

## Progressivism Philosophy and Its Implications for 21st Century Educational Practices in Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze in depth the philosophy of progressivism and how this approach has implications for educational practice in the 21st century. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach through the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. The results of this study show that the philosophy of progressivism has exerted a significant influence on educational practice. This can be seen from the implications: 1) the application of project and inquiry-based learning methods encourages students to actively seek information, ask questions and solve problems collaboratively. In some schools, teachers implement interdisciplinary projects where students work in groups to solve real problems, such as environmental projects or simple technological innovations, 2) curricula designed to be relevant to students' lives, allowing adaptation to individual interests and needs. Mentoring program where students can choose a project or learning topic that suits their interests, accompanied by a mentor or teacher, 3) focuses on developing 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. collaborative learning through group discussions, debates, and project presentations, where students learn to work together and communicate effectively.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education has long been a central aspect in the development of social society. Education becomes an important means that allows the transfer of knowledge, skills and values from one generation to the next (Zafi, 2018). In an effort to understand and improve the education system, a number of theories

and approaches have been developed over time. One of the main approaches that influenced the educational model was the philosophy of progressivism.

The philosophy of progressivism, which originated in the 20th century, has played an important role in educational thinking and change. The progressive thinking behind education is that the learning process must be tailored to the evolving needs of individuals and societies, and not simply stick to existing traditions and norms (Supriatna, 2021a). The philosophy of progressivism was first put forward by figures such as John Dewey who is known as one of the founders of the progressive education movement. Progressivism emphasizes student-centered learning, active engagement with learning materials, and the importance of hands-on experience in the educational process (Faiz, 2021). This approach runs counter to the more authoritarian tradition of education, where students are seen as passive recipients of information.

Dewey and other progressive figures viewed education as a tool to prepare individuals to be active members of developing societies. According to them, education should not only prepare students academically but also develop social, critical and creative skills in order for them to contribute positively to society (Fadlillah, 2017a). But the philosophy of progressivism is also a source of debate in the world of education. Some proponents believe that this approach encourages critical thinking and problem-solving (Rohmah et al., 2023), While critics hold the view that this approach will lower academic standards and place less emphasis on a firm understanding of the concept (Qolbi & Hamami, 2021).

Much research has been conducted on the philosophy of progressivism, especially in Western countries, examining its application and impact on education. These studies have shown that a progressive approach to education can improve critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration skills among students (Little, 2013). In Indonesia, research on progressivism philosophy in the educational context is still limited. Several studies have explored the application of active and project-based learning methods, which are part of progressivism, but have not comprehensively examined the overall implications of this philosophy for educational practice in the 21st century (Triyatno et al., 2022a).

Previous research was conducted in educational contexts in Western countries, while the local Indonesian context with its culture, education system and unique challenges has not been widely explored. How the philosophy of progressivism can be adapted to the educational context in Indonesia is still unclear. Existing studies in Indonesia focus more on the theory and general concept of progressivism without looking in detail at its practical implementation in Indonesian schools. There is still very little research identifying best practices and challenges in implementing progressivism in the field. Apart from that, research on the impact of progressivism philosophy on the development of 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity and collaboration in Indonesia is still limited. There has been no in-depth study that assesses the extent to which the application of progressivism can improve these skills among Indonesian students.

In connection with the explanation above, analysis of how the philosophy of progressivism influences education policy and the curriculum in Indonesia is still lacking. Existing research has not examined many educational policy changes that support or hinder the implementation of progressivism in schools. Therefore, to fill the gap, this research will provide a more comprehensive insight into how the philosophy of progressivism can be adapted and applied effectively in the educational context in Indonesia. It is hoped that this research can serve as a guide for educators, policy makers and researchers in developing educational practices that are more relevant and effective in the 21st century.

