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SOPHIA

Philosophical reflection on quality in education

Reflexión filosófica sobre la calidad en la educación

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Editorial

It is gratifying to have the opportunity to address you, to make you participants of the joy felt by all who take part of the Journal Sophia: Collection of Philosophy of Education. I could not ignore the news that our journal has been positively valued and accepted in Scopus, one of the largest databases that validates the quality of publications worldwide; in this sense, I extend my sincere thanks to all who take part of this process.

Specially, my heartfelt gratitude to the authorities of the Universidad Politécnica Salesiana, Priest Javier Herrán and Priest Juan Cárdenas; to the Priest Rómulo Sanmartin and to the 2006 Council of the Major in Philosophy and Pedagogy, for the initiative and the boost to advance with the publication, to Verónica Di Caudo who began with the publication process, to Luis Álvarez as the General Editor of the publications of the Universidad Politécnica Salesiana, to Ángel Torres, Soledad Aguilar, to the Abya-Yala Editorial in the persons of José Juncosa, Hernán Hermosa, Paulina Torres, Martha Vinueza M., Marco Gutiérrez, Raysa Andrade, to the diffusion and dissemination team Cristian Arpi and Jefferson Moreno, to all the members of the Editorial Council, Associate Editors, to the International Coeditors, to the Members of the Scientific Council, to the international reviewers, to the 435 main protagonist authors who have written 316 paper so far in the publication of the 32 numbers of the Journal, to the followers of the social networks Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, to all the readers and to all who have made possible that our journal has been placed as the second most significant journal of Philosophy of Education worldwide.

With great satisfaction, we present the publication number 32 of the Journal Sophia: Collection of Philosophy of Education, which has as fundamental axis of reflection the quality in education, in this sense, this volume intends to answer key questions such as: What is educational quality? How to understand quality in education? Which are the conceptions of educational quality? What type of quality is it pursued in education? Which elements enable constructing a quality education? Which are the quality referents in the field of pedagogy? What elements enable constructing a quality education? What referents should be considered for the quality and prospective of organizational strategic planning in higher education? How to address educational quality in rural contexts?

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What is the relationship between educational quality and public policies? The answers to these questions will enable to understand the sense and meaning of quality in education.

Although the concept of "educational quality" itself is relatively new in the pedagogic realm, approximately from the eighteenth century, the reforms in education, in the models, in the paradigms, in the approaches, in the methodologies, in the strategies, in the evaluation criteria, in the educational policies and in the pedagogical tendencies have been permanently occurring.

In this scenario, rethinking quality in education, leads to consider the texts, contexts, subjects and particular needs of keeping in mind that any educational process involves a group of referents such as: quality, equanimity, impartiality, integrity, justice, honesty, effectiveness, legality, morality and that when all the elements are operated together, they will enable achieving a transformation in education.

This requirement demands a relational formation typical of the human tissue initiated by the family, the society in general, the new skills, abilities, attitudes, capabilities, emotions and procedures that are generated in the teaching-learning process, aspects that dynamize life in the labor field, in the institutional-organizational context, in the cultural, in the socioeconomic, through the prevailing politics and ideology, and together contribute to achieve an integral and total quality in education.

In the following, a brief journey is made of the content exposed in each of the manuscripts approved, both for the section related to the central topic and for the miscellaneous section of the present number of the Journal.

In the central topic of publication number 32 of the Sophia Journal, there is first the paper *Building quality education from pedagogy*, written by José Manuel Touriñán López, from the Universidad Santiago de Compostela, Spain. The author considers that to build a quality education involves conceptually distinguishing quality of education and quality in education, meanings that together converge in the expression quality education. In addition, the author states that there is no quality education without working in the educational relationship, the common activity. The author manifests that it is necessary to educate 'with' the cultural area, and this demands to exercise the pedagogic function with competence, establishing an educational relationship in which such quality education is achieved; in addition, he states that only through common activity it is achieved the agreement between educational values and feelings, which is necessary to pass from knowledge to educational

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action. Then, it follows the manuscript *Observations on the approach by competencies and its relationship with educational quality*, written by Geovanny Fabián Bueno Chuchuca, from the 01D02 District of Education at Cuenca-Ecuador. The author analyzes the relationship between competencies and educational quality, for further understanding the context, characteristics and sense of the relationship, with the purpose of unveiling positions that denote a tendency in the labor market. The document postulates that the approach by competencies and the achievement of quality are a natural response of the context for a greater productivity in the bureaucratization of social institutions; thus, he pursues to adopt a quality model as transformation of the subjects beyond quality as an accountability purpose.

On the other hand, the paper *State of the art of the conceptions of quality in higher education*, developed by Fernando Gustavo Acevedo Calamet, Fiorella Gago Benito, María Alejandra da Silva Muñoz and Ana Lucía Bastos Olivera from the Centro Universitario Regional de Noreste of the Universidad de la República de Uruguay, presents an analysis of different conceptions about the notion of quality, its centrality and relevance in higher education, evidencing its polysemic, multidimensional nature, and necessary for understanding it according to the context of application. The authors seek to answer the question: who is responsible for determining the quality of a product or service in higher education?

Within this same line of reflection, there is the *Study for the quality and prospective of Organizational Strategic Planning in Higher Education* structured by Dolores Vélez Jiménez, Roberto Aragón Sanabria, and Michel Segismundo Rodríguez González, from the Universidad España at Durango-Mexico. This paper states that the changing times of the present century, and the global sanitary contingency, has brought new forms of administration of organizations in general, of higher education institutions in particular and concretely of private universities. The authors pursue to conduct a study for the quality and prospective of strategic planning, from the integration of regulatory, strategic and operational elements based on aspects of organizational structure and behavior.

This section is closed by the paper *The quality of education in rural areas from the perspective of public policies*, presented by María Teresa Hernández Herrera and Gustavo Adolfo Esparza Urzúa from the Universidad Panamericana de Aguascalientes, Mexico. The objective of the document is to delve deeper into the concept of educational quality in the reality of the Mexican Educational System; it explores the concept of educational quality in light of federal regulations that protect the right to education; it

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explains the conceptual change that has taken place in the conception of rurality; it describes the Community School Model, which educationally serves to dispersed and underpopulated communities in Mexico. According to the singular case presented in the document, the educational quality is delimited by the Political Constitution of the Mexican United States and by the contextual conditions in which it is developed.

In the miscellaneous section, we find a diversity of philosophical reflections coming from different scenarios, tendencies, approaches and perspectives, such as the ones described below:

The manuscript *Affectivity, vulnerability and limits of scientific reason*, built by Rosario Gazmuri Barros, from the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Santiago de Chile, analyzes the notion of rationality typical of our culture, marked by the scientific paradigm; it pursues to understand reason from a new paradigm and to study the connection between the issue of affectivity as the essential vulnerability of the human being and the consequences of this in moral action. In this sense, the author explains that the reason has the capability of deciphering the laws inscribed in reality in a 'clear and distinct' manner, with the purpose of dominating such reality, and transforming what is read. In brief, the document proposes the model of the work of art as a possibility for reencountering the dimensions of the human being silenced by the scientist notion of truth.

Similarly, the paper *Facing post-truth from a neo-Aristotelian foundation of education*, written by Dennis Schutijser De Groot from the Universidad Toulouse Jean Jaurès-Ecole Doctorale ALLPH@ and from the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador, considers that the current challenge of post-truth that threatens the functioning of democracy arises from the limits of our knowledge and the interference of emotions and values. The author states that two common schools of thought, ethics of the discourse and agonistic politics, fall short in resolving this challenge. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to propose a contemporary conception of a phronetic political discourse, incorporating the key characteristics of an Aristotelian phronesis. The writer establishes that a contemporary phronetic political discourse cannot be founded on the good, and that education is the key starting point to reinforce the capabilities and habits of discourse participants in order to better manage the limitations of our knowledge and our personal commitment with the political field.

Then, it is presented the document *The idea of learning from a different angle as a pragmatist criticism of cognitive sciences*, organized by Juan Manuel Saharrea, de la Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Argentina. The manuscript establishes that the relationship between cognitive

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sciences and philosophy is fruitful and diverse; that there are few philosophical attempts to analyze the concept of learning regarding its link to applications in the educational field; and that the philosophical pragmatism provides a sustainable theoretical framework to complete this task. Among other issues, the author analyzes the concept of learning from the perspective of Brandom's contemporary pragmatism; he pursues to evaluate the epistemological advantages of this stance, and at the same time, he warns about the consequences of limiting learning to causal and natural regularities, as it is the case of the cognitive approach in education; he indicates the relationships between learning and rule, as well as between learning and language.

On the other hand, the paper *Epistemic connection between humanistic formation and university professional education*, written by Martín Alonso Saavedra Campos and Ricardo Arturo López Pérez from the Departamento de Educación en Ciencias de Salud, of the Universidad de Chile, explains that the conception of an education with humanistic approach has been an omnipresent subject in professional university education; it examines humanistic education from a scarcely thematized perspective, but relevant as the epistemic dimension. In this sense, the authors present three domains to focus the theoretical analysis, namely the practical epistemic, the disciplinary epistemic, and the epistemically human. According to what was previously stated, in this document the authors argue that a professional university education based on contemporary Humanism should educationally contribute to develop a comprehension of the epistemic problems integrated to the professional performance.

Finally, there is the manuscript *Political relations between philogenic-ontogenic metaphor and "being an adult" as school telos*, built by Carmina Shapiro Donato from the Universidad Nacional de Rosario at Santa Fe-Argentina. The author states that there are situations in which, instead of a referentially rigorous, formalized, structured and controlled language, sciences appeal to explanatory resources that do not come from the disciplinary activity itself. This phenomenon creates metaphors that eventually become part of the common scientific lexicon, as they are effective in increasing our understanding. Therefore, for the author, the phylogeny-ontogeny metaphor had a very strong influence in the way that the emerging anthropology, sociology and pedagogy would think about human beings and society. This aspect forced the author to conduct an analysis of the internal logic behind this phenomenon to examine some of the effects of this metaphor on the educational field. For the writer, the problem is that this a priori knowledge, in the manner of epistemological

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obstacles, restricts the emergence of new ideas and/or solutions for the difficulties that schooling is facing today.

Dear reader, I hope that the ideas exposed in each of the lines of the publication number 32 of Sophia: Collection of Philosophy of Education, become breeding ground for building new proposals of reflection, for new research works, approaches, perspectives and/or theories that gradually contribute to the educational transformation and for constructing a different society.

Floralba del Rocío Aguilar Gordón
Editor

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Articles / *Artículos*

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Building quality education from pedagogy

Construyendo educación de calidad desde la pedagogía*

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Abstract

Building quality education supposes distinguishing conceptually quality of education and quality in education. Both meanings converge in the expression quality education. This work focuses its reflection on the knowledge of education and common activity, which is about and from which the educational relationship is intervened to achieve quality education. There is no quality education in the educational relationship, the common activity. Knowledge of education makes it possible to build fields of education with cultural areas, transforming information into knowledge and knowledge into education, adjusting it to the meaning of educating. It is necessary to educate 'with' the cultural area and this requires exercising the pedagogical function with competence, establishing an educational relationship in which that quality education it is achieved. Mastery of the function is what makes the pedagogue an expert. In the educational relationship the necessary medium to achieve a quality education is the internal and external common activity. Only by means of common activity it can be achieved the concordance between feelings and educational values; this concordance is a necessary condition to move from knowledge to educational action, and besides, quality education becomes effective by adjusting to the meaning of educating, which means to make effective what is valuable in terms of education.

Keywords

Knowledge, education, educational relationship, quality, pedagogical intervention, expert pedagogue.

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* Part of the content of the article has been presented in the editorial section of the Revista Boletín Redipe, Vol. 7, No. 1. The significance of educational knowledge and its problem-solving capacity: foundations from pedagogical knowledge, published in January 2018.

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Resumen

Construir educación de calidad supone distinguir conceptualmente calidad de la educación y calidad en la educación. Ambos significados convergen en la expresión educación de calidad. El presente trabajo centra su reflexión en el conocimiento de la educación y la actividad común, que es sobre y desde la que se interviene en la relación educativa para lograr educación de calidad. No hay educación de calidad si no se trabaja en la relación educativa, la actividad común. El conocimiento de la educación hace posible la construcción de ámbitos de educación con las áreas culturales, transformando la información en conocimiento y el conocimiento en educación, ajustándolo al significado de educar. Hay que educar 'con' el área cultural y esto exige ejercer la función pedagógica con competencia, estableciendo una relación educativa en la que se logre esa educación de calidad. El dominio de la función es lo que hace experto al pedagogo. Y el medio necesario en la relación educativa, para lograr una educación de calidad, es la actividad común interna y externa. Solo por medio de la actividad común se logra la concordancia entre valores educativos y sentimientos que es necesaria para pasar del conocimiento a la acción educativa y, al ajustarse al significado de educar, se hace efectiva la educación de calidad, lo que es valioso en términos de educación.

Palabras clave

Conocimiento, educación, relación educativa, calidad, intervención pedagógica, experto pedagogo.

Introduction

Professor Pérez Juste published an article in 2005 in the Journal of Education entitled Quality of education, quality in education. Toward their necessary integration. In this article he states the following thesis:

> The traditional concern and contributions of educators and thinkers of education about the nature, meaning and essence of education, i.e., the quality of education, can and must be compatible with movements, proposals and actions of our time in relation to quality, where approaches related to quality management can be placed in frameworks, such as those of total quality, ISO or EFQM, *evaluation*, *certification* or *accreditation*. In this sense, the concepts of quality of and in education are analyzed and formulated and an integration proposal is formalized, in which the quality of education is linked to the mission of the institutions and their educational projects, and the quality in education is integrated with the medium, which is relevant and effective (Pérez Juste, 2005, p. 11).

There are many studies on quality '*of*' education (meaning) and on quality '*in*' education (processes) and it is an assumed principle that looks for the convergence of both analyzes when talking about quality education. Some authors prefer to use quality of education, thinking about its meaning and purpose, and others prefer to build discourse on quality in education, thinking about the processes and procedures to achieve quality standards. But for me, in this work, I will use as a starting point the

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convergence of quality "of" and "in" to achieve quality education. Thus, I assume that quality education requires understanding the concept and using processes oriented toward the achievement of its defining traits.

As Professor López Cubino has summarized, a quality management model is a permanent reference and an effective instrument in the process of any organization to improve the products or services it offers. The model promotes understanding the most relevant dimensions of an organization, as well as establishing criteria for comparing them with other organizations and the exchange of experiences. As López Cubino (2001) states, the use of a reference model is based on the fact that:

- It avoids having to create indicators because they are defined in the model.
- It provides a complete conceptual framework.
- It provides the same goals and standards for everyone, in many cases well-proven.
- It determines a consistent organization of improvement activities.
- It enables to measure with the same criteria over time, so it is easy to detect the right direction.

There are several models which can be used in education prior their adaptation. The most widely used total quality management models are the Deming model created in 1951, the Malcolm Baldrige model in 1987 and the European Quality Management Model, EFQM. None of them nullifies the necessary reference to quality as a concept (Touriñán & Soto, 1999).

On the subject of quality education, I have always considered as a reference point in our formative educational context the book of 1981, derived from the seminar held in La Granda (Avilés-Principado de Asturias) under the patronage of the Asturian School of Hispanic Studies (EAEH, 1981). Seeing quality education as the degree of adequacy, coherence, efficiency and integration of the elements of the structure, process and product of education with what is considered valuable (with what it means) education is a conclusive proposal of that Seminar that I continue to assume (EAEH, 1981).

I am also aware that, as Professor Municio (1993) said, the difficulty of building up a general definition of the quality of education is that "it represents the positive social image of education, and each cultural model describes it through different components. Each component is a quality indicator that does not represent itself, but makes sense to the extent that it can be integrated into a coherent set such as a cultural model"

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(p. 18). The socio-cultural suitability of the educational offer, due to the legitimate territorial condition (temporary space) of the educational action, does not nullify the necessary reference to the traits of meaning in everything that we use as quality educational processes, according to the standards of each moment (Order, 1988; García Garrido, 2005).

Obviously, if two educational institutions with different values and cultures are considered to have high quality, this quality cannot be linked to the specific characteristics (values, goals, objectives, programs, teacher training, etc) of each institution, but, on the contrary, the quality must be in the relationships between the elements that make them up more than in those specific characteristics, respecting the temporary formative orientation, which does not nullify the logical adjustment of the actions to the meaning of educating (Vega Miranda, 1998; Touriñán, 2015).

The temporary formative orientation for the human condition is the model or educational pattern of that society (the type of people we want to educate with the formation we give them at a certain historical moment). Through intervention, we transform the knowledge of cultural areas into education, in each field of education we build (Touriñán, 2014).

The temporary formative orientation integrates the content of education and allows to concretize and differentiate the corresponding educational response in each territory to central and complementary issues of the *concept* of education, with respect to what is permanent and what changes, the essential and the existential, the structural and the functional, what corresponds to the being or the becoming of education at each specific socio-historical moment and that is reflected in the curricular architecture and in the fields of education that we build from the pedagogy.

Any temporary formative orientation combines tradition and innovation, the cultivation of the personal and the commitment to the vision, because that is the framework of education that stems from social expectations directed to the system. Tradition and innovation (sometimes masked in terms of modernity and progress) are combined, not for the pure, particular whim of the politicians in charge, but because by assuming the character of shared responsibility in education, everyone understands that when defining the human we want to educate, neither everything in tradition is rejected, nor just innovations respond to the knowledge that must be preserved. The cultivation of the personal and the greatness of the vision are combined because education, understood in its full sense, does not achieve its objective when developing a man capable of fending himself (Touriañán, 2015).

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The different ways of approaching education from the perspective of pedagogical knowledge allow to refer to it as a chosen value for educational purposes. From the intervention point of view, education is committed to extrinsic purposes or educational goals and to intrinsic purposes or pedagogical goals to achieve the fulfillment of logical requirements of the meaning of education that determine and qualify skills, habits, attitudes, knowledge and competencies as components of recognized educational value to educate oneself, and therefore to become increasingly author and not just actor of one´s projects (SI(e)TE, 2012).

The temporary formative orientation is based on the uniqueness of situations, the knowledge of education generated, the advancement of cultural areas and the relevance of existing values within a given society. The school subjects are grouped in the curricular design, taking into account the levels of the educational system, respecting the criteria and traits of real definition of education. From cultural, current, consolidated and transformed areas of education, the temporary formative orientation for the human condition offers the pattern or model for educational design and derived pedagogical intervention.

Through school subjects, formative guidance is applied and completed from strata of thought, derived from diverse cultural areas and varied status, ranging from humanism to communitarianism, from nationalism to individualism, from ethics to esthetics, from morality to religion, from philosophy to science, from anthropological to cultural and so on. Education is not necessarily confused, nor identified with these strata, because the meaning of education is specific and different from that field of reality. Education will have temporary formative orientation in the educational policy of socialism, humanism, secularism, confessional profile, community, etc., depending on the historical moment and taking into account the greater or lesser meaning of a certain type of citizen mentality; these are the philosophical senses of education linked to social expectations (Pring, 2014; Carr, 2014, 2006). But, moreover, in all such cases education maintains—it must maintain, on the penalty of losing its own status—consistency with the meaning of education, with the character and sense traits that are inherent in the meaning of 'education'. Thus educational action will not cease to be education and will not become a propagandistic vehicle of the political ideas of the dominant group (Touriñán, 2014; Touriñán & Longueira, 2018).

And this is so, because education is a process that involves realizing the meaning of education in any educational setting, developing the general dimensions of intervention and appropriate competencies,

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the fundamental habits of development, the specific capacities and basic provisions of each individual educator for the achievement of education and the guiding values derived therefrom. Once achieved, we guide the processes in a quality educational project.

Professor Teófilo Rodríguez Neira has been concerned with the quality of education and has written down texts from the perspective of the bits in the school and the gaps in the school that should always be avoided if we seek quality education (Neira, 2010, 2011, 2018, 2019).

In line with that commitment, I must also mention in this introduction, that in 1987 I published a book on pedagogical function (Touriñán, 1987b). In that book and the one published in 2020 titled *Pedagogy, Technical Competence and Transfer of Knowledge* (Touriñán, 2020a), I have various works on the pedagogical function, the social image of pedagogy and quality education. In all of them I have argued on the thesis of that first book of 1987 that I can now mention in the following terms:

- The quality of education depends to a large extent on the quality of education professionals, and at the same time the quality of education professionals depends mostly on the knowledge of the education they have received in their training (Touriñán, 1987b).
- The knowledge of the education provided by the pedagogy makes possible the mental representation of the educational action and develops in the professor the critical vision of its method and acts in each intervention, making possible the transition from knowledge to action (Touriñán, 2016).
- Estimating education (knowledge area) does not mean estimating knowledge of the field (pedagogy as a discipline of knowledge of education and derived activity) and does not always mean a positive estimate of the professor (person practicing the profession) or the career studied to be a professor. In all areas where there is double condition of knowledge and action, this possible difference of estimation occurs: regarding health, I consider medicine as knowledge and action, and whether or not I consider doctors who are subject to the interests of pharmacists with regard to prescription drugs (Touriñán, 2017).
- Pedagogy is a necessary condition (logical necessity) to satisfy a need (social, cultural, economic, personal, etc.: education), in which society is in urgent need of quality response. Pedagogy will remain in a pure academic knowledge that some teach for others to learn if it is not related to the achievement of quality education (Touriñán, 2019c).

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- We must relate social image and response to a social need with the quality of education through pedagogy, in such a way it is understood that quality education is not achieved without developing in education professionals the competence derived from the quality of the knowledge of education they have to receive in their career (Touriñán, 2020a).

Because of the latter, in this paper I will focus my reflection on the knowledge of education and common activity, which is about and from which we intervene in the educational relationship to achieve quality education. Paying attention to common activity is a necessary condition for quality education. There is no quality education if we do not work the common activity in the educational relationship, and there is no quality education if we do not conform to what is valuable in terms of education and therefore explicitly determined in its meaning.

Knowledge of education has grown over time (O'Connor, 1971; Novak, 1977; Broudy, 1977; Berliner, 1986; Carr & Kemmis, 1988; Touriñán, 1987a, 1989, 2018b, 2019b, 2020c; Schulman, 1986; Biesta et al., 2014; Vázquez, 1980, 1981; Colom, 2018; SI(e)TE, 2018). It has become a specialized knowledge (Touriñán, 2016, 2017, 2020a; SI(e)TE, 2020). This paper addresses the distinction between the specialized knowledge of each cultural area being taught and the specific knowledge of the study of education as an object of knowledge. The objective is to understand, on the one hand, that knowledge of education makes possible the construction of educational fields with cultural areas, transforming information into knowledge and knowledge into education (adjusting it to the meaning of education). We must educate "with" the cultural area and this requires, on the other hand, to exercise the pedagogical function with competence, establishing an educational relationship in which the common internal and external activity is the necessary means: we all form ourselves and have to use common activity to educate and educate ourselves and without it, it is not possible to achieve it (Touriñán, 2019e, 2019b, 2020b).

Without common activity, it is not possible to educate, nor is it possible to conduct the educational relationship. Only through common activity, in the educational relationship, do we achieve the concordance between feelings and educational values that are necessary to move from knowledge to educational action. Since in the educational relationship the common activity must conform to the meaning of educating in order for the relationship to be educational, the common activity, adjusted to the meaning

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of educating, makes quality education effective. In this way, it can be said that common activity is also a necessary condition for quality education. And this is what I argued in this text using the following postulates:

- Knowledge of education determines the concept of education over knowledge of cultural areas.
- Knowledge of education and pedagogical knowledge do not mean the same.
- Expert status is linked to knowledge of education in education professionals.
- The starting point for the real definition of education is in the common use of the term and in the activities that are carried out.
- The pedagogical function generates intervention from the common activities.
- The transition from knowledge to action happens in the educational relationship, making the concordance between educational values and feelings in each pedagogical intervention through the common activity, so that quality education becomes effective in every interaction.

Knowledge of education determines the concept of education scope over knowledge of cultural areas

The level of current pedagogical research allows to state that there are sufficient reasons to distinguish and not confuse technical language (Touriñán, 2013a and 2014): knowledge of education, and knowledge of cultural areas.

It is true that, from an anthropological point of view, education is culture and, therefore, it makes sense to say that the role of the education professional is to transmit culture. But if we also say that educational terms lack of their own content, the knowledge of the various cultural areas becomes the backbone of any pedagogical activity to the extent that the same education professionals would have to accept that their formation relies on the knowledge of those cultural areas and that knowing, teaching and educating would be the same thing. For me, by principle of meaning, to know a cultural area is not to teach, because knowledge can be separated from action and to teach is not to educate, because we can affirm that there are teachings acts that do not educate based on the proper meaning of those terms (Touriñán, 2016, 2017; SI(e)TE, 2016, 2018, 2020; Touriñán & Longueira, 2016, 2018).

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In relation to cultural areas, it is true that knowledge of the cultural area is a component of educational action, but knowledge of the cultural area has a different role when we talk about 'knowing a cultural area', 'teaching a cultural area' and 'educating with a cultural area'. This is obvious if we think of a specific case, because it is not the same 'to know History', than 'to teach History' than 'to educate with History', and so on with each area of experience constituted in the object of teaching and field of education.

From the point of view of the knowledge of education, the one who teaches is required a certain level of training relative to the knowledge of the area that will be the object of the teaching (area of experience and forms of expression appropriate to the area), but teaching an area is not knowing that area and educating is simply teaching the content of the area. It is undeniable, given the current development of knowledge of education that all teachers do not require the same level of expertise in the cultural area of experience they teach (it varies according to their level of placement in the educational system), and that all teachers should not have the same pedagogical knowledge, because this depends on the level of the educational system on which they work.

Knowing, in the broad sense of performance identified with the expressions 'I know what, I know how and do', is not confused with teaching. Skills and competencies to know and to teach do not subsume each other, nor do both of them hesitate to relate the expression 'educate with' a cultural area. Careful analysis of the pedagogical context creates a debate that knowledge of cultural areas is not knowledge of education and that it makes sense to distinguish knowing, teaching and educating (Touriñán, 2015, 2019c, 2018a, 2020d):

> a) While it is true that a large part of the objectives of education have something to do with the contents of cultural areas in teaching, the scope of the objectives is not exhausted in the fields of cultural areas, not even in teaching. The pedagogical function, referring to teaching, is not exhausted in knowing the cultural information corresponding to a topic of a cultural area in a class; rather, the pedagogical function is revealed when it is known that types of skills, habits, attitudes, etc., of the various domains that point to taxonomies are being enhanced by working in a special way on that topic. The question, in teaching, is not to know as much about an area as the specialist, but to know what knowledge objectives are achieved and how they are achieved by teaching an area topic and what skills, habits, attitudes, knowledge and competencies we are developing by teaching that topic.

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b) The identification of knowledge of cultural areas with knowledge of education fosters an unsustainable pedagogical situation: the tendency to assess school performance primarily by levels of cultural information of area. Without intending that any content is purely formal and serves to achieve any skill, it is possible to say that, although not with the same level of effectiveness, from the pedagogical point of view, with only one of the cultural themes of the program to be studied by a high school student, for example, the pedagogical strategies leading to the achievement of almost all the educational objectives of the program could be achieved, except for cultural information specific to the area.

c) Even by identifying knowledge of education and knowledge of cultural areas, it can be understood that there is a certain knowledge of education, speaking of teaching, which is not knowledge of cultural areas: knowledge of the transmission of knowledge of those cultural areas. Education would indeed have as its mission, for example, the transmission of knowledge about history. In this case, reliable and valid knowledge is a problem for historians and researchers in this cultural area; knowledge of education for teaching would be, in this case, knowledge of intervention strategies.

d) In view of the above, it is obvious that there is a different competence to educate and teach than to know a specific cultural area. In fact, the theoretical, technological and praxis knowledge that is constituted in teaching objectives is not created by the education professional; it is the researchers of each cultural area who create them. It is up to the education professional, on the basis of technical choice, to decide whether the student can learn them; whether they are consistent with the conceptual representation of the educational intervention; if they have theoretical, technological and praxis basis, as the case may be, in the knowledge of education to be used as an instrument of education; what level of content is appropriate in a particular case, what is the appropriate teaching method, and what skills, habits and attitudes, knowledge and educational skills can be developed by teaching that knowledge. In other words, the education professional dominates the theoretical, technological and praxis knowledge of the cultural area he/she is going to teach at a sufficient level to teach them; but, as an education professional, the professor dominates the knowledge of education that allows him/her to justify and explain the conversion of that knowledge from a cultural area into the objective or instrument of pedagogical intervention.

e) From the point of view of educational competence, the key to knowledge that is valid for education is not in the domain of cultural areas, as if it were the specialist of that cultural area (artist, historian, chemist, or others), but in the domain of pedagogical competence that enables to see and use cultural content as an instrument and goal of educational action in a particular case, in such a way that this cultural

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> content is used as an instrument to develop in each student the character and meaning of 'education'. Knowledge of education empowers the education professional, for example, not only to establish the educational value of a cultural content and to participate in the process of deciding its conversion to the end or goal of a particular educational level, but also to establish intervention programs designed to pedagogical facts and decisions that make the proposed goal effective.

Talking about knowledge of education does not, therefore, imply directly questioning about the knowledge of cultural areas. When we talk about 'knowledge of education', it is more appropriate to ask why certain knowledge is constituted as a goal or instrument of educational action or why the cognitive dimension of man is educable. And as well as the knowledge of each cultural area, the historian, the geographer, the mathematician, the physicist, could speak to us, according to the case, because they are specialists in each of these areas of knowledge, we have no doubt that we should respond adequately to whether such or what historical, mathematical, physical, etc., content should be constituted in the content of the educational action we carry out with a particular subject, or how to cultivate its critical sense, since it requires questioning about education as an object of knowledge. In the first idea, knowledge of cultural areas -history, mathematics, physics, etc., is the scientific object of study; in the two cases of the second idea, the transmission itself and the influence that is exerted becomes a specific object of scientific reflection.

According to the reflections made, talking about 'knowledge of education' is the same as questioning about education as an object of knowledge, which amounts to asking a double question (Touriñán & Rodríguez, 1993; Touriñán & Sáez, 2015, Colom, 2006; Vázquez, 1981, 2018; Walton, 1971, 1974):

- What is needed to know in order to understand and master the field of education; or what is the same, what are the components of the educational phenomenon that must be mastered in order to understand that phenomenon.
- How that field is known; or, in other words, what is the credibility of knowledge that we can obtain about the field of education.

We think it is necessary to distinguish knowledge of cultural areas and knowledge of education because, to the same extent that knowledge of education goes beyond what is transmitted, the pedagogical function —in the field of teaching— begins to be the object of specialized and specific knowledge. That is precisely why we can define the pedagogical

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function as tasks that require competences acquired through the knowledge of education (Touriñán, 2019f).

If we do not distinguish knowledge of cultural areas and knowledge of education, then the professional competence of teachers would be wrongly defined by the greater or lesser mastery of the cultural area they are going to teach. This type of approach generates consequences for these professionals:

- First, because the knowledge of cultural areas they teach would not be created by teachers, they would see themselves as learners of the knowledge of those areas that others investigate.
- Second, as professional competence would be defined by mastery of the cultural area, the mistake of believing that the one who knows best would be the one who teaches the best.

If we do not confuse knowledge of cultural areas and knowledge of education, neither is it true that the teacher is an apprentice of the cultural areas he/she teaches, nor is it true that necessarily the one who knows the most History is the one who teaches it the best, nor is it true that the one who best dominates a skill is the one who best teaches another to master it, unless, tautologically, the skill he/she dominates is that of teaching.

This is because each of these activities requires different competencies and skills for their mastery, and practice and perfection in one does not automatically generate mastery of the other.

It must be accepted that the knowledge of education is therefore a specialized knowledge that allows the specialist to explain, interpret and decide the pedagogical intervention typical of the function for which it is enabled, either a function of teaching, or support to the educational system, or research function.

If we review the above statements, it seems obvious that the pedagogical function, by principle of meaning, requires specialized knowledge of education.

It is clear that the pedagogical function is not confined to teaching; the professional group of teachers is only a part of the professionals of education. But the distinction made between knowledge of cultural areas and knowledge of education allows us to distinguish and identify education professionals and pedagogical functions (Touriñán, 2013b):

> a) Sociologists, doctors, psychologists, and other professionals in the education system work in the education system because they practice their profession in and over the system. But, in addition, there is a group of professionals in the education system who deserve the title of education professionals since their task is to intervene, carrying out the peda-

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gogical functions for which they have been enabled; the proper content of the training core in the profession is knowledge of education. 'Education system professionals' and 'education professionals' are two different expressions with different meaning, and it makes sense to say that not every professional in the education system is an education professional, in so far as only the content of the vocational training is always the knowledge of education. Education professional is the specialist who dominates the theoretical, technological and practical knowledge of education that allows him/her to explain, interpret and decide the pedagogical intervention proper to the function for which he/she is entitled.
b) If taking as a reference the tasks and activities to be carried out in the educational field, the knowledge of the education and the development of the educational system allow to identify generically three types of pedagogical functions (Touriñán, 1987b, 2020a):

- *Teaching functions or didactic functions* identified basically with the exercise and mastery of skills, habits, attitudes and knowledge that enable them to teach at a certain level of the educational system.
- *Pedagogical functions in support of the educational system.* They are functions that do not directly deal with teaching, although they improve the possibilities of teaching, because their task is to solve pedagogical problems of the educational system that arise with its growth and the knowledge of education, and if not corrected, they would hinder the social achievement of quality education through the educational system, such as school organization, pedagogical-social intervention, educational planning, etc.
- *Functions of pedagogical research* identified with the exercise and mastery of skills, habits, attitudes and knowledge that enable the validation and development of models of explanation, interpretation and transformation of pedagogical interventions and educational events.

One might think that the 'educative function' should be added to the pedagogical function table, because it is not the same to educate as to teach. Educating is, in fact, the most excellent role of the educator, and that role is assumed both from education and the area of knowledge, and from education as action. However, since we are talking about pedagogical functions in the strict sense, we must maintain the difference between pedagogy and education and, precisely because of this distinction, it would be a mistake to grant the role of educator in a particular way to graduated professor, as if there were no educators who are not pedagogues (Touriñán, 2015).

This statement that I have just made should not be taken as a renunciation of action and specialized and specific competence in the pedagogical function, but as a recognition of shared responsibility in the ed-

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ucational task. We must also recognize that educational competences are included in any pedagogical function, because by principle of definition and purpose in the activity, we exercise pedagogical functions because we use the knowledge of education to educate: it is not about teaching, researching and supporting the educational system, but about teaching, investigating and supporting what is educated. In this regards, the educational function is present as a quality or meaning in the pedagogical functions of teaching, support to the educational system and research, which are three different pedagogical functions.

The achievable distinction between knowledge of cultural areas and knowledge of education allows to distinguish and identify education professionals as professionals other than professionals in the education system. On this regard, there are sociologists, doctors, psychologists, drivers, cooks, architects, etc., who work in the educational system. They receive the title of 'professionals of the educational system' because they exercise their profession in the educational system by applying their specialized knowledge on the specific issues of the educational system: the school dining room, health, transport, buildings, etc. But, in addition, there is a group of professionals in the education system who deserve the title of 'education professionals'. Their task is to intervene, carrying out the pedagogical functions for which they have been enabled; the content of the training in their profession, their specialized knowledge is the knowledge of education. 'Professionals of the education system' and 'professionals of education' are two distinct expressions with different meaning, and it makes sense to state that not every professional of the education system is a professional of education, in so far as only the content of the vocational training is always the knowledge of education. Education professional is the specialist who dominates the theoretical, technological and practical knowledge of education that allows him/her to explain, interpret, transform and decide the pedagogical intervention proper to his/her function (Touriñán, 2017).

Education professionals perform 'teaching functions, pedagogical functions in support of the education system and research functions' with the ultimate objective of educating in each of them. The 'pedagogical functions of support to the educational system' are functions that refer to the pedagogical intervention, not directly concerned with teaching, although they improve the possibilities of teaching, but the aim is to solve pedagogical problems of the educational system that arise and the knowledge of education, and if not corrected it would hinder the social achievement of a quality education through the educational system. The

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pedagogical functions of support to the educational system respond to the difference between knowing, teaching and educating and, as in all the fields of reality that have the dual status of the field of knowledge and action (the case of education): the technical support to the completion of the pedagogical intervention (such as the education inspector, the director of the educational center, among others) and the technical specialist in the conduction of the pedagogical intervention (such as the pedagogue that builds fields of education and educational designs, the formative-educational counselor, the school pedagogue, the environmental pedagogue, the working pedagogue, the social pedagogue, the family pedagogue, for example). These functions are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Professionals of education and pedagogical functions

PROFESSION: Specific activity, based on specialized knowledge, socially recognized to meet social needs
PEDAGOGIC FUNCTION: Exercise of tasks whose performance require competences acquired through knowledge of education

PROFESSIONALS OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM
Their role in education is in and about the education system by applying their specialized knowledge on the specific issues of the education system: The school, health, transport, buildings, etc. Sociologists, doctors, psychologists, drivers, cooks, architects, etc., are examples of professionals of the education system.

EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS
Their task is to influence in the content of the train ing core in their profession by carrying out the pedagogical functions. Their specialized knowledge is the knowledge of education. The content of this vocational training is the knowledge of education.

EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS
They are specialists who master the theoretical, technological and practical knowledge of education that enable them to explain, interpret, transform and decide the pedagogical intervention that is specific to the function entitled

Pedagogical function of teaching

Pedagogical functions to support the educational system:

Pedagogical functions to support the educational system:

Technical support to the conduction of the pedagogical intervention
(such as the inspector of education or the principalof the educational center, among others)

Technical specialist in the conduction of the intervention (such as the teacher who creates fields of education and educational designs, the formative-educational counselor, the school pedagogue, the environmental pedagogue, the labor pedagogue, the social pedagogue, the family pedagogue, the pedagogical adviser, for example).

FUNCTION OF EDUCATING
IT MEDIATES PROCESSES OF PEDAGOGICAL INTERVENTION
(Formal, non-formal and informal self-education processes and heteroeducation processes) and heteroeducation processes

Source: Touriñán, 2020a, p. 145.

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On the other hand, the distinction between knowledge of cultural areas and knowledge of education also places us in a special position to establish the distinction between extrinsic aims of education (educational goals) and intrinsic aims of education (pedagogical goals). It makes sense to establish this distinction within the social system and for the 'education' subsystem because the intrinsic purposes are specific to the subsystem, as they derive from the knowledge of the education subsystem (knowledge of education) and, in turn, the extrinsic purposes are also characteristic of the subsystem, but because they are incorporated into it once chosen (end = chosen value) for the subsystem because they are compatible with it, although they do not originate from knowledge of education.

Thus, we can say that theoretical, technological and praxis knowledge (of Literature, History, Philosophy, Life Experience, Morals, Customs, etc.) of the various cultural areas that are constituted in the objective of knowledge of teaching are not created by the professionals of the education with their specialized knowledge (knowledge of the education), but it is the specialists in each of these areas who create them and 'turn' them into socially and morally legitimate goals in that society; for this reason they are candidates for the goal of education, especially if being socially and morally legitimate, becoming an effective extrinsic purpose.

On the other hand, the intrinsic aims are those that are decided in the system and their content is knowledge of education. The validity of their statements does not occur without their social and morally desirable character, or without their validity in a cultural area, but rather of the specific tests of the field, i.e., from the meaning granted to the statements from the conceptual system elaborated with the knowledge of education.

This same discourse requires understanding that there are certain type of goals (extrinsic) that have a historical and variable character subjected to the evolution of what is socially desirable and to the growth of the concrete cultural area to which it belongs (today we do not teach mathematics as years ago, nor are they given the same value within the school curriculum; today professors do not teach the same 'customs' as years ago, etc.). We speak here of knowledge of the disciplines that are part of education.

In addition, there are other intrinsic purposes which have a historical and variable character subjected to the evolution of knowledge of education. We speak of the knowledge of education derived from education as an object of knowledge.

