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# The implications of the concept of freedom regarding its conditions, restrictions and value with respect to learners

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## abstract

The current discussion was an attempt to construct a theoretical framework of freedom in education that depends on the analysis of the concept of freedom. This analysis treated, firstly, the implications of freedom in education with respect to its conditions, restrictions and value in education.. Some conclusions can be derived as follows. Firstly, with respect to conditions of freedom, (A) it has been argued that non-interference with learners' choices and decisions is a necessary condition for learners to exercise their freedom in education to gain benefit from its value. However, interference is not justifiable only for the prevention of license on others, which is, of course, an important exception. (B) it has been argued that the availability of making free choice and decisions is a necessary condition for learners to have freedom enabling them to acquire benefit from its value in education. But it is completely unrealistic to suppose that children are ever, as a matter of fact, free to do what they like simply because of the inherent decency and good sense of all concerned. The practical choice is never between simply doing as one likes and being constrained; it is rather between being subject to different types of constraint.

Secondly, with respect to the value of freedom in education for learners, it was seen that: (A) happiness is not the only aim of freedom in education when learners are allowed to do what they want. Happiness is only a product of being free to do what they are interested in; (B) autonomy, responsibility and creativity are valuable educational aims. Moreover, the current discussion noted that freedom is a necessary condition to achieve these aims

**Key words:** freedom, freedom in education, autonomy, responsibility and creativity

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## **1.1. Introduction**

The aim of this paper is to construct a theoretical framework of freedom in education. This examination will deal with the implications of freedom in education with respect to its conditions, restrictions and value in education. Through this analysis the current discussion aims also to analyse and examine the learners' right to be free regarding their education. This is because it might be difficult for someone to accept the claim of freedom for young learners to be equal to that of adults. This refers to three important factors; the nature of the subject, the purpose of education and the sort of restrictions that limit learners' freedom. The analysis of learner's rights regarding their education in this paper will deal with learners at school level.

## **1.2. The implications of the concept of freedom in education regarding its conditions**

When analysing the implications of the idea of freedom in education with respect to its conditions, I will focus on the learners' right to be left free from interference with their interests and choices in their education.

### **1.2.1. Freedom in education and non-interference with the learner's interests**

According to the analysis of the concept of freedom, non-interference (intentional or unintentional) from others is a necessary condition to describe an agent as free. The most important exception

for interference is the prevention of the license of others. The claim for learners' freedom in education requires also that they should be left free to do (or not to do) to be (or not to become) what they want to be without interference from adults. With respect to children interference is not justifiable only for the prevention of license on others, which is, of course, an important exception. Despite remarkable stories of children surviving without adult help it is still the case that because of their size, inexperience and less-developed rationality they are more vulnerable than most adults and need protection and guidance. However, adults' right to make decisions for children's should be limited to making decisions in children's interests and to the provision of the necessary protection and guidance. Their rights will not extend to rights over children, regardless of what is in children's interests.

Amongst the important things children need to learn are how to find out information for themselves, study independently, pursue interests, make their own growth, and to build up their experience' so as to be able to make choices and decision for themselves. They cannot do this without having the opportunity to exercise freedom. In this sense Dearden (1972:64) recognised that the child's growth is one of the main components of the value of non-interference with learners' interests and wants. In his view "only the child can do his own growing; there is no sense in which an adult can do it for him. In this sense development and growth is a process which is logically non-transferable from someone to another". Moreover, Dearden (1972:75) argues that "growth is realising one's own pattern of potentialities and, thus, finding and forming one's own individual identity". Similarly, Downey and Kelly (1979:24-5) argue that

for the child to develop and function as a person, he needs to be treated as one. He needs to be able to develop the kind of self-concept that allows him to regard himself as of value. To treat children as persons in their own right...involves regarding them as responsible for their own actions and therefore having some control over what they do.

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According to Carr (1985:60)

The child requires to learn to stand on its own two feet, but this will happen only if it has occasions for genuine discovery and experiment in which there is a real risk of failure as well as opportunity for success; for if it is to learn to accomplish what is right for correct it also needs room to experiences mistakes.

Peters (1966b:289) says that if learners are treated progressively, as persons, by being encouraged to plan their lives and to discover what is worth-while in spheres that are within their experience and competence, they will surely learn to be persons under a stable system of rules that guarantees a predictable environment.

Gradually their sphere of discretion is widened as their experience and knowledge of right and wrong increase and their competence and control over themselves and their environment is enhanced. They do not learn this either by being conditioned like performing seals or by being allowed simply to do what they want.

Another justification can be seen in Hopkins's (1979:11-2) argument when he states that freedom to direct one's own learning and non-interference with learners' desires to learn what they want allows learners to reap the benefits of intrinsic motivation. For example, he argues that learners will engage in a learning activity if that activity holds the promise of attaining results or rewards that will satisfy his drives and desires. For Neill (1992:104) preventing learners from being free to choose what they are interested in studying by interference means they will not be able to achieve the aims of what they are learning. In another sense Holt (1983:175) rejects the ideal of schools and classroom as places where, most of the time, children are doing what adults tell them to do because there is no way to coerce children without making them afraid. Being afraid as Neill thinks will make the learner even after starting

work “docile, prone to obey authority, fearful of criticism, and almost fanatical in his desire to be normal, conventional, and correct. He accepts what he has been taught almost without question; and he hands down all his complexes, fears and frustration to his children” (1953:29). He further notes that giving learners freedom and not interfering with their choices leads the learner not to feel fear, which is the finest thing that can happen to a child. In his opinion this makes the child more free to express him self (Neill,1992:14). In this sense it might be argued that this type of individual will not be in charge to determine his life and take his responsibility towards the development of society. For the development of the child’s personality, the learners’ thinking should be left free from interference by others’ thinking. It is the learners’ right to think, investigate, examine and believe whatever they want to. They should also know that the only right opinion is not necessarily the one that belongs to the people who are in a position to influence them, such as teachers, parents, writers and others. Young people in schools should be aware that there is no one reality or fact, or one way of doing something. This idea is supported for example by ‘Ammar, (1998a:33) and Kingdone (1942:145) who believe that the aims of education should be made to liberate the individual’s thinking from the interference to exercise his own thinking, to be a free chooser and be independent in his thoughts and actions. Similarly, Macmunn (1926:30) argues that “the unfree mind is the typical mind of the examine-combined formula with formula and fact with fact, but does not bring to its work that intensity of varied associations, sensory and emotional, present in the less formalised mind”.

Although Haldane (1942:116) rejects the idea of complete freedom for children, he argues that

children can, in practice, be given freedom at early age if their training is directed to teaching them the recognition of necessity. This means that they must be allowed to see and feel the consequences of their own actions

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Children should be given opportunities that allow their own experiences and other people's ideas and beliefs to influence their lives and development, but they do not need to be told who to be or what to become. From the previous arguments the defenders of the learners' right to be free regarding their education reject the idea of making the child fit the school instead of making the school fit the child. Therefore, they have paid serious attention to the claim for learners' freedom not to be subject to interference from others. For example, with reference to the philosophy used at Summerhill, Neill (1961:114) points out that "the child should not do anything until he comes to his own opinion". He also believes that the child can develop himself if adults let him be without suggestion of any kind (Neill,1992:9). Further Neill (1992:103) argues that the "community has the right to restrain the antisocial boy because he is interfering with the rights of others" but adults have no right to interfere with his/her choices and decisions. In Hopkins's view (1979:48) non-interference in education means that

there is no discipline or control aimed at determining another's behaviour in other ways-except for the prevention of license on others, which is, of course, an important exception. No individual can control another's beliefs. Every individual has the right to his or her own point of view, but he or she must protect the right of others to decide for themselves. There is, then, no use of positive reinforcement or punishment, nor behaviour modification, aimed at determining or controlling another's actions-except, again, for the prevention of license on others.