## 2. METHODS

The method used in this study is qualitative with a *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) approach. This research aims to study and analyze in depth the philosophy of progressivism and how this approach has implications for educational practice in the 21st century. This research uses a qualitative approach with document data analysis techniques to explore and understand the implications of

progressivism philosophy for 21st century educational practices in Indonesia. Document analysis techniques were used to examine various written sources relevant to this research. The sources analyzed include theoretical literature originating from books, journal articles and other academic sources that discuss the concepts and principles of progressivism philosophy. Document analysis is carried out by identifying main themes, key concepts, and patterns that emerge from these sources (Danandjaja, 2014). The process of searching research data was sourced from *Google publications Scholar*, *Mendeley* and *Science Direct*. Furthermore, selected articles will be examined and analyzed in detail how the implications of the philosophy of progressivism on education in the 21st century.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### History and Principles of the Philosophy of Progressivism

Progressivism originated in the general reform movement that American society carried out in political life at the end of the 19th century. Progressivism arose from social reforms within the American political movement that were still within the purview of pragmatic philosophical figures, including Charles S. Peirce, Willam James, and John Dewey (Sopacua & Fadli, 2022). Education progressivism devises strategies to reform education and free students from restrictive schools where students learn under pressure and are perceived as objects of learning.

Progressivism has fundamental principles in its implementation in the world of education. These principles can be detailed as follows: (Yunus, 2016) 1) learners have the freedom to develop reasonably or reasonably; 2) the best stimulus in learning is direct experience, meaning students must be directly involved in educational activities; 3) teachers as facilitators; 4) Educational Institutions become educational laboratories; 5) Coordinate activities at school and home.

The philosophy of progressivism has a paradigm where education must be progressive, and keep moving forward with development. The direction of education in the school of progressivism assumes that students have the academic assets to solve personal problems (Mualifah, 2013). Of course, the advancement of student learning practices is a major actor in learning. This not only determines the characteristics of quality education policies that adapt to developments, but also provides a strong foundation for efforts to prioritize the realization of student rights. The school of progressivism views humans as able to develop and improve the environment by using their intelligence in solving problems arising from personal and social causes (Mustaghfiroh, 2020). In addition, this school strongly rejects ideas that damage human morals because in man there is the potential to be better. In its implementation, the school of progressivism creates democratic learning, placing students in a central role.

Progressivism arose as a reaction against the conventional education system. Education is seen as not just transferring knowledge, but can hone abilities and skills through appropriate stimuli. According to progressivism, the educational process has two parts: first the psychological part, the educator must know the potential that exists in students; Second, sociologically, educators must understand how the prospects of learners will be directed (Mualifah, 2013).

The view of progressivism requires the curriculum to be good if it is based on three principles, namely: improving the quality of life of children at every level of education; directing the child's life to be more developed; developing creative aspects in life so that children can be creative in real, active for new things that can be practiced (Nursikin, 2016). One of the principles of curriculum development is developed based on the awareness that science, technology, and art can be creative dynamically. The curriculum of progressivism education emphasizes how to think, and how to act, not on what is believed and done, meaning that it emphasizes and prioritizes methods over material (Salu & Triyanto, 2017). The goal is to equip individuals with abilities that allow them to interact with an ever-changing environment. By emphasizing aspects of curriculum methodology based on the philosophy of progressivism, it will be able to adjust to situations and conditions.

The position of students in the perspective of progressivism is progress, prioritizing attention to the future, and showing anxiety about the past. Learning should be applied student-centered to see

more of their potential. In the view of progressivism there are several things that need to be considered in learning, namely: providing opportunities for students to learn independently; learning through experience; learn by motivating rather than emphasizing commands; involve students in every aspect of learning activities; Strengthening Students (Fadlillah, 2017b).

Below are selected articles that have been studied and analyzed in detail about the implications of progressivism philosophy for 21st century education.

