

JOHN DEWEY'S EDUCATIONAL CONCEPT: OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

A CONCEPÇÃO EDUCACIONAL DE JOHN DEWEY: OBJETIVOS E METAS

CONCEPTO EDUCATIVO DE JOHN DEWEY: OBJETIVOS Y METAS

Ian Gottberg de MOURA¹
Carlota BOTO²

ABSTRACT: This article focuses on the lost paths in which some pedagogical practices have fallen. Discordant pedagogical orientations are one of the consequences arising from misinterpretations in educational matters. The present work proposes the hypothesis that is possible to find a good educational objective, as long as is possible to get rid of false antagonisms, such as: theory opposed to practice, student interest opposed to school discipline. John Dewey was one of the rare thinkers to meet this condition. As a result, the article aims, through Dewey's perspective, to demonstrate how it is necessary to reconcile apparently irreducible ideas to formulate educational goals. The methodology used consisted of bibliographic studies concerning Dewey. The results achieved by the work were pedagogical conceptions, of which the child's prior knowledge is an example of not neglecting. Finally, the article concludes that it is necessary to harmonize what is wrongly opposed.

KEYWORDS: Educational objective. John Dewey. Theory opposed to practice. School curriculum against student interest. Conciliation of ideas.

RESUMO: Este artigo debruça-se sobre os caminhos extraviados nos quais algumas práticas pedagógicas incorreram. Orientações pedagógicas destoantes são uma das consequências advindas de más interpretações em matéria educacional. O presente trabalho aventava a hipótese de que encontram um bom objetivo educacional, contanto que se desvinculem de falsos antagonismos, tais como: teoria oposta à prática, interesse do educando oposto à disciplina escolar. John Dewey foi um dos raros pensadores a atender a essa condição. Em virtude disso, o artigo objetiva, através da perspectiva de Dewey, demonstrar como é necessário conciliar ideias aparentemente irreduzíveis para formular objetivos educacionais. A metodologia empregada consistiu em estudos bibliográficos concernentes a Dewey. Os resultados alcançados pelo trabalho foram concepções pedagógicas, das quais não desprezar os conhecimentos prévios da criança é exemplo. Finalmente, conclui o artigo que é preciso harmonizar o que erroneamente se opõem.

¹ University of São Paulo (USP), São Paulo – SP – Brazil. Graduating in Philosophy. Department of Philosophy of the College of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences (FFLCH). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4097-7444>. E-mail: iangdmo@usp.br

² University of São Paulo (USP), São Paulo – SP – Brazil. Professor at the College of Education. Doctorate in Social History (USP). CNPq Research Productivity Scholarship - Level 1D. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7389-2391>. E-mail: reisboto@usp.br

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Objetivo educacional. John Dewey. Teoria oposta à prática. Currículo escolar contra interesse do aluno. Conciliação de ideias.*

RESUMEN: *Este artículo se centra en los caminos perdidos en los que han caído algunas prácticas pedagógicas. Las orientaciones pedagógicas discordantes es una de las consecuencias derivadas de las malas interpretaciones en materia educativa. En el presente trabajo se plantea la hipótesis de que encuentran un buen objetivo educativo, siempre que se libren de falsos antagonismos, tales como: teoría contraria a la práctica, interés de los estudiantes contra la disciplina escolar. John Dewey fue uno de los raros pensadores que cumplió con esta condición. En consecuencia, el artículo pretende, a través de la perspectiva de Dewey, demostrar cómo es necesario conciliar ideas aparentemente irreductibles para formular metas educativas. La metodología utilizada consistió en estudios bibliográficos sobre Dewey. Los resultados obtenidos por el trabajo fueron concepciones pedagógicas, de las cuales el conocimiento previo del niño es un ejemplo de no descuidar. Finalmente, el artículo concluye que es necesario armonizar lo que se opone erróneamente.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Objetivo educativo. John Dewey. Teoría opuesta a la práctica. Currículo escolar en contra del interés del estudiante. Conciliación de ideas.*

Introduction

Education is above all a complex and controversial topic. Entering the children's universe, in search of the laws of their development, is certainly an arduous and uncertain undertaking. It is not by chance that different pedagogical theories were created, and they compete with each other, even though it should not be said that this or that one was successful in its pedagogical purposes. The way of exercising teaching raises many doubts and becomes the subject of numerous discussions, as it is even a difficult matter to understand. To deal with this subject, let us pay attention to a fine balance, sometimes ignored, although required by the understanding of our object of analysis: the balance between speculating about the child's world and fully assimilating it; further on, we will understand this balance as a harmony between child psychology and the logical universe of adults. This article will address precisely dubious pedagogical concepts, inevitable consequences of the aforementioned complexity, in which the educational process consists.