Similarly Rousseau (1950:48-9), believes that a child should be nothing but a child:

he feels his weaknesses, but not suffer through it; he must be dependent, but he must not obey; he must ask, not command. He is only subject to others because of his needs, and because they see better than he. No one, not even his

father, has the right to decide for the child what is of no use to him.

From the previous quotations basically the idea of freedom in education rests on a belief that children should have the same rights to determine their own lives as adults. The child should no more have to submit to an adult's preferences than the adult should to the child's. However, there is argument against that right which refers to the nature of the children, whereby they need to be interfered with for their own good. Gribble (1969:160-1) argues that it may often be necessary to constrain children in schools and defends his position by

referring to the intrinsic value of the development of rationality and understanding, and the need to exert authority and impose constraints in order to lead children to what is worthwhile.

It might be argued that this justification destroys the necessity for freedom as a condition for learners to develop their rationality and understanding of things and people. It is important for learners' development to find out what is worthwhile for them instead of leading them to it by interfering with their thinking and actions. For Devi (1998:172) no real and worthwhile education is possible without freedom in learning and teaching. In other words, learners must be free while participating in the dynamic process of education. Another argument is made by Chamberlin (1989:63) who states that

there are some circumstances in which we are justified in coercing people for their own good, and that anyone who is concerned about the welfare of others should not always stand by and watch them come to some predictable and preventable harm.

In Chamberlin' (1989:51) view, "adults have the right to make decisions on behalf of children because they need protection and

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guidance, but this right has to be limited to children's interests and to the provision of the necessary protection and guidance". Dearden (1972:56) distinguishes between giving learners the freedom to do what they want and giving them the chance to do what they need. Also Dearden notes (1972:56) that to motivate children by inducing or capitalising upon their states of need is something that should be regarded as immoral. Moreover, it might be possible to argue that the justification has been given by Chamberlin is an attractive one however, it does not give the adults the right to make decisions on behalf of children for the same reason. It is true that learners need guidelines and protection but this requires giving them the chance to act on their own with help from adults, not by giving them the right to interfere with their choices and decisions.

The main problem in exercising interference with children is that unlike children, adults can refuse any kind of interference which prevents their freedom, and moreover, they have the ability to fight for their rights. The matter is more complex in the case of children, as more often than not, they are ignorant of their rights. Even if they are aware of them, it is unlikely that they would have the necessary ability to fight for them. Therefore, adults are able to exercise power and authority over children with or without protest from them. However, unlike what Neill believes that learners in schools could manage without adults' dictation and, perhaps, without direction. I believe that learners need suggestions from others, and that they should be given guidance and help rather than merely being interfered by adults. Young people need adults' suggestions to develop their full potential. For example, a child will intuitively know what he is interested in learning. But as Holt (1983:175) points out, "he may not do it very well, but he can do it a hundred times better than we can. The most we can do is to try to help, by letting him know roughly what is available and where he can look for it". Likewise, MacCallister (1931:535) argues that "learners desire greater freedom to explore un-trodden paths. But learners



also need guidance and must be willing to receive help”. According to Devi learners are free to study any subject they choose at any given time; but this freedom has to be guided; the learners should experience freedom; but it might be misused: the learners have therefore, to be watched with care, sympathy and wisdom; the teacher must be a friend and guide, must not impose himself, but may intervene when necessary (1998:170).

This leads us to argue that relationships should be an equal, co-operative give-and-take between children and adults just as they should be between adults. There is no doubt that children start out helpless and dependent, but needing help and even needing some control at first to ensure safety are not the same thing as adult controls over how a child will develop, what he or she will make. There would be no need for interference if the relationship between adults and children were equal in terms of having the same right to be left free to think, choose, object and express themselves. “The relationship between adults and children does not suggest that children are not persons in their own right but the property of someone, if not the parents then the state” (Wringe,1981:94). According to the idea of freedom in education, the relationship between adults and children should not be one-way from adults to children. Freire (1998:63) argues that “it is important to live the balance between harmonious experiences between talking to learners and talking with them”.

According to the idea of freedom in education analysed so far, it is the responsibility of adults to show learners what kind of opportunities and options they have, and what kind of consequences these will result in. Adults have a responsibility to help children to express themselves without exercising control over them. What adults can do is to listen to them and find out their interests, needs, frustrations and satisfactions about their lives and education. In this sense, Marshall (1997b:94) suggests that “adults may have to be taught how to listen to children and how to seek their opinion

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without loading all the responsibility on to them". In conclusion, it might be noticeable that non-interference with learners' choices and decisions is a necessary and required condition for learners to exercise their freedom in education and get benefit from its value as it will be examined later in this paper. However, adults' right to make decisions for children's should be limited to making decisions in children's interests and to the provision of the necessary protection and guidance. Their rights will not extend to rights over children, regardless of what is in children's interests.

#### **2.2.2. Freedom in education and availability of making free choices and decisions**

The availability of making choices and decisions is one of the required conditions for someone to be free. Also discussed was the relationship between freedom and the availability of choices in terms of the value of freedom. This means that freedom becomes more worthwhile with the existence of wider possibilities or choices. However, it is important to note that because of the nature of the subject here, which is young people, it might not be easy for someone to accept the claim of freedom of choice for learners especially at an early age. Therefore, In this section I will argue for the right of learners to make free choices and decisions.

Hopkins argues that in an educational setting, "children have to be left free to learn, to make their own choices, and to stand on their own feet" (Hopkins,1979:47). Each individual should have the right to learn and become what he so chooses. Children should have the same right to freedom as adults. In terms of equal freedom, "the child therefore has claims to freedom co-extensive with those of the adult" (Spencer,1970:172). Restrictions on this right should be minimised and the opportunity to fulfil it should be maximised" (Hopkins,1976b:190). In Hopkins' view, to be free is to be a chooser; the capacity for choice will be compatible with the idea of personal autonomy, which is a development of some of the

potentialities inherent in the notion of man as a chooser. Although the notion of freedom in education implies that learners need the right to be choosers, they need help at the beginning to be good choosers, especially, at an early age when they are still immature. Thus learners need open options and a variety of opportunities and suggestions from adults. As Rousseau (1950:49) points out, children have to depend on things only in order to be good choosers and to learn to make good choices. Peters (1966b:197) suggests that learners must live in a fairly predictable environment so that they can learn to make realistic assessments of the consequences. Hopkins (1979:47), in his philosophy of freedom in education, says that

learners should be left free to choose, to decide for themselves all things that affect only them. Others may influence their decision, but the individual makes the final choices. What one learns essentially affects only oneself. Indeed, to some degree, learning can be seen to affect how one fulfils one's responsibilities to others, but there are many ways of fulfilling one's social responsibilities allowing for a multitude of possibilities for what one learns. We may require that a person fulfils his or her responsibilities, but we have no right to require how he or she fulfils those responsibilities.