Author	Article
Adisel, A., & Suryati, S. (2022).	Pendidikan Merdeka Belajar Dalam Perspektif Filsafat Progressivisme
Albeta, S. W., Firdaus, L. N., & Copriady, J. (2023).	TPACK-Based Blended Learning as an Implementation of Progressivism Education: A Systematic Literature Review
Audia, C., Maulany, K., & Binfas, M. A. M. (2022).	Philosophy Of Progressivism Education and tts Implications in the Independent Curriculum. Ehmap
Budiwan, J., & Malukah, N. (2022).	Progressivism in the Implementation of the MBKM Curriculum as a Digital Transformation of Islamic Elementary Education Institutions
Fadlillah, M. (2017).	Aliran Progresivisme dalam Pendidikan di Indonesia. Jurnal Dimensi Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran
Faiz, A. (2021).	Peran Filsafat Progressivisme Dalam Mengembangkan Kemampuan Calon Pendidik di Abad-21
Gera, I. G. (2020).	Analisis Pembelajaran E-Learning Dalam Perspektif Aliran Filsafat Pendidikan Progresivisme
Hadi, N. F., & Khojir, K. (2021).	Analysis of the Relationship Between “Merdeka Belajar” And the Progressivism Philosophy
Kahdim, M., Rafiq, S., & Afzal, A. (2023).	Aligning Curriculum with The Philosophy of Progressivism: A Comprehensive Analysis
Mustaghfiroh, S. (2020).	Konsep “Merdeka Belajar” Perspektif Aliran Progressivisme John Dewey
Qolbi, S. K., & Hamami, T. (2021).	Impelementasi Asas-Asas Pengembangan Kurikulum Terhadap Pengembangan Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam
Rahma, A. N., Rohmah, H., & Bakar, M. Y. A. (2022).	Implementasi Aliran Progressivisme dalam Pembelajaran Menurut Filsafat Pendidikan Dan Perkembangan Kurikulum di Indonesia
Rohmah, R. A., Mahdum, M., & Isjoni, I. (2023).	Pandangan Filsafat Progresivisme John Dewey Pada Pembelajaran Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka: Kajian Studi Literatur Review
Ryan, T., & Ryan, D. T. (2021).	Deweyan Progressive Education Within Ontario Elementary Health and Physical Education.
Saadah, A. F., Swaradesy, R. G., & Prasetyo, D. (2022).	Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter di “TAMSISKU”(Perspektif Filsafat Pendidikan Progresivisme)
Sopacua, J., & Fadli, M. R. (2022).	The Emancipated Learning Concept ff Education in Progressivism Philosophy Perspective
Supriatna, U. (2021).	Manajemen Pendidikan dalam Konstelasi Progresivisme (Telaah Filsafat Pendidikan John Dewey
Utami, U., & Utari, U. (2023).	Progressivism in the Elementary School Curriculum: a Systematic Literature Review

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Wahono, S. (2022).	Implementation of Progressivism Philosophy to Develop 22nd Century Teacher Skills.
Yunaini, N., Rukiyati, R., Prabowo, M., Hassan, N. M., & Hermansyah, A. K. (2022).	The Concept of The Independent Learning Curriculum (Merdeka Belajar) in Elementary Schools in View Progressivism Educational Philosophy.
Zaka, I. (2022).	Filsafat Pendidikan Progressivisme dalam Kurikulum Pendidikan Bahasa Indonesia

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From the selected articles that have been previously reviewed and analyzed, researchers classified the philosophy of progressivism and its implications for educational practice into 3; the implications for the educational curriculum, educators and learners.