Along the long tradition of thinking about education, amid small paths of desirable directions, many roads were opened, whose paths did not lead us to good destinations. In different ways we see education gone astray; either through vain educational goals or through false antagonisms created. The price paid by those who rely on poorly established theoretical bases regarding education can be seen in concrete and particular problems, as we will see during the article. It is not enough to denounce the erroneous pedagogical guidelines by which

they lead education, solutions will also be proposed to all that is erroneous in the space of our examination on education. In a figurative way, the article will promote a battery of attacks on several dubious pedagogical interpretations when reviewing educational conceptions. And it will renew the perspectives of education with new perspectives.

Finding meaningful goals or reconciling seemingly contradictory ideas is no easy task. In the pedagogical scope, this is no different. These difficulties resulted in mutually excluding theories, false paradoxes and antagonisms, and goals of derisory values. John Dewey, pedagogue and philosopher, was one of the bold thinkers. He not only unveiled the true and significant purposes of education, but also the easy ways of thinking, which take us to extremes, he challenged in order to reconcile and unify apparently irreducible pedagogical currents. Knowing Dewey's ideas, we will certainly be disappointed in the hope placed in mutually exclusive pedagogical methods. In this way, it will be recognized that if we approach extremes, mixing and harmonizing them, then we will obtain efficient pedagogical objectives that are adequate to the good pretensions regarding education.

Therefore, John Dewey's proposals and conceptions regarding teaching will be fundamental to this article. Likewise, the practical applications of its pedagogical ideas will be relevant, since pedagogy is a theoretical science, but it is also, above all, an applied, practical science; moreover, as we will see from Pragmatism, of which John Dewey is one of the representatives, an idea is valid, as long as it is confirmed by experience, by practical application. As already mentioned, John Dewey, in addition to being a pedagogue, was a philosopher; and we will see that his philosophical investigations, in particular his reflection on what an objective consists of in general, provided the basis for the theses of this work. Many educational objectives, even reputable ones, to be reviewed here do not hold up, in the light of J. Dewey's plausible, not necessarily educational, conceptions. In order to corroborate the argument, other famous pedagogues, Johann H. Pestalozzi and Johann F. Herbart, will also be considered.

Before finishing this thematic presentation, it will be necessary to address the relationship between school and society. From now on, it is worth emphasizing that education should not be jettisoned from social dynamics. Whoever thinks of education as an element that maintains the social status quo is really wrong. Quite the opposite. Education, for Dewey, would be one of the 'propelling springs' of social transformation towards progress. In this sense, once again, it is important to bring up the ideas of J. Dewey (1965), for whom education is nothing but progressive human development. According to Dewey, individual development cannot be dissociated from a social whole, since the development of society

implies the concomitant development of its members, and vice versa. An essential presupposition, both of this article and of Dewey's reflection, is inserted here: authentic human development is required, that is, true education, the conformation of a democratic society. A society cannot be constantly and authentically developed unless opportunities for development are guaranteed to all members of a society, and interests are equitably distributed. The development of each individual grows the more social relations are fair, reciprocal and equitable. That is why social, common development is indispensable for individual development. Therefore, the education offered democratically leads to the development of society as a whole and of each individual. However, as already mentioned, education is one of the factors that drive social transformation; and, therefore, social progress should not be expected only from education, but also from other social institutions, such as politics.