It is noteworthy that freedom in education rests on a belief that children should have the right to determine their own lives as adults. The objection, as Chamberlain (1989:109-10) notes, which always arises here, is that children start out helpless and dependent, but needing help. Bantock (1970:68) makes a similar point when he claims that "no child is free to choose by the light of nature alone". According to him, the "child's capacity depends entirely upon the choices that have previously been made for him, by other people to enable him to be free to choose anything". Thus, in this view, no child is free to choose until he is already 'sufficiently disciplined to see the implications of his choice'. Similarly, Wringe (1981:110) argues that children's freedom is limited by both his incomplete

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rationality and by the justifiable protection of the rights of others”. This does not mean that only adults can make good or rational choices, however. In fact, adults can be seen to make wrong choices as much as children. Hence, it is possible to argue that, unlike children, adults have more experience and might possess more knowledge to make good choices, but they acquire this capacity by learning through mistakes made in previous choices.

It can be argued that children should be allowed the right to take the same risk to choose, whether they succeed or not. If they make the wrong choice, they will learn from the experience and perform better next time. In this sense, Chamberlin (1989:63) argues that “the value of individuals in making their own choices is, simply because they are their own, and that for these always to be made by someone else, no matter how wise, would be in some way demeaning”. According to this line of reasoning, learners should be left free in a way which encourages independence of mind to make their own choices. As a result, they will learn how to be responsible for their actions. Similarly, Al-Khwli (1987:444) and Al-Zarnwji (quoted in ‘Uthman,1989:118) states that ‘learners are free when their actions come from inside them not from control from outside’. By having freedom, their responsibility for education will rise and grow. This responsibility will enable a child to choose what he wants to learn, the type of school he wants to attend and the teacher. Following Gibbs’s view on ‘rational reasons’ it could be said that learners need a kind of education that can help them to develop their ability to make rational choices so that these choices can be justified. In this sense, freedom in education can help learners to make the choice they want through the development of reason.

*After having discussed the right of learners to make their own choices, I argue that having this right may not be worthwhile unless it is followed by giving learners the opportunity to make their own free decisions according to their choices. From this notion follows the idea that ‘learners also need opportunities to acquire the skills*

*and experiences needed to make their own decisions according to their own choices' (Salam,2000:112). The initiative to involve children in decision-making processes is sure to encounter much resistance because, in general, children lack the skills and experiences necessary. According to Charlton "this may be the case. It may be also be that this unpreparedness exists because schools have been unable, or unwilling, to provide opportunities for pupils to acquire the skills and experiences needed" (1996:63). Therefore, Cowie (1994:161) argues that*

the ability to make decisions is best learned through experience. It is indeed an essential part of education that young people learn how to come to a decision in a logical manner which shows awareness of the situation, sensitivity to other people and a realistic understanding of the resources which are available. The great advantage of giving pupils this experience is that it encourages them to take their own ideas and those of their peers, seriously. Pupils who participate in a decision-making process of this kind are more likely to be committed to the procedures that ensue.

Similarly, Fitzell (1997:14) illustrates how children become 'empowered' when they are allowed to make decisions and take responsibility for those decisions. According to him,

when children feel powerless, they cannot act on their own behalf. It is evident that in developing self-determinism children will initially make a great number of mistakes due to their lack of knowledge and experience. However, this will give them an opportunity to learn from their own experiences. This means that it is impossible to expect too much from them at the beginning, but it is important that society allows them to be free to find their own way without any external control.

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In conclusion it should be noted that the availability of making free choices and decisions is a necessary condition for learners to have freedom that enables them to determine benefit from its value in education.

### **1.3. The implications of the concept of freedom in education regarding its restrictions**

In the previous discussion the necessary conditions of being free have been discussed. However, it has not discussed its restrictions because they are different according to the field of exercising freedom and who are in a position to exercise such restrictions. For example, restrictions of freedom in the field of education are different than restrictions in the field of economy. Therefore, in the following pages the restrictions of learners' freedom will be discussed.

#### **1.3.1. Learners' freedom and being subject to authority**

The application of the principle of freedom in an educational situation is not so straightforward. It is a situation in which constraints are imposed upon children's wants. Holt (1973:27) believes that "the kind of influence or control or coercion that most adults exercise over children is wrong". According to him this is because authority allows little freedom of choice and more fear. According to Smith (1985:46) "if children are treated in an authoritarian manner they will learn little, for it is the nature of authoritarianism not to base itself on reasons, and children learn from being given reasons". Smith argues that freedom gives learners the opportunity to learn through reason. This suggests that learning should not obey authority for the sake of obedience. This idea is clearer in Haydon's statement (1999:113) when he states that

accepting uncritically what someone tells you because they are seen to be in authority is not a good thing... Doing what is right cannot be a matter of doing what one is told. Schools must produce people who are able to think for

themselves what is right... to ask ‘how do we know this is right or that is wrong?’ Any pupil who is being taught to think ought to be asking such questions. And the same pupil ought to see that ‘because I say so’ is not an acceptable answer. Nor is ‘because these are the values of your society’.

Similarly, Straughan (1982:65-6) states that a child appreciates the reasons which justify an edict and accordingly make it authoritative rather than merely authoritarian. However, if he obeys rules or authorities as such he is doing what he sees there to be good and sensible reasons for doing so. The core idea of Haydon’s and Straughan’s argument is that for learners to be able to exercise freedom rather than license and derive benefit from the value of it, they have to be in a position not to obey authority.

However, freedom in education does not mean that there is no authority over learners. This is because they are immature and inexperienced and so they need guidance and protection. Restrictions of children’s freedom are important and must be justified to achieve certain important ends. If present restriction is justified on the grounds that it will enhance future freedom, then the education provided must have this as one of its aims, and must work towards its realisation.

As Smith (1985:41) argues, authority should have grounds, some sort of rational justifying basis which can be demonstrated. “In a broad sense, this is how exercising authority can be seen as different from wielding power”. Similarly, Freire argues that

without authority it is very difficult for the liberty of students to be shaped. Freedom needs authority to become free. It is a paradox but it has its foundation in the freedom of others, and if authority denies this freedom and cults of this relationship, this founding relationship with freedom

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[...] is no longer authority but has become authoritarianism (Freire,1987:91).

For learners to have a worthwhile account of freedom there has to be a right balance between freedom and authority (Power,1982:359), between pressure and permissiveness, between self-expression and submission to discipline, which will enable each child to find the best for himself. For learners to do this they need to exercise the rights of being free from restraints by authority to be able to exercise it. In short, school should be an environment for learners to learn how to be free and how to submit to justified authority in the sense mentioned before. In this sense Magsino (1979:180) argues that

By a certain twist of opaque thinking, it is assumed that adults cannot be expected to exercise rights properly in a democracy unless as young people they were allowed practice in these rights in educational institutions.

At this point it is pertinent to ask, who has the right to exercise authority? Since parents, teachers and the state in general have authority over learners, in the following pages I will discuss the notion of authority by parents and teachers in more detail.

**1.3.1.1. Learners' freedom and being subject to parents' authority**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights legitimises the idea that “parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that should be given to their children” (Arajarvi,1992:3). Similar declarations are to be found in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom and The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Although these declarations vest the parents' right to be responsible for their children's education it does not give them the prior right to make such choices and decisions for children without listening to



them and finding out what they want and what they are interested in doing at school. In this sense David, Davies, Edwards, Reay and Standing (1997:405) and Hargreaves argue that

parents make early educational decisions without much discussion with the child, but as the child grows, he or she will be assigned increased rights to share in educational decisions (Hargreaves,1997a:512).