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Both types of purposes are subjected to historical character. But the answer is very different – because of the kind of speech that justifies it –, when we say that man must know History to be considered literate (extrinsic purpose) and we must develop critical sense because man cannot be educated (intrinsic purpose) without it. In the first case, man will be more or less educated; in the second, man may or may not be educated (logical necessity). Therefore, it seems that a significant difference between intrinsic and extrinsic purposes derives from the distinction between logical need for something and psychological needs of the sociocultural level where things happen (what is the educated man of each time?).

If our discourse is correct, as we said at the beginning of this paragraph, it is possible to speak and distinguish knowledge from cultural areas and knowledge of education. But, moreover, as has been mentioned throughout this section, knowing, teaching and educating have different meanings, the logic of knowing is not the logic of explaining and there are teaching processes that do not educate. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between education as an object of knowledge (knowledge of education; education knowledge) and knowledge as an object of education (knowledge of education; our knowledge, the educability of our knowledge; the educability of our knowledge; knowledge education or cognitive education), if we can use the expression (Touriñán, 2013b). It is clear to us that:

- Talking about educational knowledge (knowledge about education; educational knowledge; education knowledge) is the same as talking about the set of theoretical, technological, and practical knowledge that research is consolidating about the reality of education. They are knowledge of a cultural area. But, in this case, the specific cultural area; that of education, becomes an object of knowledge (education as an object of knowledge, as a knowable object).
- Talking about knowledge of cultural areas is to speak of the theoretical, technological and practical knowledge that the specialists in each area —mathematicians, physicists, psychologists, doctors, etc.— have been consolidating with their research.
- Speaking about knowledge as an object of education (the educability of our knowledge; knowledge education or cognitive education) is to speak of a certain area of knowledge of education, which allows us to improve our way of knowing.

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Talking about knowledge of education does not imply questioning directly about the knowledge of cultural areas. When we talk about "knowledge of education," it is more appropriate to ask why certain knowledge is a goal or instrument of educational action or why the cognitive dimension of man is educable. As well as the knowledge of each cultural area, the historian, the geographer, the mathematician, the physicist, could speak to us according to the case about art critic, etc., because they are specialists in each of these cultural areas; there is no doubt that responding adequately to a content requires questioning about education as an object of knowledge.

In the first instance, knowledge of cultural areas—history, mathematics, physics, etc.—is the scientific object of study. In the two cases of the second scenario, the transmission and the improvement of the capacity to know become a specific object of scientific reflection in the form of Didactics and Cognitive Pedagogy. Thus, knowledge as an object of education requires research education, i.e., it requires education to become an object of knowledge, either as cognitive pedagogy or as didactics, respectively; but, in addition to responding to why a particular educational event occurred and how a particular educational event can be achieved, we must also respond to how this event is justified as an educational event and this is a question that is only answered from the knowledge we have of the concept of education, and the meaning of 'education' is built from the Pedagogy. This is the question from Pedagogy, not for improving our way of knowing, nor for improving our way of teaching but to question education from concepts with intrinsic (autochthonous) significance to the area of knowledge 'education'. To know a cultural area is not to teach, because, as we have just seen, the competencies required in each case are different and to teach is not to educate, because we can affirm that there are teachings processes that do not educate, based on the proper meaning of those terms.

It must be assumed that pedagogy is knowledge of education and it is obtained in various ways, but ultimately that knowledge is only valid if it serves to educate; i.e., to transform information into knowledge and education from concepts with intrinsic significance to the field of education. On the one hand, we need to have a broad sense of the term (I know what, I know how and do it); on the other hand, we need to teach (which involves another kind of knowledge than knowing areas of cultural experience; teaching involves making others know) and we must also educate, which implies not only knowing and teaching, but also mastering the character and meaning of the meaning of 'education' to apply the cultural

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experience to each area. When we interpret the area of cultural experience from the specific pedagogic mentality and from the specialized pedagogic gaze[1], our intellectual concern allows us to distinguish between 'Knowledge of History', 'Teaching History' and 'Educating with History', It is understood as a subject of cultural area that is part of the curriculum along with others and is part of Pedagogy in the field of education.

The 'field of education', as used in this context, is not a physical space but a concept derived from the educational assessment of the area of experience that we use as an instrument and goal of education. The field of education is the result of the educational evaluation of the experience we use to educate and, therefore, from the Pedagogy, the concept of the field of education integrates the meaning of education, the processes of intervention, the dimensions of intervention, the areas of experience and the forms of expression.

The 'field of education', which is always an expression of the cultural area valued as an object and instrument of education, includes the following components: 'area of experience' used to educate, 'forms of expression' suitable to educate with that area, 'criteria of meaning of education' reflected in traits of character and sense inherent in the meaning of education, 'general dimensions of intervention' that we will use in education, 'education processes' to be followed and 'technical scope'. Integrating these components is what education knowledge does with each cultural area to speak with concepts of educating 'with' a cultural area as a concept other than 'teaching' a cultural area and 'knowing' a cultural area that is part of the curriculum.

If we do not confuse knowledge of cultural areas and knowledge of education, neither is it true that the teacher is an apprentice of the cultural areas he/she teaches, nor is it true that necessarily the one who knows the most is the one who teaches it the best, it is not true that the one who best dominates a skill is the one who best teaches another to master it, unless if saying say that the skill he/she dominates is that of teaching nor is it true that when he/she teaches we are always using cultural content as an instrument for achieving the character and meaning of education, because teaching is not educating. The objective of pedagogy is to transform information into knowledge and knowledge into education, valuing each medium used as education and creating educational fields from the various cultural areas: It is the mesoaxiological perspective of Pedagogy[2] (Touriñán, 2020e, p. 50). It is for this reason that we can say that it is up to Pedagogy to value each cultural area as education and build it as an 'area of education' (Touriñán, 2017).

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For us, the cultural area contemplated from the perspective of educational scope is not only education 'for' a cultural area (vocational development and professional career), focused on the area as theoretical knowledge, research area and creative activity whose technical domain and practical execution can be taught. The cultural area is also education 'by' the cultural area (general scope of education and general education), general scope of education that allows the focus of pedagogical intervention in the cultural area on the development of the character and proper sense of education, -as should be done with mathematics, language, geography, or any basic general education curriculum discipline- and a general education field in which competencies are acquired for the use and construction of valuable experience on the conceptual sense of the area, which can be assumed as a common acquis for all learners as part of their integral development. We can know a cultural area, we can teach an area and we can educate 'with' the cultural area, either to develop the character and sense inherent in the meaning of education in the learners, or to develop the conceptual sense of the area within the general formation of each learner, or to contribute to the formation of specialists in the cultural area from a vocational or professional perspective (Touriñán, 2015; Longueira et al., 2019).

This is because each of these activities requires different competencies and skills for their mastery, and practice and perfection in one does not automatically generate mastery of the other. It must be accepted that knowledge of education is therefore a specialized knowledge that allows the pedagogue to explain, interpret and decide the pedagogical intervention appropriate to the cultural area, which is the object of teaching and education.

In short, the specialized character of knowledge of education makes it possible to affirm that the pedagogical function is a specific activity socially recognized to meet certain social needs; a specific activity based on specialized knowledge of education, which allows to establish and generate pedagogical facts and decisions. The competence of an expert in pedagogical functions comes from the knowledge of education: it is observed in the mastery of the appropriate competencies to educate and in the possession of a specific pedagogical mentality; it is exercised with a pedagogical perspective specialized in the structural elements of the intervention; it is diversified into professions already known today as teacher, director, inspector, social educator, labor pedagogue, family pedagogue, psychopedagogue, pedagogue, etc. All of these are logical demands that take on professionalization and professionalism from Pedagogy to achieve quality education.

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Knowledge of education and pedagogical knowledge do not mean the same

After these steps, it seems clear that asking what knowledge of education is requires a broader response that is not restricted to the knowledge of education that provides one of the streams. Depending on the type of problems we are raising, we will need autonomous or marginal knowledge. Sometimes we will need science of education (we will need 'substantive theories' of education to explain and understand education in own, autochthonous concepts, making rules and norms derived from the process); sometimes we will need scientific studies of education, practical theories and interpretive theories (rules for given purposes and orientations of action toward certain effects that justify interpretative theory; to orient the intervention toward socially prescribed purposes or to understand the educational intervention in terms validated by other consolidated disciplines, such as Psychology, Sociology, etc.). Finally, we will need philosophical studies of education, when we want to make phenomenology of an end in itself, to study the internal logic of the end within the conceptual system of Education or to know the consequences that arise for the education of a particular conception of life. We will need 'philosophical theories' (in plural) of education, which focus on knowing the consequences that arise for the education of a particular conception of life and, sometimes, we will need 'philosophical theory' (in singular) of education that focuses on making phenomenological, dialectical analysis, critical-hermeneutical or linguistic of an end itself, study the internal logic of the end within the conceptual system of 'education', etc. (Touriñán, 2019b, 202020c; Gil Cantero, 2011; Carr, 2006, 2014).

Knowledge of education comes from many different forms of knowledge and generates many different disciplines. There are disciplines derived from philosophies, there are disciplines derived from interpretive theories, there are disciplines derived from practical theories, and there are disciplines derived from substantive theories. The conceptual structure of education knowledge is different in each. Pedagogy as science, interdisciplinary studies of education, and philosophical studies of education do not get confused, although all are knowledge of education and all are part of the studies of Pedagogy as a career (Touriñán, 2014, 2016; Pring, 2014; Rodríguez, 2006; Sáez, 2007).

Different ways of understanding knowledge of education have generated a necessary diversity of theoretical knowledge of education, depending on the type of problems being analyzed. And, if this is the case, just as we can say that not all knowledge of education is Pedagogy in

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the sense of pedagogy as a scientific discipline with functional autonomy, we can also affirm that a certain pedagogical knowledge is derived from all knowledge of education, because pedagogical knowledge originates from the study of intervention, i.e., from the study of the theory-practice relationship; and a different knowledge of intervention is generated by its way of understanding the knowledge of education: in some cases knowledge is experiential, in others it is practical theory and, in others, specific technology (Belth, 1971; Touriñán & Sáez, 2015, Dewey, 1998; García Aretio et al., 2009; Gil Cantero, 2018, Rabazas, 2014; Martínez et al., 2016; Jover & Thoilliez, 2010).

Knowledge of education has its most genuine manifestation in pedagogical knowledge, which determines professional action in each pedagogical function. Pedagogical knowledge originates from the study of intervention through the educational relationship that promotes the path from knowledge to action, combining theory and practice (Touriñán & Rodríguez, 1993; Touriñán, 2017), and a certain consideration or recommendation for intervention is derived since all knowledge of education originates through the theory-practice relationship. For the same reason, we can say that any educational intervention is, to a certain extent, a pedagogical intervention, because there is a component of pedagogical knowledge in every educational intervention which originates from the study of the theory-practice relationship and does not always have the same level of technical elaboration in its manifestation. Therefore, there is an experiential pedagogical knowledge in a certain type of educational intervention, in another, there is pedagogical knowledge of practical theory and, in another, and there is pedagogical knowledge of specific technology (Table 2).

Being an education professional expert is linked to specialized knowledge

Knowledge of education is a specialized knowledge that allows the specialist to explain, interpret and decide on the pedagogical intervention of the function for which it is enabled, either a teaching function, or a support function for the educational system, or a research function (Touriñán & Sáez, 2015).

In all of these cases, the status of expert happens by possessing various competencies that enable the person for the theoretical, technological and practical knowledge of education in his/her area of action to practice as an education technician and to control the practice as an education specialist.

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Table 2
Derivation of pedagogical knowledge according to currents

Discriminatorcriteria	**Marginal current** Philosophical studies Cosmovision	**Subalternation current** Interdisciplinary interpretive studies	**Autonomous current** Pedagogical studies as a discipline with functional autonomy
Type of knowledge to obtain to knowledge of education	Ends of life and justification of ends. Consequences of education from *Socio visional philosophical theories*	Means for given ends, linking conditions and effects to an event from *theories or Applied Research*	Aims and means derived from the pedagogical intervention process, linked to *Substantial theories*
How to solve the intervention act	Using the *experience of the concrete act of intervention*	Using rules and norms derived from *Practical Theories and technical applications*	Creating rules and norms linked from *Specific technologies*
What is the origin of the pedagogical knowledge component of each intervention	From the problem-solving capacity for the intervention with the theory-practice relationship in the marginal current	From the problem-solving capacity for the intervention with the theory-practice relationship in the subaltern current	From the problem-solving capacity for the intervention with the theory-practice relationship in the autonomous current

Source: Touriñán, 2016, p. 112.

As an expert, it is possible to speak of education professionals and pedagogical professions without contradicting the fact that not everyone who educates is an education professional, because education professionals occupy a defined workplace that is compatible with the performance of other professionals in the education system and with other education agents. But it is precisely the specialized knowledge of education that gives the expertise of the pedagogical functions (Wynen, 1985; Fraser & Dunstan, 2010; Berliner, 1986, 2002; (SI(e)TE, 2020):

- The education expert (graduate or postgraduate) is a specialist in a field of reality of education (physical education, education, civic education, or others) from the point of view of the performance of functions of teaching, research or support for the intervention in the educational system.

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- Training as an expert in educational activities enables to intervene in the educational activity: to teach, organize and direct centers, to evaluate and control educational activities, etc. They are different functions that in certain cases form the activity of a profession.
- Expert training enables to achieve with a master's degree not only epistemological (theoretical, technological and practical) knowledge about education research, teaching and educational intervention, but also skill and experience in the exercise or practice of that activity
- The educational expert, where appropriate, has to master the cultural area that is constituted in the field of education (object and goal of his/her work) at a level that is sufficient to carry out the pedagogical function (artistic education, physical education, literary education, etc.).

However, the importance of differentiating 'practice' as a repeated training or exercise of an activity, and 'practice' as an epistemological level of knowledge (application of knowledge to the specific case) must be emphasized, as well as the importance of accurately distinguishing between knowing an activity, investigating it, teaching it, practicing it as a technician and practicing it as a person or as a specialist. The skills and abilities required in each case are different, and while in pure mental hypothesis they could all occur in the same person, it is normal that this does not happen and does not reduce success in each case (Perrenoud, 2004a, 2008, 2004b).

The specialist in the sciences of the educational activity practices in the epistemological field (applies his/her knowledge to the specific case and actions the sequence of intervention). In addition, he/she practices or trains or exercises in the skills of a technician of the educational activity (as a coach, as an administrator or director of educational institutions, etc.).

It is normal that a person who prepares others for the educational activity, knows it, investigates it and works as a technician of that activity, practices education. Moreover, there is nothing strange in accepting that, in certain types of activity, such as teaching, advocacy, medicine, education, etc., the practice of the activity helps the expert and forms part of his/her training. It is especially true in all areas of experience that require practical skill exercise, such as sport, education, art or surgery. For this reason, the one who knows the most is who teaches it the best, or who leaps the most is who trains the best. Using an analogy with the doctor-

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surgeon, it can be said that the person who best achieves the goal of doing medical-surgeons is not necessarily the best surgeon. The best surgeon dominates the theory, technology, and practice of clinical intervention; in addition, he 'practices', i.e., exercises clinical intervention. But because he is a good surgeon, he is not a good "coach" of surgeons, because what he needs to master the coach is the technique of teaching surgery, even if he is not an expert of the clinical intervention.

This distinction between knowing, investigating, teaching an activity or intervention (sport, medical, artistic, etc.), practicing as a technical specialist of an activity or intervention (doctor, artist, sportsman), practicing the activity at the epistemological level and practicing (training the activity as a technical specialist or as a private person), allows us to understand certain careers in relation to practice. These relationships should not be confused, because the practice of those who teach a sport or art is, first and foremost, the practice of teaching not the practice of sport or art itself. This difference is essential to clarifying issues of professionalism and in no way nullifies the importance of training and learning in the domain of skills.

From education, the teacher is required to have a certain level of skills related to the area (artistic experience and expression), but it is not clear that he cannot work as an educator in that area of educational experience without the teacher being also a practicing expert in that area of experience. For us, it is not the same to educate as to act politely; it is not the same to heal someone as to live healthily, it is not the same to teach an art or a sport as to be the athlete or the artist. So it is true that efficiency in teaching means that no more level of technical competence is required than the necessary to perform. For this reason, teachers do not need the same level of expertise in the cultural area of experience they teach, depending on their level in the educational system nor should they have the same pedagogical knowledge, depending on the level of the education system at which they work, not all students are prepared to be professionals in a determined area of education.

This difference between skills to practice and skills to know, teach, and research as a technician also allows us to understand why the health specialist is not the healthiest person, even if it is the one that is more prepared to control and optimize the instruments and health conditions. For the same reason, the technician in physical-sports activities is not the one who performs more and better physical-sports activity, although it is the one who is in the best condition to control and optimize the skills

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for physical-sports activity. The same happens in all areas of educational experience that involve practical activity, including arts.

It is essential to differentiate between the area of knowledge and knowledge of the field. The area of knowledge is the practical reality of the activity, but knowledge of the field is the intellectual domain, not the practice. The graduate is an expert in scientific knowledge, such as arts and theater. It is important to know that there are no graduates or doctors specialist in jumping fences or doing artistic works; instead people can do a degree or a doctorate from jumping fences or a play of theater or an artist: his history, his technique, his training, etc.

To know, investigate, teach an activity or intervention (sports, medical, artistic, etc), to practice as a technical specialist of an activity or intervention (doctor, artist, sportsman), to practice the activity at the epistemological level and to practice (to train the activity as a technical specialist or as a private person) and, finally, to practice as a teacher or to practice the activity of the cultural area are all different functions that are performed on a shared environment. Additionally, they are different functions in relation to a shared knowledge area that has different levels with common epistemology. It is for this reason that theory, technology and practice are integrated into each function, as shown in Table 3.

It is possible to differentiate between 'learning skills' (related to mastery of education theory, technology and practice as knowledge and action), 'research skills' (more directly related to mastery of methodology and testing and verification capabilities), 'teaching skills' (more linked to the knowledge based on specific education methods and their application, a knowledge that requires mastery of the contents of the area in which it is to be taught) and 'skills to intervene educationally with an area of experience' (which is also related with the competencies linked to the conduction of the meaning of education and to the application of the principles of pedagogical intervention in a specific area of experience, transforming it into an area of education).

Much of the confusion and dichotomy between these competencies originates in the lack of understanding in the relationships between the different activities that are exercised in the area of shared knowledge with common epistemological levels. If our ideas are correct, the status of expert or the identity of the competition occur by various achievements, linked to the scope of activity understood as knowledge and as action:

- Mastery of knowledge of education (theoretical, technological and practical) at a sufficient level to perform the function.

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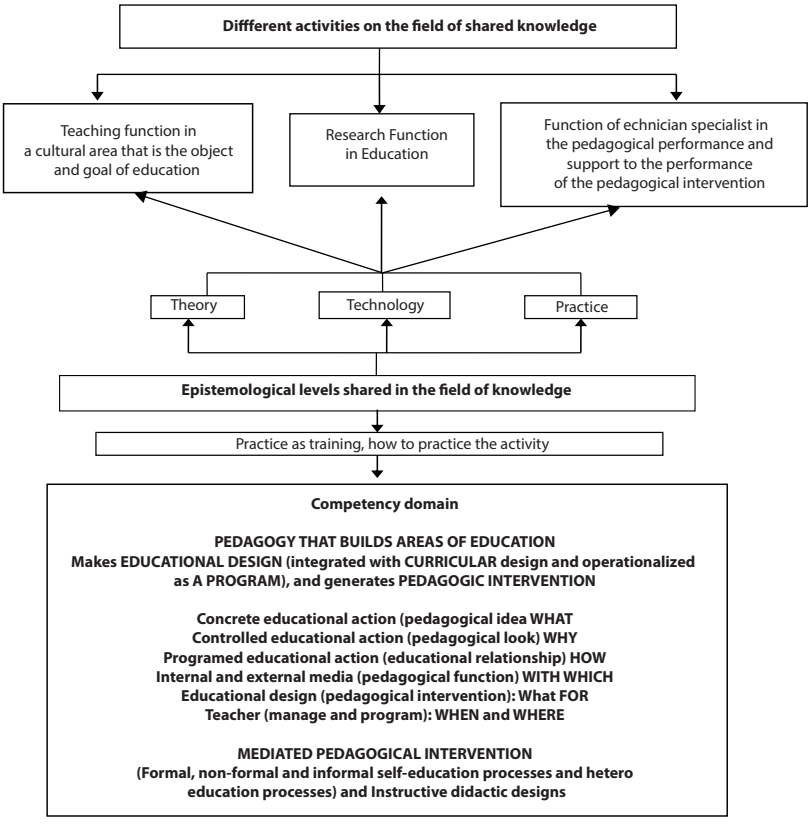
- Knowledge domain (theoretical, technological and practical) of the area of experience at a sufficient level to perform the function, where applied.
- Proficiency in the skills to technically practice the teaching role.
- Practical competence of the intervention as a specialist.

Table 3
Differential functions and common epistemological levels for a shared knowledge area



Source: Touriñán, 2017, p. 602.

Neither is it true that the teacher of an area of artistic experience is an apprentice of the area he teaches, nor is it true that necessarily the one who knows the most about arts is the one who teaches it the best, nor is it true that the one who best dominates a skill is the one who best teaches another to master it, unless the skill that dominates is to teach that

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art. Knowing, teaching, investigating, studying, training and intervening are different but related concepts and have their place in the pedagogic competence.

The educational specialist performs a specific activity based on specialized knowledge that allows him to formalize the pedagogical function beyond the personal experience of his practice, in order to achieve in the students the specific or specialized educational values within the education system (Longueira, Touriñán and Rodríguez, 2019).

The starting point for the current definition of education is in the common use of the term and in the activities that are carried out

It is known that true knowledge of things is only achieved with the experience of their frequent treatment, because this allows us to get an idea of them and to reach their meaning or understanding through a personal assimilation, which is important for the sphere of knowledge. Hence, understanding the meaning of a term is more a reflective result than an entirely work without prior experience. I totally believe in this idea (Touriñán, 2014 and 2015).

In general, any definition can be verified in a double way: as 'nominal definition' or as 'real definition', as it focuses, respectively, on the word or name with which we designate a thing, or on the typical traits of things. The nominal definition offers the meaning of a word; the actual definition expresses the typical characteristics of the thing that is intended to be defined.

It is normal to consider the meaning of the word with which we name it, before elucidating the traits identified in the actual definition. The study of the word has been specified in the definition in two ways: taking into account the origin and its synonymy. The nominal definition has two modalities: 'etymological' definition and 'synonymic' definition; in the first case, the method we use to manifest the meaning of a term is its origin; in the second case, we get the meaning by understanding it through other more well-known voices and meaningful pairs.

It is common to hear phrases that show the most common uses of education: Is good education old-fashioned now?; Where is civility?; Where is courtesy?; Is it useful to respect social norms?; kindness is not rewarded and it is not usual; ignorance is very foolish and apologizes as if it were naive; it does not seem to be formed; it has to be perfected".

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All these phrases influence on the more traditional manifestations of the common use of 'educated person'.

The most traditional forms of the meaning of education come from our collective historical experience, and there are arguments in many different authors and historical passages that have been transmitted as a collective cultural heritage and are part of the experience and collective memory that identifies education in the following common uses: 1) education is courtesy and civility; 2) education is material and spiritual upbringing; 3) education is improvement; 4) education is training.

The criteria linked to the use of common language are grouped in four sections: Content, form, use and development criteria (Esteve, 2010, pp. 21-28; Peters, 1969, 1979; Hirst, 1966, 1974; Touriñán, 2015; SI(e)TE, 2016):

a. Something is education, because it obeys an axiological criterion of content: we do not classify as education those processes in which we learn something that goes against values, and this means that we only describe as educational the learning axiological content. Education implies a judgment on the content that is used. If this is not achieved, we are simply in the process of communication, teaching and learning.
b. Something is education, because it obeys an ethical criterion of form: it is not educational to act upon an educator without respect for his freedom or dignity as a person. The educational process must respect the dignity and freedom of education, because it is also an agent of its own development. If this is not achieved, we are in the instrument process.
c. Something is education, because it obeys a formative criterion of use: we do not describe as educational the learning in which the educator repeats something that he does not understand and that he does not know how to use. The educational process must develop in the student some kind of conceptual scheme of its own about what is being communicated. If this is not achieved, we do not educate, we are only in the process of information, instruction, training and memory training.
d. Something is education, because it is based on a balanced approach to the development: talking about education requires that an integrated personality be achieved without excessive or unilateral development of one of the areas of experience, producing unbalanced men and women. The educational process always calls for balanced results. Whether we are talking about

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general training or specialized training, we are talking about training built on the principle of balanced education. If this is not achieved, we do not educate, we are in the specialist process.

In the field of education knowledge and from the activity, it can be affirmed that the activities we carry out are not those that determine the real meaning. The activities we do to educate are done for many other things, so the activities do not identify educational action. In education, the person teaches, lives, communicates and cares, but educating is not each of those things separately or all together:

- Any type of influence is not education, because otherwise, to influence a person to stop doing what he or she has to do to educate himself or herself would also be education.
- The fact that any type of influence is not education does not nullify or invalidate the possibility of transforming any type of influence into an educational process. Nothing prevents the student, by himself and from the experience others communicate to him (self-education process), or through the experiences that others communicate to him (hetero-education process), that he might analyze that negative influence with criteria based on the knowledge of education and transform it into a process of educational influence. It is not educational to manipulate or transmit as true the knowledge of a cultural area that the theoretical research of the area proves to be false. However, it is educational to unmask manipulation and use false knowledge to prove his mistake and exercise the skills of using theoretical test criteria.
- The fact that any type of influence is not education, but can be transformed into a process of educational influence does not nullify or invalidate the possibility of obtaining educational results through influence processes not exclusively oriented to educational purposes (informal processes).

From the perspective of activities, distinguishing any other type of influence and educational influences requires the pedagogical evaluation of different ways of behavior, taking into account the criterion of purpose. To live is not to educate, because there are connivances that are not specified and qualified as educative. To communicate is not to educate, because communication is always a symbolic-physical process whose purpose is to elicit the message that the speaker points to and the speaker does not al-

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ways point to education. Knowing a cultural area is not teaching, because knowledge can be separated from action and teaching is not educating, because we can affirm that teaching does not necessarily educate, etc.

From a goal perspective, education is value because purpose is a value that is chosen. As a value, the main objective of 'education as a task' is the development of skills, habits, attitudes, and knowledge that enable people to choose, commit, decide, conduct, and relate to values, because the creation of axiological experience is involved in the task. From that same perspective, the main objective of 'education as a result' is the acquisition of a set of behaviors that enable the educator to choose, commit, decide and carry out his personal life project, using axiological experience to respond to the demands made in each situation according to the opportunities, because, in the end, what is involved, with regard to performance, is to use axiological experience as an instrument of self-construction and formation: it is an activity oriented to build oneself and recognize oneself with the other in a diverse cultural environment of interaction through values (Touriñán, 2019d).

At this point, we can say that the educational activity is 'educational', because it is intended to educate and adjust the meaning to the criteria of common use of the term, just like any other object that is defined and understandable. From a descriptive perspective bearing in mind the activities set out above, the purpose of education is that the student acquires knowledge, attitudes and skills-habits that enable him to decide and carry out projects, responding according to the demands presented in each situation.

None of the nominal definition allows us to establish the specific purposes related to what is the product of education and to the temporary formative orientation of each moment, adjusted to the individual, social and historical human condition. Nor do we know exactly from the nominal definition about the structural components of pedagogical intervention, because it does not take to the complexity of education. Nothing tells us the nominal definition of the capacity to solve theoretical and practical problems of educational action, because it is not included in the problem-solving capacity of knowledge of education. None of these issues is simply deduced from the idea of purpose. We have to build a real definition, and that means answering a fundamental double question: what do all the activities have in common so that it is possible to educate and what are the traits inherent in the meaning of educating.

From the current definition, distinguishing any other type of influence and educational influences require the pedagogical assessment

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of different ways of behavior, taking into account not only criteria of use and purpose, but also understanding the activity as a common state and capacity that makes it possible for someone to be educated and also to attend to criteria of intrinsic (autochthonous) meaning to the concept of education itself so that principles of education and pedagogical intervention can be built through knowledge of education.

In short, we have to build the idea that allows us to justify that the educational activity is 'educational', because: 1) it meets the use criteria of the term, 2) it fulfills the purpose of educating in its activities and 3) it conforms to the real meaning of that action, i.e., it conforms to the character and sense traits that are characteristic of it, just as any other entity that is defined and understandable (Zubiri, 1978).

But in order to say that something is truly educational and is education, we have to ask ourselves (Longueira et al., 2019):

- What do we do with all the activities to be considered as education?
- What do we do to make an artistic activity as educational?
- What do we do to transform a particular cultural content from information to knowledge and knowledge to education?
- What do we do so that, in some cases, we teach a cultural area and, in other cases, we educate with the cultural area.
- What do we do to transform an area of cultural experience into an educational field?
- What do we do to build an educational environment integrated into the curriculum?

We have to move from knowing the aspect to defining the characteristics of education and to understanding them in its functioning, because knowing what education is requires to discern, define and understand. All specified educations (mathematical, environmental, intellectual, physical, affective, professional, virtual, etc.), are educations because they are all generically education, and that means that they have in common the traits that determine and qualify an action as education, and in each case it is implemented as a concrete and programed educational action that takes into account each and every structural element of the pedagogical intervention.

From the point of view of the current definition, 'educating' requires speaking of education, taking into account distinctive features of the character of education and the sense of education that determine and qualify its real meaning in each educational act. To educate is to act upon the meaning of education in any educational setting, developing the

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general intervention dimensions and the appropriate competencies, the specific capacities and the basic needs of each learner for the attainment of knowledge, attitudes and skills-abilities-habits related to the aims of education and the guiding values derived from them in each internal and external activity of the education, using the internal and external means of each activity, according to the opportunities (Touriñán, 2021).

From the point of view of the current definition of education, we have to advance in the knowledge of all these distinctive traits and it is logical to ask where education is and how do we get to the knowledge of its distinctive traits, because we have to go beyond etymology, synonymy and the purpose in order to achieve the real meaning and to establish principles of education linked to the character and the sense inherent in the meaning of education and intervention principles linked to the structural elements of the intervention, taking into account the activity.

Principles of education and principles of pedagogical intervention are not the same. The principles of pedagogical intervention come from the structural elements of the intervention (knowledge of education, role and pedagogical profession, educational relationship, agents of education, processes, products and means). The principles of education are related to the character and meaning that are inherent in the meaning of 'education'. The character of the meaning of 'education' comes from the complexity of 'education' and the objectionable complexity, which arises from the diversity of human activity in educational action and it can be systematized from the axes that determine the traits of education. The meaning, which belongs to the meaning of 'education', is inferred from the relation between the self, the other and the other in each educational act, taking into account conceptual categories of space, time, gender and specific difference. From character and sense, it is said that all educational action is axiological, personal, patrimonial, integral, gnoseological and spiritual (internal common activity) and is playful, constructive, preparer and relator (external common activity), and that all educational action has a territorial, durable, cultural and formative sense, because a conceptual system in education can be developed based on its real definition. Pedagogy develops principles of education, adjusted to the characteristics of character and sense of education, and principles of intervention, adjusted to the structural elements of intervention. The principles of education, derived from the character and meaning of education, underpin educational purposes. The principles of intervention underpin the action. Both principles have their own place in the performance of controlled educational action (Touriñán, 2016).

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This reasoning presents a challenge of going beyond the nominal definition and the activity with purpose: in addition to discerning (knowing the aspect), we must define the characteristics of education and we must understand their functioning, and this requires going beyond the criterion of common use of the term and the criterion of activity as a purpose to focus on what the activity has in common as its capacity to educate and on the distinctive features of the character of education and the meaning of education that they really qualify and determine in each educational act.

Two issues must be addressed to move on this challenge: 1) the analysis of activity as a capacity, from the perspective of the pedagogical function and 2) the systematization of the character and sense traits of education that determine and qualify its meaning. Regarding the second question related to the concept of education, I have devoted time and reflection in several books (Touriñán, 2015, 2016, 2017). In this work I will concentrate on the first issue and approach the issue of the meaning of educating from the educational relationship as an interaction of identities that promotes the passage of knowledge to action through the relation between values and feelings in each performance.

The pedagogical function generates intervention from the common internal and external activity

Many actions are carried out in education in order to influence the education and achieve the educational result, which are always mediated actions of one subject to another or of a subject to itself. All these actions, which have to respect the status of the student, provoke the 'activity' of the student. In its most common use, 'activity' is understood as an activity state, which is the state in which any animal, person or thing that moves, works, or executes an action at the time it is doing it (we say: this child is thinking). This use also refers to the 'ability' we have to act in that activity and for that reason we say that a child has lost activity (thinks less, has had a downfall). As the most common use of the term 'activity' as a state and capacity, we call it 'common activity' and it occurs in all people because there is activity as a state and as a capacity to do (Touriñán, 2014, 2019a).

Regarding the joint activity, current investigation distinguishes between actions carried out to obtain a result and actions whose result is the action itself. Thus, for example, solving a problem results in something "external" to action: getting a solution (studying results in mas-

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tering a topic). In all of these cases, you cannot solve the problem and have it resolved. However, I cannot feel without feeling, think without thinking, project without projecting, etc. The first are 'external activities' and the second are 'internal activities'. From now on, we will talk about education, about 'common activity' (state activity and capacity) 'internal' (result is the action itself: think, feel, want, operate, project and create) and 'external' (state activity and capacity, whose result is external to one's own action, but conceptually linked to the activity itself: I have a playful capacity, I have a capacity to study, I have a capacity to work, to intervene, to research-explore and I have a capacity to relate).

From the perspective of the internal common activity we can make a taxonomy of the activities taking the student as reference. We all agree that when we educate ourselves, whether self or hetero-education, our human condition allows us to perform the following 'common internal activities': to think, to feel affectively (to have feelings), to want objects or subjects of any condition, to operate (to choose-do things by processing means and ends), project (decide-act on internal and external reality by orienting) and create (build something from something, not from nothing, symbolizing the notation of signs: realize something -note- and give it meaning -mean-, building symbols of our culture). No one is educated without thinking, feeling, wanting, etc. Educating is always improving that common internal activity and knowing how to use it for specific instrumental activities that make us increasingly able to decide and carry out our projects.

We also agree that, when we educate ourselves, our human condition allows us to perform the following 'external common activities': play, work, study, intervene, explore and have relationship (friend, family, couple, social, etc.). These are common activities (state and capacity), because I have the ability to study, play, work, explore, intervene and have relationships. Also, they are common external activities, because they necessarily have a result to obtain that is external to the activity itself, but that is conceptually linked as a goal to the activity and characterizes it as an identity trait. Hence, we say that studying is to have and organize written information 'for' the domain (to master or know the subject of study); the knowledge-domain of the subject of study is the external result of the activity and that result is the purpose that identifies the study, regardless of whether I can use the activity to make a friend, to help another person, to steal better, etc., which are uses of the activity as instrumental specifications of it (Touriñán, 2016).

As a common external activity, studying, for example, has a specific purpose linked to that activity in a conceptual and logical way (the

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purpose of studying is to master-know what is being studied: an information, a content or the study technique itself). But, in addition, as a common external activity, studying can become instrumental activity specific for other purposes. They are specified purposes and external to the activity itself, but linked to the activity of studying in an empirical or experiential way (studying becomes specific instrumental activity, because we can study to steal, to make friends, to help another person, to educate oneself, etc.) (Touriñán, 2020b).

It is a fact that common activities are used for educational purposes, but they can also be used for other purposes. Common activities can be used to perform specific instrumental activities and have pedagogical value; they are preparatory for something else. And this is so, on the one hand, because everything we use as a medium in a means-end relationship acquires the proper condition of the means in the relationship (the means is what we do to achieve the end and the end is a chosen value as the goal in the means-ends relation) and, on the other hand, the medium shows its pedagogical value in their own conditions, adjusting the medium to the agent, to the educational purpose and to the action in each circumstance (Touriñán, 2021).

From the perspective of internal common activity we can say that activity is the principle of education, because no one is educated without thinking, feeling, wanting, etc. From the point of view of external common activity we can say that we do many activities whose purpose is to 'educate'. From the perspective of the principle of activity as the guiding axis of education: we educate with activity respecting the agent status (Touriñán, 2015).

If this is the case, the means have to adjust to the subject's activity and the meaning of education. They are means for a specific subject that thinks, feels, wants, operates, projects and creates. They are means of doing activity, playing, working, studying, investigating, intervening and relating. But the agent does these activities to educate himself: he does not think in any way, but of what is being built to educate himself and to act politely, and so on with all the activities. Therefore, any means is not 'the means' for a particular subject; in educational action, the subject acts with the internal and external means. All of these means are only educational means that serve to educate that subject. The means are not exactly the same, whether I want to form the critical sense, or whether I want to educate the will to produce strength of mind. For this reason, the tendency to focus on the specific and particular means of an action is explained, forgetting the common and shared means with other educational activities (Touriñán, 2020d).

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The activity is present in all education: from one perspective, as a principle of intervention and, from another, as a principle of education. For this reason, 'activity becomes the backbone of education' and it represents the real sense of education as an activity aimed at the use and construction of valuable experience to generate educated activity. We use common activity to educate, educate the appropriate competencies of common activity, and expect to obtain educated activity. In short, 'we use activity in a controlled way to achieve educated activity and educate the activity through the right skills' (Touriñán, 2016).

The principle of activity is neither passivity nor activism; it is the use of activity in a controlled manner to act politely. And in this way, activity and control are principles of pedagogical intervention, derived from the agent condition that has to build itself and recognize with the other in a diverse cultural environment of interaction, through the values that has to choose, commit, decide and perform, executing through concrete action what is understood and interpreted from the means-end relationship, expressing it according to opportunities.

This is so, because, by principle of activity, education cannot occur without thinking, feeling, wanting, operating, projecting and interpreting symbols of our culture creatively. We educate ourselves with internal common activity. But, in addition, we educate ourselves through external common activity (studying, playing, working, researching-exploring, intervening and relating to the self, and the other), because by exercising a particular external common activity we activate the internal common capacities, train them, exercise them and improve them to perform effectively every external common activity. The external common activity, by principle of activity, activates the internal common activity in each specific execution of the external common activity, whether it is playing, studying, working, investigating, intervening or relating. By executing the common external activity, we improve and train the internal activities-capabilities: without the activity it is impossible to educate, and thanks to the activity it is possible for the student to be actor and increasingly better agent of his own projects and acts.

The principle of activity allows to affirm that external common activity in Pedagogy (e.g., play) activates the internal common activity of thinking, feeling, wanting, operating, projecting and creating, but that does not mean falling into activism: activity for activity does not educate; thinking in any way is not a reflection of education, educating, at the very least, requires that, when thinking, the habit and the way of thinking improve.

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From the perspective of common activity, education is a problem for all and we all contribute to it, because we all educate ourselves and have to use common activity to educate and educate ourselves and, without it, it is neither possible to do so nor is it possible to achieve it.

The educational relationship requires agreement between values and feelings in the move from knowledge to action through common activity

I see the educational relationship as an interaction of identities to educate and that involves moving from knowledge to action in each interaction (Touriñán, 2016). I can choose to do something, I can commit myself to do that something and I can decide to integrate that something as part of my projects, but then I have to do it, I have to move from thought to action, I have to move from done value to effective performance. This implies, in every execution of the action, interpretation, understanding and expression. There is no education without affectivity, i.e., without facing the problem of generating experience of courage. For this reason, we need operative, volitional, projective, affective, cognitive and creative habits. Effective action requires operative, volitional and projective habits, but we also need affective, cognitive and creative habits. Only in that way do we come to the conduction of the action that always involves the execution of the action, taking into account the understanding, interpretation and expression (we attend to the cognitive, creative and affective integration).

