenched denial of the African way of life.

Farrant, however, (1964: 34) questions the feasibility of blending African form of education into formal Western education on the grounds that traditional African education may not require schools, school heads, lessons and classrooms. These attributes that Farrant cites were found among traditional societies though with different nametags. Elders and parents in traditional African societies shepherded the young through the process of acquiring knowledge and belief systems of their society by providing the necessary guidance and direction in all their stages of knowledge acquisition. Lessons are also present in traditional African education though they are primarily conducted at community and family levels in the form of, among others, games, riddles, music and proverbs. These aspects of traditional African education deserve a place in Zimbabwe's National School Curriculum if we are to produce a student who is not only appreciative of his way of life, but also equipped with an

education that makes him worthwhile in a globalising world. Therefore, there is no justification to deny the possibility of integrating these two educational systems whose inherent differences are not as pronounced as previous scholarship has claimed.

The legacy of the Western colonial educational system is quite evident in Zimbabwe through the methods of teaching, training, infrastructure and curriculum that are predominantly western in orientation. Zimbabwe's colonial educational system was a Western imposed super-structure that sought to promote individualism, consumerism and material gain at the expense of the community. It was the complete opposite of the traditional African way of life that views education as a shared enterprise irretrievably integrated with other aspects of a social group's way of life. Such a system was crafted to exploit the African. Thus, the African does not find any solace in it. Mudzamba (1982), Mhundwa (1982) and Gatawa (1990) all concur that the educational system in Zimbabwe is based on a colonial foundation that was not adapted to the life, ideas, resources and aspirations of indigenous people. It is an education that has created conflicts between school and society since it does not promote social harmony but places a dividing wall between the two. African school graduates who have taken a huge dose of Western colonial education normally view their culture with scorn given that their education is, among others, flavoured in Christocentric teachings. Therefore, it must be overhauled to reflect the true identity of the African in the globalising world without necessarily obliterating worthwhile aspects of the Western colonial education in Zimbabwe such as a properly laid out syllabi, national and international examinations, centralised schools and documentation of material so that local knowledge is integrated into the growing body of universal knowledge.

It is, therefore, important that Zimbabwe draw a new educational model that underlies the need for uniqueness and

relevance. It must also be a system that strikes a balance between Western colonial education and traditional African education, an educational system that adapts to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of the various peoples, which conserves all sound and healthy elements in the fabric of their social life. In this regard, the traditional way of sharpening mental abilities of students, such as riddles (zvirahwe) (Gwaravanda and Masaka, 2008b: 196), proverbs (tsumo) (Gwaravanda and Masaka, 2008a) and folk tales (ngano), must be integrated with Western aspects of education, such as mathematics and other sciences. Since it has been proven that the very aspects that Western colonial education denied Africans are actually conceptualized in their folklores, it is crucial for curriculum designers to take cognisance of the presence of these aspects in traditional African education and find ways by which they can assert their position in Zimbabwe's National School Curriculum.

If colonial educators used education to impose their values and way of life, post-colonial Zimbabwe and other African states in a similar situation can use the same method to reassert the African way of life and some elements of its educational system. Moyana (1989: 20) argues that dependency complex that was entrenched by Western colonial education creates a sense of non-being in the individual whereby those from without his life form compromises his ontological independence. For as long as the Western educational system is alienated from the way of life of the people upon which it is imposed, it ceases to have relevance. Even though Africans who attended mission schools could not completely discard their beliefs, being a believer in the African value systems had a social stigma to the effect that some African students gradually lost their traditions and assumed Western value systems (Pwiti and Ndoro, 1999). Not only did the colonial educational system eventually create a sense of distain for the native heritage, but it also affected the individual and his sense of self-confidence. Therefore, it is important for curriculum

designers to integrate the good aspects of both Indigenous and Western colonial education so that the curriculum used in Zimbabwe also adequately captures the content of traditional African education. While acknowledging that we are now living in a global village, it will be unwise to condemn traditional African education completely as something of the past. Neither can we totally throw away aspects of Western colonial education from our syllabi. Phasing out formal schooling would be futile given the enormous investment during and after the colonial period. Doing so would be to the disadvantage of African societies in a globalising world.

CONCLUSION

The paper argued for the fusion of worthwhile elements of both Western colonial education and traditional African education in Zimbabwe's National School Curriculum. In order to strike a balance between these two systems of education, aspects of the indigenous way of life, such as religious beliefs and values, riddles, proverbs, music and games could be integrated with aspects of Western colonial education, such as well-structured syllabi, internationally accredited school examinations and quality assurance at learning institutions to develop a student who not only appreciates the utility of Western colonial education but also values African education. The paper, however, argued that since education is a universal practice, it follows that pre-colonial indigenous Zimbabweans had a system of education. Both systems of education had both worthwhile and non-worthwhile aspects. The paper, therefore, advocated for the fusion of worthwhile aspects of these educational systems in Zimbabwe's National School Curriculum. Such an exercise would help the current National School Curriculum to reflect worthwhile aspects of indigenous education while at the same time ridding it of aspects of Western colonial education that are not relevant to national needs and aspirations.

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