Finally, two other points concerning the relationship between education and society deserve to be highlighted. First, Dewey reminds us that they educate with a view to a balance between social contribution and individual formation. Education aims not only to personal interests, nor only to social contributions. Here is an example, in which education tends neither to selfishness nor to abnegation, of Dewey's thoughtful thinking. Regarding the second point, there is a favorable relationship between work and education. Society loses out in having so many unhappy people in their jobs, professions and careers. Alienated and boring work or professional activity devoid of subjective meaning and value deteriorate life and society. This is partly due to an educational failure. It is clear that occupations that transform people into automatons are irrevocably compromised and that only economic progress would lead to increased employability and job quality. Nevertheless, more people would be happy, hopeful and interested in their jobs as education becomes more successful in its role of emancipating the human being, of making him aware of his progress, of his uninterrupted development. John Dewey was one of the great pedagogists to note that education makes the human being autonomous, capable of deciding, through personal reflection, the activity, meaningful and valued, with which to occupy and in which to progress.

Problem

Let us first point out a confusion that is created about two notions, and because of which there are traditionally formed two pedagogical currents, arranged, one in relation to the other, in a diametrically opposite way, configuring two competing extremes. We are talking

about the false antagonism between child psychology and adult logic. From these two notions, inherent to pedagogy, an educational orientation based only on the children's world competes with another orientation based only on the adult world. Despite dealing with different notions, these guidelines are not irreducible. It is known that the children's universe is disordered, subjective, emotional and capricious, while the adult's logical universe is disciplinary, objective, rational and compartmentalized. However, as we will see throughout the article, both universes, in addition to being able to be merged, raise, if together, the individual to a high level of development, which he would not reach if educated according to only this or only that pedagogical current.

Another forced opposition concerns the notions of means and ends. It seems obvious to our thinking to separate what is a means from an end. In a counterintuitive way, John Dewey shows us that end and means are identical; when we present Dewey's definition of objective, we will understand this. Furthermore, a misinterpretation links these two notions, namely: 'only the goal counts and the process, through which they arrive at the goal, is only a dull necessity'. Well, then, most of the time, looking for goals by our means, would we live in annoyance? In addition to being wrong, such an interpretation explains the educational distortion, because of which a good part of the youth, ignorant of the value and meaning of studies, rejoice only in passing the entrance exam, an imperative goal of our days; explains the subjection of a subject to a dull job just for the sake of a reasonable salary.

An educational conception, which will not pass unscathed to our attacks, is one that understands education as a preparation for life. Behind this banal idea, there are two errors. The main one is to disregard the child's previous knowledge. Johann H. Pestalozzi (2010) emphasized that teaching starts from what is familiar to the child, that is, their previous knowledge. Therefore, when the child arrives at school, he is already prepared; it is a stone to be polished. The second veiled mistake is to think that the content learned in school should only be experienced in adult life; thus, education loses in not being taught from experience, from the student's experience.

The following false antagonism in educational matters will not go unnoticed: formal learning (school) and informal learning (from everyday life) as opposite and, therefore, dissociated learning. Starting from this forced separation between school and life, problems arise, such as: the school as an end in itself; an individual lost in the complexity of the contemporary world for not having had schooling. Anísio Teixeira, a great Brazilian pedagogue, in an outline of John Dewey's educational theory, wrote:

One of the great merits of Dewey's theory of education was to restore the balance between tacit and non-formal education received directly from life, and direct and express education from schools, integrating the learning obtained through a specific exercise intended for this purpose (school), with learning directly absorbed in social experiences (life) (TEIXEIRA, 1971, p. 24, our translation).

To end the presentation of the problems to be faced in this article, one more false, although commonplace, opposition between notions will be addressed: the apparent opposition between thought and action, between theory and practice. It is clear that thinking and acting are different functions, as the former operates through generalizations, hypotheses, logical possibilities and reflections, and the latter is spatially and temporally determined, consists of immediate factual existence and always concerns particular situations. But they are not therefore disconnected from one another, which the idea of opposition suggests. We will see ahead that it was and is fundamental for human beings to combine theory and practice. Neither one nor the other, if isolated, guarantee effective human development. The exercise of thinking stimulates abstraction and reasoning; however, if isolated, it becomes idle and disconnected from reality. Practice, in turn, promotes dexterous and skilled subjects; however, if unaccompanied by intellectual development, it makes the human being subject to his instinct, his impulses and the chance of the circumstances that supervene his reality. Therefore, emptying school subjects of practical content, which usually occurs, does not lead us in the right direction; Furthermore, basing teaching on training, on mere 'mechanism' (not understood in a technical sense, but in a trivial sense, meaning physical exercise without subjective reflection, without apprehension of meaning and value) misleads education.