Through feeling, we express the mood that has taken place for meeting or not meeting our expectations in action; we express and expect 'recognition' of our choice; we express and expect 'acceptance' of our voluntary commitment; we express and expect 'reception' of our projects and we express 'commitment' to them. Choosing, committing, deciding and realizing a value has its affective manifestation of attachment in attitudes of 'recognition', 'acceptance', 'reception' and 'commitment to action'. The fact that characterizes the attitude is its condition of significant learning experience originated from the affective evaluation of the positive or negative results of a particular behavior. It happens in the form of complex internal common value-activity relationship of education, agreeing values and feelings in the passage of knowledge to action (Table 4):

There is a concrete conduction of a value counting on opportunities, but we always have to have operational, volitive, projective, affective,

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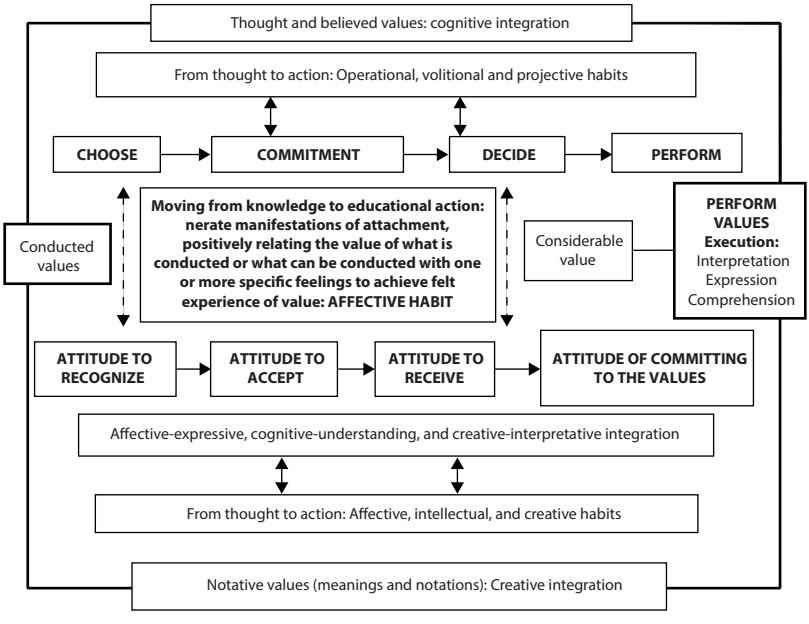
and intellectual habits and notative-significant, creator habits every time we do something we think, feel, want, choose to do, decide projects and create with symbols. Only in that way do we come to the concrete performance of something that always implies to choose processes, to oblige (to commit itself voluntarily), to decide goals and projects (according to opportunities and in each circumstance), to feel (to integrate affectively, to express), to think (to integrate cognitively, to understand) and to create culture (to integrate creatively, to interpret, to give meaning by symbols).

Table 4
Value-feeling convergence in the shift from knowledge to action|



Source: Touriñán, 2014, p. 356.

Only in this way can an action be carried out as an author agent, according to the opportunities and in each circumstance. The effective performance of the action requires interpretation, understanding and expression in the execution of the action. Conduction requires expressing what is understood and interpreted. In addition to making an 'affective integration' (expression), because we express ourselves with the feelings we have in each specific situation and we link affectively through positive attachment, we need to do 'cognitive integration' (understanding of thought and belief), relating ideas and beliefs to our expectations and

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convictions, so that we can articulate thought and believed values with reality, because our action is explicitly based from rationality to knowledge. But we also need to do a 'creative integration' (symbolic-creative interpretation); in other words, we must give meaning to our acts by means of symbols that interpret each act, because every act we perform requires an interpretation of the situation as a whole and in the whole of our actions and projects within our cultural context. 'Creative integration' articulates values and creations, linking the physical and the mental to build culture (Touriñán, 2019e).

If our reasoning is correct, the dual condition of knowledge and action places us in the holistic view of the complexity of action. The operative habit, the volitive habit and the projective habit demand, in order to perform the action, the affective habit that is derived from the value-feeling relationship in each action performed and allows to obtain, in the performance, the felt experience of value. The conduction of value is not possible in its concrete execution if we do not do an affective, cognitive and creative integration in each action according to the opportunities and in each circumstance.

Therefore, the educational relationship is interaction to educate and this implies taking on the complexity of education itself, and the demands derived from the traits of the meaning of educating, which must be observed in each intervention through the common activity, thus making quality education effective, adjusting to what is valuable in terms of education (Touriñán, 2016; Naval et al., 2021; Ibáñez-Martín & Fuentes, 2021; Perines, 2018).

We intervene to establish an educational relationship that achieves education and for this reason we use the activity of the student and the teacher. The educational relationship is the focus of the education function in which the interaction between myself and the other occurs. For this reason, from the perspective of the educational relationship, the interaction of identities (the relationship with the other) is a defining component in education. Regarding ourselves and others in the processes of self-education and hetero-education, we have to achieve the shift of knowledge to action in the educational relationship and this requires achieving a setting in which the concordance of educational values-feelings occur: choosing, committing, deciding, and performing must have their correspondence in concrete action, observed in attitudes of recognition, acceptance, welcome and dedication to the task and achievement of what is valuable in education. That task and achievement make quality education explicit.

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Conclusions: A relationship of necessity between knowledge of education, common activity and competence in the intervention for the achievement of quality education

In the educational relationship, we seek the concordance values-feelings in each interaction and we choose (to operate), we commit (to want), we decide (project) and perform what was decided (perform). In order to perform, we execute what is understood and interpreted through action by expressing it (integration of thinking by understanding, feeling by expressing it affectively and creating by interpreting symbols). Performance requires execution through action, and that action, in addition to the internal common activity of the subject, uses the external common activity of education. We perform through play, work, study, inquiry-exploration, intervention in each act and the relationship that is established between the self and the things used in each interaction, which is always defined as the I-the other relationship. All this is implemented by the teacher in the educational relationship to build, through the common activity, quality education, adjusted to the meaning of education.

The knowledge of education is now an expert knowledge that gives competence to exercise the pedagogical function with specific pedagogical mentality and specialized pedagogical look. We are able to make mental representation of the action of educating, taking into account the theory-practice relationship and are able to make mental representation of our performance as teachers, acting with a critical vision of our method and our professional acts.

Knowledge of education makes it possible to build areas of education with cultural areas, transforming information into knowledge and knowledge into education, adjusting it to the meaning of education. Education must be "with" the cultural area and this requires exercising the pedagogical function with competence, establishing an educational relationship in which quality education is achieved, and the necessary means to achieve quality education in the educational relationship is the common internal and external activity. It is not possible to educate without common activity, nor is it possible to perform the educational relationship. And there is no quality education without adjusting to what is valuable in terms of education and outcomes. Therefore, since only through common activity, in the educational relationship, we achieve the concordance between educational feelings and values necessary to move from knowledge to educational action, and since in the educational relationship the common activity must conform to the meaning of educa-

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tion, then common activity, adjusted to the meaning of education, makes quality education effective. In this way, it can be said that common activity is also a necessary condition for quality education.

Pedagogy creates a criterion about the fields of education in the generic sense of understanding each cultural area as an area of education. This is an objective that is only solved from the Pedagogy, because each cultural area has to integrate the traits that are typical of the meaning of education. For this purpose, cultural experience has to be constructed as an area of education, either general education, or vocational education (common, specific and specialized education), because it is up to pedagogy to understand each medium as educationally valued, i.e., it is up to it to evaluate each cultural area as education and to build it as a 'field of education'.

We are in a position to go from general pedagogy to applied pedagogies, building areas of education, making the derived educational design and generating the relevant pedagogical intervention. In my opinion, operating on common activity, agreeing values and feelings adjusted to the meaning of education, scope, design and intervention are elements of quality education that must be achieved through the educational relationship.

Knowledge of education, competent pedagogical function and common activity are implemented by the educator in the educational relationship to build quality education. The pedagogical function is exercised through the common activity in each interaction and, therefore, understanding and fulfilling the relationship between common activity and knowledge of education, which justifies the competence of expert and gives foundation to the pedagogical function and the meaning of education, is a logical requirement regarding the achievement of a quality education in the exercise of the educational relationship.

Notes

1. The teacher needs to do the pedagogical intervention with a specialized look to have a critical view of his method and of his acts, and to integrate the theory into practice and solve the problem of educating in the interaction. The pedagogical mentality is a mental representation made by the teacher from the perspective of the theory-practice relationship; it refers to the problem-solving capacity that is attributed to the knowledge of education in each stream from the perspective of action.
   The pedagogical mentality is specific. It is not general about life, but about education as a cognitive and achievable object. Neither is it a philosophical mentality of the worldviews, of life and of the possible senses of life, nor is it the educational mentality that meets the criteria of meaning and formative temporal orientation of

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education. The pedagogical mentality is a mentality based on education as an object of knowledge and therefore on the knowledge of education.

The *pedagogical view* is the mental representation that the education professional has of his technical performance, i.e., of his performance; it corresponds to the critical vision the teacher has of his method and his acts based on principles of intervention and principles of education.

Therefore, the pedagogical approach is specialized, it is focused on the problems of education. The technical competence to look pedagogically depends on the knowledge of the education that has been acquired.

The general foundation of this content can be found in: J. M. Touriñán (2016), *Pedagogía general. Principios de educación y principios de intervención pedagógica.* A Coruña: Bello y Martínez; J. M. Touriñán, (2017), *Mentalidad pedagógica y diseño educativo. De la pedagogía general a las pedagogías aplicadas en la función de educar*. Santiago de Compostela: Andavira; J. M. Touriñán (2020a), *Pedagogía, competencia técnica y transferencia de conocimiento. La perspectiva mesoaxiológica*. Santiago de Compostela: Andavira.

2. Pedagogy as a discipline with functional autonomy is knowledge of education that values as educational each medium it uses: It is the mesoaxiological perspective of Pedagogy. The mesoaxiological perspective is conceptually summarized in the following postulates:
   - *Knowing, teaching, and educating have different meaning*. Knowledge of cultural areas is not the knowledge of education; this is a specific and specialized knowledge. *We educate with cultural areas*. Knowledge of education bases the connection between specific pedagogical mentality, specialized pedagogical look and specific educational action controlled and programed to form the individual, social, and historical condition of each student.
   - The concept of education is the key in Pedagogy. We transform information into knowledge and knowledge into education, adjusting to the meaning of education and using the common activity of education without which it is impossible to educate. We seek in each performance the concordance between educational values and feelings in order to achieve the passage of knowledge to action.
   - The pedagogical function is technical not political, although education is a matter of political interest; the decision in Pedagogy, which is knowledge of education, is technoaxiological and mesoaxiological. It is technoaxiological because it understands education by valuing it as a technical decision, of ends and means based on the true knowledge of the field in which it is chosen and acts (the 'education' field). It is mesoaxiological, because it understands each medium and values it as educational.
   - In pedagogy, in a mesoaxiological perspective, *we build fields of education, make the relevant educational design and generate pedagogical intervention*, taking into account principles of education and principles of intervention that are justified with the knowledge of education from principles of methodology and research.
   - Common activity is the guiding principle of education and intervention. It is not possible to educate without common activity and there is no interaction without common activity. We use common activity in a controlled way to achieve educated activity and to educate the activity with specific pedagogical mentality and specialized pedagogical look, focusing the structural elements of the intervention from the common activity, because it is impossible to educate without common activity and thanks to it, it is possible for the educator to be actor and increasingly better agent of his own projects and acts.

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Observations on the approach by competencies and its relationship with educational quality

Observaciones al enfoque por competencias y su relación con la calidad educativa

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Abstract

This work analyzes the relationship between competencies and educational quality, to know the context in which they emerge, their characteristics and the meaning of this relationship; from the bibliographic review, positions that denote a tendency to the labor market are revealed, and thus a question arises if it is possible to establish another relationship between them. The methodology used is the documentary hermeneutics, the interpretation of texts with an analytical-critical approach. One of the main results obtained is that the concept of competence is adaptable to any discipline, approach, tendency or motivations, and its main characteristic is its instrumental sense, and thus in the educational context it is necessary to interpret the intentions behind its practice. In addition, international organizations play a political and influential role in the different models that have been considered. As main conclusions, it is postulated that the approach by competencies and the achievement of quality are a natural response of the context for greater productivity in the bureaucratization of social institutions, with education directed to these parameters; for this reason, it is proposed to adopt a quality model as a transformation of the subjects beyond quality as a purpose of accountability, which would lead to a change in the evaluative tendencies in the competence-quality relationship.

Keywords

Competencies, quality, evaluation, instrumental reason, development of thought, labor market.

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Resumen

Este trabajo analiza la relación entre competencias y calidad educativa, para conocer el contexto en el cual emergen, sus características y el sentido de esta relación; donde a partir de la revisión bibliográfica se desvelan posturas que denotan una tendencia al mercado laboral, por ello se plantea la pregunta si es posible otra relación entre ellas. La metodología empleada es la hermenéutica documental, la interpretación de textos con un enfoque analítico-crítico. Entre los principales resultados se tiene que el concepto de competencia es adaptable a cualquier disciplina, enfoque, tendencia o motivaciones, siendo su principal característica el sentido instrumental que posee, por ello en el contexto educativo hay que interpretar las intenciones que están detrás de su práctica, teniendo presente que organismos internacionales juegan un papel político e influyente en los distintos modelos que han llegado a plantearse. Como principales conclusiones, se postula que el enfoque por competencias y la consecución de la calidad son una respuesta natural del contexto para una mayor productividad en la burocratización de las instituciones sociales, siendo la educación dirigida a estos parámetros; por ello se propone adoptar un modelo de calidad como transformación de los sujetos más allá de una calidad como finalidad de rendición de cuentas, esto resultaría en un cambio en las tendencias evaluativas en la relación competencias-calidad.

Palabras clave

Competencias, calidad, evaluación, razón instrumental, desarrollo del pensamiento, mercado laboral.

Introduction

This study addresses the concept of competence in the educational context and its relationship with quality; some observations will be pointed out as limitations of this interaction. This concept is conceived as problematic, due to the accumulation of studies about it. The most common critic is that the concept does not have pedagogical base and foundations, and despite this curricular approaches and models have been developed.

At this point, it should be recognized the significance and importance of competencies, whose presence is not for free and they have even been shown as the panacea of educational problems in the last twenty years. However, there should be some concern about a model that is presented as universal and valid for various contexts, and so this paper intends to know the limits of the concept of competence in its development and application, reviewing theoretical and practical proposals from both international organizations and academic studies.

It should be pointed out that competencies and quality share some vocabulary: skills, abilities, indicators, standards, etc.; the issue lies on knowing the emergence of these phenomena, and based on their interaction, knowing what is the role of evaluation, how does it manifest and in how many ways?; and if the competencies-quality relationship has a single identity or characterization, which has been interpreted as an accountability linked to labor and market interests, the following question

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may be posed: is it possible to postulate a different relationship and under which foundations?

In the view of this problematic, a critical vision is a position that enables revealing possible difficulties or problems, in affinity with the observations made by Sacristán and Álvarez (2009) who considered that education should not only respond to economical and utilitarian interests, and thus Habermas (1987) and Horkheimer (2002) thinking about instrumental reasoning and criticism to the pragmatism of the societies of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is used here, and the postulates of Critical Theory constitute the positioning of this paper.

The field of literature of competencies and of the concept of quality is wide, since there are studies of competencies around creativity, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, sustainable development, etc.; any interdisciplinary field that may be embedded in the educational context. Arteaga (2015) has a clear position in these inquiries, which is the relevance of the approach by competencies in the educational field for success at work; in contrast, Sacristán and Álvarez (2009) and Barnett (2001) reject the instrumental character of competencies and the confidence on them as a mean for a true education. On the other hand, Tobón (2015) avoids reductionisms of the model of competencies in the work environment. There is also emphasis on the development of this approach by international organizations, mainly the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) with its project: Definition and selection of competencies (DESECO), where Rychen and Salganik (2000) point out that its aim is the sustainable development in an integral education of individuals beyond just the economic, statement that is questioned by the previous authors; finally, the contributions of these organizations are rescued in the World Education Forum 2015, in the formulation of the Education 2030 Framework for Action.

Regarding the methodological aspect, the documentary hermeneutics has been used in the analysis and interpretation of texts with a critical analytic position. According to this methodology, Gutiérrez cited by Pérez et al. (2019), starts with the interpretation of the phenomenon, in this case the approach by competencies, and then moves to its understanding. For Pérez et al. (2019), hermeneutics assumes a triple dynamic, the first, involves grabbing the reality under investigation, known as 'the text', which in this study corresponds to the literature around competencies in the educational context, where it is found theoretical proposals, such as the proposals developed by international organizations, and practical proposals, in tracking pedagogical approaches for developing

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competencies; at last, there are research studies around the category of educational quality. Continuing with Pérez et al. (2009), "the second dynamic of the hermeneutic methodology is the context, the place where the phenomenon is located, and finally the pretext, that enables seeing its intentionality, its path" (p. 28). For this author "the hermeneutic methodology involves a serious, methodic and profound work that exceeds the descriptive or assessment plane, it goes inside the thing in itself to know its real meanings in its context and symbolic networks" (p. 28); in this way, this study will seek to achieve a critical and objective vision, identifying the context and the relationships of the concept of competencies with educational quality.

This paper starts with remarks about the concept of competence, highlighting its problematic character and proposing a historical review from its intentional application in the education field; the contribution by McClelland is highlighted due to its referral to education, and then the reviews and adoptions of the concept by international organizations are considered, where the critics made by Sacristán and Álvarez are broached; then, it follows the analysis of the process of competencies formulation and how these relate to educational quality. The role of evaluation in this quality – competencies relationship will be highlighted, to finally expose a vision of quality that responds to the transformation of individuals and the discussion with other approaches to the problem raised.

The concept of competence

Different definitions of competence may be found in a literature review, but, which is the base notion of the concept? Is the know-how an activity or a set of activities to perform successfully in a particular situation? Many observations, nuances and genealogies have been added and pointed out to this reductionism, an example of which is the work by Tobón (2015); however, for this study, it has been considered relevant to pay attention to the development by McClelland and the OECD, because their proposals have been directly and intentionally related in the educational field.

References to behaviorism and linguistics may be found in the different genealogies of the concept, with Chomsky being one of the first references; it should be emphasized that the intention of this author is the understanding rather than a practical stance of competencies. According to Tiza (2016), Hymes with communicative competence and Canelle with discursive competence may be cited in the same line; their implica-

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tions on education, specifically the didactic, will be performed by secondary players. The term competence was academically used for the first time in English language, and the referred word is *competence* with different connotation than *competition*, now, the root of *competence* comes from the Latin word *competere* that refers to the performance to successfully achieve a particular activity, which is the base notion of the concept in all its definitions, a notion different than the meaning of competition.

Following on from the foregoing, the concept of competencies should not represent any difficulty, but what has been done is to make it complex due to the diverse contributions from different disciplines and approaches that adopt and configure them, an example of which is the complexity-competencies relationship, the imbrication between the philosophy of Edgar Morin and this concept, carried out by Tobón (2015). This author intends to unveil the sense of competencies, from the conceptual framework of complexity or, if it is allowed to enunciate it in this way, from a complex methodology, where he rather begs the question, add to competencies categories of interdisciplinarity, solidarity, sociocultural integration, self-realization, etc., thus transforming the concept where there is more of Morin's epistemology than of the concept itself; it is worth noting that it intends to be disregarded of any labor and economic reductionism.

The remark made to Tobón extends to other conceptualizations of this concept in the educational context; thus, to criticize, to carry out a deep study to find possible limitations or observations, it is necessary to study the initial proposals of the approach by competencies.

The approach by competencies from McClelland

Proceeding historically, one should start from the study by McClelland; according to Guerrero and Clavero (2004), the intentionality of applying it in the educational field follows from it. In *Testing for competence rather than for intelligence*, McClelland (1973) criticizes the evaluation system for admission to universities and success in the work environment, and emphasizes that tests have limitations to determine the skills of applicants thus exercising a stigmatizing and mutilating evaluation. This author points out the existence of a weak relationship between the abilities measured by the tests, the level of education achieved and success in life.

Thus, McClelland (1973) points out that skills should be assessed beyond cognitive estimations, other forms of evaluation should be con-

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sidered focused on the know how that is reflected in skills, abilities or actions, the aforementioned form of evaluation would disregard such capabilities. This author criticizes the performance within the work environment, where a theoretical training would have little relevance for success at work, it would rather be the practice or the skills what determines such success; thus, he proposes to train in the know how through competencies starting from higher education.

McClelland (1973) points out that there is a risk of falling in an extreme specification of occupational criteria when formulating competencies, and so he proposes to develop social competencies such as leadership and interpersonal skills (p. 9), highlighting the following:

- Communicational skills
- Patience
- Setting of moderate goals
- Development of ego (Refers to passing through states from a passive and conformist person to another capable of taking initiatives)

It should be remarked that for this author the competencies and their use are of temporary nature with the potential of improving them in the future as well as losing them.

Tobón (2015) exposes that the movement *Competency-Based Education and Training* (CBET), "focused on improving teaching competencies and strategies with the objective of articulating education with social and economic challenges" (p. 56), arises from this tendency. In the 1970s and 1980s, this tendency linked to the economic and labor field, had influence in the emergence of projects aimed at improving the qualification and accreditation of workers' competencies; these programs still exist.

Competencies approached by international organizations

Despite the study by McClelland, labor psychology, linguistics, educational sciences, the influence and significance of the approach by competencies has reached various contexts due to international organizations, such as OECD, due to size the of its political capital. The analysis and formulation of the concept of competence made by this organization, which even has its own program for this task, the DESECO, is close to what has been proposed by McClelland, competencies training for labor insertion and

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success, with its focus of interest being the social whole, competencies training for sustainable development.

The Education 2030 Framework for Action was stated in 2015, in the World Education Forum, where the aforementioned organization, the World Bank, UNICEF and others took part; 1600 representatives from 160 countries were present. According to UNESCO et al. (2015), the global objective of this Framework for Action was set as "guarantee an inclusive and equitable quality education and promote learning opportunities for all" (p. 3). With respect to quality, it is established that one of its goals is to impart competencies for decent work, employment and entrepreneurship, where tertiary education and universities play an essential role.

The use of the concept of competencies in the Incheon declaration in the World Education Forum 2015 covers many aspects such as equality, quality learning, management of ICTs, etc.; this does not represent a definition as such, and hence there is no marked tendency with respect to it, simply the instrumental value that it may have and one of them tends to the labor market.

The OECD is an organization born under the principles of economic cooperation, and in the course of its history it has had interest on education and environment, in which it has the collaboration and alliances in world forums. It is worth mentioning that its primary function is the exchange of information for economic development of member countries, however, the club of rich countries, as it is often called, does not present in its educational literature a hierarchy between economic and social aspects, and despite this there are suspicions and criticism before an economic organization that has more influence of the educational field than other proposals and whose postulates are responses to economic tendencies for more productivity and efficiency.

The interest of this organization for studying competencies emerges after the implementation of the PISA tests at the end of the twentieth century, aimed at comparing knowledge and skills in the areas of math, reading and problem solving. It was concluded that the success of a learner in his/her life after mandatory education will depend on a higher range of competencies, and the program for the Definition and Selection of Competencies (DESECO) started for this purpose. According to OECD (2005), this program would also be in charge of the evaluations for the new proposal of competencies at the beginning of this century.

The DESECO formulates three key competencies, which are named as such because they are considered valid for any context and their

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demands, and its initial scope are the OECD founding member countries; in this matter it requests the help of UNESCO to be able to define the theoretical framework and work in a proposal suitable to be applied to the larger number of contexts. Finally, the OECD (2005) postulates that the project has identified fundamental ideals that are considered as a common aspiration of the variety of realities.

Pérez (2009) presents the following concept of competence according to the DESECO:

> Capability to respond to complex demands and carry out diverse tasks appropriately. It requires a combination of practical skills, knowledge, motivation, values, attitudes, emotions and other social and behavioral components that move jointly to achieve an effective action (p. 75).

This proposal is a functional approach which is wider than mere knowledge and skills, it is made clear that competencies are built according to demands and tasks that due to their complexity and particularities will require strategies, routines, emotions and attitudes. For Rychen and Salganik (2000), OECD considers that the acquisition of competencies is a continuous and permanent learning process.

Critics by Sacristán and Álvarez

Sacristán and Álvarez (2009) point out the following observations to this proposal of the DESECO:

- The derivation of this approach to the application of PISA tests.
- Evaluation results of PISA tests are assessed as an aim.
- Depersonalization of the teacher and his/her duties.
- Unidirectionality of speech, it embraces everything and it appears as a response to current needs.
- Declared intentions of fulfilling the needs of the market, increasing productivity and competitiveness, is the primary goal of education.
- Bureaucratization of teaching work, without room for autonomy and creativity in his/her work in classrooms, acritical adoption of standards.
- Little or null intervention of the teacher in deciding about the set of competencies, they have been determined beforehand.
- The administrative work becomes relevant and important since it is the means for managing and controlling evidences, there

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is the idea that a greater administrative control will result in a greater education quality.

Despite the link and joint work of OECD and UNESCO, Sacristán (2009) states that the latter languishes and looses spaces for participation in front of the former, and this leads to a change in the educational speech and its practices, where the OECD and the World Bank design an approach according to their interests and vision in pursue to universalize its application.

Observations to the approach by competencies

This study endorses the critics made by Sacristán and Álvarez (2009), making emphasis on the last bullet, which leads to a change in the identity of the teaching work and education in general, because it focuses on handling evidences and evaluation control, where, if everything is right within the parameters of administrative control, it is not necessary to know what happens in the classrooms, the opinions of teachers nor students, evidences are the whole, but if these do not present what is expected, it is not the model what fails, it is the teacher in the classrooms. This rather envisions ingenuity and acriticity, any intended change should be in the daily work of the teacher, in his/her human quality and vocation, it is necessary to exert a large pressure on them to align them in the compromise of handling and managing evidences and documents.

A question may be posed to ask if there is really a direct relationship between the situation described and the approach by competencies, may such simple concept, if the reductionism made in this paper is accepted, result in what has been described before?; there is possibly no unique causal relationship but other reasons may contribute to such situation, besides the adoption of the external models proposed by the OECD and the World Bank; it would also be also possible to cite what the tradition of Critical Theory calls instrumental reason, a rationality that rather derives in irrationality when papers and processes are placed over individual themselves. Lipman (2002) states that: "Anything that help us to discover the meaning of life is educational, and schools are educational only as they facilitate such discovery" (p. 55). Does the approach by competencies or further on, current education as it has been described previously, contribute to this? There isn't an over dimension of market competitiveness, and is this really the most important aim of education?, they can say that it is 'not' one more aspect that should be covered, but it

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is ultimately present in the initial intentions and finally, the meaning of life cannot be determined not measured by bureaucracy, any attempt to do it is out of place, and thus an administrative and control model such as the approach by competencies cannot promise it.

For instrumental rationality as expression of the politic-economic system of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, this point is manifested in a special way in organizational units where, according to Habermas (1987), "the individual is atrophied converting him/her in a mere cell of functional reactions" (p. 451), and accomplishing objectives becomes the most important issue. Now, could these organizational units, that Max Weber cited by Habermas (1987) defines as organic components of the socioeconomic system, be extended and identified in the educational environment?, apparently yes, the education as organizational unit would respond as another component of the economic system. Despite this, the declarations of the different international organizations and national curricula seem distant from this. Horkheimer cited by Habermas (1987) mentions that "in the process of rationalization, understood as bureaucratization, the ethically founded reasons of the members are blurred, making also superfluous the participation of individuals with a practical and moral rationality" (p. 449); in it, bureaucratization is a sign of this participation in the socioeconomic system in which educational systems are imbued.

Development of competencies

For McClelland, the formulation of competencies is based on the scientific method; on the other hand, the DESECO presents an interdisciplinary approach considering the following disciplines: philosophy, anthropology, psychology, economy, sociology; it curiously does not mention educational sciences. Returning to McClelland (1973), the development of competencies consists in an investigation of those attitudes, actions or procedures performed by individuals that are considered fundamental for the success in particular situations or companies, for example, to know what a manager does to consider that he/she and his/her company are successful, the actions and attitudes of a population of professionals are analyzed and compared, and the conclusions at the end of this process will be the competencies. McClelland carries out a qualitative work with statistical resources, establishing those behaviors and skills that contribute to the successful completion of an activity, is a management of probabilities, the larger the universe investigated, larger will be such probabili-

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ties. It should be also considered that there will always be a contingency range and causal relationships for the success of a worker or company, such as the dependence on the decline of another, political favors or cultural capital, etc.

Sacristán (2009) establishes a difference between the knowledge of how something arises and the knowledge of how it is produced; in the field of competencies, it is necessary a lot of research and experimentation to overcome this observation, and despite this, the social field is different from the natural field, and pretending to objectify individuals will not completely reduce the uncertainty to know what is the set of steps that will shape competent individuals. Despite this, there are statements for developing competencies through thinking and theorization, without starting from experience.

There should be pointed out that the approach by competencies is not absolute, it offers possibilities, and thus debate and discussion should not be closed. Competencies should be exercised as an element within an approach, they should not be the goal and much less the approach.

Rychen and Salganik (2000) present the competencies developed by the OECD that have been formulated with a pretension of generality, known as key competencies:

- Act in an autonomous and reflexive manner.
- Use tools interactively.
- Take part of heterogeneous groups and be functional in them (p.11).

These *key competencies* have been formulated in an interdisciplinary nature, as a must be, and thus there is no follow-up or initial study in the practice as indicated by McClelland et al. (2000), who point out that Jack Goody, anthropologist invited to the conceptual development of the proposal, considers that there are pretensions of generality that entail homogenizing effects in the diversity of contexts.

Analyzing the triad of competencies from their formulation until now, it is interpreted the predominance of certain technical and instrumental rationality. In its interdisciplinary development, the economic point of view has been weighted more than the others, and thus acting in an autonomous and reflexive manner as has been proposed through subcompetencies, where creativity and critical-analytical thinking highlight, has been rather in pursuit of effectiveness and efficiency in production increase, better machines have been developed to reduce costs, technology is a new need, strategies have been formulated for maintaining the attention of individuals in the consumption of digital services, which has

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resulted in a polarization and post-truth. Citing Hannah Arendt (1993) "Irreflexive creatures at the mercy of the technique regardless of how deadly they may be" (p. 16).

Torres (2021) points out that the OECD used PISA texts in 2018 to evaluate the capability-competencies of students to detect biased texts; 47 % of the average students of the OECD countries were capable of distinguishing between facts and opinions in digital media. One of the conclusions of the report states that there is a relationship between the countries with high percentages of this indicator, and the training in institutes about the use of digital media and the access to these technologies; there are also exceptions such as the case of Spain, where about 90 % of students claim to have connectivity and, however, the low percentage of students that may identify biased information is 45 %; Latin American countries such as Chile and Colombia are also below 50 %.

As a conclusion, it is stated that the OECD paradoxically evaluates what has possibly contributed to train. The ideal of success of workers and companies that seek to be competent contributes to create conditions for more traffic in networks; according to Žižek (2019) "The last corner of the globe has been conquered in technical terms and put at the service of its exploitation in economic terms" (p. 54). In this dynamic, no spaces are created to act in an autonomous-critical manner and come to a stop to question if the results of the productive expansion contribute or not to the welfare of the other and of nature.

The educational quality and the approach by competences

Highlighting the critics to the approach by competences, it is necessary to address the concept of educational quality and know the relationship between them. For López et al. (2018), educational quality as a category has a polysemic and non-neutral connotation, and thus, this study has considered the concept proposal of Harvey and Green (1993), who provide a general framework about how to understand educational quality in the following points:

- Quality understood as exceptionality, which refers to something distinctive and special.
- Quality as perfection or coherence, which consists of achieving the product perfection that is linked to the culture of quality, where it is not necessary to verify the final result because res-

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ponsibility is transversal to the members and to each stage of the process.

- Quality understood as an adaptation to a purpose, it responds to fulfilling expectations of a particular interest group.
- Quality as quality-price relationship, the concepts of effectiveness and efficiency are presented, the former consists in achieving the proposed goals and the latter in doing it with the lowest cost of resources; this notion has a direct relationship with accountability, is an investment that demands results.
- Quality as transformation, privileging qualitative changes over quantitative ones, the primary issue is that students develop their capabilities; here quality is not a service but a transformation of the participants.

These points contribute to enable orienting the analysis of different proposals, statements of different countries, organizations, ministers and institutions, providing a resource to interpret the practice of the aforementioned and unveil the notion of quality they expose.

Quality as adaptation to a purpose may be found in the curricular proposals of different countries, where the most emerging needs that will be worked on are established according to each context, and in general competitiveness in the international market is not ignored. In this construction, determination of aims, the quality-price relationship is deployed and accountability constitutes an important moment of the process.

In this aspect, the adaptation of ISO standards plays an important role in the field of educational quality. These standards seek to evaluate each aspect of the organization, the results and its agents; Tobón (2015) indicates a variant for the educational environment, the EFQM (*European Foundation for Quality Management*) model, which applied to education presents the following essential criteria: "leadership, strategic planning, management of human talent, academic processes, results in the students, results in the human talent, results in the society, general performance" (p. 76). A position close to achievement of aims, where it is necessary to implement general standards to establish a measurement, where the criteria are focused on self-evaluation of organizations, and according to Tobón (2015), the ISO 9000 standards are the ones that provide external warranty before the state, the community and others about the quality of the educational model.

In this quality framework, educational curricula may determine, adapt or adopt an approach by competencies or another, and account-

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ability will revolve around them, having now: skills, indicators, evaluation criteria and standards, which is the common jargon of these tendencies; for example, the case of Ecuador whose curricular reform in 2016 expresses the objectives in terms of capabilities (MINEDUC, 2019, p. 446), and the proposed aims are justice, solidarity and innovation, aspects similar to what is proposed by the Education 2030 Incheon Declaration. Achieving these aims is guided by skills, accountability and evaluation, and the presence of indicators as criteria for evaluation is highlighted.

Going back to international organizations, one of the main aims to which, according to OECD (2005), competencies are directed is in "improving and enhancing commercial relationships and sustainable development, where it is sought the development of abilities to face challenges from the present and the future in constant change and uncertainty" (p. 3), without relegating its social and personal attention. The member countries seek to maintain their competitiveness, others intend to reach their economic development, countries that postulate their admission to the organization and that have assumed an approach by competencies, whose most important evaluation are the PISA international tests. Better results in the PISA tests are interpreted as equivalent to educational quality (in the DESECO speech), and therefore a greater guarantee for economic development, which is a rather reprehensible issue.

The evaluation in the approach by competencies

The evaluation issue is fundamental; McClelland (1973) makes clear that it is necessary to assess the process when the competency is carried out, not only observing the results, because this involves working with abilities, skills and attitudes, in this aspect the summative evaluation only provides an incomplete information that does not enable to know if the competency has been developed correctly.

An approach to this evaluation notion is found in Miller cited by Oseda et al. (2017), who present a four-stage evaluation pyramid, the first two: know and know how, focused on the cognitive part having the exam as evaluation instrument; the last two correspond to demonstrate and make, focused on the behavior whose evaluation instruments, as proposed by Oseda et al. (2017), are: the rubric and the attitude scale. It should be noted that this author considers this evaluation as authentic because it enables linking the classrooms with real and working life (p.238)

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Despite what has been pointed out, contradictions may emerge such as the cases in which an approach by competences is adopted with a content-focused teaching, where knowledge is evaluated with the exam or the questionnaire as the primary instrument; the implementation of an approach relatively new to a system whose practices are rooted in a traditional education, which is a great mistake of educational systems.

A bureaucratic and homogenizing system defines in advance the approach without analysis, revision nor consultation of the participants, educational quality is measured under arguments of authority and without criticality, leaving no space for uncertainty, it is a blind faith on a collection of papers and regulations; at the end, quantitative cold data is still used to indicate whether there is or not educational success.

At this point, it is important a reflection around the evaluation issue, citing Álvarez (2009), the evaluation is the mean not the aim that enables knowing if the student is learning or developing a competency, ability or content with the objective of being able to correct and specially conduct the learner. The evaluation should have a formative connotation centered on the process or accompaniment, for Álvarez (2009) "it is about transforming the cult to the exam (…) as a control resource to be a training exercise" (p. 233).

The approach by competencies related to the quality as a purpose is oriented to results and control of evidences, its maximum expression is the exam that measures a final result, and to which the different international tests finally drift, similar to how a company or factory evaluates the ultimate quality of their products, despite that in this specific case human beings are being assessed, a group of learners, as well as the subjects behind each educational model. If a true evaluation framework is carried out, in which educational players become aware of their learning, it would not be completely necessary a final international assessment, because the process would feedback and correct itself in pursuit of achieving a particular quality, ability or objective; comparisons between countries and models would not be necessary.

To know the limitations of this approach it is required a critical analysis, which results complicated when curricula are formulated under the influence of international organizations, many countries adopt the approach that they implement without criticality; paraphrasing Aimé Césaire (2006), the DESECO or the OECD, as the western thinking, are in the podium of the reason to determine the educational proceeding, its work is to give 'light' to peripheries, ignoring and failing to observe their needs and culture; but perhaps the root of the problems are the same subjects aligned in their dependence and political sovereignty.

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Oversizing of the scope of competencies

Teaching work in classrooms requires creativity and intuition which, in front of the follow-up and the set of steps of the approach by competencies, becomes obfuscated when following a script, and he/she should do it because evidences are necessary as a proof of their work. It is necessary to believe that the cumulus of evidences demonstrates the domain of the competence, but is it possible to be sure that it will be transferred in reality? and is it really suitable to be applied in other contexts?, only the probabilities are left. What should be emphasized is that the success of a student in his/her social, economic and working life not only depends of the educational field but also of other instances, leaving this load only to education and with a single approach just ignores the inequalities and gaps in the social field.

This approach by competencies shares the logic of the quality model in connection with accountability, control of evidences and bureaucratic load; it is convenient to remark its relationship with the evaluation as purpose. At this point the results should be the guarantee for achieving success, and they will enable qualifying, classifying and in the worst case segregating; it is about revealing what has been bad from the comparison with other educational models or approaches, which in general correspond to different contexts. Such an evaluation rather causes discomfort, and thus it is necessary to rescue the notion of formative transversal evaluation, which for Álvarez (2009) "should involve all educational players, not only ministers and teachers, but also students to promote their involvement in learning, with the logical consequence of the implementation of self-evaluation" (p. 237), co-evaluation and evaluation of others beyond the summative assessment.

In this relationship between the know and the know how of the approach by competences, which according to this paper has its limitations and difficulties, what is criticized at the end is the oversizing of its scope. In this case it is proposed a perspective for the work in classrooms with a notion of quality for transformation, according to Harvey and Green, which consists in working on the conditions that are behind the competencies and the construction of knowledge, such as cognitive or executive functions or thinking skills, which are derived from the Theory of structural cognitive modifiability by Feuerstein (2012); these are common for all activities, skills or competencies carried out by subjects in any aspect of their life; it is necessary to go to the foundations of thinking to work on it and strengthen it.

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The purpose of this position is to carry out an internal change in the cognitive structure of students, which has a larger resistance to impacts of the medium than other short-term changes. For de Maturana (2010) "This change alters the course of cognitive development of the individual, in his/her abilities, capabilities, competencies; above all, it alters the plasticity or modifiability of the subject that favors further learnings of the student" (p. 45). Another point to highlight in de Maturana (2010) is the support to educational inclusion of students whether they are associated or not to disabilities, issue that is not found or is not addressed by the literature about the approach by competences; for Feuerstein (2012) the gaps of students with severe disabilities may be dealt with and significant alterations may be achieved in their cognitive function, and similarly for de Maturana (2010) "in those students whose distal determinants such as the sociocultural context, the family environment, health, nutrition, etc., are an obstacle for learning" (pp. 48-49)

This proposal is not new and has been applied in various contexts, one of the most significant may be the intervention by Valera et al. (2006), in the public network of the state of Bahía in Brazil. Finally, it is worth mentioning that this position is centered in the subjects, in the students for a quality model as transformation, beyond the market claims, achieving high grades or scores in international or local tests that derive in a bureaucratization, as mentioned by Álvarez (2009), transcending an exam-oriented teaching.

Discussion

Two positions about the approach by competencies are found in the scientific literature, one in favor of its application in the working environment and the other that questions it remarking a latent utilitarianism, position endorsed by this paper under the postulates of the Critical Theory in the thinking of Horkheimer.