The justification that always gives parents the right to make decision on behalf of their children is as Harris (1982:35-6) and Almond, argue that “children, especially in their early years, are too young, too inexperienced, and above all too infinitely malleable and adaptable, to determine the conditions and content of their education for themselves” (1991:195). This is why parents in the name of love and protection have to determine everything for their children regarding their education. If the justification for adults ever having the right to override children’s wishes and make decisions for them is that this is in children’s interests because they need protection and guidance, then adults’ right to make decisions for children’s should be limited to making decisions in children’s interests and to the provision of the necessary protection and guidance. Their rights will not extend to rights over children, regardless of what is in children’s interests.

The worst effect here is to see the children trapped between their own will and their parents, with no way out. It is evident that parents desire to see their children in good positions in society. This wish to see their children educated drives them to push their children to do things that they often resent doing. This might be in the interests of the parents, but a natural consequence of this forced education/schooling is an understandable lack of readiness on the part of the child to co-operate. It is arguable that parents do not always do what is in the best interests of the child. Even parents can be misguided and make such decisions that might be in conflict with the child’s best interests.

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However, this does not mean that parents have to allow their children to do as they want and do nothing. For instance, Sutherland (1988:78-82) notes, that “parents have the right to advise their children when the schools offer some options, to express their views about matters which affect their own children, to evaluate the work of the school in general or the performance of the educational system in general and to discuss the progress of their children with teachers and make enquiries or complaints about it”. Similarly, Darling (1992:48) points out that “the mere absence of adult authority is not enough and that sometimes more positive action is required”. This means helping children to grow rather than controlling them. As discussed so far, parents have to understand that their children can make their own choices and decisions according to their interests and wants. It is true that they might need help.

#### **1.3.1.2. Learners’ freedom and being subject to teachers’ authority**

Freedom in education implies that no unjustified authority should be exercised by teachers in the classroom. According to Downey and Kelly (1979:137-8) and Silk (1976:273) if the teacher is responsible for imparting knowledge, arranging examinations, and managing the learning situation this would automatically give him/her a certain degree of authority. This means that the teacher is an authority in his/her subject (White,1985:200). For example, a language teacher of either Arabic or English can be expected to exercise his/her authority in deciding what aspect of the language should be taught first. However, “the more knowledgeable a student is in a subject the less authority need be exercised over him. And thus, the need of authority here becomes a function of the inexperience of the subject” (Silk,1976:275). But, in cases where the learners have the opportunity to choose between the two languages, he/she does not have the right to exercise his/her authority on what language they should choose.

However, Bantock (1970:194-5) holds that “schoolchildren are confronted with the unknown of the subject or area of study, which requires them to make a leap of faith. Before any learning can begin they must simply accept the authority of the teacher, who is therefore, an authority in the sense that he possesses knowledge beyond the present grasp of his pupils. They are in a position to understand any justifications he might offer for calling it knowledge rather than just something he felt inclined to say”. Smith (1985:53) disagrees with Bantock’s view and argues that the fact that the teacher is an authority in the classroom should not be regarded as a matter of his simply knowing more than his pupils. According to Smith,

They [children] are not barbarians at gates of knowledge who must put their trust in the teacher’s cognitive authority before they can be admitted to learning. The extent to which children already possess knowledge, concepts and understanding and are capable of receiving explanation and perceiving the point of activities forbids this picture.

The point that begins to emerge from the process of teaching is that it is not just a matter of knowing one’s own subject, nor even of understanding it deeply enough to be able to produce reasons for what one says based on its distinct logic or fundamental procedures. Teaching seems to involve understanding what learners are making of their experiences, including their schooling. In Langford’s (1971:145) and Peters’s (1973:47-8) view

teachers are put in authority by the community because they have qualified as authorities, to a certain extent, on those forms of knowledge with which educational institutions are concerned. This does not mean that their job is to stuff the minds of the ignorant with bodies of knowledge which they themselves have managed to memorise. For they are concerned with teaching others how to think, not just with telling them what to think. They should try, in other words, to introduce others to the critical procedures by means of

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which such bodies of knowledge have gradually been established and can be challenged and transformed. This is what makes their authority only provisional (Peters,1973:47-8).

According to Hopkins (1976b:198), the teacher is an important resource for the learners, but that does not give him the right to control them “The teacher may initiate and argue for certain activities but not require them. The line is between influence and control. The teacher’s ideas and beliefs may influence a learner’s actions; if the learners so choose they may be used to determine a student’s actions for them”. For Reddiford (1971:17) the teacher “has a right to make pronouncements and issue commands because he has special competencies, training and insight”. In this sense, Rose (1999:63-4) notes that “the teacher and learner relationship is at the hub of any successful learning process, and that it is dependent upon the ability to provide learners with the freedom to learn”. It is, therefore the teacher’s responsibility to make use of “whatever possibilities of self-determination the learners have to promote their aim of autonomy” (Haydon,1983:227).

Among the many arguments about the teacher's role is the idea that teachers should be neutral in their teaching. Learners should learn by discovering things for themselves rather than by being told; and this course of discovery will include among other items the discovery that it is possible to hold different views about a vast number of subjects, between which views they will have to choose (Warnock,1979:160-1). In philosophy, for example, the neutral teacher will present to his learner the different views that exist, then, sit back and allow them to make up their own minds to discover evidence or other considerations which might favour the different views. For Nordenbo (1978:130)

there has been a growing demand for the teachers to refrain from inculcating in the pupils any special life philosophy,

and in particular any special political viewpoint; in short, any particular system of values.

Also Falk (1996:26) states that the role of the teacher “is to give the students centre stage in the classroom, providing a setting in which the students play an active, inquiring role in their learning”.

In line with others Degenhardt (1976:112) also says that apart from providing learners with challenges and opportunities to be creative, “a teacher aiming at creativity must continually look for ways of teaching which combine a maximum of passing with a minimum of restriction. The relationship in the classroom has to have love, which may be as Entwistle (1974:70-1) suggests the key to discipline: it is only instrumental to a relationship which exists for purposes other than the development of personal rapport. It is fundamental to the character of the teacher-learner relationship that it must ultimately be dissolved’. On the contrary Rousseau’s (1950:84-5) advice to the teacher is in complete opposition to that of Entwistle.

Let him always think he is master while you are really master. There is no subjection so complete as that which preserves the forms of freedom; it is thus that the will itself is taken captive.

The teacher’s role in the classroom in the light of freedom in education is to make learners feel free to try things out. According to Kelly learners need to be confident that the teacher will look sympathetically on their failures as well as approvingly on their successes. Such work, then, requires teacher-learner relationships that are based on collaboration and mutual understanding rather than on distance and control (1990:125). The teachers have to involve their learners in the decision-making process by asking them their views on lesson planning, determining activities to be done, choosing evaluation methods and even to evaluate their work. Neill (1992:104) mentions that in his school he never asked any of his

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teachers how s/he teaches. This was because Neill gave the learners the chance to evaluate their teachers and find out about their positive and negative characteristics in teaching. To do so, teachers should listen to the learners and find out about their interests and the difficulties they might have in learning what they are interested in. In doing so, the teacher does not have to exercise authority over the learners. On the contrary, the relationship between the teacher and the learners should be built on equality and respect towards each other. But as discussed before, freedom does not mean that the teacher should not be in authority at all. There must be some authority exercised by the teacher in the classroom. But if this is to happen, as Downey and Kelly (1979:141) argue, authority must be exercised in reasonable or justifiable ways. In this manner, Smith (1985:42) argues that “intellectually and morally the teacher is the sort of person to have good reasons for what he says and does”. Accordingly, a teacher must exercise authority over learners in the classroom only if s/he has adequate reasons for doing so, for example; if a learner breaks the rules. Rules can be considered an essential element in our social lives and experiences. The point of following the rules is not to conflict with the freedom of the learners. The learners must know what the rules are and why they have to obey them. They also have to share with the teacher in making the rules. Straughan (1982:66) argues that children should not obey a rule merely because it is a rule, nor that he must learn to obey it for that reason. It is only when rule-following is interpreted as obeying rules because they are rules that it becomes a conceptual non-starter; also, if a learner’s actions harm others or if a learner does not respect other people’s freedom.