### **The Philosophy of Progressivism and Its Implications for Educational Practice**

#### ***Implications for the curriculum***

The philosophy of progressivism has significant implications in the world of education. This flow has brought good changes and influences on the curriculum, educators to students. The implications for the curriculum, according to Budiwan and Malikah in their research, stated that the flow of progressivism views education not only as a transfer of knowledge, but also includes the process of developing various kinds of potentials possessed by students. (Budiwan & Malikah, 2022) This is in line with Hadi and Khojir in the results of their research stating that the curriculum by practicing the philosophy of progressivism has desired the flexibility of educational institutions in exploring the intelligence and abilities of students by the potential, interests, and tendencies of each student in a democratic, flexible and pleasant manner. (Hadi & Khojir, 2021)

In the process of its implementation in the curriculum, progressivism has formed the concept of a flexible, free and open curriculum supported by educators who act as motivators and guides students. (Rahma et al., 2022). This view is in line with Fadlillah's opinion in his research which suggests that the implementation of progressivism in education has resulted in democratic education that is centered and appreciates the potential of students. While the teacher in this case is only a facilitator, guide, and director for the development of students. (Fadlillah, 2017b). While in practice, Zaka assumes that the philosophy of progressivism has influenced the development of language teaching practices, and contributes to curriculum development including syllabus, methodology, strategy, assessment to learning evaluation. (Zaka, 2022).

In addition to the curriculum with conventional learning. Progressivism has also provided positive things in *e-learning* learning. According to Gera in her research, by practicing the concept of progressivism in *e-learning* learning will produce a dynamic, flexible learning process moving towards progress following the pace of development and changing times. (Gera, 2020). So that this will encourage changes and educational progress in terms of curriculum that is always dynamic according to the needs of students. (Rahma et al., 2022). Because in its implementation, progressivism will connect important social problems with what students learn in making education more relevant. (Kahdim et al., 2023). The progressivist approach has a focus on learners and their interests, and values different points of view to create a welcoming environment and has brought the Indonesian curriculum to an adapting change. (AUDIA et al., n.d.)

Apart from the explanations above, The philosophy of progressivism has several important implications for the 21st-century curriculum in Indonesia, including:

#### **1. Emphasis on Learning Experiences**

The 21st-century curriculum should be designed to provide meaningful and relevant learning experiences for students. This can be achieved by implementing various active and student-centered learning methods, such as project-based learning, collaborative learning, and problem-based learning

(Yunaini et al., 2022a). For example, students can engage in research projects investigating environmental issues in their communities, or work in groups to design innovative solutions to social problems.

## 2. Development of 21st-Century Skills

The 21st-century curriculum should focus on developing essential 21st-century skills for students to succeed in the future, such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving. These skills can be developed through various learning activities, such as class discussions, debates, presentations, and group projects (Couch, 2018). For instance, students can be encouraged to debate controversial issues, present their research findings to the class, or collaborate with a team to design a community awareness campaign.

## 3. Student-Centered Learning

The 21st-century curriculum should center on the needs and interests of the students. Teachers should act as facilitators and guides, helping students learn independently and explore their own interests (Alemdar & Aytac, 2022). For example, students can be given the option to choose their research topics, or they can design their own learning projects with teacher guidance.

## 4. Integration of Technology

Technology should be integrated into the 21st-century curriculum to support learning and enhance student outcomes. Technology can be used for various purposes, such as accessing information, communicating with others, and creating creative products (Vaughan, 2018). For instance, students can use computers to research topics, create presentations, or communicate with experts around the world.

## 5. Authentic Assessment

Assessment in the 21st-century curriculum should be authentic and meaningful, measuring what students have truly learned and can apply in real life. This can be done through various methods, such as portfolios, projects, and presentations (Tisdall, 2019). For example, students can be assessed based on their portfolio of work, their presentations on their research projects, or their ability to solve real-world problems.

The implementation of progressivism philosophy in the 21st-century curriculum in Indonesia can help prepare students to face future challenges and opportunities. However, it is important to note that implementing progressivism requires significant changes in the Indonesian education system, including changes in the roles of teachers, learning methods, and assessment systems.

### *Implications for Educators*

In the philosophy of progressivism, the educator is seen as a facilitator and guide, as well as a motivator for learners. According to Yunaini, educators are considered to have free time to improve their competencies through various platforms that are sources of teaching materials, so they have the freedom to innovate and create (Yunaini et al., 2022b). This stream has also created a breadth of educators and educational institutions in exploring the potential, intelligence, and skills of dynamic, natural, and democratic students, resulting in advanced, quality, and efficient education (Adisel & Suryati, 2022).