Horkheimer (2002) distinguishes a subjective and instrumental rationality from an objective rationality. The former does not seek to know the specific character of processes nor the abstract functioning of thinking, it focuses its attention on means and aims without stopping to question if such objectives are reasonable. For this rationality "the idea of an objective capable of being rational by itself without referring to any type of advantage or subjective gain is (…) deeply alien" (p. 9). In contrast, objective rationality seeks to explore if the objectives are desirable by themselves, holding confidence on reason and its adaptation to

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human behavior, reflecting about its acts and convictions, without abandoning the search for the truth. Horkheimer (2002) states that: "Socrates was certain that reason, understood as universal comprehension, should determine the convictions and regulate the relationships between humans and between humans and nature" (p. 13). When reason is subjectivized or relativized losing its universality, it would experience a series of changes giving rise to the pragmatic thinking that identifies the truth with the results, relativizing this category.

Horkheimer criticizes what he calls instrumental reason, the pragmatism impregnated in the thinking and social field, that has been possible to identify in this study in the approach by competences. Proposals in support of educational competencies for the working environment are discussed below, considering the following sample of works:

Guzmán et al. (2019) explicitly mentions the acquisition of competencies for the demand of the labor market, where the critical thinking serves as employability mechanism (p. 24). In reference to educational quality, it is stated the direct relationship that it has with satisfaction in the business environment, with collaborative work, problem solving and critical and creative thinking being a mean to achieve it, showing the success of this approach through the perceptions of students. Oseda et al. (2017) present a similar approach, but focusing on the pedagogical aspect, on methodological proposals to achieve a group of competencies directed to employability, these are: project-based learning, collaborative work and use of ICTs, highlighting values such as solidarity, empathy, etc. What may be criticized to Oseda et al. (2017) is not specifying the competencies developed, and to Guzmán et al. (2019) the limitation of a qualitative approach prior to employability to state that "true students solve everyday problems, satisfying the requirements of organizations" (p. 36). In the line of Oseda there are Lozano et al. (2017) in the study of pedagogical approaches; they use a hermeneutic methodology to establish the membership of three pedagogical approaches with twelve competencies in an education for sustainable development.

Beyond the observations made, it should be remarked that the pedagogical models, the quality and the education presented by these studies are means for employability, the education is not an aim in itself, it is valued by its results, it is subjected to an instrumental rationality, ontologically degenerating values such as solidarity and empathy, which should be valuable by themselves, and are rather considered a mean, a resource for employability, as it happens with critical and creative thinking which

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are considered as resources for success at work; the latter conditions the criterion for selecting methodologies and pedagogical approaches.

In this pragmatic field, according to a subjective rationality of means and aims, it should not be questioned where the education for the labor market drifts to, or if there may be another path or option, this is not its logic, the subjectivity of self-conservation does not look beyond its instrumental character. Horkheimer (2002) states that "when thinking becomes instrument, one can quit thinking" (p. 19); only the highest competencies for competitiveness in a capitalist model are expected for this field of means and aims, where the individual weighs more than the collective, efficiency is sought, the highest production with the smallest cost of resources; they are means for the fetish of money and now for the success as well. For Horkheimer (2002) "when aims are not determined anymore in the light of reason, it is impossible to claim that an economic or political system, no matter how cruel or despotic it is, is less rational than other" (p. 25).

At this point it should be rescued the vision of the New School movement, where Fullat cited by Moreno (2012) states that: "School is life and it does not prepare for life. Cooperation is more important than the competency; one learns solving problems and not through the transmission of knowledge" (p. 256). It is a school or an education whose vision of quality does not respond to a mere achievement of aims without an opening to criticism, but that it problematizes its own aim in pursuit of rationality rescuing solidarity, knowledge, the collective as valuable by itself, seeking the transformation of learners.

Another aspect to highlight is the epistemological status played by knowledge in an approach by competencies, here the discussion is centered on Higher Education where for Manríquez cited by Oseda et al. (2017) "there is a displacement from the center of gravity of university education, historically responsible for training professionals for the labor market" (p. 245); similarly, for Kreimer (2000) "the merit in strict reference to the knowledge sphere, appears as a possibility to access to working places and to political positions from the creation of universities in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries" (pp. 28-29). In this narrow relationship between university and employability, for Bicocca (2017) the knowledge intends to be useful, effective and operational. The know how of competencies is a mean for success at work, that will require a selective body of knowledge that will in turn be means for the know how, as Horkheimer (2002) would say, is the victory of the mean over the aim, the knowledge loses value in itself, its character becomes being an instrument.

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The effect of this pragmatism-utilitarianism acquires strength in an industrial society, where for Horkheimer "all products of human activity transform into merchandise (…). The productive work, whether manual or intellectual, has become honorable, turning into the only accepted way to spend life" (p. 30). This characterization is present in the societies of the twenty-first century intoxicated by an instrumental rationality, which justifies the need of an approach by competencies for employability, issue that became clear in the debate about European higher education at the end of the twentieth century.

For Guerrero and Clavero (2004) "the development of competencies aimed at individual personal success is the tool or guarantee of organizational success, which is the core or system, the subject of the globalization era" (p. 31). This position conceives the person as the mean for organization success, is the human capital that has to be educated and trained for self-demand and to make necessary a training by competencies. Arendt (1993) states that: "while the need would make work something indispensable to maintain life, excellence was the last thing to expect from it" (p. 58).

Barnett (2001) points out that a society that seeks regeneration of capital does not require knowledge per se, but as it can take advantage of it, an immediate pragmatic need where the knowledge that does not contribute to such purpose are easily discarded. From this logic there is no need to stop to think whether educating for economic and labor competitiveness is the main path to follow.

In this characterization of knowledge in an approach by competencies in relation to the quality as purpose, it should be highlighted its temporary nature, for Gimeno cited by Bicocca (2017), "instrumental knowledge is knowledge of high technical utility and of high temporary expiration, since they respond to occupational standards that are not absolute, and thus the competencies that are necessary today will not be necessary in few years" (p. 275). This results in abandoning an ideal of a valid or universal knowledge, there is no room to think on this but in the continuous update determined by the labor market, as it happens in the description of competencies by OECD and with the pedagogical approaches in the educational field.

The approach by competencies has been justified in this university-labor market identification, and a position that may transcend this posture is rescuing a university unrelated to instrumentalization, subjectivation and reproduction of human capital, where knowledge is not conditioned by market needs, Acosta and Miramontes (2013) state that:

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> The university in its own historic definition should be a space for debate and research about nature and inquiry of human condition and the scopes of culture, as well as the necessary preventions about political and technical-productive activity in the civilizing processes, the university must preserve and promote the production of knowledge, regardless if it has a technical applicability (p. 3318).

This position that separates knowledge from instrumentalization consists in assuming what Horkheimer (2002) called objective rationality, "whose essence reflects the structure inherent of reality" (p. 14), it does not ignore subjective rationality but as "part of a broader rationality, where thought may deduct criteria applicable to all things and living creatures, and where ethical and political notions are independent of subjective interests" (p. 14). At this point, paraphrasing Horkheimer (2002) a population suffering from hunger, a child in danger, the inequality, the injustice, the bureaucratization and also the environmental degradation speak their own language which is not its justification in pursuit of market productivity.

Conclusions

The approach by competencies has an instrumental foundation, its concept, the know how or successfully solving a particular situation or problem, may be adapted to any perspective or intentions. At the end, it is desired to postulate that the emergence of such posture is a response to the labor and market system of the present times, where social institutions, with education one of them, have been bureaucratized, whose practices are directed to the success of a higher productivity, serving as a tool or mean for this objective. This position is justified from a historical review by McClelland in his study of competencies for labor efficiency, from which programs with this spirit were derived for both the business and education sectors. Afterwards, there is the presence of international organizations, specifically the OECD, whose proposals of competencies as well as its political capital have influenced quality models of countries that take part of its evaluations. In this case, the vision of quality corresponds to the purpose where it highlights accountability for sustainable development.

Then, competencies and quality emerge from this reality, and critics arise here due to their tendency to market and competitiveness, and above all for intending to be universal; beyond that, the accountability of this relationship responds to an evaluation model of summative nature, the

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final evaluation will determine whether success or quality are close or not, qualifying and adjectivizing students, teachers and educational models.

The instrumental rationality of this market and employability dynamics considers knowledge and education as a mean and not as an aim in itself, is a training for the labor market, which determines the pedagogical approaches and tendencies.

Thus, regarding the question about a relationship between competencies and quality beyond economic interests, a posture of the fundamental notion of competency is endorsed, which due to its malleability it may adapt to a quality model as transformation of subjects, where the market and the working environment are not the essential things, only another aspect for training the learner, where it should be considered if the use of competencies should be an approach in itself in this quality model, or rather a resource that responds to this tendency, which may be fed from other proposals such as the structural cognitive modifiability, development of thought and epistemological principles that consider knowledge as a value in itself.

Finally, the dynamics of the evaluative matter should change, assuming the posture of Álvarez (2009), the evaluation should be present at each instant of the educational process without becoming an administrative or bureaucratic control, with the criterion of improving learnings, cognitive development, skills, and not waiting for a quantitative summative assessment that express about the student what the teachers knows beforehand. This involves and requires a change of approach in the compromise of educational players so that it transcends the proposal of quality as transformation.

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State of the art on conceptions of quality in higher education

Estado del arte sobre concepciones de la calidad de la educación superior

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Abstract

Given the polysemic and multidimensional nature of the notion of quality and its centrality and growing relevance in higher education, it is necessary to lay the foundations for conceptualizing it in terms of its context of application, in order to provide support and consistency to the design of specific policies. This paper presents the main methodological guidelines and findings of an exhaustive literature review focused on identifying the conceptions of quality in higher education in papers published in high-impact international journals between 2016 and 2020. Following the axial guidelines of the PRISMA-P method, 186 articles were selected out of 53,290 identified as the initial universe. An analysis using open deductive coding, enabled identifying prevailing conceptions of the quality of higher education and its valued components. Another noteworthy finding is the relevance of grouping these conceptions into two categories –"quality en soi" and "quality pour soi"– which are very similar to the positions taken in two very influential publications in Latin America. A crucial question arose from the analysis of the articles selected for review: who is responsible for determining the quality of a product or service in higher education? The answer to this question gave rise to the emergence of an alternative theoretical-conceptual positioning to those underlying those two categories: "quality pour qui" (quality for whom).

Keywords

Higher education, quality, literature review, state of the art, PRISMA-P method, targeted policies.

Resumen

Dado el carácter polisémico y multidimensional de la noción *calidad* y de su centralidad y relevancia creciente en la educación superior, resulta necesario sentar bases que permitan conceptualizarla en función de su contexto de aplicación, de modo de dar sustento y consistencia al diseño de políticas focalizadas. El artículo expone los principales lineamientos metodológicos y resultados de una exhaustiva revisión bibliográfica orientada a esos efectos, centrada en la identificación de las concepciones sobre *calidad de la educación superior* en artículos publicados entre 2016 y 2020 en revistas de alto impacto internacional. Una vez finalizada la revisión, que siguió los lineamientos axiales del método PRISMA-P, quedaron seleccionados 186 artículos del universo inicial de 53 290. Un análisis por codificación abierta deductiva permitió identificar las concepciones predominantes de la calidad de la educación superior y sus componentes valorados como sustantivos. Otro de los resultados destacables es la pertinencia de agrupar esas concepciones en dos categorías —"calidad *en soi*" y "calidad *pour soi*"—, muy afines con las posiciones asumidas en dos textos muy influyentes en Hispanoamérica. Del análisis de los artículos seleccionados surgió una interrogante crucial: ¿a quién le corresponde determinar la calidad de un producto o servicio en educación superior? La respuesta a esta pregunta dio lugar a la emergencia de un posicionamiento teórico-conceptual alternativo a los subyacentes en esas categorías: "calidad *pour qui*" (calidad para quién, calidad para quiénes).

Palabras clave

Educación superior, calidad, revisión bibliográfica, estado del arte, Método PRISMA-P, políticas focalizadas.

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Introduction

Current academic production focused on the issue of defining the concept of *quality in higher education* and of its main components, of great theoretical, political and practical reference, is abundant and very diverse regarding approaches and theoretical and/or empirical addressing strategies. In this context, the objective of study outlined here was to determine and analyze the current state of such production, as a base for a conception of *quality in higher education* that results adequate to its context of application and fruitful for policy formulation in that area. In other words, such objective is not exhausted in itself, but it is put into service of a conceptual construction whose relevance and usefulness are supported on the knowledge of the current academic production about such topic.

Quality is a concept that has acquired a remarkable centrality, relevance and ubiquity in numerous areas of contemporary industrialized societies, including the area of higher education, which it is the object of interest and analysis from at least four decades ago (Avci, 2017; Lomas, 2002; Nabaho et al., 2019; Saarinen, 2010; Van Vught & Westerheijden, 1994; Wittek & Kvernbekk, 2011).

Nevertheless, its polysemic nature (Scharager, 2018) and often vague and ambiguous (Goff, 2017) continues posing difficulties to any initiative of design and evaluation of educational systems, plans, programs and organizations. Indeed, the extensive existing literature referred to the concept of *quality of higher education*, far from having led to a precise and widely accepted definition, reveals the great difficulties that block fulfilling such attempt (Matei, 2016; Pompili, 2010; Prisacariu & Shah, 2016). This situation has caused a process of semantic oversaturation and, paradoxically, of deflation of meanings (Acevedo, 2011), specially because it is a concept in constant change and not susceptible of a unique interpretation (Zepke, 2014). But the paradox is only apparent; if multiple perspectives and meanings of *quality* are admitted, the concept becomes less useful as a change tool, or even with no sense.

In any case, even though *quality* continues to be a complex notion, and with very diverse senses and applications, explaining its features recurring to its subjective nature, as some experts have intended (Municio, 2005), does not contribute to elucidating the concept and its multiple senses and meanings. This nature does not necessarily invalidate —and it should not do it— finding a definition that is precise and adjusted to the context in which the concept is applied (Acevedo, 2008; Prisacariu and Shah, 2016; Reeves and Bednar, 1994), even if it is recognized that a definition sufficiently agreed by players within a single school organization

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rarely exists (Mendoza and Ortegón, 2019; Pompili, 2010). Moreover, it is not even usual that a concrete definition of the concept of *quality* exists in the documents of the institutions whose mission is assuring the quality in higher education institutions; indeed, as stated by Goff (2017), although these documents may propose quality indicators and metrics, they do not provide a definition or description of its meaning; in general, organizations are liberated from this task.

In the area of higher education, the concept of *quality* is very controversial (Acevedo, 2008) and complex (Acosta, 2015; Cabrera, 2005; Cardoso et al., 2016; Harvey & Green, 1993; Larrauri et al., 2015). It has been highlighted its ubiquitous and elusive, since different groups of agents attribute different meanings to it (Cheng, 2014; Goff, 2017; Gvaramadze, 2008; Harvey & Green, 1993; Nabaho et al., 2019; Neave, 1986; Newton, 2002, 2010; Prisacariu & Shah, 2016; Weenink et al., 2018) nature. In many works it is also described as a multidimensional (i.e., Avci, 2017; Barreto & Kalnin, 2018; Brunner, 1992; Elton, 1998; Green, 1994; Harvey & Green, 1993; Kleijnen et al., 2013; Krause, 2012; Nabaho et al., 2019; Reeves & Bednar, 1994; Sarrico et al., 2010; Scharager, 2018; Toranzos, 1996; Vesce et al., 2020; Westerheijden et al., 2007), dynamic (Boyle & Bowden, 1997; Ewell, 2010; Harvey 2005; Westerheijden et al., 2014) and relative concept, since it depends on the way it is perceived and conceptualized by different players of the area (Baird, 1998; Cardoso et al., 2018; Green, 1994; Harvey & Green, 1993; Harvey & Newton, 2007; Harvey & Williams, 2010; Middlehurst & Elton, 1992; Mortimore & Stone, 1991; Newton, 2010; Scharager, 2018; Welzant et al., 2015; Wittek & Kvernbekk, 2011).

These singular features of the concept of *quality of higher education* inhibit the possibility of the existence of a definition with a generalized acceptance in the international academic community. Nearly two thirds of century ago, i.e., three decades before it began to be installed as an axial notion in the field of higher education, Gallie (1956) qualified it as a concept essentially disputed. The abundant and very diverse academic production published in the last four decades confirms this perception, even though such dispute has been fed by increasingly varied foundations.

In its application to higher education, a dispute plane, indicated by different authors (Filippakou, 2011; Newton, 2002, among others), has been the recognition that such concept is involved in a power struggle in which the adoption of certain conceptual definitions reflects a competition for a better academic positioning. Blanco (2013) has emphasized that the concept of *quality* takes part of a symbolic peculiar field constituted as a regulatory framework for discourses, policies and practices. That is

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why, as pointed out by Monarca and Prieto (2018), it is about a field that houses disputes about the way to understand educational institutions and organizations, their functions and relationships with other areas of the social world, including the statewide one. Its influence in the sense of the educational policies and practices is, hence, very significant. Then, it becomes necessary to study how does it take part as a prominent concept in the decision-making processes, specially in the design of higher education policies. In this context, it should be confirmed what was pointed out by Prisacariu y Shah (2016): *quality* is never a neutral concept, but it inevitably responds to a tacit idea about higher education, about its sense and purpose, its values and underlying ideological assumptions.

In addition, the difficulties to achieve a definition of the concept of *quality* with generalized acceptance are increased, when including another circumstance referred, rather than to the concept itself, to the context of its application: what should be taken into consideration, the quality *of* education or the quality *in* education? Even though both conceptions are often employed indistinctly (under the generic expression "*quality in higher education*"), some experts establish a distinction. For example, Pérez-Juste (2005) considers that the concept of quality *of* education focuses on the education objectives, whereas the concept of quality *in* education is associated to the processes and factors necessary to achieve quality results: directive and administrative management, human resources and materials, evaluation. Thus, quality *of* education is a broader concept than that of quality *in* education (Rodríguez-Morales, 2017).

The main methodological guidelines that were applied in an exhaustive literature review will be sketched in the following section; such review was focused on the identification of the definitions and conceptions about the notion of *quality of higher education* present in academic papers published recently. Some of the main results obtained will be presented and discussed in subsequent sections, with the purpose of putting into context the current state of the art about the topic. As a conclusion, the theoretical-conceptual positioning of the authors of the present paper will be explained, and the implications on the higher education field of the results emerging from the literature review conducted will be highlighted. At last, the main limitations of the study carried out, lines of continuity and future analyses that may be potentially fruitful, will be mentioned.

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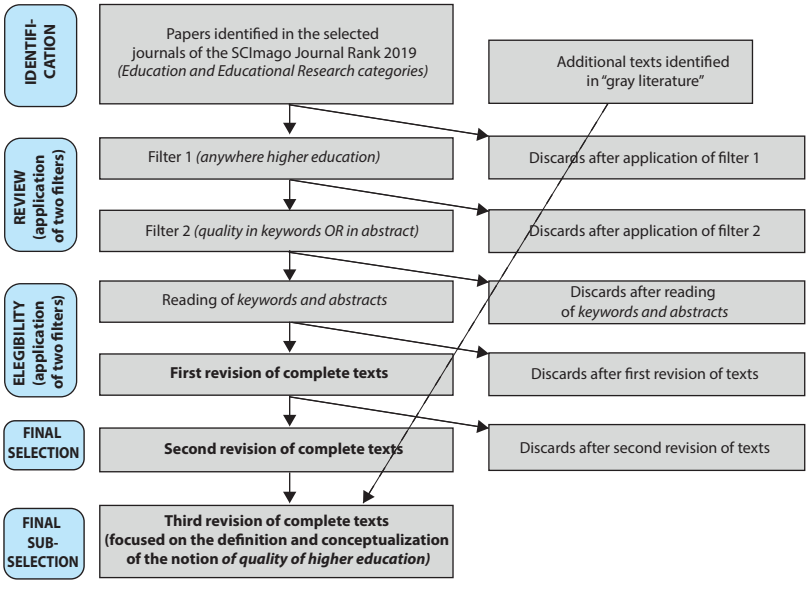
Review of the current international academic production about the conception of quality of higher education

An exhaustive literature review was conducted with the purpose of establishing, in the current international scientific literature about the topic of *quality of higher education*, a state of the art focused on the identification of the predominant conceptions about this notion and its main components. It is our belief that the results of such review will provide solid foundations on which to sustain a conception of *quality of higher education* that results useful and suitable for the formulation of educational policies and programs in that field.

The literature review was conducted based on the fundamental guidelines of the PRISMA-P method developed by Moher et al. (2009), and further adjusted by Shamseer et al. (2015) for systematic reviews and meta-analysis. The sequence of the review is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Flow diagram of the review of papers about the quality of higher education



Source: Made by the authors, based on Moher et al. (2009).

The search was restricted to the papers published in the period 2016-2020 in a selection of 1272 journals in the categories "*Education*" and "*Educational Research*" of the *SCImago Journal Rank* of 2019 (SJR-2019 hereinafter).

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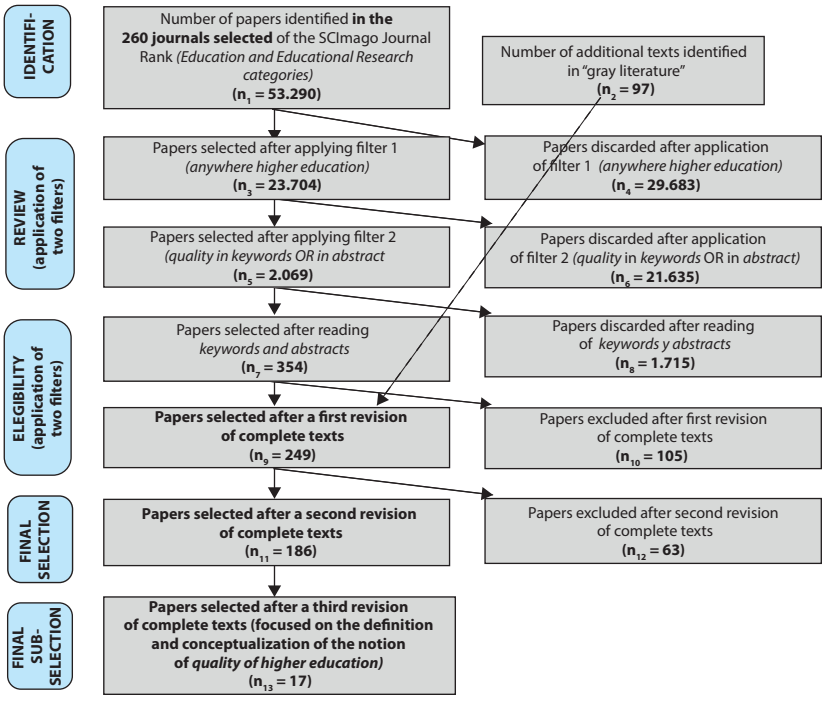
The journals were selected based on the adequacy of their name to the thematic focus considered. As a result, 260 journals were selected, 80 % of which are published in English: 88 of the 306 journals of quartile Q1, 70 of the 307 of quartile Q2, 56 of the 304 of quartile Q3, 35 of the 293 of quartile Q4 and 11 of the 62 journals without categorization. Among the 260 journals selected, 60 % correspond to the United Kingdom (92) and to the United States (64); the remaining are distributed in the following countries: Spain (25), Netherlands (15), Brazil (7), Australia (6), Switzerland (5), Turkey (5), Mexico (5), South Africa (4), Canada (3), Poland (2), Russia (2), Malaysia (2), New Zealand (2), Colombia (2), Chile (2), and other 17 countries with one journal each.

Figure 2 shows the results obtained in each of the phases of the review conducted.

Figure 2
Review of papers about the quality of higher education



Note (*): After reading the 97 texts of "gray literature" originally identified, 17 were discarded due to their little relevance. The 80 texts selected in this category correspond to 5 books (6%), 69 book chapters (86%) and 6 papers published in journals (8%)
Source: Made by the authors, based on Moher et al. (2009).

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The first phase of the search —designated as "Identification" in the diagram— was restricted to the abstracts and keywords of the papers in each of the 260 journals selected, according to three successive search instances. The first two corresponded to the phase designated as "Review" in the diagram: application of the filter "*higher education*" in any part of the text, followed by the application of the filter "*quality*" in *abstracts* and *keywords*. With the purpose of refining and increasing the sensitivity of the search, besides the aforementioned filters, the following Boolean connectors were used in both instances: (*Quality*) AND (*Education* OR *Educational* OR *Academic*) AND (*Education* OR *Teaching*) and the corresponding ones in Spanish: (Calidad) AND (Educación OR Educativa OR Académica) AND (Enseñanza).

The second phase of the review —designated as "Eligibility" in the diagram— consisted in the selection of papers based on the reading of abstracts and keywords of the 2069 papers selected in the previous phase. Then, a new selection was made based on the reading of the complete texts of the 354 papers selected in the previous instance, as well as the 97 texts corresponding to "gray literature" (books, book chapters and papers published in journals not indexed in the SJR-2019. Narrative reviews, scales, validation of scales and studies of distance education systems were excluded in this phase. Thus, 249 papers, from the initial universe of 53,290, and 80 texts of "gray literature" (five books, 69 book chapters and six papers) were selected.

In the "Final Selection" phase those 249 pre-selected papers were subject to a very detailed second reading, which resulted in the selection of 186 papers of the total of 53,290 papers published in the 260 journals included in the search universe. An analysis of topics using open deductive coding was conducted from this second reading, which enabled making brief reviews of the most relevant results about the conception of quality of higher education and its components considered as substantial. In addition, this analysis enabled to identify the main standards considered in the evaluation of the quality of higher education. The results of this phase were recorded and arranged in a spreadsheet that includes: journal name, paper title, author(s), publication date, keywords, country in which the study was applied, type of study (empirical or non-empirical), methodological strategy (quantitative, qualitative, mixed), predominant dimensions or standards in the conception of *quality*, and the size and features of the analysis unit and/or of the constructed sample (teachers, students, staff members, managers, experts, others).

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At last, it was of particular interest to select, from these 186 papers, those with analytical focus in the conception of *quality of higher education*, whose content resulted very useful in developing this text, especially at the moment of analyzing and weighing the results obtained in the review conducted. From the third reading carried out with this purpose —designated as "Final Sub-selection" in the diagram — 17 papers were selected, some of which were already mentioned in the introduction of the present paper.

Presentation and discussion of the main results of the literature review

Five big groups of results emerged from the literature review:

- The existence of a work that remains, nearly thirty years after its publication, the one with the greatest influence in the academic production about the conception of quality of higher education.
- The confirmation that, despite its notorious diversity, the great majority of the definitions and conceptions about such notion may be arranged in groups clearly differentiated based on their theoretical-conceptual foundations, which present an appreciable affinity with the positions assumed by two experts whose works were very influential in the last fifteen years, at least in the Hispano-American realm.
- The identification of the components or standards mostly employed for evaluating the quality of higher education: education and professional performance of teachers, rigor, exigency, curriculum integrality and planning, administrative management and organization, academic performance of students, characteristics of the relationship between players, degree of development of motivating studying environments, building structure and available material resources, research activities, extension activities and relationship with local players, governance regime, symbolic dimensions, financial support.
- The existence, confirmed in most of the papers considered, of a correlation between the type of assumed conception of the quality of higher education and the empirical strategy adopted for determining it (i.e., quantitative, qualitative, mixed).

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- The identification, in the case of empirical studies, of the predominant analysis units (i.e., teachers, students, graduates, managers, experts).

Due to space reasons, only the results corresponding to the first two sets will be succinctly presented here.

The influence of Lee Harvey and Diana Green in the conception of quality of higher education

After eight years, the stinging question posed in the title of an essay rather mentioned even today —*What the hell is quality?* (Ball, 1985)— obtained, in the paper "Defining Quality" (Harvey & Green, 1993), an answer of fast and enormous acceptance in the international scientific community. Perhaps that acceptance was due to the fact that, far from providing a concrete and concluding answer —nothing of the type *Quality is…*—, it contributed a solid framework for elucidating the concept in the field of higher education.

In "Defining Quality", the authors highlight that the relative nature of the *quality* concept when applied to higher education does not mean that it is about different perspectives of the same concept, but different perspectives about different concepts, but under a same designation: *quality*. In addition, they established five ways to conceive the quality of higher education, which represent, as pointed out by Prisacariu and Shah (2016), the main perspectives often assumed by the diverse players that take part in the field: quality as excellence, quality as consistence or perfection ("*zero errors*"), quality as adjustment to the objectives proposed ("*fitness for purpose*"), quality as economic efficiency regarding the correlation between costs and results ("*value for money*") and quality as transformation.

The authors of most of the papers consulted in the review that refer to those five perspectives (i.e., Cardoso et al., 2018; Cheng, 2017; Scharager, 2018; Tomás & Esteve, 2001; Wicks & Roethlein, 2009; Woodhouse, 1996) agree that the most widely used definition corresponds to the perspective "*fitness for purpose*" and, to a rather smaller extent, to the perspective "*value for money*". As stated by Cheng (2017), a feature common to the perspectives "*fitness for purpose*" and "*value for money*" is their focus on institutional development and on its evaluation by external agencies or agents. The perspective "*value for money*", built around the notion of *accountability*, the quality control devices in pursue of quantifiable results and the consideration of the student as client or consumer (George, 2007; Houston, 2010; Scharager, 2018; Tomlinson, 2017), is closely linked to the neoliberal ideology prevailing in an important part

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of the current western world (Acevedo, 2021; Giroux, 2015; Paradeise & Thoenig, 2013; Saunders, 2010, 2011; Saunders & Blanco, 2017).

Undoubtedly, "*Defining Quality*" (Harvey & Green, 1993) is the most influential and most cited paper with a focus on quality of higher education (Marshall, 2016; Scharager, 2018). In the literature review conducted it is cited 133 times, in 17 % of the papers selected after the first reading of complete texts (in 42 papers of the total of 249 papers selected in that phase); in other words, this work is cited in each of those papers more than three times, in average. The works by both authors separately are also very influential. With the exception of "*Defining Quality*", in that universe of 249 papers there is a total of 128 citations to works authored by Harvey or Green or where one of them is a coauthor. As shown in Table 1, such citations correspond to 33 papers (13 % of the universe under consideration). Therefore, the total sum of both types of citations if 261, i.e., something more that one citation, in average, in each of the 249 papers selected in this phase. These figures are enormously larger to the corresponding to any other paper and/or authors with publications about the topic of interest in journals indexed in the SJR-2019.

Table 1
Number of citations in the 249 papers selected: (1) to the paper by Harvey and Green (1993); (2) to the papers by Harvey and by Green as authors or coauthors (with the exception of Harvey and Green, 1993)

Q	Authors	cita-tions (1)	cita-tions (2)
1	Akalu (2016)	4	4
1	Alzafari (2018)	1	1
1	Alzafari & Kratzer (2019)	1	1
1	Alzafari & Ursin (2019)	1	2
1	Avci (2017)	14	13
1	Cardoso, Rosa, & Stensaker (2016)	4	9
1	Cardoso, Rosa, Videira, & Amaral (2018)	7	7
1	Cheng (2017)	1	2
1	Das, Mukherjee, & Dutta Roy (2016)	1	-
1	Dicker, García, Kelly, & Mulrooney (2019)	2	2
1	Eliophotou Menon (2016)	8	6
1	Gerritsen-van Leeuwenkampa, Joosten-ten Brinke, & Kesterd (2019)	2	-

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1	Giraleas (2019)	1	-
1	Goff (2017)	8	4
1	Hildesheim & Sonntag (2019)	3	3
1	Marshall (2016)	5	1
1	McCowan (2017)	3	-
1	Mukwambo (2019)	1	1
1	Prisacariu & Shah (2016)	3	5
1	Rahnuma (2020)	1	7
1	Sadler (2017)	2	-
1	Sarrico & Alves (2016)	1	5
1	Scharager (2018)	8	2
1	Steinhardt, Schneijderberg, Götze, Baumann, & Krücken (2017)	2	-
1	Tezcan-Unal, Winston, & Qualter (2018)	1	-
1	Vesce, Cisi, Gentile, & Stura (2020)	-	2
1	Kaynardağ (2019)	-	1
2	Bertolin (2016)	1	-
2	Brennan (2018)	1	-
2	Giannakis & Bullivant (2015)	2	2
2	Hauptman (2018)	2	2
2	Khalaf (2020)	7	1
2	Leiber, Stensaker, & Harvey (2018)	1	4
2	Seyfried & Pohlenz (2018)	1	-
2	Walls, Carr, Kelder, & Ennever (2018)	1	-
2	Zheng, Cai, & Ma (2017)	12	10
3	Barreto & Kalnin (2018)	6	18
3	Barsoum (2017)	1	2
3	Koķe, Jansone-Ratinika, & Koka (2017)	1	2
3	Mendoza & Ortegon (2019)	1	1
3	Monyatsi & Ngwako (2018)	2	1
3	Nabaho, Aguti, & Oonyu (2019)	6	1
3	Ortíz & Rúa (2017)	-	1
4	Aravena & Meza (2017)	1	-
4	Njie & Asimiran (2016)	2	5
(1): citations in 42 papers (25 Q1, 9 Q2, 6 Q3, 2 Q4) **(2): citations in 33 papers** (20 Q1, 5 Q2, 7 Q3, 1 Q4)	**Sub-total:**	**133**	**128**
	Total:	**261 citations**	

Source: Made by authors.

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The influence of this multi-cited work is even greater in the content of the 17 papers that were selected because they are focused on the concept of *quality of higher education*: it is cited in 14 of those 17 papers (82 %), and the total of citations is 70, i.e., an average of five citations per paper. As illustrated in Table 2, the figures are similar in the case of citations to works authored by Harvey or Green separately or where one of them is a coauthor: 72 citations, that appear in 15 of the 17 papers selected (88 %). In this case, the total sum of both types of citations is 142, i.e., something more than eight citations, in average, in each of those 17 papers. Clearly, these are figures much greater than the corresponding to any other paper and/or authors that have published studies about this topic in journals of the SJR-2019.

Tabla 2

Number of citations in the 17 papers selected that are focused on the conception of the notion of *quality of higher education:* (1) to the paper by Harvey and Green (1993)*;* (2) to the papers by Harvey and by Green as authors or coauthors (with the exception of Harvey and Green, 1993)

Q	Authors		Citations (1)	Citations (2)
1	Akalu (2016)		4	4
1	Avci (2017)		14	13
1	Cardoso, Rosa, & Stensaker (2016)		4	9
1	Cardoso, Rosa, Videira, & Amaral (2018)		7	7
1	Cheng (2017)		1	2
1	Dicker, Garcia, Kelly, & Mulrooney (2019)		2	2
1	Goff (2017)		8	4
1	Marshall (2016)		5	1
1	Mukwambo (2019)		1	1
1	Prisacariu & Shah (2016)		3	5
1	Scharager (2018)		8	2
1	Vesce, Cisi, Gentile, & Stura (2020)		-	2
3	Alvarado, Morales, & Aguayo (2016)		-	-
3	Barreto & Kalnin (2018)		6	18
3	Mendoza & Ortegon (2019)		1	1
3	Nabaho, Aguti, & Oonyu (2019)		6	1
3	Ortiz & Rúa (2017)		-	-
(1): citations in 14 papers (11 Q1, 3 Q3) **(2): citations in 15 papers** (12 Q1, 3 Q3)		**Subtotal:**	**70**	**72**
		Total:	**142 citations**	

Source: Made by authors.

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Two polar conceptions: quality en soi and quality pour soi[1]

As was already discussed, there is a great variety of discourses that employ and define the concept of *quality*, but not all are converge nor refer to the same thing (Harvey & Green, 1993; Toranzos, 1996; Weenink et al., 2018). Half century ago, Kripke showed that naming and describing are not synonyms, because "when describing, predicative elements about the object named are enunciated, but […] names do not have their own sense" (Cárdenas-Marín, 2016, pp. 116-117). This refers to what, in the middle of last century, in a posthumous book, Wittgenstein (2017) called "familiar similarities": although it is pretended that there are essential characteristics common to the things bearing a same designation, what they have in common is, in rigor, a set of superimposed similarities.

Once these considerations have been assumed, a careful reading of the 186 papers selected in the penultimate phase of the literature review enabled inferring that the great majority of them may be arranged in two great groups: (i) those that develop a conception —that may be qualified as "quality *en soi*"— of the notion of *quality of higher education* theoretically or empirically supported and valid for practically any institutional context; (ii) those that, in attention to the markedly subjective nature of this notion, discard the pertinence of searching for a unique definition, in the framework of a type of conception qualified here as "quality *pour soi*".

On the other hand, in a literature review of papers written in Spanish focused on the quality of education (Acevedo, 2008), it was determined that two of them, besides being very influential in the academic production immediately after their publication, resulted representative of polar positions about this topic. These are the papers "The quality of education: axes for its definition and evaluation", of the Argentinian sociologist Inés Aguerrondo (1993), and "The construction of quality educational programs", of Pedro Municio (2005) from Madrid. Although it is little probable that much authors of the papers that emerged from the review conducted here have read any of those two papers —among other reasons, because 80 % of the journals reviewed are anglophone—, the paper by Aguerrondo (1993) may be anyway considered a precedent in the first of the two aforementioned groups (that includes the works that tacitly assume an "*en soi*" conception of quality of higher education), while it is valid to consider that the paper by Municio (2005) is a clear precedent of the second group, whose works are characterized by a "*pour soi*" conception of quality.

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Aguerrondo (1993) bases her argumentative development on the consideration of quality as a complex and multidimensional concept applicable to any aspect of the field of education —learnings, teachers, infrastructure, processes— and which governs the decision-making in such field. Since it is a concept that is socially and historically determined, its definition fundamentally arises at every moment and place from the demands that the social system makes to the education. This perspective is reaffirmed in works from diverse backgrounds (i.e., Filippakou, 2011; Lemaitre, 2010; Tedesco, 1987), as well as in many of the papers that were selected after the literature review conducted (i.e., Nabaho et al., 2019; Prisacariu & Shah, 2016; Scharager, 2018) and in others published prior to the period considered in the review (i.e., Kleijnen et al., 2013; Rosa et al., 2012; Thune, 1996). For example, Prisacariu & Shah (2016) highlight that the concept of *quality of higher education* largely exceeds the eventual satisfaction of the players involved and, in any case, have important political implications. They state that, in such construct, this concept is never neutral and its meaning is always contextual. Indeed, in any definition of quality of higher education it tacitly underlies an idea about higher education, its fundamental nature, purposes and processes. This results most self-evident in those works that define quality in higher education as "*fitness for purpose*", the mostly used of the five perspectives proposed by Harvey y Green (1993); it is a pragmatic perspective that is generally applied for the control of educational processes and systems, meanwhile processes are often associated to political aspirations of national governments with the purpose of encouraging the work of organizations of the sector in a highly competitive market (Cheng, 2017; Prisacariu & Shah, 2016) and, often furtively, favor the disciplining of people under the prevailing development model (Arce, 2020).

The theoretical position of Municio (2005) is not opposed in all its terms to the previously outlined one, but it presents substantive differences. Its axial statement is that "there is no "thing" called quality, […] but whatever is quality will be defined by the recipient of the object or service" (p. 488). In other words, it considers that quality is not, *sensu stricto*, an attribute or feature inherent to a product or a service, but rather a value (an attribute or feature) assigned by its recipient and which will depend on the degree in which such product or service contributes to fulfill his/her needs, interests, demands or expectations. This approach is also widely accepted in the academic production that emerged from the literature review conducted, both explicitly (i.e., Cardoso et al., 2016; Cardoso et al., 2018; Dicker et al., 2019; Mendoza & Ortegón, 2019, among

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others) and implicitly (i.e., Mukwambo, 2019). For example, Mendoza and Ortegón (2019) consider that *quality* is a subjective concept in the field of higher education, susceptible of multiple definitions and assessments, which is evident in the fact that the aspects considered key for quality differ notably between students and teachers. In a large number of the academic production of the last three decades (i.e., Cheng, 2011, 2012; Cheng & Tam, 1997; Green, 1994; Harvey & Green, 1993; Kalayci et al., 2012; Lomas, 2002, 2007; Newton, 2002; Sarrico et al., 2010; Schindler et al., 2015; Watty, 2005, 2006), including many of the ones selected in the review presented here (i.e., Avci, 2017; Dicker et al., 2019; Prisacariu y Shah, 2016; Scharager, 2018), it is emphasized that there are as many definitions of *quality of higher education* as there are categories of the players directly involved, either in the educational center of interest (students, teachers, managers, non-teaching staff) or external to it (funding or sponsor organizations, alumni, employers). Similarly, in some of those works (i.e., Avci, 2017; Dicker et al., 2019) it is pointed out, in accordance with what is exposed by Municio (2005), that the adoption of particular definitions of *quality*, besides not always being coincident inside each of those categories, depends on the circumstances prevailing at each moment and place.