After having discussed the relationship between authority by parents and teacher and learner’s freedom it is worthwhile discussing punishment in which authority can be exercised over learners. In this case the relationship between freedom and punishment has to be

examined to find out if punishing the learners will or will not limit their freedom and what is the value of it.

### **1.3.2. Learners' freedom and being subject to punishment**

The definition of punishment as Smith (1985:61-9), Flew (1973:85-87), Mabbott (1973:41-6), Marshall (1975:150-4) Peters (1966b:267-9), Kasachkoff (1973:364-370), Deininger (1965:205-9), Glover, (1970:199) and Hamm (1989,111-2) have suggested contains 'five necessary elements'. Firstly, the act of punishment cannot be a fortuitous event or happening. It cannot be done accidentally. Secondly, punishment must be painful or unpleasant. Thirdly, punishment must be enacted by someone whose authority to do so has been established. Fourthly, the infliction of pain or unpleasantness must be on an offender. Finally, punishment entails infliction of pain on an offender for a breach of a social rule. This condition is actually an elaboration of the fourth condition, since the notion of offender already entails the kind of culpability which deliberate breaching of rules results in.

The concept of freedom for learners in education also rejects the idea of inflicting pain as a form of punishment. Especially that they "probably do not prevent immoral actions... in fact they may elicit bad feelings in a child" (Pickering,1998:66). This kind of punishment, i.e. inflicting pain, as Wringe (1981:116) notes, "treats individuals as if they are not rational and not capable of desisting from the offence in question either through being persuaded of its wrongness or out of a prudent regard for their material interests". This kind of punishment is almost universal in state schools especially, in lower-class schools or working-class areas where the population has long been conditioned to accept physical pain as the normal means of socialising children.

Al-Qurashi (1986:173) believes that young people should feel secure from being punished, to think, object and express their own

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thinking and objections. According to Calvert (1975:11-3) it is true that learners, especially at an early age, do not have enough experience and knowledge to realise the difference between what is right and wrong. But this does not give adults the right to punish them. It is indeed, not logical to punish a young learner for doing something he or she does not know is wrong. For example, Neill and Rousseau completely reject the idea of punishing children on the grounds that they do not know what is wrong and what is right. Rousseau (1950:56) maintains that teachers and parents should not make children ask forgiveness for wrongs that they did not intend to commit. It is true that a child does not have sufficient knowledge of right and wrong. At the same time, children do not have much control over their impulses and bodily movements. Neither are they able to predict the future and they have no notion at all of long-term consequences of their actions. In Peters' view, (1966b:288) even when a child has developed quite a good sense of what is right and wrong, it can still be reasonably argued that

he is so susceptible to peer-group pressure that it is only the very unusual and independent child who can stand out against his peers and refuse to do what he knows to be wrong. At an early age this type of pressure comes very near to coercion which is an accepted plea for diminished responsibility.

Similarly, Lewis (2001:317) argues that

There is a need to encourage teachers to avoid becoming coercive in the face of increasing in student misbehaviour and to rather respond by calmly punishing misbehaviour while rewarding good behaviour, discussing with students the impact their misbehaviour has on others and involving them in some of the decision-making surrounding rules and consequences. If teachers do not, it means less students time on task, and possibly more significantly, less responsibility.



However, although Wringer (1981:114) argues against punishment, in particular, physical punishment, he also talks about some instances in which punishment can be seen as justifiable. According to Rawls (1975:459) and Quinton (1973:62) no one should be punished unless the punishment has valuable consequences. For example, Wringer (1981:114) argues that the significance of punishment is to protect the rights of others “from the acts of a child not yet rational or at the level of morality, or to protect the child from the consequences of acts he would avoid if he were rational or at the level of prudence”. Downey and Kelly (1979:156) and Freire and Shor (1987:93) point out, learners must be warned that freedom does not mean complete lack of punishment. The point is children should not be punished for the sake of punishment they have to be told that certain acts may warrant punishment.

When unjustified punishment prevents learners from doing what they want, it is not possible for them to learn to be self-controlled and self-determined. When learners are given the freedom to learn, they should also be given the right to establish their own rules; this will allow them to be completely free to determine, accept and obey the rules. The idea of freedom, as mentioned above, is concerned with allowing children to acquire benefit from the value of freedom without the fear of external punishment. The idea of freedom upholds the necessity of involving children in making rules and determining the type of punishment for breaking them. If children are involved in determining their own rules and punishments, it will not in anyway inhibit their freedom, as they will be aware of what wrong they have committed to deserve being punished. In addition, Fitzell (1997:6) notes that involving children in making their own rules and punishments will help in their individual growth:

When children are involved in developing rules and consequences, they learn to use words to solve problems, to govern themselves, and to feel empowered. When rules deemed necessary by the teacher are explained and consequences are logical, children learn to be fair and

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trusting. When children who break the rules are involved in determining ways to solve their own problems, they learn to control their own behaviour. When children are taught to see situations from another child's point of view and are required to make restitution to the hurt party, they learn empathy, forgiveness, and caring.

In this manner, learners will learn the importance of rules in their lives as well as other people's lives. Following certain rules can be considered important for exercising freedom as it gives learners a guide to do what they want, without any comments or objections from other people such as teachers or parents. When learners follow rules that they themselves have determined, their actions will be acceptable and reasonable to other people or at least their actions will be justified and have moral causes. In such a context, punishment can be justified only if learners break their own rules. If they do not obey their own rules then they are clearly making a choice between following the rules and punishment. The significance of giving children the freedom to make and follow their own rules will teach them self-discipline. Self-discipline is thought to be educationally desirable because the submission to rules springs from the individual's own decisions in which some kind of autonomy is displayed (Hirts and Peters,1970:124-7). Self-discipline or self-restraint encourages autonomy in the individual and makes him a better achiever. Accordingly, the ability to exercise self-restraint and to behave autonomously depends to a large extent on the conviction that learners are responsible for their actions. This does not in any way suggest that discipline limits freedom, on the contrary, it helps the person to extend a number of alternatives and, at the same time, it implies what Aviram (1995:71) calls the 'notion of commitment'. For Thompson (1980:117), "discipline and order create the boundaries within which particular freedoms operate". Similarly, Macmunn (1926:43) argues that the only true liberty is through discipline. Jeffrey (1971:30) uses the

term 'self-limitation' to talk about freedom in a deeper sense. Moreover, in the same line Hannabuss (1987:17) argues that "freedom consists in: an ability to observe rules and an ability to make one's own rules". By the same token, Neill (1966:8) argues that by being free learners acquire self-control in which they will have the ability to think of other people and respect their rights.