Now follows the biographical presentation of John Dewey, with whose ideas this work intends to review educational misconceptions.

Biography

The American, John Dewey, was born in the year 1859 in Burlington, city of the state of Vermont; he died in 1952. He therefore had a long life span of almost 100 years. He witnessed great transformations in humanity, revolutionary technological inventions, the two World Wars, the intensification of industrialization and urbanization, among many other events and changes, which marked the impressive period between the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. He was a philosopher and pedagogue. Or rather, a pedagogic philosopher, since Dewey valued unity so much: unity between thought and

action, children's interest and school curriculum, to name a few examples. Furthermore, for Dewey, philosophy is the inspiration of education.

As stated earlier, John Dewey was one of the main representatives of the pragmatist philosophical current. But what is Pragmatism? It is a current of thought that assumes that experience, a concrete experience conceptually apprehended, is the only criterion of truth; with the exception that a truth is never static because dynamism is inherent to experiences. In addition to Dewey, this American philosophical school had, as its formulators, Charles Sanders Pierce and William James.

John Dewey became a pedagogue properly when, in 1894, he was invited to the University of Chicago. At that moment, he asked for the direction of a department of Pedagogy and the creation of an experimental school, which later became known as the 'Dewey School'. He sought with the creation of this school to put his ideas to the test. Aware of democratic ideals, Dewey opened space in his school for periodic meetings of teachers, in which they proposed new school activities in line with their daily and direct experiences with students. Cooperativism among students was also a characteristic of the school: gathered together, they worked with sewing, carpentry and cooking to sell their products in the city. The Dewey school, therefore, was very different from the whole of American society, in which competition, not cooperation, was the rule. Which is not surprising in a school whose creator aimed to transform society, not reproduce it.

A prominent pedagogical strategy, illustrating Dewey's ideas, applied in his school was what became known by the generic name 'occupation' (WESTBROOK, 1993). The occupations were classes taught based on the reconstruction of experiences or production practices. So, for example, classes on national history simulated the creation of the dwellings of the first settlers; classes on prehistory were given based on the construction of caves by the students themselves; Mathematics classes took place concomitantly with woodworking classes. This sophisticated and creative educational method was the embodiment of John Dewey's pedagogical concepts. In the occupations, the students perceived the inextricable union of thought and action, of theory and practice; the students' interests were captured by the classes; child psychology was linked to the adult logic of the school curriculum and, through the subjective experience of students in the reconstruction of experiences, they acutely learned the meaning of school subjects.

Development

Just as a set of problems related to educational misconceptions was presented, another set of theses will now be presented in order to face those problems. The article highlights problems largely arising from false antagonisms and from resulting pedagogical currents that exclude each other; Likewise, problems raised by educational objectives inappropriate to what is expected of a true education were explained. The following responses to the pedagogical deviations mentioned were inspired by John Dewey's conceptions for education, conceptions that are always characterized by repulsion to extremes, unity between ideas and, mainly, by philosophical foundations.

Similar to inverting the sides of a mirror, in this subsection we will convert problems into solutions, following the order of presentation of the problems in this work.

Democracy, in addition to being a political system, is a mode of social configuration, in which there are fair relationships and an equitable distribution of interests. For John Dewey, effective education, individual and social, must be combined with a democratic society. And it must be combined for several reasons. As democracy is a development of a social whole and education is human development, one must be combined with the other. Furthermore, given the inequalities of concrete societies, education cannot be a factor of social reproduction, but of transformation. Transforming society towards an integral development, not only the disadvantaged social classes will develop, but also the portion already developed will develop more, since the individual human development and of social portions grows in proportion to the development of a social whole increases until ideally there is a social homogenization, or equality. One more point of contact between education and democracy, now under the scope of work, refers to human emancipation. According to the great educational proposals, among them that of Dewey, education provides autonomy to the individual. In this way, the individual choice of work, with will, value and meaning, would be democratized. Another reason for combining education and democracy is the balance proposed by Dewey, in pedagogical matters, of individual formation with social contribution. In effect, such balance promotes fairer and more reciprocal social relations, which are democratic characteristics.