Although Aguerrondo (1993) and Municio (2005), just like the great majority of the papers selected in the review conducted, coincide that quality is a concept socially determined and hence susceptible of multiple definitions, for Aguerrondo (1993), as it was already stated, they fundamentally emerge from what the social system demands to education —social determination is projected from the social system towards education, one of the subsystems, while for Municio (2005) they emerge from the user –social determination emanates from the recipient of the educational product or service—. In the first case, the concept of *quality* —its conceptual construction, definition and characterization— is conceived from *the political view* in a traditional sense and, in the specific case of Aguerrondo, with a notorious neo-Marxist stamp; in the second, *politics* is conceived according to a more updated version, in consonance with what seems to be estimated, at least in this part of the world, as "politically correct".

Each of these forms of conceptualizing quality results in the adoption of distinctive analysis units. In the first, these are often institutional agents: government offices that rule educational subsystems (especially through its expression in official documents), their technical advisors (in many cases, supranational experts), management teams (both at insti-

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tutional and organizational scale) and, more infrequently, funding and sponsoring organisms. Many of the papers selected in the conducted review share this position (i.e., Cheng, 2017; Nabaho et al., 2019; Prisacariu & Shah, 2016). In the second case the studies are focused on analysis units constituted by different groups of players directly or indirectly involved in the organizational dynamics of an educational center: students, teachers, alumni, potential employers (of alumni and advanced students). Many studies aligned with this view were also identified in the review conducted (i.e., Avci, 2017; Cardoso et al., 2016; Cardoso et al., 2018; Dicker et al., 2019; Mendoza & Ortegón, 2019; Mukwambo, 2019; Scharager, 2018).

Based on this, those who, as Municio (2005), align around a "*pour soi*" conception of quality, are focused on the analysis of quality along the process followed by an educational program, with emphasis on its results and effects, whereas those who, as Aguerrondo (1993), are inclined towards an "*en soi*" conception of quality, assume a perspective that privileges systemic studies focused on educational policies and on the ideological and pedagogical options assumed by planners and decision-makers. This vision is shared by authors of different geographical and discipline origin (i.e., Lemaitre, 2010; Nabaho et al. (2019); Prisacariu & Shah, 2016; Weenink et al., 2018). Aguerrondo (1993) argues that there is quality where there is coexistence between the current general political project and the implemented educational project or, more concretely, "among [its] fundamental axes (ideological, political, pedagogical, etc.) and the organization (or the phenomenal appearance) of the educational apparatus" (p. 5). Thus, in this perspective, the political and ideological definitions are the ones that establish the scales for evaluation of quality, whether of an educational system, a school organization or a pedagogical proposal.

Therefore, in its implied connotations and in all that can be inferred from them, lies the main divergence plane with the perspective of Municio (2005), for whom it is of little importance the nature, validity or consistence of the ideological and political definitions (or even technical) that have taken part in the gestation of the educational product or service, nor the effectiveness of efficiency features attributed to them. From this perspective, achieving quality does not depend on the degree in which the educational service or product fulfills the objectives established by its creators —its efficacy— nor lies in the extent to which its production process has optimized the resources available —its efficiency—, but rather the degree in which such product or service contributes to fulfill the needs of its recipients (or users, consumers or clients, depending on

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the case). If the latter are in charge of determining if a product or service has quality, then its evaluation should not be made in terms of efficacy or efficiency, but in terms of "effectiveness, value and satisfaction" (Municio, 2005, p. 493). Then, there is quality if the educational product or service fulfills the objectives established by its creators —in consonance with the "*fitness for purpose*" perspective referred to by Harvey and Green (1993) and, according to what emerged from the review conducted, adopted by the great majority of the main experts about the topic—, but as long as such objectives are oriented to fulfill the needs, interests, demands or expectations of its recipient (or users, consumers or clients)

Thus, in opposition to the paradigm that defines quality as a function of the presence of attributes inherent to the educational product or service —its internal quality, according to the expression proposed by him — (definition aligned with the perspectives of "*quality as excellence*" and of "*quality as consistence or as perfection*" referred to by Harvey & Green, 1993), Municio (2005) vindicates a definition focused on the assessment of its consumers —its external quality—, constructed based on the distance perceived by them between their initial expectations and the degree of satisfaction achieved with the received product or service. In sum, even though the educational product or service results excellent in terms of efficiency and efficacy, that does not guarantee its quality in a full sense, which will be only achieved when the effects produced in its users are estimated by them as satisfactory or valuable. In a way, this positioning is aligned with the one exposed by Michel de Certeau (2000) in other discipline and thematic realm: "a model is not judged by its tests, but by the effects that it produces on the interpretation" (p. 150)

As a conclusion, an alternative position: *quality pour qui*[2]

Definitely, who should define, determine or evaluate the quality of a system, program, product or service in higher education? To decision-makers advised by experts, would respond Aguerrondo (1993); to its user or consumers, would reply Municio (2005). Let us consider, for a moment, that in terms of pertinence, viability and consistence or convenience, the response by Municio (2005) is acceptable: "whatever quality is will be defined by the recipient of the object or service" (p. 488). In that case, in which way could a consumer define the quality of the educational product or service that he/she consumes? In which way all consumers of a category of product or service could determine its quality? Is it esta-

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blished (or inferred) by the mere fact of acquiring and consuming it? Are the consumers in conditions —situational, intellectual and corporate, among others— of determining consensual parameters for defining and evaluating the quality of an educational product or service? Even more relevant: if so, is it really required that planners and decision-makers are adjusted to such definitions and determinations? Would that be a valid and pertinent adjustment? Would it be technically consistent and politically convenient?

The first two questions of the preceding paragraph, of intentionally rhetoric nature, invoke instrumental objections. The responses to the remaining questions, which imply objections referred to the practical sense —understood with the meaning attributed by Bourdieu (1990) in his book entitled, precisely, *Le sens pratique*— and are biased to the technical and political relevance, are, or should be, strongly negative. In most of the current world, the fundamental guidelines of higher education are a matter of State. It should not be conceived the creation and implementation of educational products and services apart from of educational public policies, and much less delegating the definition of their quality to their consumers or, much less, taking what they consider as quality as a central input of some educational plan, program, service or product. The goods of education, crucial field in any social system, should not be equated to any other good that participates in the logics of the market.

However, according to what is established by Municio (2014), the fundamental principle of quality, accepted unanimously by experts in quality and entities that establish quality standards and/or certifications, is the orientation to the client. In their opinion, any institution must center their management in the client, and all product or service should be oriented to the satisfaction of his/her needs. On the contrary, we insist, this should not be strictly like this in the field of education. In this field, the needs should be established by the social systems in its entirety –specifically, the citizens (among which, the players of education are obviously included)–, which, according to the constitutional regulations that govern our social life, delegates such setting to the competent bodies of the State.

From the preceding argument it should not be inferred that education, by pursuing the maximum quality of its components, should not take into consideration the demand of the involved social sectors, nor paying the proper attention to the degree of satisfaction of the users of educational products and services. But it should not be exhausted in it. In any case, it could be admitted that any educational product or service must be oriented to the satisfaction of needs, but as long as it is not about

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the needs exclusively sensed, perceived or expressed by users, but also of those that the people responsible of the design of educational policies —meanwhile socially, politically and technically legitimated— consider convenient to satisfy. This is the only sense that should be attributed to the orientation to the client defended by Municio (2005).

To this respect, our position is closer to the one exposed by Aguerrondo (1993):

> An efficient educational system is that which provides the best education possible to the greatest number of people. Then, it is constituted at an instrumental level: it depends on […] how it is defined, in the political and technical instance, what is 'best education' (p. 3).

Thus, it is clear that the definition of quality of education —"the best education"— corresponds to "the political-technical instance", this is, to the field of action of the agents to which the citizens attribute the obligation, the authority and the competence to define the educational policies and make decisions. In any case, the citizens directly or indirectly involved or affected by the so defined educational policies have their own spaces and instances —and if it is not this way, they should conquer them— for the eventual rejection or questioning of them. As it happens with many others issues that emerge from (or are installed in) the social life of republican States with formal democracy and semi-representative constitution, a good part of the conflicts are resolved according to the mobilization and pressure capacity of the organized social groups, whether it is about, in the case of the educational field, teachers, students or their families.

It is pertinent to make a clarification exclusive for the Uruguayan case (and, with some nuances of difference, also for the Argentinian case). Inalienable principles of institutional autonomy and of the co-government by university students, teachers and alumni, rule in the public university education in Uruguay; these principles were established by the Organic Law of the University, in force since 1958. In this case, in front of the question posed at the beginning of this section: who should define, determine or evaluate the quality of the educational system?, the response is unique and unequivocal: to the decision-makers, who are also its users and consumers. The star players of the Uruguayan public university system —students, teachers and alumni— are also the main agents of change, according to a representation system very consensually agreed and widely legitimated and accepted.

In any case, it is necessary the adoption of an unequivocal and precise definition of the notion of *quality of higher education*, as part of the

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starting horizon of every design of integral educative plans or programs, both at the institutional and organizational levels, as well as of any system projected for the evaluation of existing plans and programs. But this is not the only necessary definition. It should be added the responses to two questions formulated by Blanco and Berger (2014) and reaffirmed by Marshall (2016): who define the criteria to be included in such definition? Who benefit from the different existing definitions of quality?

In agreement with this type of statement, the manifestly pragmatic interest underlying the present text is expressed in a mostly political perspective that is apart both from the "*en soi*" and "*pour soi*" conceptions. On one hand, because the essentialist conceptions, that our epistemological positioning discards, contribute nothing in political, of transforming action or praxis terms. On the other hand, because the merely subjectivist conceptions inhibit the possibilities of transforming planning, programming or projection. Then, the "*en soi*" and "*pour soi*" conceptions should be relegated, and substituted by a "*pour qui*" conception of quality in higher education: quality for whom.

Limitations and potential continuity lines

Although the literature review was conducted with the maximum rigor and exhaustivity (a starting universe of 53,290 papers published in the 2016-2020 period in a total of 1272 journals, adding also 80 texts of "gray literature"), two limitations may be pointed out.

A first limitation lies on the fact that the review was exclusively restricted to papers published in journals indexed in the 2019 *Scimago Journal Rank* (even though it is an indexing base very recognized in the international scientific context).

Another limitation, of rather partial nature, is that the period of time considered in the review (2016-2020) does not enable directly knowing and evaluating the theoretical and semantic derivation of the notion of *quality of higher education* from its establishment in the "hidden agenda" of the international scientific community —towards the 1980s— to the present.

The most immediate continuity lines of the literature review conducted, which would complete the integral state of the art about the matter addressed, correspond to the analysis and discussion of the results that were excluded from the present text, already enunciated at the beginning of its third section: the components or standards mostly used for evaluat-

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ing the quality of higher education and the correlation between the type of conception of quality of higher education and the empirical strategy adopted for determining it, including the predominant analysis units.

Notes

1 Here the expressions "*en soi*" and "*pour soi*" are maintained in their original spelling taken from the French language, since they do not admit a precise translation that simultaneously preserves their epistemological connotations. Based on a referral to distinctions typical of the post-Socratic Greek philosophy and of the Kantian philosophy, the expression "quality *en soi*" makes reference to objectivistic positions, those that consider that "things" have an essence (the noumenon, the thing-in-itself), whose existence is independent of our capacity to perceive it and, thereby, of any form of sensible intuition or of representation. In contrast, the expression "quality *pour soi*", refers to subjectivistic positions, among which there are the phenomenological ones that reject that "things" have an essence and that postulate, grossly said, that the world is the phenomenal world; the apparent world, the world sensitively intuited, perceived, represented (Acevedo, 2008). Conceived this way, "quality *en soi*" and "quality *pour soi*" are polar notions, contrasting. Their existence in a pure form is highly improbable, but result useful to differentiate the epistemological positions that, regarding higher education, present clear affinities with one or other of these notions.

2 The literal translation of the expression "*pour qui*", taken from the French language, is "for whom". In the context of the discursive development of this text, the use of the expression "*pour qui*", without translation and applied to the concept of *quality*, responds to the intention of promoting in the reader its contrasting with the expressions "quality *en soi*" and "quality *pour soi*".

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Study for the quality and prospective of Organizational Strategic Planning in Higher Education

Estudio para la calidad y prospectiva de la Planeación Estratégica organizacional en Educación Superior

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Abstract

The changing times of this century and the global health contingency, have brought new forms of administration of organizations. In the particular case of Higher Education and precisely, in private universities, the operation has been modified. Therefore, the objective of this research was to conduct a study about the quality and prospective of Strategic Planning, through the integration of normative, strategic and operational elements based on aspects of organizational structure and behavior. The fulfillment of the objective enabled to elaborate a linear model with high correlation and thus consider variables of these elements, with the most relevant being those related to the normative element, i.e., the Institutional Philosophy, both Mission and Vision, which specify in its precepts the quality to be achieved in institutional service, both administrative and predominantly educational. The methodological approach was quantitative, of correlational depth and not experimental. The key informants were a sample of the administrative staff, for which a questionnaire with response scale was applied and the data was statistically processed. It is inferred that the strategic work is implemented with quality if procedures and measurement indicators are integrated in each administrative area, as well as its high correlation with organizational compliance, which in turn promotes a quality educational service.

Keywords

Higher Education, administration, Strategic Planning, institutional philosophy, quality, prospective.

Resumen

Los cambiantes tiempos del presente siglo, y la contingencia sanitaria mundial, han traído nuevas formas de administración de las organizaciones. En el caso particular de la Educación Superior y de forma precisa, en universidades de corte privado, la operación se ha modificado. Por lo tanto, el objetivo de esta investigación fue elaborar un estudio para la calidad y prospectiva de la Planeación Estratégica, a partir de la integración de elementos normativos, estratégicos y operativos con base en aspectos de la estructura y comportamiento organizacional. El cumplimiento del objetivo permitió elaborar un modelo lineal con alta correlación y así considerar variables de dichos elementos, siendo las más relevantes, las relacionadas con el elemento normativo, o sea, la Filosofía Institucional, tanto la Misión como la Visión, las cuales, en sus preceptos, puntualizan la calidad a lograr en el servicio institucional, tanto administrativo como preponderantemente educativo. El enfoque metodológico fue cuantitativo, de profundidad correlacional y no experimental. Los informantes clave se integraron en una muestra del personal administrativo, para lo cual, se aplicó un cuestionario con escala de respuesta, los datos fueron procesados estadísticamente. Se infiere que el trabajo estratégico se implementa con calidad si se integran los procedimientos e indicadores de medición en cada área administrativa, así como su alta correlación con el cumplimiento de la organización, el cual a su vez promueve un servicio educativo de calidad.

Palabras clave

Educación Superior, administración, Planeación Estratégica, filosofía institucional, calidad, prospectiva.

Introduction

Planning is the fundamental process from educational administration, for any Higher Education Institution. Foresight and diagnosis are implicit in this process, to provide operational order and direction, in the general and in the specific, of the areas that constitute the university structure.

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Planning is a tool that enables to indicate where it is desired to be and where it is desired to arrive in a specific time, having as main guideline the institutional philosophical aspects. Each institutional sphere should have projects, strategic objectives, and observable and quantifiable results that give an account of the quality in their processes.

For the Universidad España (UNES), Strategic Planning is a process of participation structured in work teams, which derives from the dynamics of the private universities involved in quality accreditation processes within the national context. At present, it enables deciding the direction and development of the organization over time according to its Institutional Philosophy, integrated by Mission and Vision.

The objective of this research work is to conduct a study about quality and prospective of Strategic Planning of UNES, using a nonexperimental methodology through a quantitative correlational approach, which may also be useful for other Higher Education institutions. Vélez et al. (2021) emphasize that practicing quality control in Education implies to design, plan, provide, evaluate and act to maintain the level of utility and satisfaction for the student. Thus, planning from the administrative area has incidence on strictly educational processes.

The research problem focuses in how aspects of the organizational structure and behavior should be integrated with quality and prospective in Strategic Planning for the next renovation period, all of the above having the Institutional Philosophy as essential base. Establishing Philosophy as a way of life in the university area to govern academic and administrative processes, as well as being the support for organizational culture, implies considering the student, first of all, as a human being, not as a number, record or object. On these terms, the Philosophy recovers the human sense and the purpose of education. The Philosophy, understood as Institutional Philosophy, seeks a concrete and placed education, to prioritize human interrelations, not only within the administrative process and the Strategic Planning, but also in university life in general.

According to the Center of Institutional Effectiveness (1998, cited in Ruiz, 2017), Institutional Effectiveness is achieved as the goals proposed at the beginning of the planning system are accomplished. Strategic Planning arise from the need of grouping and indexing operational efforts, aimed at the collection of institutional data, which according to the needs of each of the elements to measure and in consistence with the UNES Mission, which states "Train quality professionals capable of living better with others and with themselves"; this prints a seal to all framed actions. The research and its results will serve to consolidate the admin-

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istrative process, as well as providing structural elements that intend to align organizational behavior and the development of functions with a quality vision, and thus the research question is posed to determine, how to correlate normative, strategic and operational elements with quality and prospective in strategic planning, based on aspects of organizational structure and behavior?

The social projection is evident, since public compromise, which is a current trend in Higher Education in the first world, will be part of the planning model that will be implemented for UNES in 2023. Watermeyer (2011) states that public compromise is related with changes in the universities, since it responds to an agenda of activities that requires the interaction between the academic context and the public and community environment. Activities obviously derived from the substantive functions of teaching, research and extension. Regarding the theoretical value, the contributions of classical theories of administration have equilibrium and importance from the results and their contrasting. The variables enrich their conceptualization and correlational behavior in front of the macro variable, and this effectively reinforces a substantive theory. As in any scientific research, more research studies are proposed from the findings to promote the consolidation of the institutional and educational management line, which in turn may be useful for other universities.

In the state of the art of this research study, it is demonstrated that the number of studies conducted in Latin American universities about Strategic Planning is still incipient. The research works found are scattered in countries such as Mexico, Cuba and Ecuador. Indeed, there are studies similar to this one, such as the ones by Urcid-Puga and Rojas (2020) and Soler et al. (2015), because they address models for Strategic Planning that are commensurate with current work being conducted in the area and with what UNES is searching for. There is no representativity to be considered as experts in the topic, since documents respond to research intentions in each context of university administration.

Within the studies mentioned in the previous paragraph, it has been found and reaffirmed the importance of having a Strategic Planning so that academic and administrative management is efficient, organizational structure operates appropriately and objectives and, above all, institutional improvement are achieved. The dimensions, stages and features proposed in each research work and in each model, represent a knowledge base to integrate the proposal presented here. Research works on this topic have been found and reviewed from three approaches: quantitative, qualitative and mixed. In the latter the results are not suf-

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ficiently precise to intend establishing administrative projects, and therefore, these research works are omitted in the present discussion.

It is key to mention that aspects of Strategic Planning such as its categories, namely normative, strategic and operational, have not been investigated. Moreover, other diagnosis techniques besides SOWT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis have been used, to be able to established the model sought. Case studies could be integrated to assess the model and, consequently, raise quality standards in Higher Education.

López et al. (2012) conducted a research in the Mexican context, which highlights the importance of Strategic Planning in the university to overcome organizational ambiguities. It is an experimental work which demonstrates that it is necessary that strategic objectives are related to the interests of the participants. Strategic Planning should be a standard practice, in order to carry out administration and management of resources. From the beginning, it is considered a conceptual model, and even in an experimental stage it is notable the environment of transition toward the improvement of both academic and administrative processes, despite anarchic attitudes.

This is also evidenced in the results, because the questions directed to the personnel are of subjective nature. It is also notable the importance of the real capacity at the high hierarchies that direct processes, to avoid ambiguities and an image of irrationality to the planning process that is considered as rational. A highlighted aspect refers to the clarity of the functions and obligations of the personnel involved, to achieve objectives. Another aspect focuses on the contractual condition and on personnel policy when it is a public university. Finally, the main contribution is the change promoted by the implementation of Strategic Planning.

The study by Ojeda Ramírez (2013) identifies Strategic Planning in Mexican higher education institutions, and conducts an analysis from rhetoric to practice. First, it presents a historic journey of strategic planning, particularly in Mexico, its evolution in the business sector and subsequent implementation in universities. Second, from the context of the author, it is presented a department of institutional planning, and also the importance of the involvement of several people and of fulfilling the common and general stages of this process, namely, the philosophical institutional framework, the objectives, the typical analyses with the SOWT technique, the strategies and their development, as well as the control and evaluation. The author states that the implementation of Strategic Plan-

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ning in Mexican universities is still incipient, although it is a relatively recent requirement for achieving quality accreditations.

The Synergic Model for Strategic Planning is established in the research work by Urcid-Puga and Rojas (2020), in which the main result is a qualitative methodology; it states that Strategic Planning should promote changes in Higher Education institutions, and may generate a shared value in their curricular processes and in the sociocultural environment. They consider Strategic Planning as the driving force of decision making, changes, growth and identification of strategic areas so that operational areas respond to the achievement of objectives. The shared value as intangible asset with respect to what people expect from the university, in both their internal and external context. With respect to the latter, the competitiveness aspect is crucial, as well as the relationships with the productive sector; of course, without ignoring fulfilling substantive functions.

Cruz et al. (2019) present a management model from a quantitative research; even though this model only focuses on teacher improvement, it specifically shows the necessary managerial functions. The divisions of this model may be part of Strategic Planning, as it is identified in university management. Such divisions are: sense of identity, capability of analyzing reality, adaptability, integration and group work. In the management dimension, Planning, Organization and Control are considered. In the strategic dimension, Strategic Planning and Implementation Methodology.

Continuing with Cruz et al. (2019), the direction of human capital should establish the diagnoses and improvement plans so that university professors become involved in the improvement ideology and enhance their performance. An interesting result of this research showed that the degrees of each professor do not guarantee a good performance, and thus it is necessary to promote improvement plans. The main contribution of this study is the conception of Strategic Planning, where enhancing the development of human capital promotes strategic development because it has impact on all fundamental actions of each working sections and, therefore, on the integral management, and strengthens the strategic conception of the university.

The research work by Guerrero Pulido (2012) finds the relevance of contributing with educational administrative studies, particularly at the university level, from the proposal of a Strategic Planning model that not only focuses on the operational issue. It is completely identified the need that such university performs a normative planning that includes the ideas, and which is also structured with intelligent strategic goals and objectives. Unfortunately, this document does not have a theoretical

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foundation about Strategic Planning as fundamental object of study. It is only limited to provide two chapters referred to the university context, but not to the administrative regulation as it should occur to conceptualize the substantial theoretical elements. It was not found the use of any associated theoretical reference, everything is contextual. There is an absence of a legal framework in the university.

As a consequence of the absence of pertinent theory, there is no normative planning to enable carrying out Strategic Planning. The different areas perform only in an operational manner, without a follow-up of the projects and without documenting advances or achievements, and thus there is no information that provides evidence of achieving strategic objectives. It is remarkable the subdivision of dimensions: technological, organizational, academic and of the external environment to provide a guideline for improvement. The paradigm and methodology are only succinctly enunciated as mixed; a deep study might have resulted in larger impact and internal congruence of this research work. Guerrero Pulido (2012) poses the following general research question, which is the required planning model? This model is not presented nor consolidated; the required planning design is only enunciated in the document.

The research work by Soler et al. (2015) in the Ecuadorian context provides the need of a management model in the university, and, for the particular case, of adopting the Balance Score Card, which involves and states that it is fundamental to recognize the organizational structure of the university, in order to locate communication channels and decision making. It results interesting the division in subsystems, which enables establishing a particular organization. The subsystems considered were the strategic, research, teaching, administration and relations. In addition, the interest for efficiently achieving the mission through institutional management. Another contribution is the statement of tactical objectives and their corresponding indicators. The operational objectives provide a guideline for the classification and planning of strategies.

Theoretical foundation

Theoretical precepts are established below to understand Strategic Planning and the related elements. Four points may be analyzed according to Steiner (2001), who refers to the future of the current decisions, the process, the philosophy and the structure, Strategic planning involves establishing organizational goals, defining strategies to achieve them and

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ensuring their implementation; to accomplish better results, managers and personnel should believe in the value of strategic planning, is an attitude to perform activities in the best possible way with the integration of short, medium and long-term programs, budgets and operational plans.

The text by Rodríguez (2017) exposes that strategic planning is important because it helps to have a clear concept of the organization once the mission has been declared; this enables formulating plans and activities to achieve objectives. The acceleration of the technological change and the increasing complexity of the external environment are aspects to value the time horizon and the reach of the organization.

Ramírez Cavassa (2004) emphasizes that the administrative structure of an educational institution should be constituted in such a way that all essential activities of the organization are covered; thus, the hierarchy in the chain of command enables indirectly the need of leadership for consolidating such activities. According to Chiavenato (2009), the behavior of each person is an important aspect in organizations. The perspective of human resources has been subject to administration theories until evolving to the concept of human capital.

Arango (2010) states that the enterprise architecture is a coherent set of principles, methods and models that are used in the design of the organizational structure. It should be mentioned that there has been an evolution in this respect, and it is gradual the emergence of new enterprise architectures which impact not only the structure but, in parallel, promote positive changes in the organizational development.

The strategy defines long-term objectives, while the structure organizes the activities that arise from these strategies, providing hierarchy and arrangement.

> The formalization of the structure usually concentrates in an organization manual whose purpose will be to guide people in their work, by establishing the location of the positions within the structure, their dependence, who depend on it and which are their functions and duties (Gilli, 2017, p. 47).

Anda (2006) states that a system for quality management may be adopted in the administrative field, which in turn implies that the different departments get involved in the compromise and responsibility for quality, and that this is the only way to satisfy client expectations.

> In a planning for quality, it is essential to take into account the following aspects: quality policy, quality standards, key concepts, leadership, cli-

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ent needs, quality program, goals and proposals for quality. In addition, consider new organizational structures (Anda, 2006, p. 107).

The value given to an institution, expressed as quality, depends on the objective features of such institution, as well as on the idea of the evaluating subject about what are efficiency and quality. Malo (1998) establishes the ideal types of quality values, remarking Academic Quality with an approach centered on the course and in professor control; this a traditional acceptance approach which, nevertheless, offers fewer fundamental changes.

According to Astigarraga (2016), the origins of prospective date back to the end of World War II, where the term foresight prevails to identify the science that studies the future to be able to understand it and in turn have influence on it. In other words, is a systematic and collaborative process to establish a long-term vision. The work by Miklos and Tello (1999) integrates the thought of Michael Porter, according to which a single prediction should not be made but a possible future to occur, neither a variant nor blurred images, but different points of view of the future. The main objective of the scenarios is to have an analysis of tendencies, desirable situations with the firm intention of adapting to the change.

Materials and methods

According to Vélez and Calderón (2018), the Vienna Circle was mainly constituted by mathematicians and scientists. The paradigm postulated for scientific research in the area of social sciences was the positivist-quantitative. Its fundamental postulates are: the reality has its own existence and is constituted by given things and events, which are interrelated in cause-effect terms. The knowing subject is capable of observing and measure reality in a neutral and objective manner.

This paradigm enables decomposing complex phenomena in indicators susceptible to be known, because they are observable, measurable and/or estimable. The attributes of the knowledge produced are: be proven and be subject to statistical parameters. To obtain results of a representative sample of a population, it postulates inferences that enable to generalize its results. It is important to mention that the election of the quantitative approach is congruent with the described positivist paradigm. Thus, it was decided to choose a deductive method with structured research design, summary statistics by group, focused on a sample of the administrative personnel, in a single application of the research instrument through the survey technique.

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The size of the representative sample was calculated maximizing confidence to 95 % as defined for research processes, and minimizing error to 1.5 %; thus, the result is based on the following: a standard error of 0.015, a population of the administrative personnel of N=71, a representative sample of n=31, i.e., 31 observations that in social research translate to 31 participants (Hernández, 2014, p. 179).

It is a nonexperimental research, because no variable is manipulated, primary information is extracted given the real conditions in the context. There is neither a controlled or laboratory environment to carry out measurements, only the phenomena are observed in their natural environment to analyze them. Due to its scope, this research is correlational, with the purpose of joining the incidence level between the different independent variables with the dependent ones, and that they respond to the episteme of the administrative group of the UNES; it is considered the most suitable to be able to establish a prior model which translates into the administrative model. The correlational study implies the association of variables by means of a predictable pattern (Hernández, 2014, p. 93).

The work hypothesis refers to the structure, for establishing correlations through the statement that the quality and vision of Strategic Planning in the UNES depends on the training of the administrative personnel, of the use and handling of indicators, procedures, and of the achievements obtained. The variables involved were operationalized with dimensions and indicators such as existence, pertinence, strength and impact; a research instrument with Likert scale response was generated with these indicators. Such instrument obtained construct and content validity through triangulation of judges. It was also subject to the pilot stage to calculate the reliability value in a single application, which resulted in a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.778 for 16 items. Based on the above, this research has the necessary scientific rigor to support the results and the formulation of a quality model.

Results

Anda (2006) states that a quality management system may be adopted in the administrative field, which in turn implies that the different departments get involved based on the compromise and responsibility for quality, and that this in the only way to satisfy client expectations; the following analysis with respect to frequencies starts from this premise. Results indicate that 58.1 % of the personnel considers that training has

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a high influence on the quality of institutional processes; 38.7 % of the personnel is completely convinced that the use of indicators drives quality of Strategic Planning, 3.2 % is little convinced and another 3.2 % is not convinced at all. In addition, 48.4 % of the personnel expresses that the implementation of procedures drives quality of Strategic Planning.

Chiavenato (2009) indicates that human capital is the talent that the organization attracts and retains; this type of capital is constituted by persons with the competencies necessary for the success of the organization. It depends on the design and on the organizational culture to boost the talent, based on the identification of either physical and/or cognitive skills; this is directly related, to take actions with the administrative personnel.

On the other hand, 83.9 % of the personnel considers important to carry out a quality work, and 16.1 % considers it is fundamental to have incidence on the organizational culture. With respect to the Vision as a reference point toward a work with prospective, 61.3 % states that it is necessary to fulfill it. From Godet (2000), the stated prospective indicates that it is about a reflection that intends to illuminate the action and everything related with the strategic. It distinguishes two phases: one exploratory and another normative, where the selection of strategies is conditioned by uncertainty. A 67.7 % of the personnel is willing to take part of a new quality model, which emphasizes the integration of training, promotion of organizational culture and improvement in the administration.

Regarding the general descriptive analysis, in the 1 to 4 Likert scale it was obtained that, with a mean of 3.29 and a standard deviation of 0.78, the administration should be the main driver of the Strategic Planning achievement. It is a repetitive trend, even though the mean is 3.39, that implementation of procedures causes that the personnel shows a dispersion of 0.71, whereas the institutional Mission, which has a mean of 3.1 and a deviation of 0.83 toward the left, induces decision making to promote the context.

With a mean of 3.55 in the variable Vision, a reinforcement can be made in the organizational culture to steer towards knowledge, experience and promulgation for fulfilling the Institutional Vision. The structure and behavior of organizational dynamics will have incidence in favor of administration in general.

The involved correlations were calculated for the interpretation and depth of this study, demonstrating the following: it is observed a practically null correlation between training and Strategic Planning vision, with a coefficient of 0.019, and a null determination with 0 % of the cases. Therefore, it is interpreted that, in general, training is not determinant in the follow-up and projection of Strategic Planning.

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A correlation coefficient of 0.623 was obtained which, according to Briones (2006), represents a moderate correlation between Strategic Planning quality and vision and the use and handling of indicators. It is observed a high correlation, with a coefficient of 0.824 and a determination coefficient with 67.9 % of the cases, between Strategic Planning quality and vision and the implementation of procedures. Therefore, it is interpreted that, in general, procedures are determinant in the follow-up and projection of Strategic Planning. In general, achievements should be driven by the administration in the follow-up and projection of Strategic Planning.

Hypothesis checking is carried out with the test of analysis of variance (ANOVA), particularly for each of the variables involved. For evaluation, it is necessary to have available tables of values of the F distribution, and according to Briones (2006, p. 262), for a significance of 0.05 recommended in research, and in the particular case with 1 degree of freedom in the numerator and n-1 of 30 in the denominator, a critical value F=4.17 is read. The calculated value of F is 0.011, which is not greater than the F from tables, and hence the null hypothesis is accepted and the work hypothesis is rejected regarding the dependance of Strategic Planning with respect to training.

The calculated value of F=18.396 is greater than the F=4.17 from tables, and hence the null hypothesis is rejected and the work hypothesis is accepted. Thus, Strategic Planning quality and vision depend on the measurement indicators. The calculated value of F=61.478 is greater than the F=4.17 from tables, and hence the null hypothesis is rejected and the work hypothesis is accepted. Thus, Strategic Planning quality and vision depend on the implementation of procedures in each area. The calculated value of F=12.649 is greater than the F=4.17 from tables, and hence the null hypothesis is rejected and the work hypothesis is accepted. Thus, Strategic Planning quality and vision depend on an administration that drive achievements.

A model in prospective in front of future Strategic Planning is presented below. This is feasible according to the results obtained in the following table, which synthetizes the global correlation of such model. The purpose infers the fulfillment of Institutional Philosophy based on the contribution of the personnel for the prospective of the Institutional Philosophy in a new model.

As it is seen in Table 1, a Quality Model for Strategic Planning and based on Institutional Philosophy, Mission and Vision, offers a high correlation of 0.791 and applies to 62.5 % of the cases. This could be adjusted to a linear model in an advanced stage of the formulation of the new Strategic Planning.

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Table 1
Model Correlation

Model Summary[b]				
Model	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
1	.791[a]	.625	.531	.377

a. Predictors: (Constant), Do you visualize a better scenario for the Institution in 2023? Do you contribute with the training of Quality Professionals? Does the use of measurement indicators drive Strategic Planning quality? How much influence does training have on the Quality of Institution processes? Does it fulfill the Vision of the University? Does the administration drive the achievements of Strategic Planning?
a. Predictors: (Constant), Do you visualize a better scenario for the Institution in 2023? Do you contribute with the training of Quality Professionals? Does the use of measurement indicators drive Strategic Planning quality? How much influence does training have on the Quality of Institution processes? Does it fulfill the Vision of the University? Does the administration drive the achievements of Strategic Planning?

Prepared by authors.

Ruiz (2017) states that quality-based models for planning are founded on institutional self-evaluation processes that promote the revision of areas, the identification of strengths and areas of opportunity with the purpose of orienting toward a continuous improvement, it focuses on the needs and expectations of students and has incidence on the capabilities of the personnel. Quality-based planning involves searching for institutional accreditation. Thus, in the UNES experience, the processes for quality accreditation, where one of the most relevant is the accreditation obtained from the Federación de Instituciones Mexicanas Particulares de Educación Superior (FIMPES) for many years, have supported the present research work and its findings have been used to benefit quality for processes and expected results.

Discussion

According to Daft (2011), organizations may experience important changes in their constitution or in their operation. The scopes of the organizational change are affected because it is common to think about the complexity of the new. This applies to the results obtained, because while it is possible to construct a correlational model between variables considered as elements and aspects that should be continuously improved, and this is clearly necessary, there is not a complete willingness to accept new

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ways of working. Ramírez Cavassa (2004) emphasizes that the administrative structure in an educational institution should be constituted such that the essential activities in the organization are covered, as well as the hierarchy for the chain of command; this indirectly enables the leadership for consolidating those activities, and thus the results suggest locating leaders in this compromise and implications about Strategic Planning, a leader that is committed to continuous monitoring and appropriate strategies to increase the correlation values in the proposed model

Rivas (2002) states that the first and fundamental aspect of Mintzberg model is the strategic group, responsible for fulfilling the purposes of the Mission. This group corresponds to the top management or hierarchy of the organization, and is in charge of strategic projects and resource allocation, as well as the evaluation of the general performance. The members are the image of the organization to the external environment. This model has represented one of the most recognized proposals in the administrative sector, for the particular case of this university context; precisely this first aspect is the one that will be activated to fulfill the quality and prospective model that has been proposed as the main result of this research work.

There are important aspects that have influence on the organizational culture, and these may be classified as structural and subjective. The structural refer to how each person is placed in a function, which influences even the clothing and the protocols that should be followed. Regarding the subjective aspects, they integrate values and ways of thinking of each person (Chiavenato, 2009). It is clear the influence of the environment on the ethics of a person, but if the organizational culture is appropriately defined and applied, it will impact on each individual, framing his/her behavior inside the organization. It is important to take care of the internal environment, value and evaluate the behavior of the personnel to avoid problems.

This research work confirms, by means of the structural aspect, the importance of the procedures and of using and handling indicators, both in the result of the correlation and in the hypothesis test. With respect to the subjective, and concerning Institutional Philosophy, the postures assumed by the key informant personnel will have intervene on decision making and will have incidence on the values of people, to be able to sensibilize them about constantly performing a quality work to fulfill the Institutional Mission and Vision.

Normative planning is constituted by the Vision, Mission and values of the Institution (Ruiz, 2017). One of the great objectives in the leadership of an organization is to design these components in such a way

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that a Strategic Planning system with clear objectives and performance indicators is integrated to enable a continuous improvement. It is important to highlight that this vision of the ideal future of the institution should be realistic and reachable, otherwise it is lost the motivation of the different players that take part of the educational process and are responsible of handling the Strategic Planning objectives. That is why there is a consistency between the results and the vision or prospective to be followed in the UNES, the quality will always be a valid and reachable proposal if it is established an organizational culture which is participative, open to change and cooperative in the functions that offer achievement of objectives and an ideology for continuous improvement.

Conclusions

With respect to the answer to the general research question, how to correlate normative, strategic and operational elements based on aspects of the structure and organizational behavior with quality and prospective in Strategic Planning in the UNES? In the first instance, it is concluded that the aforementioned elements where theorized, and further integrated in the research instrument to finally structure the Quality Model. The fundamental normative elements considered include the Mission and Vision, due to the relevance of the Institutional Philosophy as foundation and guiding principle of any Strategic Planning; the strategic elements include the indicators and the work of the administration to reach achievements; the training and the procedures were considered as operational elements. The research work demonstrates that quality underlies and prospective is emphasized in all cases, resulting in a model with a high correlation coefficient of 0.791 for the possible linear model.

It is concluded that the general objective has been fulfilled, which was conducting a study for the quality and prospective of Strategic Planning in the UNES based on the integration of normative, strategic and operational elements according to aspects of the structure and organizational behavior, in the integration of administrative academic, technical, support and administrative nonacademic personnel. The quantitative methodology promoted such integration through a correlational depth, to determine which elements have incidence, and in this way make decisions for the future of the organization.

The quantitative methodology was ideal; however, it is recommended to conduct another study that considers other variables such as teamwork and leadership; even though the administrative personnel

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may optimize procedures, interesting and important results may be also obtained about these variables that have influence on the dynamic and produce a organizational behavior towards the consolidation.

It will be necessary to compare with previous strategic planning to verify the trajectory and desired differentiation, which in turn enables fulfilling the current needs and the prospective ones in the next five years. It is recommended to carry out a complementary diagnosis that considers the environment exogenous to the organization; it is probable that a SOWT analysis is not enough, but a global work through, for instance, Porter's five forces or PEST (political, economic, social and technological) analysis.

It is definitive that there is a compromise of the authorities and the administrative personnel of the UNES to investigate and participate in the internal dynamics that offer results for decision making, to provide a quality educational service in a sustainable and integral manner, as it is the case regarding the coming Strategic Planning. Finally, this research may represent an example for Higher Education institutions committed to fulfill their Philosophy and improve the quality in their processes.