#### **1.4. The implications of the concept of freedom in education regarding its value**

*In this section I will analyse and examine the value of freedom in education. In this sense it might be argued that giving learners freedom has a value for them and value for their society as well. It will be an examination of whether; (a) happiness is the only aim of freedom in education when learners are allowed to do what they want, (b) autonomy, responsibility and creativity are valuable as educational aims. Then the following section will examine if that freedom is a necessary condition to achieve these mentioned aims, (c) allowing learners more freedom brings better academic achievement when the pressure of controls is blocking it and when there are a variety of options.*

##### **1.4.1. The relationship between being free and being happy**

As discussed before, the value of freedom in its simplest terms as an instrument that leads someone to do something he/she wants to do. Accordingly, for someone to do what really interests him/her produces feelings of happiness. Therefore, it will be argued in this section that giving learners freedom to determine their education will make them happy. Also it will give learners the chance to have happy educational experiences which helps them to satisfy their interests and society's interests also. It might be important to note that many children find school and education as a generally unhappy experience because they do not feel happy in learning when they are not that interested in anything they are doing. In this

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sense Neill argues “happiness is not only the aim of the idea of freedom in education, but also the only goal of life (1961:24)”. Likewise, Hopkins (1979:121) argues that freedom is the only means to happiness, and academic achievement “comes as a part of happiness, self-directed, and self-disciplined, not instead of them”. However, I disagree with Neill and Hopkins that happiness can be an aim in the implementation of the idea of freedom in education

Freedom is only a means to let learners feel happy when they do what they like. Also because, as discussed before, it gives learners the opportunity to increase their powers and capacity through education to do things that they could not do before. When education reduces the gap between the learners’ interests and their ability, it might increase their happiness, but happiness in this sense will only be one product of education but not its aim. Moreover, freedom maximises the choices and opportunities that might lead to happiness, but it does not guarantee happiness. In this sense happiness might be a necessary condition for the learners to achieve other educational aims but it is not an aim in itself. According to O’Hear one can not aim at something which is necessarily a by-product of something else, and happiness is essentially a by-product in this way (1981:41). As Bantock (1970:64) argues, “happiness comes as a by-product of the achievement of some end, and the more we consciously wish to be happy, the more it eludes us”. At the same time, Peters (1981:35-6) discusses three logical reasons against considering happiness as an aim of education. Firstly, education is not a necessary means to happiness, for many uneducated people are perfectly happy. Secondly, happiness is a complex state of mind that depends at least in part on having some desires fulfilled. Finally, it depends on objective conditions having to do with circumstances, which may change because of events for which the individual may not be responsible, and there is nothing much that education can do about these (see also, Chamberlin (1989:107-8) and Rafferty (1973:13)).

Moreover, happiness is changeable; it is a feeling that can change when the context or the circumstances change. What made the learner happy once might not make him happy again in another context. The learner will be happy, for example, if he does not attend a Maths class. But when faced with a particular situation that requires the skills provided by those classes, this non-attendance might result in his failure in dealing with the situation. The inevitable effect of such a failure is the learner's feelings of unhappiness.

It is noteworthy, however, that freedom is only a means to happiness. For instance, people who are not free to do certain things are still happy in doing other things. In this sense, freedom to learn might be one way to feel happy during the period of learning. The point is that learners need freedom to do or not to do something they like, and in being able to do what they want they will feel happy.

#### **1.4.2. The relationship between being free and being autonomous**

The value of autonomy as an educational aim has been emphasised by a number of professionals in education, for example, Strike (1972:276-7), Hannabuss (1987:17), Ridley (1990:138), Wringe (1997:115), Dearden, (1975a:7) and Oliver (1985:131). They state that one of the central features of the progress of learners is the development of their capacity to act autonomously. Therefore, Blenkin and Kelly (1983:85), Gardner (1985:242), Dearden (1975b:58) Hargreaves (1999:122) argue that schools must prepare learners to be autonomous and self-organised, networking, entrepreneurial in order to share in this world. This is because, firstly, as Neill (1966:8), Heathcote (1997:167-8), Allen (1982:205), Indabawa (1997:191-2) and Peters, Woods and Dray (1987:22) suggest, it is 'self organisation', 'self government' self-determination or 'self-realisation' that allows learners to ascertain things for themselves and learn by making their own mistakes. Because "the autonomous man has a mind of his own and a will of

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his own. He exercises independence in his thinking and in his decisions about practical affairs” (Benson,1983:6), Dearden, (1975a:7) and (Pring,1984:72). In other words, the virtue of autonomy is a state of character linked to reliance on one’s own powers in acting, choosing and forming opinions. For Downie (1987:79) and Croce “when we educate a child, we aim to make of him a person able to go his own way as a free and autonomous being” (1942:63). In this sense Wambari (1991:197) believes that the autonomous person knows himself, understands who is, what he would like to make of his life and how best he can make of his life what he believed it should be. He also has a clear picture of the life he wishes to lead, his place in his community: he makes carefully reasoned choices that guide him towards the realisation of the aspired for life

Secondly, an individual who is autonomous is ‘self-directed’, has reasons for his actions and makes rules for himself (Atherton,1978:96), (Galston,1995:519), (Mason,1990:435), (Barrow,1975a:134), (Peters,1974:341) and (Arneson1985:433). Thirdly, an autonomous individual can exercise his freedom in a good way according to his own desire, and therefore will be responsible for the consequences of his actions. This is because as Martin (1988:68) and Smith (1997:130) believe, autonomous behaviour is based on “reason”. Therefore, the actions of an autonomous individual can be seen to be justified and responsible. Because “autonomy means that we are subjects of a moral law made by ourselves, and so imposed on us by ourselves” (Miller,1998:77).

My argument here is that according to Telfer (1975:27-8), Crocker (1980:114), Kelly (1990:125), Wringe (1997:115) and Dearden (1975a:11) for learners to act autonomously they need to be free to trust in themselves and express their needs, wills and beliefs. In order to do this, learners need freedom to make up their own minds about what they would like to do and to do it (Phillips,1997b:245).

When individuals rationally and freely choose for themselves between many options rationality and freedom can be considered as necessary and sufficient conditions for performing autonomous actions (Bonnett,1978:54), (Bridges,1997:155-6) and (Gewirth,1975:41).

In the event of being unfree, it will be impossible for learners to act autonomously. Autonomy is possible only if learners are given the opportunity to exercise their own free will in determining their education. According to Cuypers's (1992:7) definition of autonomy, he believes that a person can be called autonomous only if "he is not alienated from himself, neither on the natural side by physical causes or blind drives nor on the social side by other people's opinions". Furthermore Benson (1983:9) argues that "to be autonomous is to trust one's own powers and to have a disposition to use them, to be able to resist the fear of failure, ridicule or disapproval that threaten to drive one into reliance on the guidance of others". Accordingly, giving learners freedom in education will help them to express themselves, to learn independently, make their own decisions and manage their lives.

Similarly, Dearden (1972:74-5) sees education as a process of growth which can be determined as self-realisation (the self to be realised is not the one which he is, but the one which it is desired that he should become) being oneself (Children need to be themselves), and being a chooser. To achieve these processes of growth, freedom is a necessary condition. Al-Said (1989:13) believes that freedom in education helps learners to be autonomous, to have a mind of their own and that it enables them to think for themselves. It means that learners can make up their own minds on moral questions, and can choose their own moral views, and so on. Having a mind of their own may well mean having the wit to adapt, having the courage to take the initiative and having the ability to think out the solution to a new problem.

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From the previous arguments it has been argued that freedom is a necessary condition for someone to be autonomous and act according to his/her own will and reason. It has been also examined that freedom is a necessary condition for exercising that activity. In short, achieving autonomy as an educational aim can not be done until learners have freedom to act, in the way argued before.