After the reasons why education and democracy are combined with each other, the proposal follows that the presentation of the school curriculum follows the student's interest. John Dewey did not oppose a child-centered pedagogy and a curriculum-focused pedagogy. He sought to harmonize child psychology with adult logic, or curriculum. Johann Friedrich

Herbart (2003), before Dewey, had affirmed the fundamental articulation of the child's subjective world with educational instruction. It is clear that we bring Dewey closer to Herbart in the midst of a certain risk, given his criticism of 'herbartism', a pedagogical current that propagated, not without some distortion, Herbart's ideas (HILGENHEGER, 1994, p. 319-320). However, both defended the apprehension of the curricular content based on the student's interest and mental activity.

As it could not be otherwise, we once again turn to Dewey, for whose pedagogical conception education, like life, is an evolutionary *continuum*, an uninterrupted progressive development. In this sense, there is no fixed purpose, except the death of the human being, the only condition to interrupt the vital or educational development. Still on means and end, we will argue in favor of the following thesis: not only is the end something valued and significant, but the means and the process are also valued. Who knows if we would have more youthful enthusiasm for studying if we valued the educational process more? Process through which the goals of going to college and getting a good job are achieved, goals that are undoubtedly valued.

Continuing the attack on the problematic and beaten educational conceptions encountered here, it is affirmed that an educational objective is empty, unless particular and concrete; and effective unless general and abstract. In fact, education is not an entity, general and abstract, that accomplishes objectives; and only people in 'flesh and blood' achieve goals.

As for the two problems, disregarding the child's previous knowledge and educating without experience, generated by the pedagogical concept of preparing the child for life, this work argues that education must start from the child's knowledge and interests to, through experience, experience, guide them, organize them, expand them and even correct them according to school subjects. This educational proposal is in fact dense and complex, and articulates many elements: the child's inner world, experience, adaptation to logical thinking. But it could not be different, as it aims to do justice to an effective educational process.

Now, let us remember that for Dewey there is no dissociation between formal (school) and informal (everyday, life) learning. Both are at the service of experience, practice, goal achievement, and problem solving. What distinguishes them is the way they learn: at school, learning is explicit, justified, ordered and intended; already in life, learning is intuitive, casual, methodical and indirect. However, one must accompany the other and we will see why later.

Finally, the last thesis of this article is presented in the face of false antagonism, thought against action. The present work argues that theory and practice, mind and world, are not antinomies, but complementary principles. With thought, our actions become deliberate,

intentional, planned and effective (DEWEY, 1959). When we present the definition of objective according to John Dewey, we will understand that thinking and doing add up in an equation favorable to the human being. Theory without practice and practice without theory lead respectively to idle thinking and blind action. That is why they cannot empty school contents of practical meaning or base teaching on technicalities without subjective understanding.

Argumentation

Let's start the arguments for that beneficial union of the social contribution with the individual formation, certain in the educational scope. No one will disagree that individual formation is one of the main functions of education, because everyone wants to develop talents and vocations, acquire qualities and skills, and this only happens if there is education. On the other hand, individuals are formed with a view to social contribution, since solidarity is a moral imperative and that, from the reciprocal contribution, our lives and the lives of others improve and are facilitated. Therefore, education, as Dewey indicates, must unite individual formation with social contribution.

Without ignoring economic factors, the article also argues in favor of qualitatively improving working life through education. Human emancipation is achieved through the educational process, which enriches subjective consciousness, that is, makes the subject more critical, insightful, reflective and willing (in a good sense of the term, to be free to choose according to one's subjective determination). Thus, if education were effective, individuals would choose their jobs and professions autonomously and, therefore, would be happier and more fulfilled in their jobs.

Let us now return to that interesting distinction between means and end. They commonly make the mistake of finding an absolute opposition between means and end. If there is a distinction between the two, it is only apparent because means and end are identified. An end is nothing more than a means to another successive end, because human life, like education, is not a sequence of endings and beginnings, but a continuity until the true and only end, death, if it does not assume the afterlife obviously. Therefore, education is for life and does not end at school or college; moreover, completing college and school are not different ends, but stages in a vital learning process. We add to this another question of the discussion about means and ends: the question of whether only the ends matter or if the means also matter. We assert this without hesitation that both end and means are significant and

valuable. For, on the contrary, the condition for achieving our ends would be boredom, the obligation to perform tedious tasks in order to achieve our goals. In this way, it would be right to perceive the means as valuable, significant and progressive achievements, whose process culminates in the achievement of an end. In this regard, it must be said that a means is worth not because of an optimistic outlook, but because there are indeed valuable means, it is enough for us to recognize them.