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The quality of education in rural areas from the perspective of public policies

La calidad de la educación en territorios rurales desde las políticas públicas

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to delve deeper into the concept of educational quality in the reality of the Mexican Educational System. As a problem, the asymmetry of results and realities experienced in the rural and urban contexts is assumed to question whether there is a common criterion about 'educational quality'. The concept of educational quality is explored in light of federal regulations that protect the right to education. On the other hand, it is explained the conceptual change that has taken place in the conception of rurality, becoming increasingly diverse. A specific section describes the Community School Model, which educationally serves to dispersed and underpopulated communities in Mexico. Methodologically, a hermeneutic reflection of three sources is proposed: the concept of education, the wording of Article 3 of the Mexican Constitution with its various changes and descriptions of the rural educational environment in that period, and the Multigrade Schools promoted by CONAFE as the system that reaches those territories. It is concluded that educational quality is delimited by the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States and the conditions in which it is developed, all framed by the following factors: (i) the dignification of the person, (ii) the legal terms described in Art. 3, (iii) contextualized in the geographical reality of the student.

Keywords

State and education, right to education, educational policy, educational quality, relevance of education, educational efficiency.

Resumen

El objetivo de este artículo es profundizar el concepto de calidad educativa en la realidad del Sistema Educativo Mexicano. Como problema se asume la asimetría de resultados y realidades vividas en el contexto rural y urbano para cuestionar si existe un criterio común sobre la 'calidad educativa'. Se explora el concepto de calidad educativa cara a las normas federales que amparan el derecho a la educación. Por otro lado, se explica el cambio conceptual que ha habido en la concepción de ruralidad, volviéndose cada vez más diverso. En un apartado concreto se describe el Modelo de Escuelas Comunitarias, quienes atienden educativamente a poblaciones dispersas y con menos pobladores de México. Metodológicamente se propone una reflexión hermenéutica de tres fuentes: el concepto de educación, la redacción del Artículo 3 constitucional mexicano con sus diversos cambios y descripción del entorno educativo rural en dicha temporalidad y las Escuelas Multigrado impulsadas por el CONAFE como el sistema que llega a dichos territorios. Se concluye que la calidad educativa está delimitada por la Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicano y las condiciones en las que se desarrolla la misma, lo anterior enmarcado por los siguientes factores: (i) la dignificación de la persona, (ii) los términos jurídicos descritos en el Art. 3, (iii) contextuados en la realidad geográfica del estudiante.

Palabras clave

Estado y educación, derecho a la educación, política educacional, calidad de la educación, pertinencia de la educación, eficiencia educacional.

Introduction

This paper gets deeper into the concept of educational quality in the reality of the Mexican Educational System. The asymmetry between the results and realities in the rural and urban contexts is assumed as the problem, to question whether there is a common criterion on 'educational quality'. It begins with a brief historical review of article 3 of the Cons-

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titution (Art. 3) and its reforms; based on this, a contrasting framework is constructed that enables assessing to what extent the educational projects promoted in the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States (PCUMS) have favored the development of such territories, and to what extent the changes in rural intervention strategies have addressed projects and pedagogical visions, instead of fulfilling objectives exclusively related to the improvement of indicators of the various public administrations.

According to Hernández and Esparza (2018), changes in Educational Policies have been promoted in Mexico, lacking a pedagogical methodology in the construction of public educational projects. According to them, although there have been proposed public policies to improve the administrative, social and cultural conditions of educational institutions, for example: the structuring of the Secretary of Public Education -SEP- or the processes of rural intervention by the National Council for Educational Development —CONAFE—; the pedagogical factor that develops the potential of each student is not yet clear. Similarly, they argue that a good part of the changes incorporated this century— despite having as diagnostic reference international tests such as the report of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)— this has not translated into an improvement in the quality of educational practices.

Therefore, the central problem that constitutes the aim questions three aspects: How has educational quality been understood and defined in Mexico and under what parameters its level of achievement in rural territories has been evaluated? Is there a permanent quality criterion with which the performance of public education is evaluated or, on the contrary, should it be redefined according to the particular objectives of each federal government? Is there a reference example that enables studying the development of a true quality education and from which the objectives of this concept may be illustrated?

The work plan to address these questions is the following: a definition of the concept of educational quality is elaborated in the first section, from three aspects: philosophical, legal and historical. Then, section two explains how formal education has been conceived in rural territories through community courses that take multigrade education as their core methodology. Finally, the conclusions rescue those points that contrast the reality of education in rural territories with the compliance of educational quality parameters.

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Philosophical, legal and historical definition of 'educational quality'

The concept of quality is one of the most subverted compliance parameters in recent times. However, the aim of this section is to explore the historical, legal and philosophical foundations of the definition of this concept; it is interesting to highlight the contextual meaning that has been given to it in rural areas. A pedagogical reflection will be made to unify these diverse points of view, in such a way that the interest is to study how the different definitions in the three aforementioned aspects have contributed to strengthen the best resources and teaching aids and their link with the learning processes. The general question to answer will be: How has educational quality been defined and founded in rural territories and what projects have been implemented to guarantee a meaningful learning process?

Subject and context of educational quality

Two important issues are studied in this section: first, the concept of educational quality as an indicator circumscribed to the idea and foundations of the 'person', specifically to the most appropriate procedures for their training; based on this idea, it will be explained that educational quality will only exist within the compliance framework of the procedures defined initially. The second point to be detailed is the rural context to know what are the requirements that must be considered for fulfilling educational quality.

For John Cossio (2014) quality "refers to the universal and particular characteristics of something, and to the processes through which such characteristics are configured. The quality of something necessarily corresponds to it, and whose absence affects its nature" (p. 18). The interesting point about this concept is the link with the social environment and the positioning it makes of the nature of the individual it focuses on. In this way, the delimitation of the general principles depends on both external (social) and internal (anthropological) factors, in such a way that a delimitation implies both the recognition of the reality in which an educational practice is exercised, as well as the own structure of the individual being served.

This link between the form of the person and his/her context has been supported, among others, by the neo-Kantian philosopher Ernst Cassirer (1945). For him, humanity managed to consolidate various cultural resources through which it could ensure a place in the world; its main achievement was the development of a 'symbolic consciousness'.

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The essential resource with which it was able to reach this stage was the capacity of the human species to unify the world of nature and the theoretical world; in this way, the human being is a being in continuous relationship with both his/her environment and with his/her own organic and psychological reality.

It is not possible here to go into much detail about the complex philosophical vision of the author, but in general some fundamental questions may be deduced: (1) for Cassirer, the world of culture is a world of unity whose center is human nature. (2) Placing the human being at the center establishes the need to, on the one hand, recognize the human being as a 'symbolic animal' and culture as a unit of symbols. (3) Cultural activity appears both as a form of knowledge (symbolic forms) and as a means to confirm true human nature. (4) When these ideas are applied to the thesis developed so far, it can be stated that: education is part of the world of culture and, therefore, the center of educational activity is the human being; education has as its goal the confirmation of human nature and, for this, it must integrate the diversity of cultural resources in favor of the human being.

On the other hand, Jürgen Habermas (2010) has stated the following:

> Against the assumption that attributes only a retrospective moral load to human rights, we would like to defend the thesis that there has always been—although initially it was only implicitly—an internal conceptual link between human rights and human dignity (p. 6).

With this approach, it can be stated that the center of all human rights is the own individual. For this author, although there have been some cases on which practices based on codes that have supported slavery, territorial invasion, among other activities that violate the dignity of the person, have been established, it is from this transgression that the defense of rights calls out louder for the restoration of the core value of this concept. In general, for Habermas (2010), dignity "constitutes the moral 'source' on which all fundamental rights are supported" (p. 6).

Bringing together all the ideas, according to Cassirer it can be asserted that all cultural activity (in this case Law, Pedagogy and Public Policies) must be unified having the person as common center. In addition, Habermas (2010) emphasizes about dignity: any legal activity (and public administration activity) must be sustained by the unrestricted respect for the person, since its violation implies a claim and invokes a restoration of deviated actions to their essential principle. Finally, according

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to Cossio (2014), quality assumes the universality of the concept of person; it is proposed to materialize it through resources that guarantee its operationalization, but always pursuing to confirm human nature, since the deviation of an action from the confirmation of its purpose prevents that such action is rated as 'quality'.

Once the concept of person has been placed as the 'who' of quality, it is now necessary to define the particular 'where' towards which the rest of the work will be oriented, specifically speaking about rural territories. In the geography of space, this environment is explained through the historical transition that rurality has experienced in front of education, going from a dichotomous conception to one that enables more possibilities. It is also explained how the urban and rural division has led the inhabitants of each of these territories to be isolated from each other; above all, in the case of inhabitants of communities or towns classified as rural, they have been undermined by the lack of access to information and basic rights.

As a first point, it is necessary to make a historical account of the term rural and its transition from 'rural education' to 'education in rural territories'. As stated by Ríos-Osorio and Olmos (2021), the change from one meaning to the other to refer to formal education imparted in rural contexts is more than a game on words; it is rather an invitation "to recognize persistence and transformations of the rural, which historically, [...] has been read from its dichotomous condition in relation to the urban" (p. 16). This has had negative implications for the equitable recognition of geographic spaces, since such dichotomy has translated into a hierarchical recognition of greater value for the urban to the detriment of the rural.

In the geographic space, objects and actions are inseparable. The idea of mixed realities about the notion of the nature-culture dichotomy, must refer to the meaning that the human being cannot be understood without the other, because we live in community; from this interaction it is understood that space is a mode of relationship inseparable from the individual. Based on this, Grammont (2016) writes that historically there has been a separation between rural and urban spaces "thanks to the concentration of industry and services in the city" (p. 51). This started dividing the conception between the two environments and such dichotomy permeates the access to basic rights. However, the author points out that this dichotomy has changed significantly in recent times.

In this sense, Pérez (2001) points out that "the rural goes beyond agriculture" (p. 4), and should consider a diversity of cultural activities

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and practices. Thus, the rural territories have been reconfigured by the new peasant economies, drug trafficking, regional conflicts, mobility and displacements, as well as by greater connectivity and cultural diversity. For Grammont (2016), the immersion in the globalized world made even more complex the dichotomies of rural and urban worlds, since the increase in the access to information technologies and the 'cascading decentralization' process caused that production services and processes are no longer exclusive to urban areas. This affected the activities and context of rural areas, which approached in a particular way to participate in the globalized world and enabled the growth of Non-Agricultural Rural Employment (NARE), both related to the connectivity to communication and transportation means and also as a possibility of migration due to the precarious conditions produced by agrarian crises. In this sense, Sánchez (2016) has stated that the phenomenon of migration and abandonment of agricultural activities has grown continuously, diversifying family relationships even in the poorest rural populations, where people are no longer essentially peasant and became salaried workers in informal sectors. In this line, quality in rural education involves the correspondence between specific realities and educational work.

The adaptation of quality educational processes to the different social changes experienced by rurality remains in doubt, since the contexts and situations are particular and diverse, in addition to the fact that there are rural populations in which mobility and migration have recently increased, typically as wage-earning employees in the city, without having the best access conditions to quality services, including education. In terms of educational reality, Enrique Bautista (2018) considers that: "There are material and resource deficiencies that may generate the perception that education for rural or indigenous communities is of 'third quality' or inferior to the one for urban or economically productive areas" (pp. 50-51).

Although the author establishes that these differences correspond to a perception, he starts from results that show the deterioration and carelessness of the organization of the schools in which he studies. In contrast to this reality, Lourdes Pacheco (2013) states that the rural school was created for two main reasons: first, to contribute to strengthen educational conditions in non-urban areas after the abandonment of the rural space by the *Porfirista* administration and, second, as a strategy to guarantee the same school conditions and access to education in Mexico. She emphasizes that rural schools were created as 'schools of the place', because their objective was to serve the "needs and regional characteris-

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tics for the school to become the center from which community action was led to a better way of life" (p. 90).

Pacheco (2013) also considers that these objectives were achieved largely thanks to the responsible work undertaken by teachers in charge of fulfilling these duties. Such reality corresponds to the historical detail presented by José Vasconcelos (2002) about rural conditions in Mexico; in his work as secretary of education he proposed:

> We required traveling teachers to leave established schools before sending us the report that there were none. To start, we designated new teachers with the name of missionaries, in honor of the true civilizers that the New World has known (p. 133).

This description shows how the abandonment of rural education in Mexico has been historically recognized, lacking a foundation that justifies such differentiation. Although there have been several projects proposed to remedy this reality, this does not imply that the differences have been resolved. It is true that the persistence of the projects proposed to tackle these dichotomies has been permanent, however, the fact that the gap between rural and urban areas persists indicates that the differences remain.

In short, it has been argued that educational quality is understood only to the extent that practices favor the dignification of the person. It was also noted that, despite this, the geographical characteristics in Mexico are a differentiation condition when serving needs. This discrepancy may be considered as discriminatory, since there is no philosophical foundation that enables substantiating the difference in school attention. Considering this limitation, the legal terms on which educational quality is based are studied in the following section, to similarly show that there is no parameter that enables justifying the difference in the attention to school needs between urban and rural contexts. This will enable asserting that, despite the existence of philosophical and legal clarity of the concept of quality, these criteria are not applied to the development of educational projects that promote a dignification of the person in rural areas.

Freedom, gratuity, secularism, and dignity. Core values of educational quality

In Mexico, the education depends on the legal and administrative guidelines implemented by the Mexican State in collaboration with institutional bodies. However, this principle appears only up to the 2013 version of Article 3, which states the following: "the quality in mandatory education so

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that educational materials and methods [...] guarantee the maximum achievement of student learning" (Art. 3, III, 2013)[1]. In the current version this orientation has been derogated and replaced by "the honesty, values and *continuous improvement of the teaching-learning process*" (Art. 3, III, 2019. Emphasis added). Therefore, it might seem that the interest and definition of education in terms of quality was considered only in the period between 2013 and 2019; hence, an exploration outside of this period is meaningless. On the other hand, it is argued that the interest in educational quality has persisted since 1917 in the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States —PCUMS—. A brief description of which has been this delimitation is presented below, highlighting its applicability in rural territories.

According to Rockwell and Garay Molina (2014), the history of educational quality in Mexico is mostly about the history of education in rural areas, and especially multigrade education, a system that prevailed in Mexico for most nineteenth century. Therefore, the conception of what should be understood by educational quality is developed in the PCUMS. And this has been the case since its origins in 1917; To show this, the original constitutional wording can be reviewed, which stated that:

> *Teaching is free; but it will be secular the one taught in official educational institutions, the same for the primary, elementary and higher education that is taught in private institutions. No religious corporation, nor minister of any cult, may establish or direct schools of primary instruction. Private primary schools may only be established subject to official surveillance (Art. 3, I, 1917).*

As can be seen, the original text relates 'education' and 'teaching', to highlight that educational quality is understood in the context of student needs. With the requirement of an 'official surveillance', it was proposed the development of a 'secular' conception of the educational project. This wording also highlights the "free and mandatory" character. The underlying intention, beyond these statements, is to promote a unique perspective and in strict adherence to the values and principles that the Mexican state intended to promote. This is important in this context, however, to deepen what was understood by 'official surveillance', José Vasconcelos (2002) would define it in the context of three major central cultural projects for Mexico: the construction and management of Schools and Libraries, as well as the promotion of Fine Arts:

> Under the name of Schools it is included all scientific and technical education in its different branches, both theoretical and practical. The creation of a special Department of Libraries was a permanent need, because the country lives without a reading service and only the state may create and main-

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> tain them as a complement to school... The Department of Fine Arts took over, starting with teaching of singing, drawing and gymnastics in schools, all institutes of higher artistic culture, such as the former Academy of Fine Arts, the National Museum and the Music Conservatories (pp. 60-67).

These projects had the interest of constructing a common space with strategic projects that would equally enable the training of all those who lived in Mexico, to guarantee universal access to educational spaces. By 1920, according to Juárez-Bolaños (2009), 80% of the population in Mexico was illiterate, so for rural contexts the priority was the coverage, establishing schools in areas where they did not exist. The pedagogical postulates that would guide education within the aforementioned "official surveillance" began to be outlined with such coverage. Education would focus on learning for daily life, that would help inhabitants of rural territories to improve their daily living conditions. The foregoing manifested one of the contributions of Vasconcelos, who considered the complexity of rural territories in access to education. Juárez-Bolaños (2009) explains it as follows:

> […] a group of people who traveled throughout the country, settling in rural communities for a short time [approximately three weeks]. Its goal was to encourage people to prepare as teachers and to establish the *first rural schools* (emphasis added) as "*La casa del pueblo*" […] Over time "the missions […] instead of traveling […] concentrated their activities in some communities" (p. 267).

In the cited text, it is highlighted that from the beginning of this vision of rural education, the aim was to integrally involve the person, considering not only his/her academic aspects, but also family and community development aspects. Proof of the above were the 'Article 123 Schools', small rural schools in farms that stood out especially in *Cardenist* times. In this way, rural teachers became fully involved in the life of the community, directly relating education to the social and political processes that took place in the rural territory.

In general, the aforementioned highlights the axes of educational quality in rural territories, making reference to inclusion and access to school. After this wording, the constitutional foundations have been updated eleven times through which the 'official' character has been redefined to guarantee better 'surveillance' mechanisms; the background, in theory, should be the compliance of the general ideals proposed by the Mexican state. Table 1 shows a summary of the main changes proposed to this general regulation and what happened at those same times to rural territories.

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Table 1
Summary of Educational Reforms (ER) and the corresponding promoted Pedagogical Projects (PP)

Educational reforms 1934-1993	Educational reforms 2002-2016
1. Art. 3 - 1917. The PP starts from a social need. National unity is sought through school literacy. Popular and regional education is emphasized.In rural territories, coverage is promoted as the first aspect, *Las Casas del Pueblo* and Cultural Missions begin as itinerant and end up consolidating the basis of rural school (Juárez-Bolaños, 2009). 2. Art. 3 - 1934. The **RE** proposes a socialist education with a popular character; primary education is mandatory. The **PP** promotes knowledge as a means of development, rejecting religious education. In rural territories, a boost is given from the curriculum to deal with political and social concerns of the rural population, such as the distribution of ejidos (Juárez-Bolaños, 2009). In 1936, the SEP unified the departments of rural and urban education in territories and states, eliminating the difference in the programs between one and the other (Rockwell and Garay Molina, 2014). Art. 3 - 1946. The **RE** returns to the secular nature of education and proposes the harmonic development of human faculties. **PP.** It is crystallized The Eleven Year Plan, which seeks national unity, teacher training and the creation of the free textbook; these actions were aimed at fighting school dropouts. During these dates, the education in rural areas begins to be homogenized with the education in urban areas. The Casas del Pueblo are no longer community centers and became traditional schools as a result of the promotion of urban growth. In 1948, the first National Rural Education Congress was held, where rural teachers had an active participation (Rockwell and Garay Molina, 2014). 3. Art. 3 - 1980. **RE** autonomy is granted to universities and their functions are delimited. The coordinating and administrative role of the State in Education is confirmed. **PP.** The decentralization of education begins through SEP delegations by state. The purpose was to serve regional needs. In 1971, education began to be offered to children who lived in rural micro-localities, through the CONAFE, seeking universal teaching (Bolaños, 2009). 4. Article 3 - 1992/1993. **RE.** Primary and secondary education become mandatory. Scientific progress is established as the guiding criterion for education. The general criteria of education are also established (democratic, national, promoter of human coexistence, respect for human dignity). **PP.** The National Agreement for the Modernization of Basic Education is promoted, the purpose was to favor the administration of state education. The paradigms of modernization of education focus on international standards which increase the educational gap, focusing on compensatory educational policies for rural multigrade schools (Rockwell and Garay Molina, 2014).	1. Art. 3 - 2002. **RE.** Preschool education becomes compulsory. **PP.** PISA recommendations about education focused on skills and competencies are included. It is not until 2005 when pedagogical work begins on specific materials for rural multigrade schools, even so, there is little specialized information on the matter (Juárez-Bolaños, 2009). Art. 3 - 2011. **RE**. The criteria of education are expanded: respect for human rights and awareness of international solidarity, in independence and justice. **PP.** It was offered a curriculum that enables the maximum development of professional skills. Rural teachers are young high school graduates who serve as guides without major training, due to the lack of budget to hire graduate educators (Juárez-Bolaños, 2009). 2. Art. 3 - 2012. **RE.** Upper Secondary Education (USE) becomes mandatory. The education criteria promote preventing any form of discrimination. P.P. The USE is organized under the scheme of competencies. The diagnoses show that, until then, there is a lack of teacher training that enables the translation of such model to the classroom. 3. Art. 3 - 2013. **RE.** Quality it included as a criterion of education; in addition, administrative control of education and professional teaching service are claimed. The National Institute for the Evaluation of Education –INEE– is created. **PP.** The evaluation of teachers is promoted as an organizational criterion. The National Project for Educational Evaluation and Improvement of Multigrade Schools (PRONAEME) was born from the Conference of the National System of Educational Evaluation; thir project included 28 entities, the INEE, CONAFE and the National Institute of Educational Physical Infrastructure (NIEPI) (INEE, 2017). 4. Art. 3 - 2016. **RE.** The regulation of the process of admission, permanence and promotion of teaching service is delimited. It should focus on the stipulated by the INEE. **PP.** It is promoted the design of a New Educational Model that will pursue to strengthen the "Key Learnings", although competencies are maintained. Recently, with the collaboration of research works carried out by the now dissolved INEE and the creation of Research Networks such as the Thematic Network for Research in Rural Education, the attention has been diversified, slightly expanding the degree of academic involvement; this in turn impacts public policies. In addition, the internal regulations of CONAFE have been modified in reference to the change in the profile of the Community Educational Leader and infrastructure support, with *La Escuela es Nuestra and Héroes de Acero* (Hernández, 2021).

Source: Esparza and Hernández, 2019, p. 202 with modifications made by authors.

In the scheme above, when distinguishing between 'educational reform' and 'pedagogical project', it is asked if the materialization of the various projects has answered to a pedagogical structuring of the re-

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sources that are required to promote an educational process. At the same time, the general status of education in rural territories is added, where the educational reforms and pedagogical projects that stood out did not impact them. The development of a project not only implies the articulation of the foundations that guarantee the operational legality of an educational activity, but it is also necessary that, after constitutional reformulation, such task is articulated in a scientific project that guarantees the means, resources and daily operation mechanisms for all.

Bonifacio Barba (2018b) states that the corresponding values for each reform of Art. 3 respond to a process promoted by the ruling federal administrations, to crystallize the objectives proposed in each version of the PCUMS. For the author, the following have been the common guidelines to pursue in terms of education: (I) harmonic and integral development of the student, (II) scientific knowledge, (III) democracy and (IV) love for the nation. For the author, the main value contained in Art. 3 with its different reforms is democracy, despite the historical impact and interests. However, it can be said that the democratization of education in rural areas has been lacking, since it has not shown the quality indices that are promoted more vigorously in urban contexts.

Bonifacio Barba (2018a) has also studied some of these implications in Article 7 of the General Education Law (GEL), which refers to: (1) integral development of the individual, (2) acquisition of goods and values, (3) strengthening nationality and sovereignty, (4) knowledge and practice of democracy, (5) justice, (6) scientific knowledge, (7) solidarity and human dignity. With this analysis, the values collected from Art. 3 are recognized with those proposed in the GEL. The same author highlights that "human dignity is the basis of the right to education and of the legal goals/values that concur" (p. 309). Detached from the above, the value of freedom is seen as a consequence of the search and respect for dignity. Despite the variations in vocabulary between Art. 3 and the GEL, a unity in values is perceived since the ultimate goal is the promotion of life in democracy and the recognition of the dignity of the person as a fundamental basis of education. In this way, Art. 3 and its foundation in respect for human dignity ties with other foundations and values embraced by the PCUMS, especially what is stipulated by the 2011 version of Art. 1, which states:

> In the United Mexican States, all persons will enjoy the human rights recognized in this Constitution and in the international treaties subscribed by the Mexican State, as well as the guarantees for their protection, the exercise of which cannot be restricted or suspended, except in the cases and under the conditions established by this Constitution (Art. 1, I, 2011).

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Thus, the search for universal recognition of the person based on the set of individual guarantees appears as a basic and primary need in all constitutional articles. However, Article 3 itself, as it has already been seen, explicitly guides the search of training and respect in all educational actions promoted in Mexico. Until now, a historical tour of the versions of Art. 3 has been given, highlighting the main Educational Reforms with their corresponding pedagogical proposals, an in turn highlighting what was happening with respect to attention to education in rural territories at the time of such educational reform.

The intention in action of all of the above is the search for educational quality in our NES. In the process, it has been presented the existing gaps between the educational effort in urban territories and the little attention that has been given to rural territories and the specificity of their educational models. It was explained how the only system that deals with basic education in small and dispersed localities is less than 50 years old. The recognition of the maximum constitutional values and of the GEL itself should be reflected in every school system in the country, regardless of whether it provides service to 5 or 500 children and adolescents. The following section shows some efforts that have been made to recognize the value of rural contexts, as well as some of the programs that have been implemented to strengthen the dignity of the person, rather than the satisfaction of an administrative indicator. The advantage that will be seen in the following example is to show that educational quality is not in the implementation of a strategic plan, but in the true strengthening of the corresponding skills and competencies, in this case, of the subjects of the rural contexts.

The educational quality in Multigrade Schools

It must be remembered that the development framework of the term educational quality in Mexico began in 1993 when, by recommendations of international organizations, a quality approach is implemented to ensure high academic standards. According to Esparza (2018), from 2000 the competency-based approach acquires more strength; the application of the PISA test occurs for the first time in Mexico. At the same time, school attention begins to focus on the academic achievement of students, having the standardized evaluations as the main metric.

Although the search for educational quality from its comprehensive vision is the basis and guide of education in Mexico, it is in the Con-

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stitutional Reform to Art. 3 in 2013 that the word 'quality' appears in the official wording for the first time. Although for some authors this was an important step to promote learning excellence in all students, for others it meant a redundancy and a partial vision, since the inclusion of the term followed economic objectives based on the results of international tests and recommendations from external organizations. As explained by Trujillo et al. (2018), in this last view the inclusion of the term quality was:

> Subject to four components: educational materials and methods, school organization, educational infrastructure and competence of teachers and managers. It reduces the indicators to their minimum expression by determining as a unit of quality measurement the maximum learning achievement of students and consequently the educational policy turned to take as main reference the results that students achieve in the standardized evaluations (p. 82).

For Trujillo et al. (2018), the reference made to the term quality is reductionist and lacks pedagogical foundations, since it simplifies the measurement of quality to high student learning, reflected in standardized tests. In other words, it refers to the first and third conceptions of quality mentioned in previous paragraphs. On the other hand, the previous conception of quality was aligned to the National Development Plan implemented by such government, focusing on teaching practice as the main means of obtaining quality processes for students to achieve the necessary learning.

Considering the complexity of relationships in economic activities, mobility and access to goods and services, it is now important to point out that education in rural territories encompasses more than one type of school system. Rurality presents gradients that identify each community as unique according to its own characteristics; thus, rural communities refer to a diversity of contexts that vary in economic activities, geographical contexts and cultural characteristics, which are usually categorized by unsatisfied basic needs. The following is what Lucila Galván (2020) writes about this situation:

> It seems that Rural Education is not only relegated or invisible from politics, but also from research. There are several factors or circumstances that may be contributing to this disregard or postponement: the strong and increasing level of urbanization in Latin American countries, the little importance that governments have given to rural education in recent decades, the ambiguity of the definitions of rural and urban and the tendency to define rural as 'negative', which is not urban; the pre-

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> cariousness of the statistical registration systems in education of their countries does not enable us to differentiate between rural and urban schools, teachers and students (p. 9).

This does not mean that agriculture no longer exists, but rather that such context has been recognized as a geographical reality, but has not received enough attention in terms of fulfilling needs; however, the interest should not be placed on the approach of the material resources that are lacking, but on the importance of serving social and cultural processes that enable to achieve the central objectives through systematic projects. By recognizing that there have been various proposals aimed at promoting quality education in rural areas, it is considered to establish a perspective of the processes that must be taken into account for the full compliance of a quality education.

Then, the education provided by the National Council for Educational Development (CONAFE) is taken as an example. The task of CONAFE is complying the right to education for children and adolescents that live in communities with less than 2,500 people, and that regularly belong to rural, indigenous, or migrant populations, without this meaning that the other systems or subsystems are outside of what is exposed here. The schools belonging to this system are multigrade, that is, they group together in the same classroom several school grades with students of different ages. According to Hernández (2021) and supported by data from the National Institute for the Evaluation of Education -INEE- (2019a), by 2019 26.5% of children and adolescents at basic education age lived in rural communities, of which about two thirds are constituted by less than 100 inhabitants. The dispersion and remoteness of these locations makes it difficult to access goods and services, making it even more difficult to achieve the appropriate degree of excellence or quality. At this time, it is necessary to refer to the aforementioned link between quality and equity established by the INEE (2019b) highlighting concepts addressed here, when it explains in its report about Mandatory Education in Mexico:

> Quality in relation to the right to equity in education refers to all the components of the right to education being a tangible reality for all subjects entitled to it, at any of the levels and modalities of the National Educational System (p. 102).

This reinforces the idea of educational quality as compliance with the provisions of the highest regulation of education. In particular, for CONAFE community courses, where, from the middle of the past centu-

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ry various academics have raised their voices to highlight the gap that exists in educational quality in rural territories compared to urban spaces. This is manifested to a greater extent in multigrade schools, which are in communities with few inhabitants and which, in addition, have mostly high and very high rates of social marginalization; this has repercussions on the student's personal stability, his/her nutrition and development. According to the INEE (2019b), complying with the values and rights set forth in the GEL and in the PCUMS itself is complicated under these conditions. Hernández (2021), Rockwell and Garay Molina (2014) and López-Salmorán and Santa-Polanco (2019) agree that the actions aimed at improving education in the CONAFE Community Courses from the 1990s have been compensatory, focusing on material support such as school supplies, scholarships, financing for infrastructure, furniture, and school supplies, but rarely to the pedagogical vision that encompasses the inclusion and relevance of the paradigms that guide instruction.

In the same way, framed in the context of the current administration, it has been established from the National Development Plan (NDP) 2019-2024 to improve the infrastructure of the country's schools in order to dignify them. With this in mind, the Operating Guidelines for the Program *La Escuela es Nuestra* were published in the Official Gazette of the Federation (OGF) at the beginning of October 2019. Such guidelines emphasize:

> That the general objective of the program is to improve the infrastructure and equipment of public basic education facilities, beginning in a first stage with those located in areas of very high and high marginalization and localities with indigenous populations, through the contribution of a direct economic subsidy to school communities for the maintenance, rehabilitation, equipment and/or construction of educational spaces (OGF, point 10).

La Escuela es Nuestra also includes the program *Héroes de Acero*, which focuses its efforts on changing the profile of the Community Educational Leader who serves as a teacher in community courses. In addition, there has been little in terms of public policy in rural territories, specifically for community courses. CONAFE continues to emphasize material issues, as it has been done since the 1990s, despite the recommendations issued by specialized organisms, although now extinct, such as the National Institute of Evaluation for Education in 2019.

In the recommendations of the Institute, after recognizing the social and infrastructure barriers that make the situation more complex, curricular and pedagogical issues are highlighted that include teacher

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training, oriented to academic improvement, but also to the higher well-being and development of the rural communities to which the students belong. INEE (2019b) points out that educational materials lack inclusion because they are presented in only one language, which excludes students whose mother tongue is other than Spanish.

The INEE (2019b) points out that any process that seeks to raise educational quality in CONAFE multigrade schools, must consider a thorough review of teaching practices and recognize the strategies that have emerged from the teachers themselves. This implies, to a certain extent, a decentralization of decision-making and a greater investment in evaluation processes and local and personalized training. According to Joaqui Robles and Ortiz Granja (2017), the issue of the other in education implies an in-depth reflection on the meaning of the other. To explain the above, the author points out that:

> An individual materially participates in the same species that includes other human beings, but, formally, it is unique, indivisible, and unrepeatable; hence, it can be said that there is *per se* the possibility of speaking of a self, but also speaking of another formally different from oneself (p. 197).

This enables to speak about the recognition that educational authorities have given to the uniqueness of person of the child or adolescent who lives in rural contexts. This implies a recognition of the diversity of its rural territories, although it implies a larger investment in all senses. For students of CONAFE multigrade schools, the principle of individuation makes them unique in their context and in their own existence, which derives in the recognition of their dignity. On the other hand, the relationship of the self with the other is an ethical commitment. In this sense, the person as a concrete and real self, but always in an ethical relationship with the other, has particularities that do not override universal rights, but demand from them an adequate response to their own uniqueness.

The above is related to what Vera (2019) states, when she explains that:

> An authentic rural school must be positioned in its territory, which is nothing more than the area within which the rural community lives and develops a history, a specific way of living reality, manifests a set of values, traditions and expressions of the sociocultural, as well as ancestral ways of producing and carrying out daily work, for which it must turn its look towards these players, and rediscover with them that history-nature relationship that gives meaning and identity to community life (p. 310).

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With these ideas, it can be stated that the analysis of educational processes and quality parameters given in rural contexts, needs to study power relations, but not in administrative terms, but as a strategic situation given in a defined context; the purpose should be to study the way in which an institution operates as a force for producing desired consequences for a few (those who have power) and undesired for others. Starting from the conceptual procedure about the contextual meaning of the term quality, to have educational quality in Mexico is to comply with the maximum regulation that establishes the highest standards. Such standards are focused on the care of the person and on the full compliance with the distribution of school educational services.

Considering the beginnings of education in rural territories with the 'Casas del Pueblo', their objective was to integrate community life with school, provide setting to the context and seek the development of students in a holistic way. This situation started changing with the homogenization of rural schools with those of urbanized contexts, the particularities of each territory, inhabitants, needs, desires and characteristics, were no longer seen. The dichotomy and the reductionist vision developed around the conception of intellectual and social inferiority of rural territories, progressively widened the gap between educational services, academic research and educational public policies implemented for rural contexts. Only the form began to be equipped without accompaniment from the background, from any angle, neither the contextual nor the ideal.

The above indicates a deficit in the application of the values and principles founded in the PCUMS that would guarantee a quality education in Mexico, including rural territories. This is explained by the following reasons: (1) For more than a century, it has been seen that educational public policies aimed at rural territories have been remedial, without an integral interest for the territory, it is seen as a transitional education; it is expected that a community that remains rural at some point 'overcomes' its status and become urban. (2) The foregoing has been disturbed by the growing number of small localities that are increasingly dispersed throughout the national territory, and whose economic and social characteristics diversify widening their context and complicating their homogeneous understanding. (3) More than an order that stipulates the specific guidelines for improving education in rural territories, it is necessary a personalized approach, adapted to each territory to know its characteristics and base on them the orientation of the educational policy.

Thus, educational quality goes beyond compliance indices in infrastructure, invested monetary capital and results in standardized tests, but

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rather involves a series of prior processes that include the preparation of rural teachers to highlight national values, and provide an education that takes into account the maximum value, the human dignity of each student.

Conclusions

This paper has delved deeper into the concept of quality, achieving three important results. First, defining quality in relation to the reality of the person and his/her dignity, it was highlighted the value of this reference concept to assess to which extent educational activities are aimed at the development of the human being. It was proposed that the center of any educational action should guarantee strengthening the abilities inherent to the nature of the people who live in a specific culture. In this sense, the importance of the geographical environment was recognized as one of the reference sources, to refer to the contextual and social needs that educational activity should focus on; for the purposes of this paper, the reality of the rural environment was specified and it was shown that it has been historically disregarded, considering that the center of the value of educational quality is in the attention to the urban context, to the detriment of marginalized areas. Although outstanding efforts are recognized at different times, such as the educational missions of Vasconcelos, it was remarked the fact that there is no a continuous systematic project that points out to the permanent organization of pedagogical processes.

The second result pointed to the legal conception on which the educational activity in our country is based (Article 3 of the Constitution). The objective was to recognize to what extent pedagogical interventions for the rural context have been 'educational missions' promoted in isolation by some outstanding personality. In the review of these foundations, it was shown that the call for a universal education is a necessary attribute, to which all public administration (and educators in general) must aim. In this sense, the general effort must focus on the development of projects that simultaneously guarantee the difference between spaces (in this case, rural and urban) since they are different contexts, but which must have a common general basis. With this result, it was possible to determine that the various outstanding projects throughout history have been efforts to implement a conception of quality established in Art. 3, but that this has not always been developed successfully.

The third result was achieved in the context of the brief study of the Multigrade Schools promoted by CONAFE. This showed how the

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structuring of these programs, on one hand, is supported by a legal basis that validates that the structure of our PCUMS establishes the development of the dignity of people in their particular geographical contexts. In addition, the existence of programs whose center of operation is not oriented to the fulfillment of a numerical indicator (without disregarding it), enables to recognize the central spirit of 'educational missions' implemented by the Secretary of Public Education; although several of the administrative and pedagogical support aspects of multigrade schools can be improved, centrally focusing on the development and dignity of each of the people they serve in rural contexts, enable to maintain that the deep meaning of educational quality is based on the degree of dignity it promotes through the socio-educational programs that are implemented.

Although the administrative measurement and the relationship with a standardized measurement process is always necessary to quantify the degree of progress and achievements, it will be necessary to understand as 'progress and achievement' those factors that can be translated into at least three terms: (1) the recognition of the reality of the student, as well as the fulfillment of the needs that derive from it, (2) the shaping of the individual own skills, in order to influence the geographical reality in which the subject lives and develops and (3) the link that these first two maintain with the objectives and values described in Art. 3, and with the general strategic project of Mexico.

Note

1 The Mexican Constitutional Article 3 throughout its history has had 10 Constitutional Reforms that have been reflected, among other aspects, in its wording. Since an analysis of its most important changes will be carried out, it seems necessary to clarify which constitutional version we are referring to; to distinguish them we propose the following way of citation: Art. 3, paragraph number (I, II, III...) and the year of publication. the edition of the article being cited (1917, 1934, 1946…). All references come from (PCUMS 2021).

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Affectivity, vulnerability and limits of scientific reason

Afectividad, vulnerabilidad y límites de la razón científica

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Abstract

The present paper analyzes the notion of rationality typical of our culture, marked by the scientific paradigm. According to this paradigm, the reason has the ability to decipher the laws imprinted in reality in a 'clear and different' way in order to dominate that same reality and transform what it reads. This formulation leads to the nonrecognition of humans' own limits. The first goal of this paper is to understand reason from a new paradigm. The second one is to study the connection between the issue of affectivity with the essential vulnerability of the human being and the consequences of this in moral action. The paper is structured in 5 sections. In the first one, the notion of reason will be analyzed as it is conceived from the scientific model. The second one will focus on the consequences that this notion has had on our culture. The third section studies the question that meshes all the others: the recovery of the cognitive value of affections, in order to rethink, in the fourth section, the issue of the practical use of reason and moral action. Finally, the model of the work of art is proposed as a possibility for reencountering the dimensions of the human being silenced by the scientist notion of truth.

Keywords

Rationality, vulnerability, affectivity, habit, deliberation, contemplation.

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Resumen

Este trabajo analiza la noción de racionalidad propia de nuestra cultura, marcada por el paradigma científico. Según este, la razón tiene la capacidad de descifrar las leyes inscritas en la realidad de manera 'clara y distinta' con el fin de dominar esa misma realidad, y transformar aquello que lee. Esta formulación lleva al no reconocimiento del propio límite del ser humano. El objetivo primero de este trabajo es la comprensión de la razón desde un nuevo paradigma. El segundo, estudiar la conexión de la cuestión de la afectividad con la esencial vulnerabilidad del ser humano y las consecuencias de esto en la acción moral. El escrito está estructurado en cinco apartados. En el primero, se analizará la noción de razón tal como es concebida desde el modelo de las ciencias. El segundo se centrará en las consecuencias que dicha noción ha tenido en nuestra cultura. El tercer apartado estudia la cuestión que engrana todas las demás: la recuperación del valor cognoscitivo de los afectos, para, a partir de esta recuperación replantear, en el cuarto apartado, la cuestión del uso práctico de la razón y la acción moral. Por último, se propone el modelo de la obra de arte como posibilidad de reencuentro con las dimensiones del ser humano silenciadas por la noción cientificista de verdad.

Palabras clave

Racionalidad, vulnerabilidad, afectividad, hábito, deliberación, contemplación.