In the learning process, the philosophy of progressivism has provided openness between educators and students in designing models, strategies, approaches, methods, and fun learning media, thus presenting natural learning concepts so that students can develop in accordance with the fields of interest. (Siswadi, 2023). In addition, Ryan also stated in his research that with this educators will realize and understand that learners need progressive teaching and constructive feedback when they practice, reflect, and learn based on experience in a safe environment. (Ryan & Ryan, 2021). All of these things will support teachers in becoming quality and meaningful educators for students.

The practice of the philosophy of progressivism in the world of education will form educators who have various skills in solving learning problems. Because according to Wahono in his research, this school of philosophy trains educators in developing 4C thinking in students (*Critical Thinking*,

*Communication, Creative Thinking, and Collaboration*). An educator is equipped with various competencies that will form students who can adapt according to the times and conditions within the scope of lifelong education (Wahono, 2022)

The philosophy of progressivism has several important implications for educators in 21st-century educational practices in Indonesia, including:

#### 1. The Role of Educators as Facilitators and Guides

In the progressive paradigm, educators are no longer mere transmitters of knowledge but act as facilitators and guides who help students learn independently. Educators must create a conducive and supportive learning environment where students feel safe and comfortable exploring their ideas and taking risks. Educators should also provide proper guidance and direction to help students develop their potential optimally (DiCindio & Steinmann, 2019).

#### 2. Mastery of Various Learning Methods

Educators need to master various active and student-centered learning methods, such as project-based learning, collaborative learning, and problem-based learning. These methods can help students learn more meaningfully and relevantly to their lives. Educators should also continuously learn and develop themselves to keep up with the latest advancements in science and technology (Albeta, Firdaus, Copriady, et al., 2023).

#### 3. Student-Centered Assessment

Assessment in progressive education should focus on the students rather than rigid standards or curricula. Educators need to use various authentic and meaningful assessment methods, such as portfolios, projects, and presentations. These assessments should measure individual student progress and help them develop optimally (Raber, 2018).

#### 4. Collaboration with Parents and the Community

Educators need to collaborate with parents and the community to create a holistic and supportive learning environment for students. Parents can be involved in the learning process, such as helping their children with school assignments or being guest speakers in class. The community can also be involved in various school activities, such as providing resources or mentoring students.

#### 5. Ability to Adapt to Change

The 21st-century world is rapidly changing, and educators need to adapt to these changes. Educators must be open to new ideas and willing to try innovative learning approaches. They should also be able to learn from mistakes and continually strive to improve the quality of their teaching (Triyatno et al., 2022a).

Implementing the philosophy of progressivism in 21st-century educational practices in Indonesia requires significant commitment and effort from educators. However, if implemented correctly, progressivism can help create a higher quality and student-centered education system that prepares students to face future challenges and opportunities.

### ***Implications for Learners***

The philosophy of progressivism has facilitated students to play a role in completing tasks according to their talents and interests. According to Supriatna, quoted from the results of his research, providing students with learning freedom space by their interests and talents will make it easier for students to learn in developing skills and self-competence (Supriatna, 2021b). This is supported by Yunaini in her article which states that students will experience firsthand knowledge in character strengthening, learning themes, to critical issues related to sustainable lifestyles, culture, entrepreneurship, and technology in their environment (Yunaini et al., 2022b). So with this, students can take real action in answering these problems according to the learning stages and needs

The philosophy of progressivism has formed students with good character in terms of attitudes and behavior. In line with this statement, Saadah in his research stated that in practice the practice of progressivism philosophy has shaped the character of students who are religious, disciplined, honest, creative, and care about the environment (Saadah et al., 2022). In addition, it has also produced students

who can think practically and can solve problems effectively through their experience (Rahma et al., 2022). This is the main hope to create an ideal education that is of quality and meaningful to students.