Before proceeding with the following arguments, the definition of objective according to John Dewey will be presented, with which we will base other theses of the article. Such a definition will be formulated here based on one of Dewey's books (2007). Well, objective for Dewey is the intention of an individual, with whose intelligence the viability of a significant and valued result was checked in advance. This result becomes an objective when foreseen and purposely chosen by a conscious subject, to the detriment of other action alternatives. It follows from the feasibility of an intention: the realization of present circumstances; the perception of obstacles to actions, available resources for different results and potentials; knowledge of the interrelationships between facts, of the causal relationships between one event and another; the observation, in short, of concrete and particular situations, therefore. Only after this thorough prior analysis of possible results, and that deliberative process, of choosing one result among others, a plan is made, with a view to achieving an objective. It is also worth noting the difference in result and objective: the former is simple factual existence, it is a simple effect; while this is the complete realization of an orderly and regular process in space and time, of a chain in which each action has an intrinsic continuity, that is, it is preceded by another determined action and followed by another definite act until they reach the end of an intentional process, which completes and realizes it. In these terms, John Dewey's intricate definition of objective is exposed.

With this, we were able to readily support two theses of the article, namely, an educational objective must always concern a specific and particular student and must consider the students' prior knowledge. For the first thesis, we have two justifications: as we saw with Dewey, an objective exists only if it belongs to mundane circumstances, determined and ordered spatio-temporally, and involved in real factors; moreover, only a concrete and particular subject deliberates, and not a general and abstract one. Regarding the second thesis, we argue that the feasibility of an objective depends on potentials, available resources and obstacles to actions, and in education the student's knowledge is potential and resources, and his difficulties are obstacles.

The next thesis of the article to be supported is that of reconciling the student's interest with the school curriculum. As we have seen, this thesis was proposed by great pedagogists, such as Dewey and Herbart. The union of the child's subjective world (psychological) with the adult logical world, another way of referring to that conciliation, confronts two antagonistic pedagogical currents, one that focuses only on the child and the other that highlights only the subjects, or school subjects. It happens that one should complement the other, not deny it. For, education is put in effect by the concurrent actions of psychology and logic. The knowledge, rigorous and formal, acquired over millennia of human civilization and arranged in the school curriculum, what we call the logical world, are recurrently bequeathed through education to each new generation, preserving all human advance already obtained. Nevertheless, psychology has the same importance in education. This is due to the subjective, interior and reflected experience of the student, the only way of effective teaching and learning. Furthermore, curriculum-based education alone does not motivate the student to continue learning, because it consists of external and arbitrary impositions of content; and, when based solely on child psychology, education also does not motivate sequential learning, because it is based on capricious impositions of spontaneous and changing interests on the child. If an educational objective is to be realized, then one must attend to the sequentiality, regularity and continuity inherent to any objective, as pointed out by Dewey in the very definition of objective. Therefore, the children's interest that motivates and the school discipline that solidifies learning must be allied in order to guarantee the effectiveness of any educational objective.

Another false antagonism attacked here was thought opposed to action. In other words: mind versus world, theory versus practice. According to us, thought and action must come together for the good of the human being, because if separated they would make the individual deficient either in practice or in theory. The apprehension of the conciliation of these two human aspects, mind and world, allows us to understand the central concept for Pragmatism, the concept of experience, from which we dynamically assess truths. For John Dewey, thought, bequeathed to us by biological evolution, is an 'instrument' to solve practical problems of our existence in order to guarantee us well-being and survival. Still regarding the inseparability of theory and practice, let us remember that in the very definition of a goal there is an inextricable union of mind and action: we do not simply act to achieve our goals, but we mentally anticipate the result of our actions; we know the relationships between events; we plan; We therefore combine theory with practice in order to achieve our goals. The functions of the spirit in general, thinking, predicting, reflecting, analyzing, are not alone and are not

merely contemplations. Their reasons for being are precisely their practical applications in lived or future experiences. Furthermore, it is only when we rationalize, research, investigate and analyze experiences that we grasp their meanings and learn ways to solve the practical problems of existence. Such assimilations are accumulated over time, being transmitted from generation to generation through the cultural heritage, and formally constitute the contents of school subjects. That is why children must be confronted with problematic situations in order to mobilize their theoretical knowledge along with practical ones. In this way, it will be seen that the meaning of things is acutely apprehended by experiencing problematic situations. When reconstructing and reorganizing experiences in the school context, from which the great teachings and learnings of civilization were extracted, children analyze them, investigate them, reflect on them and acquire greater knowledge, from which they will better manage the experiences in the future.