Introduction

The question of narrowing the fields of truth, a consequence of the path followed by modern philosophy, is today object of widespread criticism. The commitment to the mastery of the object of knowledge, typical of the scientific method, not only shows today its disastrous consequences in the field of ecology but, even more radically, in the loss of the possibility of truth in the realm of ethics and politics: once the truth has become synonymous of accuracy, any field where the mastery of the scientific method is not possible seems to be relegated to the field of mere opinion.

From the perspective of science itself, the subject rises as the dominator of the object, putting as the aim of his/her research the use of truth. The researcher seeks to have his/her object available, to ensure his knowledge, to walk on safe ground. This has been the path of science and also, which makes the gesture more dramatic, of philosophy. The latter, since Descartes' methodical attempt, has run parallel to science, and at equally alarming speeds, on this path towards the domination of its object. Although, as exposed by Heidegger (2010), the impulse begins already in classical ontology, modern philosophy takes it to its consummation.

> Research has available the entity when it is capable of calculating it in advance in its future course or of calculating it a posteriori. In the anticipatory calculation, nature is almost established; in the historical a posteriori calculation, almost history. Nature and history become the object of explanatory representation. (...) This objectification of the

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> entity takes place in a representation whose goal is to place the whole entity before itself in such a way that the man who calculates can be sure of the entity or, what is the same thing, can be certain of it. Science becomes research only and exclusively when truth has been transformed into certainty of representation (pp. 71-71).

The experience of astonishment reverts in mastery, and then, one has the illusion that the being is available, illusion that, although it has founded a culture, is deprived, in its foundations, of that to which it aspires. And this depriving points to deeper processes: to those through which the human being loses himself/herself in the loss of the being.

The analysis of the problem of narrowing the fields of truth may be treated from different perspectives. The present study will focus on the reflection of what, we affirm, is prior, and meanwhile it is, it is the cause of what we have called the narrowing of the fields of truth: the notion of reason. And this is because today rationality itself is conceived from the scientific or positivist model. And this not only has consequences on the possibility of accessing to truth in nonscientific fields, but also on the theory of action that such notion of reason inspires.

This paper proposes a reprocessing of the notion of reason from the possibilities mainly offered by the thought of three authors of contemporary philosophy: Merleau-Ponty, Nussbaum and Gadamer. In addition, we turn to some notions of J. E. Rivera, who, making a synthesis of the thoughts of different authors of the phenomenological tradition, offers a compendium in "De asombros y Nostalgia (1999)". The bibliography has been chosen according to the possibility offered by these authors, in the first place, to highlight the cognitive value of affections and, therefore, their importance in moral action. The question of the intentionality of the body, a central topic in Merleau-Ponty's writings, makes possible the discovery of a sphere of configuration of meaning prior to the act of objectification, central to the revaluation of the affective dimension of the human being. Nussbaum, on the other hand, bases on the recovery of Stoic thought and the reflection on literature (so typical of her writings), to show the affective dynamics as central for understanding the human being. Secondly, the chosen authors make possible a rethinking of the notion of reason from the previous fact: if the affections are a source of knowledge, the very act of reason must be rethought. Thus, we turn to the ontology proposed by Gadamer (1993) from the experience of the work of art and the reflection on the centrality of Greek tragedy for classical thought, as shown by Nussbaum (1995).

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The paper is structured in five sections. The first one will analyze the notion of reason as it is conceived from the model of the sciences, especially the exact sciences. The second will focus on the consequences that this notion has had in our culture: the narrowing of reason in its practical use, the invalidation of the emotional sphere as a source of knowledge, the conception of freedom from the possibilities of rational domain; all of which leads to the nonacceptance of the vulnerability typical of the human being. The third section will focus on the matter that links all the others: the recovery of the cognitive value of the affections, in order to, from this recovery, rethink, in the fourth section, the matter of the practical use of reason and moral action. Finally, the model of the work of art is proposed as a possibility of reencountering with the dimensions of the human being silenced by the scientistic notion of truth.

The reason from the model of the sciences

The model of the exact sciences and, in part, of the natural sciences, conceives reason as a faculty capable of capturing the laws inscribed in reality. The model is, above all, mathematical. Galileo, in 1623, affirmed that the universe is written in mathematical characters. And the task of reason is to discover this language. To read these characters. What is the purpose of this reading? Preponderantly, the transformation of that same nature for the benefit of the human being. If, for example, the law of gravity is understood mathematically, we can go against its force by applying a greater force by means of, for example, the propulsion engine. The mission of reason, from the positivist model (with its idea of progress) is to unravel the laws of the universe in order to achieve technical progress. In other words, science transforms human life in a technical sense, because it enables a certain technology that makes quality standards to be higher.

The scientific method that ensures such mastery is based on formulating a hypothesis, and then moving to experimentation and testing in pursuit of the formulation of a scientific law. Scientific praxis is experimentation. In other words: a hypothesis is proposed, a theory that is further put into 'practice', is put into practice in experimentation, and then proved and transformed into a law. Reason itself, therefore, is conceived as the ability to unravel reality in a mathematical way: exact figures, verifiable results. From this perspective, something is rational when our reason can account for the conditions of the possibility of its existence or the laws of its 'functioning'. And when it can be verified that such functioning is accurate.

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This is what happens with the study of nature: although human reason is not the condition of possibility of its reality, it can be reason that reads its characters and, therefore, manages to dominate it. It achieves the 'rational explanation'. And this is extensive to every object that is a product of technique: the artifacts. They are rational inasmuch as it is a human reason that has created them and because this reason can come to understand the conditions of possibility of the existence or functioning of that object or artifact. Thus, for example, even if it is unknown how the Internet works, it is known that, if the necessary effort is made, its functioning can be understood and, what is more, with the appropriate dedication, even be able to elaborate those conditions of possibility. In this case, knowledge of the laws by means of which the Internet network (or a printer, or any machine) operates, could lead to the realization of that same artifact. It is a knowledge that can provide a technology: I can build something with that.

From this perspective, reason in its theoretical use is restricted and determined by technique, in pursuit of the mastery of that same reality that it scrutinizes. There is no uncertainty if reality can be mastered, because it can be rationalized. Rational is, thus, a phenomenon (whether natural, social, human) whose existence or whose functioning can be accounted for (even if we do not generally account for it). Confidence is produced by the perspective of the possibility of rational control over the phenomenon to which reason turns its attention. As will be seen, this notion of trust will have radical consequences when analyzing human praxis in society, since it prevents the acceptance of vulnerability, as an essential condition of the human being and of human relations.

From the perspective of moral action, rationality is also conceived from a scientific point of view. A decision is rational when it has been made after weighing the options, and after weighing them rationally, a phenomenon or an action has become a reality (performing a work, for example, a food recipe, or entering a university career). However, the very notion of rational deliberation has been tinged with the positivist gaze. Rational, in this sense, is the search for the best means, in this case the most effective means to achieve a result. In other words, a decision is rational when it provides me with greater benefits, more profit, but a profit that must be demonstrated as greater. Anything that goes beyond what we can prove (which often boils down to counting) makes us feel that it is out of control. And that, in our positivist mentality, is something we cannot stand for. Moral rationality is thus restricted to those decisions where I can, indeed, account for the greatest benefit for me. If not, it is

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not a rational action, but we qualify it otherwise: emotional, passionate, irrational.

Reason, therefore, in its practical use is reduced to strategic rationality: seeking the means to achieve the most profitable ends. And it eliminates the moral gaze and what Aristotle called prudential thinking (1995). Because the efficacy of action is not the same as its goodness. In the words of De Tienda Palop (2011), this translates into a demand for optimization:

> The rational necessarily possesses the maxim of "doing the best attainable", according to the circumstances, the context and the other factors involved. Rationality has a solid normative component: that of doing not what is good, but what is best, under certain circumstances and limits, and this is its outstanding characteristic (p. 28).

In other words, if something is rational only to the extent that I can prove the benefit it provides, I leave aside the kaleidoscopic world of freedom, where there are thousands of factors that come into play and that cannot be reduced in terms of benefit, or demonstrable quantification of that benefit. And which, therefore, are eliminated from the field of rationality.

Issues deriving from the notion of reason from the model of science

Hereafter, it will be analyzed some of the problems derived from the notion of rationality outlined here, due to the narrowing of such reason both in its theoretical function and in its practical function.

From the theoretical perspective, the first problem to be analyzed will be that of the impossibility of reason, conceived from the scientific model, to account for those phenomena that cannot be converted, in an absolute sense, into an object of knowledge. In other words, although in a broad sense any phenomenon can be the object of reason, whilst it can be focused and attended to, in an absolute sense it cannot be all those in which the subject itself is understood by the phenomenon it seeks to understand. This is what happens with the human being himself/herself and all that derives from the study of his free unfolding: his/her culture, the social fact, his/her emotions, the aesthetic phenomenon, etc.

Given the impossibility of reason, seen from the positivist model, to fully embrace these phenomena, they are declared as irrational. If

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something is not rational, it is irrational. Therefore, if I cannot rationalize, if I cannot give a clear, mathematical, precise, demonstrable, 'objective' explanation of something, it is not rational. The consequence of this is that any reality that cannot be the object of scientific reason is left without reflection. The construction of the social world is left to everyone's discretion, or to the sum of individual opinions. This is what happens when democracy is reduced to individual voting rights. Government is formed from the sum of wills, but not from the dialogical coordination of these. And this is a moral problem, which concerns reason in its practical use.

This problem leads to another, which can perhaps be invoked as its cause, or at least one of its causes: to think that knowledge only comes from the act of reason and everything else is not knowledge. The very act of reason is an active moment: reason is used. Reason, in fact, is exercised. And it does so by focusing attention, objectifying, or making the object of attention something that has been opened, in a prior manner, in another way. In other words, what is the object of the proper act of reason is not, prior to such an act, something unknown, but something that has been understood in 'another' way. Rational knowledge is a mode of knowledge, or a moment of understanding. It is a moment: when attention is focused on something and it is decided to perform an act by means of which I stop from everyday life and contemplate that: it may be a problem, something I had not taken into account so far, weighing arguments in pursuit of a decision, or simply taking distance from everyday life to 'look' or 'observe' that which has provoked astonishment for any of the above reasons. The moment of objectivity is a moment of global understanding of reality. But before that moment, there is an understanding of the whole that surrounds the human being, in a way that is not properly rational, but that can in turn be the object of reason.

The matter is that the understanding of reality is not something that is made only from action. It is also made from passion: understanding is a game between what is actively made and what is suffered. It is here that the world of affectivity enters: there is a pre-rational or pre-objective knowledge that crystallizes in affectivity, as we shall see. And this affective crystallization, whose origin is not the proper act of reason, can be the object of reason and, insofar as it can be, it is 'reasonable', as we shall see. This, of course, only if we move away from the notion of reason as it has been characterized from the scientistic point of view.

A third problem is the notion of freedom as consequence of this notion of rationality. If freedom keeps up with reason, and if reason has

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as its characteristic feature the mastery of the reality it contemplates or studies, freedom, because of our rational being, is also considered as a possibility of mastery, control. And it is deeply disturbing that something impedes this control. As well as the fact of acting against what is rationally evaluated as the best. The problem is that moral action is not like the praxis of science: there is no law that can be claimed to be universally valid and that must be applied in all cases. No. It requires experience, which is not the same as the experiment that science does to test its theories. And that experience involves complex factors, which cannot be so easily reduced to universal laws. The problem with this conception of rationality is that, as Bown (1988) states, "a rational decision or belief must be based on an evident evaluation, by the appropriate application of certain rules" (p.7).

In this same line of analysis, a final problematic issue derived from all of the above is the consequent vulnerability of being human. The power that, in fact, science has given over nature has led us to believe that reason is absolute, that everything can become the object of its action. This has blinded the human being in front of the fact that reason itself is precarious, and not only because -as it was said- it cannot make the object of understanding those phenomena by which the human being himself is understood, but, even more, because reason itself, in its action, is precarious, according to Rivera (1999). In other words, it is not taken into consideration that the action of reason itself depends on assumptions that, as such, remain hidden to the objectifying action itself. That is why it is so profoundly surprising, for example, when one acts against rational convictions. And the problem is, then, that it cannot be accounted, from this notion of rationality, for human vulnerability. This problem is directly related to the already mentioned question of affectivity, as a crystallization of a way of knowing reality, and this for two reasons. The first, because it is not possible to have control over the way we are affected, and this is already a cause of vulnerability. The second, according to Nussbaum (2008): "emotion records that sense of vulnerability and imperfect control" (p. 66).

The matter is, then, what does reason mean, what are its real possibilities. And what is central: can self-understanding and understanding of the other human being claim an absolute domination? The vital situation seems to show that we are drifting from fortune, understanding by fortune, as Nussbaum (1995) states, "what does not happen to the human being by his/her own active intervention, but what simply happens to him/her in opposition to what he/she does" (p. 31). And that seems to be what makes vulnerable good human life and, therefore, its flourishing.

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The cognitive value of affections

The first problem that will be addressed in order to unravel the problem of reason is the issue of affectivity, since it combines two of the aforementioned topics: the matter of pre-objective or pre-rational knowledge and the matter of vulnerability, because it is notified by emotions. And, therefore, the deepening of the issue of affectivity involves reason both in its theoretical and practical use.

As Heidegger (1997) affirms, the attitude of 'directing the sight' typical of the rational moment of objectification, and which modern philosophy proposes as the very act of knowing, is not sufficiently original. The task is, therefore, to discover such original attitude, which is so from the existential point of view, not only from the chronological perspective. However, we believe that it is essential to resort to the chronological or genetic perspective in order to give an account of such originality. It is useful, for this purpose, to make a description that accounts for the own genesis of knowledge.

The process of world's comprehension will be dated (for practical reasons) at the moment when the child comes out from the mother. Then, it is then when he/she opens to the world, and finds a dwelling. Slowly, this awakening will give him/her the capabilities to move around in the middle of world, to the extent that he/she conquers a space that he/she feels safe, in which he/she welcomes all helplessness. This shared space, this dwelling, is the first place where we are affected by reality. Body is own, but in the dwelling (be it the mother uterus, the body that embraces or the room), there is another one, and, as long as it is like this, there is a world. According to Merleau-Ponty (1971):

> From the first moment I used my body to explore the world, I knew that this bodily relationship with the world could be generalized, that a minimal distance had been established between me and the being, that preserved the rights of a new perception of the being itself. There is nowhere to find the other in the being, it slips into my perception from behind: the experience I have of my apprehension of the world is what makes me capable of recognizing another experience and of perceiving another myself, only if, in the interior of my world, a gesture similar to mine is outlined (p.198).

To adequately understand the issue of affectivity, the perspective provided by Merleau-Ponty is crucial: the world is not a set of objects, but a universe of meaning, and it is so insofar as there is another, which I recognize as 'another me', and with whom a vital communication is estab-

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lished, through which that which is apprehended is captured as something with meaning. The gesture of the other -in the first instance, of the mother- is the sign of a world that begins to open up for the child. The mother's gesture is an indication, an invitation, an invocation. This is central to understand that the stratum of the affective disposition, the primary stratum of reality valuation is essentially communicative. The world opens then from this invocation, from the affection that colors the inner map, the geography of affections, which are the first layer of knowledge.

The child, in the words of Rivera (1999), is overwhelmed when knowing the world, that is to say, is affectively absorbed in it. This radical openness, this comprehensive absorption of the world, is original. At a very early age, he grasps the meaning of things, of his parents' words, and before that, of gestures. Corporeal gestures, hugs and kisses are the first layer of communication. And the meaning of these is not intellectually conceived, but existentially grasped. The child understands in a vital way that to which he/she opens himself/herself: he/she is able, little by little, to move in the midst of the sense of the world, even when he/she has not asked himself/herself rationally what the world is, or what is its objective meaning. This implies that this opening, as pre-reflexive, is affective. The world, the senses lodged in the world, become body (in the word, in the gestures, in the tonality of the voice, in hugs), penetrate the child's body, forming his/her affective world. This implies that, as he/she knows the world, the meaning of things, the notions of good or bad, an affective landscape is forged in him/her that sediments this knowledge and through which he/she can move in the middle of the world. He/She cannot give a full intellectual account of what he/she knows, but he/she can show, affectively, how he/she values things, situations and people, the world around him/her.

The vital trajectory of the person is realized, in the first instance, therefore, not from rational objectification, but from the original affection, from which he/she emerges towards the consciousness of self and of the world. From full communion with the mother, he/she emerges towards the world, with which he/she enters in communion through the mediation of the parents, the family environment, the home or dwelling.

From this perspective, the body itself presents an intentionality that is prior to the intentionality typical of rational knowledge, and that is the original layer of knowledge not only during childhood, but throughout the entire life of the human being. It is what Husserl (1962) calls the operant intentionality, which is not only prior to, but foundational of the other intentionality, that of the act, which is properly rational. As Merleau-Ponty (1994) states:

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> The movement of the body can only play a role in the perception of the world if it is an original intentionality, a way of referring to the object distinct from knowledge [meaning objective knowledge]. It is necessary that the world is around us, not as a system of objects of which we make the synthesis, but as an open set of things toward which we project ourselves (p. 396).

This intentionality implies an evaluation of reality. In other words, although in this first layer of capturing the world there are no purely objective acts, or, in other words, intellects about what things are in themselves, the affection presents an evaluation, i.e., taking a position, a tension of the person with respect to what is captured. This implies a vital projection, or, in Merleau-Ponty's words, a polarization towards that which is manifested, a polarization that will lead the child, by his/her developing motor capacity, to move in one direction or another. As it was said, this primary, original intentionality is an invocation, and, as such, it implies an evaluation in order to the own becoming, which has as a response attraction (lived as an impulse to approach and possess and to remain in it, from the corporeal dilation) and repulsion (lived as an impulse to flee, and in case it is not possible to flee, it is lived as corporeal contraction). This projection, not being voluntary, says Rodríguez Valls (2010), "(...) is referred to an instance that we could call intentionality of the body: a cognitive evaluation of the reality made by the body itself with respect to the organic situation in which it finds itself in front of the reality that is imposed on it" (p. 5).

The affections, or the passionate dynamics, are, therefore, a knowledge of the body, but cannot be understood as a mere capture of sensations, since they open up a world. The world, thus understood, is not the mere environment, but that which is detonated by the presence of another whose gesture gives sense to reality, to such an extent that it constitutes it as a 'world' or 'dwelling' in which is inhabited. The word and the gesture are introduced in the affective perception, and this causes that the perception of the world, yet in this original corporeal intentionality, is impregnated with values given by the word and its emotional valence. The categories of 'good' and 'bad', received in infancy, as well as the challenge that indicates to the child that something is bad; the parents' anger and joy, which are expressed linguistically and gesturally: all this permeates affection. This implies, as Husserl (1962) states, that the original intentionality is not an individual vital experience, even when the body itself is the zero point of any orientation and, therefore, the way in which the affection is gestated is always unique.

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In this same line of interpretation, from a rereading of Stoic ethics, Martha Nussbaum (2003) shows that it can be affirmed that emotions are forged in two moments: that of appearance (a moment typical of affection) and that of judgment (which in turn generates an emotion):

> (...) a judgment, for the Stoics, is defined as an assent to an appearance. In other words, it is a two-stage process. First, Nikidion thinks, or comes to his attention, that such and such thing is the case. (Stoic appearances or representations are usually propositional in nature). It appears to him that this is the case, he sees things this way, but at that moment he has not really accepted it. He may go ahead and accept or embrace the appearance, commit himself to it; in such a case, the representation has become his own judgment (p. 464).

In her work Landscapes of Thought (2008), the philosopher distinguishes four elements in emotion, which enable to explain value judgment and which, in turn, show that emotions are not irrational, as are reflex actions and natural forces, such as wind or blood pressure. First, emotions are 'about' something: they have an object. And the way they relate to such an object is not the way a natural force relates to its object, nor it is the way a reflex action does. The knee reflex, for example, is activated no matter what activates it. The same happens with any natural force, such as the wind. Instead, emotions receive their identity from the object and the way they are directed to that object: fear is such with respect to that which is feared and for the reasons by which it is feared. The second essential element, according to Nussbaum, is its intentional character:

> That is, it figures in the emotion as it is perceived or interpreted by the person experiencing it. Emotions are not about their objects merely in the sense of placing them in the crosshair and aiming at them, just as an arrow is shot at the target. The relation is more internal and involves a way of seeing (...) What distinguishes fear from hope, fear from grief, love from hate, is not so much the identity of the object, which may not change, as the way of seeing it (pp. 49-50).

Thirdly, in the way of perceiving the object, certain complex beliefs about the world and the meaning that such an object has in the construction of such a world are active. "To feel fear, as Aristotle already perceived, I must believe that some misfortune is imminent; that its negative character is not trivial, but serious; and that preventing it is beyond my complete control" (p. 51). And the last element of emotion is value, i.e., emotions ram or embrace the object because they apprehend it as having a value.

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The valuation embedded in emotion is, therefore, primary, and original with respect to the judgment that later, at the moment of rational objectification, is made. This is today affirmed by the knowledge of neuroscience. In his study on the cognitive processes of emotion, Castaño (2017) states that:

> The value judgments that are internally linked to the biological function of emotions bring the subjective that accompanies experiences, so that affective reactions give meaning to life and behaviors; they show us that we do not act without sense, and that each of our actions is linked to a feeling and its affective valence (p. 11).

Therefore, it can be affirmed that it is only because this first 'judgment' of value exists, that rational deliberation can then take place, since it is in comparison with this first evaluation that distance and taking a new position with respect to the valued object are possible. The moment of objectification, which is the act of reason itself, is that by which a stop is made in front of the reality in which the human being is daily immersed; attention is centered on something, and this is done intentionally, voluntarily, and that which is 'ob-served' with the intention of apprehending it for what it is in itself. It is important to emphasize the voluntary nature of the objectifying act of reason, since it shows a radical difference with the intentionality typical of emotions. The act of objectification may decide where to direct its attention. This is so radical that it is possible to voluntarily move attention away from some idea that it is suspected it is not convenient to discover as true, or that does not seem sufficiently interesting as to focus on it. It is not the same with emotions: in the presence of that which is emotionally embraced there is a vital polarization. Attention seems to be dominated by the presence of that which polarizes, and it is not possible to avoid at will the effects that this has on who is affected by it. Hence, from the linguistic perspective, the way of referring to both acts is different: one says 'I think', using the active form of the verb, and, on the other hand, 'I feel', using the reflexive form of the verb.

A final crucial issue for the subsequent analysis of practical reason is the issue of habit. The four elements typical of emotions are not enough to understand the cognitive complexity they carry. It is also necessary to consider the consequences of such structure. If emotions are bearers of an evaluation by which one tends to the objects towards which the human being is polarized, this implies that he/she makes movements for or against the objects towards which he/she is projected or which are rammed. And these movements are not deliberate, so they cannot be con-

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sidered, in the proper sense, moral actions. But, as it was said, they are not irrational movements either, as reflex movement can be. In other words, they are movements through which the human being orients himself in the world, and which generate a habit, establish a set of tendencies as a response to evaluation, and which gradually crystallize as a way of being oriented to the world.

The habit is generally seen as a mechanical matter or as the result of a deliberate and repeated action. Merleau-Ponty (1994) adds a different characterization that accounts for its origin in the intentionality of the operating body, and affirms that habit is a form of understanding what has the body in relation to the world. Moya (2012) concludes, after studying the question of habit, that habit is a way of inhabiting, and integrates corporeal, psychic and metaphysical aspects. It is an access to the pre-objective world: it incorporates the lived everyday life, by which the person is anchored to the world in a certain way. It is about taking a position in front of the world, a corporealized consciousness prior to reflective consciousness, and that is acquired from the motor perspective and from the perceptive perspective. As Merleau-Ponty (1994) states:

> The analysis of the motor habit as an extension of existence is thus prolonged into an analysis of the perceptive habit as the acquisition of a world. Reciprocally, every perceptive habit is still a motor habit and here also the capture of a significance is done by the body (p. 69).

In other words, the human being inhabits the world from a tendency crystallized in the body, which is what enables him/her to move in the middle of the world and enables him/her, in turn, the novelty in action, also of the deliberate action.

The problem of moral action and reason in its practical use

From the perspective provided by the cognitive character of emotions, moral action is revealed in a new way. Practical reason, conceived from the point of view of positive science, has as its task to obtain the best means to achieve a specific aim. In this case, the best is equated with that which yields the greatest profit. Practical reason, in its deliberative exercise, has to focus on the calculation of that profit. This implies that the object of reason are the consequences of the act. That is to say, the morality of the act, as utilitarianism affirms, is determined by the greatest benefit that such act achieves, so reason has to calculate the consequences that the act in question will have. This conception of moral action does not

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consider in its rational calculation the cognitive value embedded in emotions. Whoever deliberates in order to decide what action to take can only focus on the consequences of the act itself; personal dispositions towards the object evaluated by reason play no role, unless they can be added to the total satisfaction produced by the act.

Another way of thinking about moral action, also derived from the scientistic view, is to make its goodness lie on the application of the universal law, as it happens in science as it has been conducted since the establishment of the scientific method. Something is validated as true inasmuch as it complies with a universal law. Or, rather, the same law is validated as such (and leaves the denomination of 'mere theory'), when it is proven in practice. This, taken to the moral plane, means that an action is good when it sticks to duty, as a universal moral law. This is the claim of Kantian ethics. However, as Gadamer (1997) states:

> Practical philosophy does not consist in the application of theory to practice [...] but arises from practical experience itself thanks to what is in it of reason and reasonableness. And it is that praxis does not mean to act according to certain rules or to apply knowledge, but refers to the most original situationality of the human being in his natural and social environment (p.183).

This situationality is the one that is accredited by emotions and is the one that must be incorporated in moral deliberation. This does not imply that what is valued and reported in the emotions should become, per se, the object of action. Emotions produce, as was said, two effects: the first is valuation and the second, motivation in pursuit of a conduct. There is no control over the first effect. There is control over the second. The human being has control over the action he decides to perform because he has control over the motor system. This fact has led the theory of moral action to focus its attention, almost exclusively, on moral action, its object, and its consequences, leaving backwards to the reflection the issue of the cognitive value of affections.

In fact, the classical doctrine of virtue takes into consideration two things: the rational (objective) evaluation of reality and the action that appears adequate in such evaluation. Emotions are considered as points of support or motivation for action, when the emotion is channeled towards the action. Although it shows the importance of modulating emotions so that they support or affirm the desire of the deliberate object as good, they are not considered themselves as carriers of knowledge. In other words, this doctrine overlooks the fact that the way in which this

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reality is affected is also an evaluation (not objective-rational), which is primary, is original, and also provides extremely valuable information, because it not only says something about the reality evaluated, but also about the human being himself/herself, and that, therefore, has to be the object of interpretation and must be incorporated into moral deliberation. As stated by Nussbaum (2008):

> Instead of conceiving morality as a system of principles to be captured by the impartial intellect and emotions as motivations that either support or undermine our choice to act according to those principles, we will have to consider emotions as an essential part of the system of ethical reasoning (pp. 21-22).

When ethical reasoning only takes into consideration the evaluation made by reason in its objectifying function, it puts the human being in front of the problem that such evaluations come from an act through which it is sought to capture what objects are 'in themselves'. What remains backwards to the evaluation is precisely how the human being polarizes himself towards them, how they are 'in him', a polarization that says much about the human being himself, and which, therefore, is key for the recognition of his vital position in the world. For Merleau-Ponty (1994), when the own vital situation is not considered in the deliberation, one runs the risk of proposing a project that knows nothing about the own existential being. And the problem of the annulment of affectivity as a rich source of valuation has the fatal consequence that it is never an existential annulment. In other words, who pretends, from deliberation, to annul or obviate what he/she feels, does not for that reason stop feeling it and it does not stop to be constitutive of his being, even when he/she proposes to do so. What happens is that he/she does not become conscious of what is being forged in him/her.

On the other hand, Aristotelian theory of virtue presents the habit as a way to do things acquired by the repetition of acts, deliberate - mediate or immediate - in the case of the virtuous habit, non-deliberate in the case of a vicious habit. The notion of habit, instead, as conceived by Merleau-Ponty (1994) brings us to a central issue in the analysis of moral action: when we make a decision, there is no clear and distinct understanding of the situation itself, but rather an articulation between the habitual way of communicating with reality, of moving in it, and the new way of making a decision. We are not deliberating all the time, although we are always acting. And when we do it, we do it from what we are, from a perspective, given by our habitude, our background, our inhabitance.

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Everything we do, our interaction with the world, conscious and unconscious, connatural and learned, is incorporated, is a body footprint. And that footprint is what allows adequate or inadequate relationships with the surrounding world. There is, therefore, a continuous adaptation from new perceptions, and the body responds by constituting or creating a relationship with the world that serves as a base or ground for its actions, which makes it inhabit as 'at home'. "When I assume a present, I recapture and transform it, my past, I change its sense, I free myself, I get rid of it. But I only do so by committing myself elsewhere" (p. 462).

As we said at the beginning, the problem of the notion of reason understood from a merely scientific perspective is that in its practical use it cannot account for the lack of control over one's own action, a control that is primarily assumed. This is what happens when the human being carries out actions that are not in accordance with the objective rational evaluation that he/she has made, as happens in maniac acts, in compulsive obsessions, or simply when he/she 'lets himself/herself be carried away' by emotion. In both cases, he/she loses control over his/her actions precisely because an evaluation of reality that has more strength in action than any rational evaluation has been encrusted. Hence the importance of incorporating the own emotional situation in moral deliberation. This is what Nussbaum (1995) affirms:

> The investigation into our own passional geography constitutes an important element of the activity of knowing ourselves. Moreover, the response of the passions is a constitutive part of the optimal type of recognition of one's own practical situation (p. 44).

Now, to accept the possibility of this incorporation in moral deliberation, implies conceiving reason itself from a paradigm different from the scientific one, since it is evident that we cannot make a clear reading of the emotional situation, as we do of the laws that govern nature; we cannot claim a 'transparent' objectification of the situationality itself. In other words, if emotions, with their evaluative content, enter as a fundamental element in moral deliberation, this implies taking into account the fact that reason, in its practical exercise, is limited, and this for two reasons: the very act of evaluative objectification typical of deliberation is subsequent to the original evaluation notified by emotions. And it cannot take an absolute distance from that first evaluation. And, second, because emotions, at the moment of being objectified, cease to be 'felt', they lose their own emotional valence, or their emotional strength. In other words, in the objectification of emotions there is something that is lost, insofar

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as it remains 'backwards to' the objectification itself. And all this has a radical consequence: the acceptance of one's own vulnerability.

What has been reviewed so far leads us, therefore, to think about the moral act and the freedom of such act from a new perspective. Although freedom as autonomy depends on deliberation, before the very possibility of deliberation there is polarization towards certain projects, moved by the evaluation inherent in habit. This implies accepting that freedom, as stated by Merleau-Ponty (1994), is deep-rooted: it does not exclude the habitual, and pretending to do so is denying our way of being. The free act cannot pretend to destroy the situation itself, but what happens, in fact, is that it 'meshes with it'. And this is not the same as denying freedom. We are free beings, but we are not absolutely autonomous beings. Indeed, the first 'autonomy' (that of the child who becomes capable of solving problems and moving in the world) is made possible by the pre-reflexive habit, which is the embodiment of synchronization with the world, and which is affectively notified. The practical reason can take charge of affective evaluations and put them in relation to those made by rational objectification, but it cannot claim to do so from a 'perfect', clear reading. In this sense, emotions, like the body itself with its habits, cannot be 'objectified' in an absolute sense. "The body is not, thus, an object. For the same reason, the consciousness that I have of it is not a thought, that is, I cannot decompose it and recompose it to form a clear idea about it" (p. 215).

The deliberate action has to count with the fact that it cannot apply to life what it sees intellectually (or rationally) as a scientific law is applied to nature. Because it must count with all that it has incorporated (which is cultural, familiar, past history, the language from which I pre-reflexively evaluate reality), and which is the way of inhabiting the world. And culture (which conditions our beliefs) or language cannot be 'claimed' to block freedom, because, as we have seen, without this 'habituality' we could not be free either. The free subject is not a subject self-constituted from scratch from itself, as the idea of the autonomous subject pretends. It is a subject in which habit and spontaneity are always at play. And the reason, in this sense, is precarious, so that the subject cannot avoid its vulnerability.

Moral deliberation is not, therefore, comparable to calculative action: the factors that enter the weighing cannot be reduced to digits, and data are neither there that are transparently presented to us before the objective conscience. A 'correct' action is not possible, just as the result of an equation is correct, or the sum of 'pros' and 'cons' in the analysis of the consequences of the action. The 'profit' of the action is not the adequate

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perspective for discovering its moral value, nor, therefore, can the efficacy of the action be.

The model of the work of art: theoretical and practical use of reason

From what has been said so far, we can conclude that reason has deeper and more radical possibilities than the mere act of scientific matrix, by which nature or artifacts are objectified. But at the same time, it must recognize its precariousness. When its object is the human being himself and his free action, from which culture, social organization, language, art, etc. are born, there is no possibility of reducing the kaleidoscopic world that displays verifiable data, to positive data. We cannot possess the world without residue, from reason, which does not imply that reason is barred from every field in which it cannot exercise absolute domination. As Merlau-Ponty (1994) says:

> The error of reflective philosophies lies on believing that the meditating subject can absorb in his/her meditation, or capture without any residue, the object about which he meditates, that our being can be reduced to our knowing. We are never, as the meditating subject, the unreflected subject that we want to know; but neither can we become entirely conscious, reduce ourselves to transcendental consciousness. If we were conscious, we would have to have the world in front of us, our history, the objects perceived in their singularity as systems of transparent relations (p. 83).

The issue that remains to be resolved is which is the real possibility of the reason. Here Gadamer's reflection on understanding is illuminating. The consideration of emotionality as an integrating part of our knowledge, as well as the consideration of the precariousness of reason, leads us to understand our own capacity of knowledge in a new way. The first: the understanding of reality is not only carried out from the action of reason (in its objectification act), but also from passion, in which it resides the reception of language, of family and cultural beliefs, and habit, as a mode of synchronization between what is received and motor action. This precariousness leads to the fact that the act of reason is better qualified from the notion of contemplation or ob-servation (to rescue the Latin prefix ob, which means that something is put in front). And this is because the very notion of objectification resonates the idea of manipulation, domination, control, and verification, acts to which reason cannot aspire in the domains we have analyzed. The human being who sets out to

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understand the world (not to act in it) would then be conceived as a spectator who participates, from that very contemplation, in the spectacle.

Gadamer (1993), in order to show what understanding implies, resorts to the recovery of the notion of theory, as the Greeks understood it. Theorós, for the Greeks, was the person who participated in a festive embassy, in which his function was determined by the sole attendance. This concept refers to the spectator in the truest sense of the word: he/she participates in the festive act and such participation determines its sacral juridical character. Greek philosophy understood, therefore, theory as attending what is, but this contemplative attendance was not determined from the action of subjectivity, but from what is contemplated.

Theory, from this perspective, was true participation, suffering the drag of contemplation rather than a doing. The objective of theoretical activity consisted, therefore, not in the control of the observed, as in science, nor in the transformation of the observed, but in the participation of the manifest truth. From this perspective, theoretical reason would have as its own act to stop or move away from daily action, from the pragma, to commit to the contemplation of the spectacle of reality, but not to transform it, but only to contemplate it, affirms Rivera (1999). Now, this assistance is not purely passive, but there is, as we said, an action. Or, rather, two: the first would be to get ready for contemplation itself and the second, to pay attention to what is contemplated. As it happens in a theatrical play, for example, those who are ready to be spectators know that they do not have to act in the face of the events presented as they would act in everyday life. He/She does not have to solve problems or deliberate on moral action in pursuit of a decision. In other words, his/her action must be limited to contemplation, not to intervention on what he/she contemplates. In this sense, it is a contemplation that happens 'in itself', not 'for me'; it is not a contemplation with a view to action. The paradigm of contemplation as participation thus serves, for Gadamer, to characterize the own act of reason in its theoretical use.

The paradigmatic example, for this author (1993), of this type of contemplative participation is given in Greek tragedy, since the objective in it is not the simple presentation of events, but the catharsis of the spectator. The effect of the play on the spectator is, therefore, part of the essence of the tragic. For this reason, the participation of the spectator in the tragedy is constitutive of the tragedy itself, and its contemplation is strict participation. The presence of the spectator is not added to the work as something accidental. Now, this participation of the spectator is not an action that interferes with the story presented by the tragic play:

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he/she can only accept the events. However, the events presented are there to achieve the effect on the spectator. His/Her role as observer, not player, is crucial, otherwise the tragic play would not exist. He/She is the one for whom the play is acted, for whom tragedy is made. But what is of interest is the play itself. From this perspective, the notion of theoretical reason recovers what for Aristotle was an exclusively human desire: to know for the sake of knowing.

Now, the model of tragedy provides us with yet another element for our reflection: the human being, when he contemplates the world from the 'distance' of observation, engages with it and does so also from his affective dispositions. In other words, if in life itself the first sphere of valuation is emotionality, the exercise by excellence of reason cannot but engage that same sphere of value, but now from the distance provided by the act of theoretical reason. When reason sets out to ob-serve the human world without acting in it and without the objective of using it, the sphere of emotions also comes into play, as happens in tragedy, which aims at the catharsis of the spectator. In this sense, the very contemplation of reality would imply an existential catharsis, a liberation. The spectator of the play, moreover, knows that his/her own understanding of it depends on the interpretation made by the players and, beyond that, by the own director. And not only that: in front of a play it is evident that this same interpretation is impregnated with emotional valuations, with the inherent beliefs that they entail. There is, therefore, no neutral or clear understanding, reducible to data. It is neither of the world.

Nussbaum (1995), on the other hand, also uses the model of Greek tragedy, but with a different objective than Gadamer. As in all his work, his interest is focused on practical reason, on the issue of moral deliberation. For this author, tragedy is essentially about the vulnerability of the human being, of the problem of his/her freedom, which shows, on the one hand, the rationality of man, who pretends and believes to dominate the course of his life, and the confrontation with fortune, with everything that happens to the person without his/her active intervention, what simply happens to him/her. What tragedy is about is precisely to show the failure of "(...) the aspiration to rational self-sufficiency in Greek ethical thought; this aspiration can be characterized as the desire to make the good of human life safe from fortune through the power of reason" (p. 31). The seduction of the spectator's soul points precisely to participation in this failure, which implies a knowledge of human vulnerability. This vulnerability occurs on three levels: the first is that of activities and relationships which, by their nature, are especially vulnerable to change and to moving. All

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inter-human relationships are subject to this unmanageable vulnerability of the person who exercises them and of the person with whom he/she enters the relationship. The second level is that of the mutual relationships between the activities that the human being carries out, activities that, in fact, at more than one moment are opposed to each other, and require incompatible courses of action. The third level designates the relationship between the self-sufficiency of reason and the less governable parts of the inner structure of the human being. The effect of purgation, the seduction of tragedy, will not only, says the author, show these three levels of conflict, but will make the spectator participate in this vulnerability.

The type of knowledge to which tragedy invited, for the Greeks, was not, therefore, according to Nussbaum (1995) only that of a thematic reflection of the ethical matter, but a display of the ethical problem of vulnerability and participation of the problem from the cathartic effect, which manifested that same vulnerability. For the Greeks there was no radical separation between what we today consider philosophical texts and literary texts: both were equally important reflections of the ethical issue: "For them there were human lives and their problems, and, on the other hand, various genres in prose and verse in the framework of which such matters could be reflected upon" (p. 40). The importance of the exhibition of truth is shown, then, in the dynamics of tragedy, in which the spectator encounters a truth, which is manifested to him. Participation, therefore, is in the strictest sense of the word. Not only is the truth exhibited to the spectator by showing him/her a world that 'refers to' or 'opens a new sense' to his/her world, but he/she himself/herself participates in that open world and understands its truth from his/her own experience in front of the play. For the one who makes sense, he/she makes an experience of the truth that he/she has in front of his/her eyes, joining to the cognitive activity an emotive response.