#### ***1.4.3. The relationship between being free and being creative***

“Now, more than ever, the needs of a rapidly changing world require creative responses. Thus, educators are called upon to furnish conditions that support creativity in their students” (Weinstein,1993:275). In this sense Hopkins (1979:10) argues that rapid change in a complex society and its culture calls for great adaptability and creativity in its individual members, not only to enable those individuals to find their way in that society but also to help that society adjust institutions and cultural mores to successfully meet the changing circumstances.

The following argument aims to investigate whether freedom is a necessary condition for creative action. For example, Foster (1971:37), Freire and Shor (1987:20), Kelly (1990:125) and Wilson (1977:113-5) state that nobody expects creative work from learners in a strict, authoritarian situation since this is likely to inhibit rather than promote the freedom that creative work requires. Similarly, Hopkins (1979:10) argues that “one of the most important circumstances necessary to develop creative people is freedom”. For Radford and Burton (1974:105) and Tischner (1994:15-7) there is relation between creativity and thinking which act simply by assuming freedom and self-direction. Similarly, Kleinig “the exercise of authority in teaching stifles creativity and the development of autonomy, leads to indoctrination, and substitutes for relationships of mutual respect and interests, relationships of domination and subservience” (Kleinig,1982:210). “Other observers



of the education scene detect a deadening of students imagination which seems to result from heavy classroom regulation and discipline of behaviour, and emphasis on memorisation and the authority of the teachers and printed sources” (Pfeiffer,1979:134).

I will discuss some evidence which demonstrates the importance of freedom for being creative. Firstly, as Suchman (1967:89) argues, non-interference and non-control are necessary conditions for being creative: “creative thinking is autonomous; that is, it is neither random nor controlled by some fixed scheme or external agent, but is wholly self-directed”. Therefore, freedom is a necessary condition in giving learners chances to “preserve their creativity by non-authoritarian attitudes on the part of parents and teachers, especially by not having negative evaluations put upon their initial efforts” (Gowan,1967:11). Accordingly, Barrow, Anderson et al note that creativity is ‘spontaneous behaviour’, where spontaneity is defined as ‘behaviour in the relative absence of environmental threat or coercion’ (Anderson,1965:47). Further, Al-Faywumi (1991:227-8) believes for learners to be creative they need to be left free, without interference to observe things on their own and develop self-discipline. They also need to be given the chance to ask questions, make choices on their own and to learn how to think. ‘All these skills must be learned in a free atmosphere in the classroom’ (Silim,1999:122).

However, non-interference and non-control do not mean that there are no rules at all, and there is no control on the child and his environment. For Entwistle (1974:60-1) rules and constraints are necessary for creative activity. In fact, Entwistle and White disagree with the conventional rule that “creativity requires being free from conventional rules” (White,1975:131). Thus, freedom does not mean the absence of rules, but it gives learners the opportunity for broadening the rules, ideas or conceptions in order to create new rules for new work. Exercising freedom allows learners to ‘exercise control within themselves’ (Butcher 1969:94). This means that they

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make their own rules to control their thinking and actions. This type of freedom is compatible with self-control and is the core of the claim of freedom in education. In this connection, Dewey (1938:60) notes that “no rules, then, no games; different rules, then a different game”. Similarly, Poole (1980:12) notes that “some children produce most newness in a setting that is open and free, in which the child has the opportunity to produce what has meaning and significance for him or her. [...] Children produce more creative responses when they are forced to break through old conceptions and ideas in order to find newness”.

Secondly, the concept of freedom provides opportunities for learners to do what they want. Hence, the question of creativity is reasonable where there is no creative activity without the opportunity to think in different/new ways, to use different approaches or knowledge without any external control from others. Like Poole, Simon (1967:50) argues that another possible source of creativity would be to “draw on a mixture of ideas and cues garnered from different fields of knowledge”. In their discussion about creativity, Lytton (1971:104) and Stoddard (1959:187) mention that education has to provide opportunities for learners to live a creative life that demands the chance to make free choices. The notion of creativity is compatible with the findings of psychologists, who refer to the processes of self-regard, self-respect, self-realisation, self-expression, self-production, self-direction and self-actualisation, as creative processes. Evidence relating to the conception of opportunity suggests that when a learner is given freedom to do what he wants, he will be able to express himself in his own way, thereby using his own thinking. Similarly, Rogers (1970a:147-9), Suchman (1967:92-3) and Barrow and Woods (1988:140-1), hold the view that creative persons must do their own thinking and not simply parrot the thinking of others. For instance, when learners are given a certain amount of scope for free expression in the art room, they grow up less restricted in their

artistic expression than those who are not given such freedom (Barrow and Woods,1988:140-6).

Finally, freedom in education gives the learners a chance to be themselves and to learn on their own. Thus, it is clear that one cannot talk about the notion of creativity without talking about freedom. In this sense, Torrance (1962:114) maintains that many creative students prefer to learn on their own. According to him, when education does not give the learners freedom to learn on their own, not to be told what they do, there is a possibility of losing the potentially creative learners. This is because doing creative work is not that simple and requires doing many actions which can not be possible without freedom. For example Torrance (1965:9), states that “the creative reader produces a variety of possibilities, uses a great variety of approaches, looks at the available information in a variety of ways, breaks away from commonplace solutions into bold new ways, and develops his ideas by filling in the details and making the idea attractive or exciting to others”. For someone to do so, freedom is a required condition that helps him to do creative work.

From the previous arguments it has been examined that freedom is a necessary condition for someone to perform creative action and develop that capacity. Also it has been argued that freedom is a necessary condition for exercising creativity. In short, achieving creativity as an educational aim can not be done until learners have freedom to act in the sense argued before.

#### **1.4.4. The relationship between being free and being responsible**

The value of responsibility as an educational aim can be seen in the arguments by Hannabuss (1987:17), ‘Usman (1979:292) and Diraz (1982:166). They state that one of the central features of the progress of learners and their society is the development of their capacity to be responsible for their actions. Talking about teaching

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learners responsibility as an educational aim requires that they should be free to make choices and decisions in which they learn how to take responsibility. Because as Hannabuss (1987:17) argues responsibility presupposes the exercise of free will and choice. In exercising choices, learners will not only come to a cognitive understanding of the tension between freedom and constraints but also, knowing the rules, choose to obey them. This requires freedom for learners to learn and exercise responsibility that helps them to make their own choices and decisions without interference from others.

To achieve responsibility as an educational aim the next argument aims to investigate the relationship between being free and being responsible. According to Strike's view (1972:268) 'Usman (1979:299) and Al-Hababi (1972:22), the idea of being responsible is compatible with that of being free to choose and being able to make-decisions. For Schofield (1973:259)

if we are free to act, we are free to do wrong or right. If we are constrained to do right, we lose our freedom of choice and consequently a very important type of freedom. Freedom of action makes responsibility for action inevitable.

According to Schofield and Gray there is logical connection between the two concepts: responsibility and freedom. On the one hand, the logical connection is centred in the concept of a person's action. "If you are morally responsible for your action then...the action must have been done freely" (Rowe,1991:237), Weiss (1942:186), Mason (1990:437), Taylor (1944:89) and Hallowell (1942:330). "When we have an obligation, we are required to do or omit some type of action" (O'Neil,1988:447). But a person's sense of responsibility will be complete if his action is ultimately and irresistibly unconditioned (Kristjansson,1992:104) and (Scheffler,1973:109). If choice is an illusion, there can be no praise

or blame, and no responsibility (Glover,1970:198). The choices have to be ultimately and irresistibly unconditioned. Responsibility can be seen to be diminished if a person is under another's influence. "if there is virtue in having options between which free agents can make autonomous choices, this must surely be because exercising freedom is a means to personal commitment, satisfying pursuits and rewarding ways of life" (Jonathan,1997b:215-6).