From the above, two erroneous educational conceptions are dissolved: the forced separation between formal and informal learning; and the idea that experiences are only for adult life. As for the first error, we only have to say that formalized knowledge is not the enemy of knowledge acquired immediately and spontaneously from everyday life, from concrete experiences, but is originated from and complementary to them. Regarding the second error, it is up to us to say that, according to the above argumentation, the experience must be part of the school context because they learn more acutely through concrete situational experience.

To conclude the arguments of the article, we now support the remaining theses. Education is progressive and constant human development. In this sense, the educational objective coincides with itself; for the genuine educational aim is, moreover, progressive and constant human development. And for there to be development, there must be transformation. In this way, we defend that education is not a reproducer of a given state of affairs, but its transformer. Added to this, we have the thesis that society as a whole must be transformed by education because the objective of education is not achieved only by educating a genius individual, or an isolated social elite, since human development will only occur more and more as a social whole develops. There is effectively only one society, whose pillars are integral social development, fair and reciprocal relationships, and equitable distribution of interests. This society is democratic. Thus, the conjoint union between democracy and education is crystal clear. A union so intuitively remarkable that it almost dispenses with our exposed argument. We now come to the central point of John Dewey's pedagogical theory: the unbreakable association of education with democracy. In short, constant individual

development, concomitantly with social development, oriented towards social ends is the zenith of any educational purpose. Finally, let us not forget to remember that the transformation of society cannot be promoted only by education, but by other means as well, such as politics by rebuilding habits and social institutions.

Final considerations

From the exposition made, we conclude that, in terms of education, many false antagonisms were constructed in order to create excluding and fruitless pedagogical guidelines. With Dewey's ideas, we saw that by combining extremes we managed to correct our interpretations and propose effective interventions.

The first point to remember refers to the harm of opposing psychology to logic, the children's world to the curricular world. If we focus only on the curriculum, we fall into bookish culture, into verbalism, into meaningless mechanics, into 'memorize'. Now, if we focus only on the child, we incur a discrediting of the rich knowledge elaborated by millennia of civilization, in giving too much of freedom to the space of disorder, illogicality and volatility of the children's world. Furthermore, let us remember that no goal is realized in the midst of demotivating arbitrary upbringing or amid the changing and capricious interests of children. It is necessary to reconcile interest and discipline, knowledge accumulated in millennia of civilization with an effective apprehension of content and meaning through the student's subjective reflection.

It is also concluded from the work that thought and action, mind and world, theory and practice, commonly understood as examples of an antinomy between irreconcilable domains, are, on the contrary, complementary aspects that, when together, strengthen each other. As we saw with Dewey, thought is the instrument bequeathed to us by biological evolution to efficiently direct our actions. We have several mental faculties, such as understanding, learning, intelligence and deliberation that enable us to perceive the meaning of different phenomena and their interrelationships; to invent ways to control nature; to develop creative solutions to problematic situations; to learn and pass on teachings that will better guide our future experiences; and to decide and choose the best alternatives of action. Therefore, school education should not privilege only the theoretical, or only the practical; but must ally them.

Finally, let us remember from the above that the educational objective is progressive and constant human development. We have seen that full and authentic development can only be achieved with an education that reaches all members of society. Partial social development

is inauthentic and meager, generating distortions within societies. Thus, it soon appears that the constitution of a democratic society is essential to the educational objective.

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How to reference this article

MOURA, I. G.; BOTO, C. John Dewey's educational concept: objectives and goals. **Rev. Sem Aspas**, Araraquara, v. 10, n. 00, e021013, Jan./Dec. 2021. e-ISSN: 2358-4238. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29373/sas.v10i00.15693>

Submitted: 07/09/2021

Required revisions: 13/10/2021

Approved: 10/11/2021

Published: 29/12/2021