Ideal education is education that prioritizes the needs and potential of students. The ideal education will give students the opportunity and freedom to become active and creative learners. (Utami & Utari, 2023). Because the educational philosophy of progressivism always prioritizes progress consistently and applies it constructively, constructively, and innovatively (Albeta et al., 2023). Basically, the flow of progressivism always wants fundamental changes in the provision of education in a better, quality, and real benefit for students. It aims to form individuals who are capable, independent, and responsive in facing all changes.

The philosophy of progressivism has several important implications for students in 21st-century educational practices in Indonesia, including:

#### 1. Emphasis on Student-Centered Learning

Students are encouraged to become active and independent learners who take responsibility for their own learning. The interests, talents, and needs of the students are the main focus in the teaching and learning process. Learning is designed to actively engage students in meaningful and relevant activities that relate to their lives (Salsabila et al., 2024).

#### 2. Holistic Learning Approach

Progressivism views education as a comprehensive process that not only focuses on intellectual development but also on the social, emotional, and physical development of students. Learning is designed to integrate various disciplines and encourage students to see the interconnections between subjects. Diverse and rich learning experiences are provided to help students develop a wide range of skills and knowledge (Sulistyaningsih, 2023).

#### 3. Utilization of Technology and Media

Technology and media are used to support student-centered learning and provide various engaging and interactive learning resources. Students are encouraged to use technology creatively to solve problems, communicate, and collaborate. Digital literacy skills are taught to help students use technology wisely and responsibly (Pande et al., 2023).

#### 4. Student-Centered Assessment

Assessment is designed to measure students' progress in achieving holistic learning goals. Various assessment methods are used, including self-assessment, peer assessment, and portfolio assessment. Assessment is conducted continuously to provide valuable feedback for both students and teachers (Musyarapah, 2017).

#### 5. Collaborative Learning and Learning Communities

Students are encouraged to work together on tasks and projects. Learning communities are created to support students in learning and growing together. Positive and respectful relationships are built between students, teachers, and parents (Yunaini et al., 2022a).

The implementation of the philosophy of progressivism in 21st-century educational practices in Indonesia can help students become creative, critical, and independent learners who are prepared to face future challenges. This aligns with the national education goals of Indonesia to produce a high-quality and character-driven young generation. However, it should be noted that the implementation of progressivism also faces several challenges, such as the need for well-trained teachers, adequate resources, and a change in mindset from various stakeholders involved in education. The application of progressivism in educational practices in Indonesia is still evolving. With commitment and cooperation from all parties, it is hoped that progressivism can bring significant benefits to students and the future of education in Indonesia.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The school of progressivism has contributed greatly to the practice of 21st century education. The implementation of progressivism in educational practice has significant implications for curriculum, educators and learners. Based on the findings and analysis that have been carried out, the following



are some of the main implications of applying the philosophy of progressivism in educational practice in Indonesia: 1) the application of project and inquiry-based learning methods encourages students to actively seek information, ask questions and solve problems collaboratively. In some schools, teachers implement interdisciplinary projects where students work in groups to solve real problems, such as environmental projects or simple technological innovations, 2) curriculum designed to be relevant to students' lives, allowing adaptation to individual interests and needs. Mentoring program where students can choose a project or learning topic that suits their interests, accompanied by a mentor or teacher, 3) focuses on developing 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. collaborative learning through group discussions, debates, and project presentations, where students learn to work together and communicate effectively.

**Implications** This research shows that the application of the philosophy of progressivism in education in Indonesia has great potential to improve the quality of learning and prepare students with the skills needed in the 21st century. However, challenges remain, including the need for adequate teacher training, strong policy support, and more flexible curriculum adjustments. Recommendations for further research in the long term to assess the impact of implementing progressivism on student learning outcomes and the development of 21st century skills.

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