On the other hand, If we accept Ayer's (1984:2,15) statement that it is a necessary condition for a man to have acted freely that he could have acted otherwise, then one should accept that the rational agent must be responsible for his free actions because according to Gibson when an agent chooses, he/she chooses for a reason (1936:257). According to Ellrod (1992:126) "the person with the power of free choice... is a source of actions... and a producers of results. The will is a sort of causal power: it gives rise to effects". This means that one's choice was under his/her control, therefore, he/she is held to be responsible. Smith (1985:104) argues that being able to give an account for his/her action is to be able to give reasons that hold for his/her action This is in case there are no factors which prevent agents from exercising control over choices, "for they either are unaware of crucial aspects of the situation which might lead them to alter their actions, or are compelled to perform certain deeds by force" (Ellrod,1992:124). For Chisholm (1976:23-4)

if a man is responsible for a certain event or a certain state of affairs... then that event or state of affairs was brought about by some act of his, and the act was something that was in his power either to perform or not to perform.

For Smith (1985:93-4) to treat someone as a responsible person in the first sense is

to regard him as one who has acted knowingly and willingly, when he could have acted otherwise. A responsible person has the capacity to make choices, to

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deliberate and act deliberately. The actions he performs are done under one intention or another, even if the intention is not always explicit: they are responses to the world as viewed under some description, rather than mere reflexes.

However, there is an almost universal belief that children do not have the capacity to be responsible persons. For example, Rosenake (1982:95) believes that children are “more likely to harm themselves and less likely to promote their own interests because of their cognitive and moral deficiencies”. He also shows that both children and adults are more competent than is generally thought in the relevant respects and that adults are less so. “Neither in their ability to make reasoned choices, nor in their tendency to make bad choices, are the majority of children clearly inferior to many adults”. In reply to this belief, Gray (1991:31) argues that being responsible does not mean that the subject of freedom (X) has to make only right and good choices; whether a person’s choices are good and right will depend on the person’s personal experience in making choices. Similarly, Harris (1982:38-45) points out that children are capable of planning systematic policies and strategies requiring a high degree of rationality. With reference to child psychology, Donaldson (1978: 33-59) notes that with children aged between 7 and 11 years’ intellectual status ‘is best understood and even defined by its being essential by only a preparation for, and so is necessarily inferior to, that of the adult’. Also she believes that ‘the gap between children and adults is not as great as has recently been widely believed [and that] children are not so limited in ability to reason deductively’.

This means that learners need the freedom to learn by their own experiences how to take responsibility. In short, to accept that learners have the right to be left free is to accept that they can be responsible for their choices and decisions. In an educational setting we cannot blame a person for failing in a particular subject if he/she

was not given the choice to decide for him/herself. In such a situation, it would be more logical to lay the blame on the person who had the opportunity to choose such a programme but still failed. In this sense Wringer (1981:113) argues that the child does not become rational and responsible for his acts all at once.

There may be some areas in which he is not competent to decide what he should do, and in which adults must assume responsibility for his actions. Simultaneously, there may be other areas in which he perfectly well understands the consequences and implications of his acts. In such areas it is quite in order to speak of his being punished by way of the forfeiture of certain rights when he does what he knows to be wrong. Normatively speaking, he is not a child, but an adult in respect of such acts, even though he may still be a child according to some institutional criterion such as age.

For Suliman (2000:180-196), Nwr-Al-Din (1997:200-4), Al-Said (1989), Gad (1996:149) and Pringle

the child who is denied the opportunity to exercise responsibility will fail to develop a sense of responsibility, for himself, for others or for material subjects (Pringle,1982:103).

From the previous arguments it has been argued that there is determined relationship between being free and being responsible, whereby nobody can be seen as responsible unless he/she can carry out such free choices and actions. Moreover, it has been argued that for young learners to learn how to take responsibility they need to act freely in which they will exercise responsibility at their early age.

#### **1.4.5. The relationship between being free and academic achievement**

Many traditional educationalists are deeply interested in the effect of freedom in education on academic achievement because it is their primary goal in education. I will investigate this relationship

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between freedom and academic achievement, but not because achievement will be greater by allowing learners freedom in their education. I intend to demonstrate that giving learners freedom in education will help them in their academic achievements up to a point, since giving them freedom will enable them to be autonomous, creative, and responsible, as discussed in the preceding pages. In Hopkins' (1979:121-2) view, no claim can be made that freedom will necessarily produce greater achievement than other educational philosophies. However, allowing freedom would bring more achievement when the pressure of control is blocking that achievement.

Hence, it is clear that freedom might be the only way to break away from older philosophies, which stress passivity and receptivity in the classroom. Freedom gives students the chance to acquire knowledge, discover facts, think critically and search for order, system and precision, in other words, it gives them 'intellectual education' as Dearden (1984:120) describes it. In some ways, as in creative accomplishment, achievement may be greater in an environment of freedom, but in other ways, as in rote learning, achievement may be less.

The fact that allowing more freedom brings more achievement when the pressure of controls is blocking it, has been demonstrated by Hopkins (1979:122-6). Hopkins presented many studies relating freedom to academic achievement. For example, studies of progressive education, open education, studies investigating the results of even more self-direction in education and studies investigating the relationship between the child and rearing practices and achievement. Recently there have been many studies investigating the relationship between freedom and learning different skills in particular subjects such as Schee (1999) and Lai (1999). Talking in a practical sense about the role of freedom in bringing more academic achievement can be seen in the free



progress system as practised by the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of education Pondicherry (Devi,1998:168-9). In this system, the two central fundamental concepts are freedom and progress. In this system, it is accepted that no progress is possible without giving students freedom in learning. They have found that there is a positive relationship between giving learners freedom and their progress. According to this system, progress means several things; an increasing amassing of information, development of certain skills, development of psychological abilities, development of body and life and mind, the training of the mind to deal with large and universal ideas and so on. Another example where freedom in education is at the core is Summerhill School as practised by A. S. Neill. The learners who have graduated from Summerhill include university professors, doctors, engineers, teachers, painters and writers. If the object of education is to give people the opportunity to take up such careers, in these cases Summerhill has succeeded, but from a Summerhill point of view that is not particularly important (Gribble,1998:8). Moreover, many practices of freedom in education have been studied by Gribble (1998) such as Dartington Hall School (England,1926), Tamariki School (New Zealand,1967), Sudbury Valley School (USA,1968), Bramblewood School (USA,1969), Countesthorpe Community College (England,1970), Neel Bagh and Sunavanam (India,1972), The Pestalozzi School (Ecuador,1977), Kleingruppe Lufingen (Switzerland, 1977), Mirambika (India,1981), The Barbara Taylor School (USA,1985), Japan: Tokyo Shure, Nonami Children's Village, the Global School, Kinokuni (Japan,1985), The Democratic School of Hadera (Israel,1987) and Sands School (England,1987). It is clear from the previous evidences that the idea of freedom in education will not diminish learners' achievement.

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**The implications of the concept of freedom regarding its conditions,  
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