The very fact that the spectator's response involves emotivity is, for the author, a crucial fact, since contemplation itself leads us to bring into play the psychophysical device that human beings have to access the sphere of value. In this way, both tragedy and any literary work provide us with an experience of our own emotional situation, but in a different way from how this is put into play in everyday action: it does so from the distance of representation. What the spectator contemplates arouses an emotion, which is therefore linked to his or her intimate sphere of value. The fact that these emotions emerge in the face of the narrative work or tragedy has the advantage that they do so outside the sphere of action, in which an immediate response is demanded. In other words, in the midst of pragma,

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emotions are often motors of action, and, in many cases, of non-deliberate action. Or, in deliberation itself, the compulsion for a response in the face of the demanded action often leads us to disregard the cognitive content of the emotion. Precisely because what is demanded is an action.

For Nussbaum, therefore, literary works are presented as an opportunity for human beings to discover what they really value or believe. They are, therefore, privileged occasions for moral deliberation. When we access to the narrated story, we engage, as we have seen, as reader-spectators, with the narrative. But the commitment is not, in the primary sense, moral, but fictional. This enables a less risky scenario, more controlled, than the vital scenario for the emergence of emotion. And it enables taking distance -of a relative distance- necessary for deliberation, while at the same time it enables us to take charge of the sphere of emotionality, without attempting to control it. Literature, therefore, enables us to contemplate our own emotionality in a freer way, i.e., in a moment of freedom that is not urged by the need to decide. This freedom, therefore, favors a profound reflection of our own being, which has in front of it not only the future, the future action that we must carry out, but also the past, because in the emotion there is a recognition of our history and of our cultural situation, our way of inhabiting the world, which is essential for genuine moral deliberation.

One last issue, which we will not deal with in-depth but which we feel it is important to point out, is the relevance that the author gives to literature in the education of democratic citizens. For her, narrative imagination allows us to forge empathy, since through the exercise of being readers or spectators we can put ourselves in the situation of the other from the place of our own vulnerability to commune, in that place, with the vulnerability of the other. In other words, through imagination, literature leads us to occupy positions that are not those we have in real life, and in those positions, emotions emerge that transfer us, from our primary sphere of value to the sphere of value of those who indeed occupy that position in real life. This makes us capable, therefore, of a genuine dialogue with the other more human, because it is propitiated by empathy. And it makes us, even more, to discover common values, because if we can empathize, it is because there are, latent in the emotions, shared primary values of the world.

Conclusions

The very fact that the first layer of valuation is not deliberate, implies that the very action of reason is much more complex than what is usually be-

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lieved from objectivist theories. In emotionality, which is the first device of valuation, there are embedded beliefs and ways of embracing reality that are not trivial, and that cannot be ignored in moral deliberation. We can only access to the plane of value from the emotion, so this plane must not be suppressed, because if we do so we limit this same deliberative act.

Now, understanding the own act of theoretical reason from the paradigm of contemplation and participation is, therefore, fundamental for a reorientation of the act of practical reason. Only because the act of theoretical reason, which is the act through which the human being seeks what the world is 'in itself', can, from the perspectives reviewed here, have as its object the human being himself and the world that he/she constructs, it is possible to understand the act of moral deliberation by including in it the own emotionality. In other words, only if emotion itself can be brought to contemplation, can moral deliberation include the valuations embedded in it as part of its weighting. This possibility, as we have seen, is limited itself by the complexity of factors involved in emotion and because reason itself, in its action, depends on presuppositions (presuppositions that are also inscribed in emotionality and that cannot be possessed without residue in reflection). This limitation implies the acceptance of the own vulnerability, inasmuch as deliberation cannot assume in its reflection all the factors that influence the construction of the world. And not only that, it implies being willing to experience that vulnerability, since in the exercise of contemplation of our own emotions we are confronted with those same emotions in which the lack of control over ourselves is accredited.

The challenge posed by the topic addressed here has multiple edges. One of them points directly to education. And this, from different perspectives. One of them is the one proposed by Cepeda (2021) in his study on the subject in the cognitive sciences:

> Emphasizing emotions as a process of human development is a task that can and should be inserted into the educational field, the functioning of the brain is closely linked to the emotional dimension, and this in turn, with the experiences that are recorded from the contact with the environment, therefore, retaking this consideration is not only conceived as a favorable scenario for the subject, but also for society (p.131).

Very congruent with the above is the perspective addressed by Nussbaum in Nonprofit (2010): the task that is urgent is the education of democratic citizens, and for this purpose education in arts and literature is crucial, since these disciplines enable the formation of empathy. The

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acceptance of the own vulnerability and the encounter with the other from that vulnerability leads to, as we said, a profound dialogue with the other, since the natural attitude of defense towards the other is demolished. Moreover, this reestablishes confidence, no longer understood as the result of absolute control, but as faith in another who is at the same time vulnerable. Nussbaum (1997) states:

> The literary works that promote identification and emotional reaction break down these stratagems of self-protection, force us to look closely at many things that can be painful to face and make this process digestible by giving us pleasure in the very act of confrontation (p. 30).

Now, not only is education in arts important for this purpose. It is also important to the extent that artistic education leads to recover an activity typical to reason: contemplation. The implementation of this attitude in the process of education leads to the development of the capacity to be freely interested in truth. In the field of arts, this gratuity is essential, and thus it presents itself as a propitious scenario to return to a relationship with truth that is not marked by utility or profit. In other words, it is not only necessary, as Nussbaum proposes, to recover literature and art as a place of recognition of one's own situation and that of the other, in pursuit of a richer deliberation and the recognition of the own vulnerability, but also to recover the very exercise of gratuitous contemplation, to return to the exercise of knowing for the sake of knowing, which detonated philosophy.

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Facing post-truth from a neo-Aristotelian foundation of education

Afrontar la posverdad desde un fundamento neo-aristotélico de la educación

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Abstract

The current challenge of post-truth that threatens the functioning of democracy arises from the limits of our knowledge and the interference of emotions and values. Two common schools of thought, ethics of the discourse and agonistic politics, fall short in resolving this challenge. According to Aristotle's understanding of politics, both of these elements were already present. He presents politics as a field of knowledge determined not exclusively by knowledge itself, but also by the limits to that knowledge and by the emotional weight.

The aim of the present paper is to propose a contemporary conception of a *phronetic political discourse*, incorporating the key characteristics of an Aristotelian understanding of *phronesis*. The proposed hypothesis is that a contemporary *phronetic* political discourse cannot be founded on the good, since the plurality of conceptions of the good is what separates modern politics from Aristotelian times. Instead, and following the debates in neo-Aristotelian ethics, the foundation in development of the character of (future) participants in such discourse should be sought. Therefore, education is the key starting point to reinforce the capabilities and habits of discourse participants in order to manage, in the best way possible, the limitations of our knowledge and our personal commitment with the political realm.

Keywords

Post-truth, political discourse, Aristotle, *phronesis*, values, character.

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Resumen

El desafío actual de la posverdad que amenaza el funcionamiento de la democracia surge desde los límites de nuestro conocimiento y la interferencia de las emociones y los valores. Dos corrientes comunes, la ética del discurso, y la política agonista, son insuficientes para resolver este desafío. En la comprensión de la política de Aristóteles estos dos elementos ya estaban presentes. Él presenta a la política como un campo de saber determinado no exclusivamente por el saber, sino al mismo tiempo por los límites del saber y por el cargo emotivo.

El objetivo de este artículo es proponer una concepción contemporánea de un *discurso político phronético*, incorporando las características clave de una *phronesis* aristotélica. La hipótesis es que un discurso político *phronético* contemporáneo no se puede fundar en el bien, ya que la pluralidad de las concepciones del bien es lo que separa la política moderna de los tiempos aristotélicos. En su lugar, y siguiendo a los debates en la ética neo-aristotélica, se debería buscar el fundamento en el desarrollo del carácter de los (futuros) participantes en dicho discurso. Por consiguiente, la educación es el punto de partida esencial para reforzar las capacidades y los hábitos de los participantes del discurso a fin de mejor manejar, en la medida de lo posible, las limitaciones de nuestro conocimiento y nuestro compromiso personal con el campo político.

Palabras clave

Posverdad, discurso político, Aristóteles, *phronesis*, valores, carácter.

Introduction

This paper addresses the post-truth issue from a practical approach in the political field. As an introduction, the post-truth issue is briefly presented as it has arisen in recent years in the political space. Then, the first argumentative step consists in contrasting two proposals for the organization of the political space: ethics of the discourse according to Habermas, and its agonistic counterpart according to Laclau and Mouffe, among others. Both proposals fail to recognize part of the root of the current post-truth issue.

Afterwards, the Aristotelic *phronesis* will be presented as a third alternative, which simultaneously recognizes the insufficiency of the exclusive reason in the political discourse, and the need for a community experience or an emotional commitment. From this proposal, a neo-Aristotelian conception will be developed from a political practice like *phronesis*, i.e., as a practical science as understood by Aristotle, but translated to the current context, determined specifically by the plurality of the conceptions of good.

With the aim of taking politics as *phronesis* to the present, the role of teleology in Aristotle's thinking will be explored, and its pertinency in the ambit of human activity. Although a characteristic of modernity is the fact that it ended the Aristotelian teleologic vision, it is still relevant to include a consideration of the purposes in the political realm. Never-

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theless, in relation to human activity and in the contemporary political realm, it will be demonstrated that this is an undetermined purpose.

Finally, the proposal of a contemporary *phronetic* political *praxis* can be articulated from previous analyses. After pointing out its most pertinent features, the paper ends with some suggestions to be considered for the education of the future agents of the *phronetic* politics.

Starting point: The post-truth issue

Post-truth is one of the most fundamental and complex problems in the current political field. The truth does not obey to an objective criterion anymore, but it has become a subjective adage subject to strategic uses. Politicians try to pass blatant lies as apparent certainties, insisting in their stance by adding a void "it is true". Meanwhile, listeners accept their word as absolute truth, as long as they are not convinced by any rebuttal which may seem obvious (Blackburn, 2018).

By the way, the use of falsehoods in politics is nothing new, and the roots of the post-truth issue extends beyond the present time. Its central role in the contemporary period has its origin especially in the shift made by Nietzsche (2006) of the truth as the basis of knowledge, and its strategic and useful understanding. His analysis of the usefulness of history "for life and action", among other writings and observations, marks the start of the end of the great self-evident narratives, and especially of the faith on the objectivity of sciences and of the existence of an objective truth. It demonstrates that what is called "truth" is rather the result of a conjunction of perspectives, choices and interpretations, all at the service of particular purposes (Heit, 2018).

The urgency of the problem resides in the fact that the strategic use of the truth in the political field leads to its undermining, which ultimately can contribute to the failure of contemporary democracy. This is due to the fact that democracy presupposes the capability of every voting citizen to give direction to political instances based on their own rationality and reasonableness. But when rationality is not the primary faculty in decision making nor in the management of political discourse, then the democratic process can lose its sense of being.

At least two phenomena that are too human can be identified that distract from the rationality of political discourse: emotions and ignorance. On one hand, political players may claim appeals to truth by the simple fact that their listeners cannot not know about everything, and

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not even them can know about everything. By definition, fact-checkers are behind the facts, when the argument has already been made and the political point has been already marked. In a society that is always more differentiated and specialized, and indeed always more complex, partial, or occasionally almost total, ignorance, is always greater and inevitable.

On the other hand, the political field is distinguished by the emotional commitment of the topics addressed. For a political player, it is more effective to debate about immigrants or crime, instead of talking about international agreements of economic cooperation or tributary systems. The reason is that the formers invoke the emotion of voters; they evoke rage, fear, outrage. Thus, in a democracy the political discourse naturally tends to move human beings 'of flesh and blood', before addressing rational beings (Escobar & Ramírez, 2020). The political participant experiences an emotional commitment with political discourses, and the handling of 'facts' and 'truths' finds its limits both in the political actors and in their listeners.

Finally, when ignorance and emotion take the place of rationality and reasonableness, one of the logical results is the growing populism of recent years, followed very closely by a general distrust in politics. Paradoxically, this distrust is accompanied by a blind obedience to the politicians followed by people, even when faced with the proven falsification of their postulates. In short, the post-truth leads to endorse political stances from an emotional identification and despite their proven falsehoods. Therefore, it is urgent to find an answer to the post-truth issue.

The phronesis as an alternative to the ethics of the discourse and the agonism

Some models have been presented to address the post-truth challenge. Indeed, a return and defense of the truth can be aspired. Meanwhile, there can even be a doubt about the existence of "The Truth", a "search for the lost truth" seems like a vain hope. The same complexity of contemporary society identified by Morin (2005), implies that there is not, and will not be, a single view of the entire world. It also implies that our position in the world is not a purely rational process, but always emotional as well (2004).

Then, two opposed alternatives to address the post-truth issue in political discourse can be distinguished. On one hand, there have been attempts to develop a formal framework where political agreements can be made, for example, based on certain participation rules. The ethics

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of Habermas' speech (1985) is one of the most representatives of this option. His participative model requires and presupposes "only" to the formalist subscription of the rules to participate of the discourse. This solution requires the exclusion of the emotional basis, so corrosive in the contemporary political discourse. It is demanded that participants suspend their most fundamental personal values to assume "a controversy-free point of view", or which in terminology borrowed from psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg, is called a post-conventional moral stance.

Without mentioning the innocence of which this proposal has been often accused, it is about an extension of the trust on human reason. By doing so, the emotional and evaluating commitment is ignored —an unremovable element, as it was demonstrated by the current post-truth crisis. The values to fight and make political decisions are not a discomfort, but they are the engine of politics. The unease that has chased democracies in recent years demonstrates that a technocracy leaves people impassive; a democracy (it is the condition for its existence) invokes people, involves them in decision making. As stated by Nussbaum (2001), the emotions experienced by people demonstrate what matters most. Happiness, rage, disappointment, even apathy, indicate the things we value deeply. And these values have cognitive content. Emotions are rational. Instead of excluding them from political discourse at all cost, it should be recognized that they constitute the starting point of such discourse. Instead of surrendering what is valued more, it can be included in the political discussion.

The political agonism described by Laclau and Mouffe (2015) is located at the other end of the same playing field. In this perspective, confrontation is not formalized, as in Habermas, but rather radicalized. While the ethics of the discourse excludes *pathos*, the agonism tends to reduce the political discourse to only the *pathos*. Agonism places in the middle the confrontation between conflicting perceptions and convictions, and considers that any previous discourse rule takes part of a hegemony, and hence reveals a destabilizing predisposition. Indeed, the objective is to repeatedly undermine the established discourse and centralize what was excluded before.

A risk that this path entails is made visible in the fragmentation of the left in many countries. For the purposes of this paper, an important problem is the insurmountable gap between, on one side, the so-called hegemonies (Laclau & Mouffe, 2015) and who they represent, and on the other side, the alterities and the excluded. The "left" and "right" cannot meet anymore, instead they keep themselves enclosed in their respective ideological walls,

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above which the "other" is projected as a mere caricature-like antagonist. Any shared community or playing field is rejected beforehand, considered either an impossibility a priori, or a hegemonic power strategy.

An alternative to both options is presented from a *phronetic* perspective of the political discussion, its concept of truth, and the participation in such discussion. It will be considered that the ethical discourse requires an adequate practical wisdom, that the involved concepts of truth and good are constituted in such discourse, and that, therefore, it is not such truth that establishes politics but the attitude of the participants. Indeed, the post-truth issue was already implicit in the conception of truth itself in the type of knowledge presented by politics, as well as the ethics. Then, from the conception of political discourse as field of *phronesis* and the place of truth in that discourse, some constitutive elements for the participation in such discourse can be indicated, and therefore in the contribution to a relationship adapted to the truth. And considering that the participants (and not the truth) constitute the fundamental element, education is crucial.

The implicit assumptions in the politics as *phronesis*

The problematic status of truth in politics has its roots in Aristotle. He considers that politics is a practical science, or *phronesis*, and not a pure science. Certainly, the following characteristics of *phronesis* may be identified considering it, on one hand, as a practical science, and on the other hand, as a *dianoethics* virtue, as it was also presented in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1985)[1].

First of all, in *phronesis* an absolute truth does not exist. It distinguishes itself from scientific knowledge like mathematics, because "what is an object of science is necessary […] then it is eternal" (1139b20[2]). *Phronesis*, understood as practical knowledge, is not concerned with such eternal truths, but it is about the contingent (Aubenque, 1963). Its objective is not 'The Truth', if it is considered as eternal and absolute. Instead, it addresses local and particular knowledge. The count of participants in a protest can be a simple example. A common way to count the number of participants in a protest or political event is taking the average between the organizers of such protest, and their detractors. Since both numbers will be at a great distance, the 'truth' is surely somewhere in the middle. That is the reason why, when Kelly-Anne Conway defends the count of attendees to the inauguration of American president, she distinguishes

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between a falsehood and 'alternative facts' (NBC News, January 22nd, 2017[3]), her proposal is not as strange as it may seem. In fact, 'political science' enables a plurality and indeterminacy of facts, a feature of *phronesis*. Indeed, a consequence is that political discourse is threatened by the *logos* itself (Aristotle 1990, 1356a1-4). Both the political reference to truth and its justification in facts, end up being problematic.

Secondly, as demonstrated by Aubenque (1963), Aristotle (1985) realizes that "political science", being a practical knowledge, contains truths that concern human beings. Its objective consists of "what is good and bad *for mankind*" (1140b2-5; the emphasis is ours). Thus, *phronesis* is not about any truth, but truths that affect and matter to mankind. Indeed, if emotions are understood as indicators of what matters to human beings, the fact that politics invokes our emotions becomes logical (*pathos*). Another example based on the same contemporary American political field is valid here. When the conservative politician Newt Gingrich was confronted about the official statistics demonstrating a decrease in crime and violence in most cities of the United States, he responded "being a politician, I prefer to trust in what people experience" (CNN Live, July 22nd, 2016[4]). In politics, not only *logos* or rationality are relativized, but also, since they concern to mankind, *pathos* and emotions are incorporated to touch mankind.

Nevertheless (and from the perspective of *phronesis* as more a virtue than a science), the matter does not stay in a purely subjective plane. Beforehand, Aristotle (1985) starts his analysis of practical wisdom with the verification that "regarding prudence, we can comprehend its nature, considering which men we call prudent" (1985, 1140a24-25). To know what is to be prudent, the prudent man (*phronimos*) must be investigated, and his example followed. The circularity is so obvious that takes part of the argument itself. To a general level, *phronesis* is fueled by the personal relationship with others, through common sense. So, their more general 'truth' is intersubjective.

Such intersubjectivity crosses the *Nichomachean Ethics* and *Politics* in general. To this, it is significant that Aristotle dedicates two of the ten chapters of his biggest ethic work to friendship (*philia*). The friend, i.e., the concrete other, works among others as an alter ego to measure and improve my own excellence. And it does not concern exclusively the friend as understood today: in general, *philia* is what also connects citizens with each other. Aristotle refers to the relationship between siblings as one between equals, based on love (*philia*) as a familiar parallel to the relationship between citizens. In other words, for Aristotle what connects

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citizens in a society is not only a self-interest or an earnings calculation; it is also an emotional bond.

In parallel, in *Politics*, Aristotle (1988) links the social nature of mankind with *logos*. His description of man as *zoon politikon* is well known (1253a2-14). This political sense of belonging is based on being conferred with reason, *logos*. This reference to *logos* can be taken literally, being the requisite of a common language. Only a being with language capabilities can express his/her needs and feelings. Only a being in possession of a shared reason is capable of talking about topics such as justice and injustice. The political community is based on the shared language of its members; literally a "common sense" is required. "This is unique to man among other animals: possessing, only him, the sense of right and wrong, of just and unjust, and other values, and the community participation in these things shapes the house and the city" (1253a18). In short, the intersubjectivity of *phronesis* is based on both the emotional part (the *philia*) and the rational part (*logos*) of human beings.

This final point is of central importance. *Logos*, along with *philia*, form the base of society. In fact, the members of a community can be called *philoi*. Aristotle recalls that any given community depends for its existence on a shared interest (1988, 1252a1-7). In a healthy community, each member has its role in the group, his/her contribution to the purpose of society.

Now, introducing the concept of purpose in the political debate, on one hand it is addressed to the point that more distinguishes the contemporary age from the antiquity, because the big shift in modernity has consisted in undoing the cosmovision from its teleological frameworks, changing them by a natural and determined world. Thinking about a "teleological" politics seems very problematic and even undesirable in a post-teleological framework. On the other hand, rethinking the purpose of political society from the angle of *phronesis* and *eudaimonia* will enable to formulate an alternative perspective on the end of society, based on constant discussion — in which the concept of good does not precede so much the discourse, but it takes part and object of the same discourse.

Teleology and *phronesis:* an undetermined purpose

So far, the non-absolute, committed and (inter)subjective character of phronesis has been highlighted. In other words, the concrete aspect of what Iris Murdoch calls "concrete universals" (Murdoch, 1970) is unders-

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tood. Now, such universality is under scrutiny. On one hand, *phronesis* reaches up to where its object allows, i.e., the concrete human behavior. However, the second foundation is that "prudence is a way of being rational, *true* and practical in regard to what is good and bad for man" (Aristotle, 1985, 1140b4-5; the emphasis is ours). In parallel with the subjective, intersubjective and contextualized tendency, for Aristotle *phronesis* also has an objective basis.

By linking the truth of *phronesis* with its object, human behavior, the bond is made for the same end, which is what is good and bad *for man*. With this, the *teleological* core of Aristotle's philosophy is reupdated, as a metaphysical framework, in its ethics and politics. At the same time, it is worth making a clear difference between the metaphysical and physical framework from that teleological foundation, applying the same in the field of practical knowledge. The teleological foundation has generally been abandoned entering modernity (for example, you may think about the devastating critique made by Thomas Hobbes at the Stagirite, in chapter 46 of his *Leviathan*, 1988). To adequately value teleology in the present context, Aristotle should be relocated in historical context.

With his teleological proposal, Aristotle (1994) opposes to two central and opposing tendencies at his time. On one hand, Plato (1992) assumed that the world of particular things is a mere particular representation of a separate transcendental world that he calls the World of Ideas. Trees, clouds, and men arise and perish, following the eternal models against which they always end up incomplete, imperfect. Mathematics is here the model science, from which philosophy takes its example. The 'what for' of particular things, their sense, is transcendental to these same entities, like mathematic laws are transcendental and external to triangles and particular sums.

On the other hand, there is the materialistic tradition, under which the world order principle can only exist in things that belong to the same world. The presocratic atomists have formulated a variety of ways to understand the complexity of the world and its phenomena, from a joint interaction of basic elements. Democritus, the last of the great *fysiologoi* and a contemporary of Plato, suggests that chance, or a kind of blind natural selection, is the principle that orders the world (Kirk & Raven, 1957). For Democritus, the 'what for' of things can only be explained from those same things, in combination with the chance that governs an exclusively material world.

Teleology is the Aristotelian answer to both extremes, idealism and materialism. Against Democritus' materialism, he proposes that the

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world order cannot be explained only by matter itself. From simple elements, chance is not a sufficient reason to explain the complexity of existing things. Simultaneously, he opposes Plato in considering that such complexity ordering principle cannot be transcendent to those same emerged entities. Elements do not obey, whether from the imposition of a demiurge or not, to transcendental ideas or exemplary essences. In other words, even if there is a principle ordering the world and the things, this principle is immanent to the world itself and its entities.

Now, in the framework of natural philosophy, such teleological framework has been abandoned a long time ago by a mechanist cosmovision. In such world (not so far from what Democritus foresaw), there is not a place for final causes. Rain does not exist to 'irrigate plantations", human noses are not what they are anymore 'to hold glasses'. But what does this overcoming of teleological thinking imply to our understanding of human behavior, and of course, of the practical wisdom of *phronesis*? The first phrase of *Nichomachean Ethics* states the teleological foundation of human activity: "Every art and every investigation and, equally, every action and free election seem to tend to some good" (1094a1-3). The 'what for' of human behavior is a profoundly teleological topic. And, while the physical world and nature have overcome the metaphysical framework, human behavior is still profoundly teleological, i.e., it is understood from the purposes is seeks to reach.

Thus, when wondering about the good at which human behavior is headed to, Aristotle presents a teleological question. In opposition to both Plato and Democritus, this good to which human behavior is headed, is not transcendent. There is not a transcendental Idea of Good, but it is something immanent to the human existence in particular. Good is immanent because it is about the "most complete fulfillment of our potency" (1045b33-36) that can be reached. Ethic excellence is being the best one can be —not in front of an ideal imposed from the outside, but from the own abilities and objectives of the human being. Nevertheless, in ethical and political areas, this fulfillment of human potency cannot be understood from a purely materialist way. Human good is not determined in a mechanist way; it is not in the hands of *fysis* or chance. Then, what is it?

To Aristotle, the question regarding the purpose or *telos* of human behavior coincides with good. The objective of human activity, the last point, is the good. As a result, and following the aforementioned, it is not about a transcendental Idea of the Good, but about the immanent fulfillment of the inherent potential of an entity. At the same time, this potential is not a mechanist effect of its causes, but it is about the personal

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human potential. As such, the good of human behavior had not been determined prior to such behavior. The act ontologically precedes the potency. The indeterminacy inherent to human good resounds throughout *Nichomachean Ethics*. In the case of *phronesis* as a "practical science", the impossibility to formulate universal truths has repercussions on Aristotle's ethics, because there is a plurality of acts and intentions of interest. In the case of *phronesis* as a virtue, the circularity of defining it referring to the same prudent man has already been mentioned, to know what is to be prudent.

The *phronetic* political discourse

From the previous analysis, it is now possible to propose a tentative definition of the political discourse in its *phronetic* sense. A *phronetic political discourse* is a shared space based on the committed participation of the agents gathered by the plurality of perspectives in a discussion dedicated to topics about politics and values. Every element could be clarified briefly in the following manner:

- The starting point is the political discourse, considering the basis on the complexity that lies underneath the post-truth challenge, a contemporary and typically political issue. As such, it is about the space for ordering and handling the polis, i.e., of the society in which people live together.
- Politics is about a shared space; it is considered that human beings must live together. And living together entails at least a shared *logos*, a common sense.
- It is also considered that any participation is committed, i.e., that citizens care about both the process and its result, and not only for ourselves but for the society. Society, in the *phronetic* model, is based on a form of *philia*, an emotional bond between fellow citizens, a basis of shared values.
- Nevertheless, the values that are shared, and more precisely the desired conception of the final good, is fundamentally undetermined. Hence, what constitutes the basis or foundation of the *phronetic* political discourse is not the purpose as *eudaimonia*, but the participants themselves. It is about, in words of Michael Slote (2010), a view based on the agent.
- This foundation in the character links the cognitive and emotional, evaluating, aspects of the same agent

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- The final objective of the *phronetic* space is precisely the confrontation and the discussion of arguments and truths in favor of the different conceptions of good, as well as the conceptions themselves. In other words, the conception of good is a topic of the discourse itself (MacIntyre, 1984[5]).

The *phronetic* conception of political discourse refuses, on one side, to exclude the topic of the good of the discussion. The presence of post-truth seems an element already constituent of politics in an era of complexity. Assuming that the contemporary political crisis demonstrates the impossibility of removing the emotional from the political, it is rather sought to incorporate more fundamental values to the participants. The political debate does not let itself to be reduced to a simple calculation of interests, or to an administration of goods, as political philosophers along the entire ideological spectrum have dreamed of.

On the other hand, it is necessary to start from a common ground, from a common sense and from a community experience, to avoid falling into unsolvable oppositions. For the existence of political dialog, there should be some form of dialog in its etymological sense, *dia-logos*. It is inherent to the contemporary political community the need to live together with people that have beliefs, values, convictions, and desires that are different than ours. And yet, at the end of the day, any common good is not common anymore. Conversely, the indeterminacy of the *telos* of human activity has left in Aristotle room for a fragrant plurality. Thus, 'the good' cannot be anymore assumed beforehand, but it must be an object of the same political discourse.

After seeing that the background for political discourse is not in the same conception of good, and that plurality is what profoundly determines contemporary political discourse, the background must be searched for in another place. From the field of contemporary neo-Aristotelianism, the constitution of the participants of the discourse can be taken as a more appropriate background, i.e., the character of the agents in the *phronetic* political discourse, without referring to any previous conception of 'the good' or 'the right' (Van Zyl, 2019). Now, any exhaustive description of such character implies a contradiction in itself, and would be a setback in face of accepting the impossibility of formulating only one founding concept of the good in relation to *phronesis*. Similarly to Aristotle's ethics, ethical excellence can only be described through concrete examples and therefore an undefinable plurality, the character of the political maintains its undefinable plurality. Hence, instead of articulating such nature in full detail,

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the key elements to facilitate an adequate participation in the political discourse can be rather explored. Instead of looking at the requisite character, the foundational elements can be explored with better detail from their formation, to enable maintaining plurality of its constitutions.

Notes for the formation of the agent towards *phronesis*

In such *phronetic* formation, it is not possible to assume a specific conception of good. Since the agents must be prepared for a participation in a plural and complex field, it becomes impossible to simply assume a fixed identity, with a determined purpose. And, if it is decided to show any dominant identity, it must always be taken into consideration its contingent social-historic peculiarity and its relativity in front of a plural field. Regardless of this restriction, Aristotle himself gives us some guidelines to think of a more adequate education to prepare the agent for participating in a *phronetic* political discourse. He ends his *Nichomachean Ethics* with the call to pursue the greatest excellence than can be reached by means of nature, habits and education (1179b21-23)[6].

First, upon looking at nature, it is found at the same time the ancient heritage of Aristotelian teleology and the opening that it contains in the ancient thinker when addressing human activity. As it has been argued, the teleological heritage does not prevent, in the case of human behavior, an opening and the plurality of different coexistent purposes. In fact, Christine Swanton (2003) articulates a pluralist interpretation of the theory of virtues based on Aristotle. She understands virtues as "a good attribute of character, more specifically a disposition to respond to, or recognize, matters inside a field or fields in an excellent or sufficiently good way" (The translation is ours). So, for Swanton, plurality depends on the field in which one is acting.

Human nature consists in a conjunction of abilities that can be either developed or not, gathering both the rational and irrational parts of the human being. The emotional part, though is not rational in itself, depends on rationality (Aristotle, 1985, 1102a27-1103a11). Considering that it is proposed to start from the agent, and not from a fixed conception of good, the question is how it is sought to handle nature. Through the plurality of the fields in which we get involved, the agent is the starting point, not a reactive result. Nevertheless, the agent cannot be reconsidered to the measure of some fixed criterion that precedes the agent itself, whether in a transcendental or physiologic way. Even if the field in

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which the agent must act is distinguished by its irreducible plurality, the character of every agent must constitute a unity. It is proposed to think based on the character, assuming the field (or fields) of acting in a given manner. Of course, the unity of character does not imply its simplicity, nor its teleological goodness, but it refers more to its firmness. Aristotle considers that, in the end, the happy life does not depend on destiny, nor exclusively on our behavior at the moment, but on our attitude. A fulfilled life is measured according to the firmness of the character demonstrated (1103a6-11). Thus, referring to *phronesis*, the important thing is how much an individual maintains a certain firm attitude in front of his/her own limitations and impediments, especially rational and emotional, and under pressure depending by the demands of the field.

In second place, a central element in the education that prepares an agent for *phronetic* participation is the creation of habits (1103a24-26). For Aristotle, the virtues of character are shaped not only from nature or from the matter as a particular agent, but also through exercise and effort. Now, in the absence of a particular good, and with the impossibility of determining it in a political discourse, together with the inevitable presence of conceptions of good in such discourse, it is clear that this exercise cannot focus on the content nor on a result to be obtained. Thus, instead of focusing the exercise on a particular search for the good or its truth, it can focus on the search method.

Concretely, it goes back to exercise, not to the formulation nor the search of a particular good or a group of preestablished values; the exercise of constant evaluation and verification of proposals in the political discourse and its proponents. The capability of the (future) *phronetic* agent to recognize the validity of the proposed arguments could perhaps be prepared, as well as his/her ability to identify and understand the participants themselves who handle those arguments. Considering that it is impossible to remove the emotional dimension of political discourse, facing the absence of definitive truths, the best exercise consists in perhaps enabling to recognize the truthfulness of a discourse.

Obviously, it is an impossible effort and the objective is unreachable. However, an adequate education must incorporate this critical faculty of the character and of the motivations of the agents, and not only the arguments in question. It often involves an a posteriori work, as is the case of the virtues, where it is not always known where to direct the effort before being in a real situation. Thus, for example (and to use a typical Aristotle example), the warrior can only recognize his own strengths and weaknesses regarding his bravery after being in a real situation of lethal danger. From

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there, it is possible to find the adequate exercise and correct each one in the optimal direction. From there, it is possible to search the adequate exercises and correct each one in the optimal direction. The fact that this optimal direction does not depend any longer of an established measure, but on a complex field of constant human behavior, it does not facilitate the work to be carried out, but it always makes it more important and more urgent.

In third place, regarding the education itself, it is demonstrated by excellence the aforementioned intersubjective treatment. An educator is, more concretely, the *other* that provides an example and a model for adequate and inadequate behavior, and that helps to reinforce both the construction of good habits as well as the articulation and refinement of the being itself. Hence, the responsibility for training the agents necessary to handle and form the *phronetic* political discourse lies on the education itself.

The educator is the example, not in his/her proposal of a truth or a particular good, but in his/her attitude and his/her *agent being*. From there, education must focus on the development of the two problematic elements pointed out at the beginning, rationality and reasonableness. Education must prepare agents capable of deciphering their own arguments, as well as their feelings, to subsequently be able to decipher the rational and emotional contributions contained in a political discourse. In education, the agent must develop the required firmness of character, not to search (or even worse, grab) a particular discourse or some idea of good, but develop his/her capability to prove any claim of truth, value, or truthfulness.

Of course, an education focused on a *phronetic* agency must combine both critical and self-critical faculties. This task does not exclude reinforcing its own conceptions of good. On the contrary, an agent in a *phronetic* discourse is capable of understanding, formulating, and transmitting his/her own values and convictions. And in education such capability can be reinforced —not from values, but from the agent itself. At the same time, the agent develops the ability to understand, analyze and criticize the proposals formulated in a political field. This capability is not exclusively rational, but also emotional and evaluative. In short, it is suggested that the best way to subvert the collapse of democracy is to appropriately prepare (future) citizens to handle the condition of complexity and live the reality of post-truth.

Conclusion

The final consequences of the complexity of contemporary society at a political level are both the inevitable ignorance and irreducible com-

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mitment. The current post-truth issue demonstrates the attribute of complexity inherent to the contemporary political discourse. Politics, understood as a practical science, contains both the invocation to rationality and common sense (*logos*) and an undeniable emotional commitment. Certainly, a partial ignorance of citizens and political players cannot be avoided, nor their emotional commitment.

To counteract this political challenge, this paper suggests developing an involvement in political discourse, not from formal rules that exclude the most profound values and conceptions of good that every participant provides, nor from a model of fight that excludes beforehand the possibility of agreement between citizens in a common place and the possibility of a shared rationality, but from the model of (neo-)Aristotelian *phronesis*. This model assumes the non-universality of statements and the ethic commitment of the participants in the *phronetic* discourse. Then, an intersubjectivity is presumed, both from the constitutive rationality (*logos*) and commitment (*philia*) of the discourse itself.

For Aristotle, the teleological anchor of his philosophy is central. Translating the model of *phronesis* to the present this teleological framework is maintained, but not as a foundation of the discourse in a conception of a purpose or of a particular supreme good for mankind. It rather includes such purpose as a supreme value and source of the commitment of the agents that participate in the discourse. The conceptions of good maintained by citizens constitute the object of a discourse marked by its plurality. In short, it should be talked about what matters.

This plurality requires an education that prepares (future) agents for participation in the *phronetic* political discourse. Indeed, the focus of such education is not found in the search of a truth or of final purposes, but instead in the capability of investigating claims of truth, value, purpose, and truthfulness. Then, an adequate education does not seek to surpass the limits of knowledge, nor exclude ethic commitment. The objective is rather to explain and articulate such self-commitment, as well as to develop the faculty of recognizing and observing the different commitments of other agents, and recognizing and handling self-limitations and the limitations of others.

Finally, the goal of a preparatory education for *phronetic* praxis is the shaping and reinforcement of the character of the (future) agent. It is considered that the best remedy to the challenges of a complex society consists in solidifying ourselves to face its risks. The foundation of *phronetic* politics is not in a conception of good, nor in the exclusion of political values, but in the agent as a constitutive participant of a plural

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and complex space. Therefore, the education of the agent is the basis of a consolidation of the political field.

Notes

1 It is still an object of debate the place and the interpretation of the concept of *phronesis* in the work by Aristotle, especially its use closest to a virtue in the ethical writings, and its sense rather as a science in other texts such as *Metaphysics* (1994), For the purposes of the present research, it is closer to the reading of Aubenque (1963), without repeating the argumentative steps carried out in such debate.

2 For the references to the work by Aristotle, references have been included according to Bekker edition.

3 https://bit.ly/3m3G3sY

4 https://bit.ly/3E2gzlU, consulted on the 12-12-2019, the translation is ours.

5 MacIntyre defines a *practice* as follows: "any coherent and complex form of a socially established cooperative human activity, through which goods internal to this form or activity are carried out when trying to reach such excellence standards convenient to, and partially definite of, such form or activity, such that human capabilities are extended to achieve the excellence and human conceptions of the concerned purposes or goods" (p.187; the translation is ours).

6 Stanley Cavell (2004) incorporates Aristotle in his development of a moral perfectionism, a proposal and a terminology that this research work endorses completely.

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Out-of-place learning as a pragmatist critique of the cognitive sciences

El aprendizaje fuera de lugar como una crítica pragmatista de las ciencias cognitivas

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Abstract

The relationship between cognitive sciences and philosophy is fruitful and diverse. Nevertheless, there are few philosophical attempts to analyze the concept of learning regarding its link to applications in the education field. The philosophical pragmatism provides a sustainable theoretical framework to complete this task. The aim of this study is to offer an approximation to the concept of learning from the perspective of Robert Brandom's contemporary pragmatism (1994, 2001). Specifically, it analyzes this concept as an instance of the 'social practices' idea based on the normativity conception proposed by Brandom, evaluating the epistemological advantages of this stance. At the same time, it warns about the consequences of limiting learning to causal and natural regularities, as it is the case of the cognitive approach in education. To this end, this work determines the traditional and conceptual affiliations of the idea of 'social practices' in recent philosophy, and based on such reconstruction it shows that a learning approach beyond cognitivism is possible (without questioning its possible contributions). Additionally, it states the relationships between learning and rule, as well as between learning and language. As a result, this analysis enables to place formal learning within the framework of social practices, explain its normative nature and define how language is conditioned by it.

Keywords

Learning, cognitivism, Brandom, practices, social, education.

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Resumen

El vínculo entre ciencias cognitivas y filosofía es fructífero y diverso. Sin embargo, son pocas las tentativas filosóficas que examinan el concepto de aprendizaje en su relación con aplicaciones para el campo educativo. El pragmatismo filosófico ofrece un marco teórico sustentable para efectuar esta tarea. Este estudio se plantea como una aproximación al concepto de *aprendizaje* desde el pragmatismo contemporáneo de Robert Brandom (1994, 2001). Concretamente, analiza este concepto como una instancia de la idea de 'prácticas sociales', a partir de la concepción sobre normatividad que Brandom propone, evaluando las ventajas epistemológicas de esta postura. Al mismo tiempo, advierte las implicancias de reducir el aprendizaje a regularidades causales o naturales, tal como se desprende del abordaje cognitivista en educación. A tal fin, el artículo sitúa las filiaciones de tradición y conceptuales de la idea de 'prácticas sociales' en la filosofía reciente, y a partir de dicha reconstrucción muestra que es posible un abordaje del aprendizaje más allá del cognitivismo (sin cuestionar sus contribuciones posibles). Asimismo, señala los vínculos entre aprendizaje y norma, así como también entre aprendizaje y lenguaje. Como resultado, este análisis permite situar el *aprendizaje formal* en el marco de las prácticas sociales, explicar su naturaleza normativa y definir el tipo de condicionamiento que el lenguaje adquiere en él.

Palabras clave

Aprendizaje, cognitivismo, Brandom, prácticas, sociales, educación.

Introduction

The relation between cognitive sciences and philosophy is fruitful and diverse. Fuentes, Umaña, Risso & Facal (2021) have recently demonstrated the importance of this relationship for configuring the field of educational psychology along the twentieth century, particularly in a regional (and specifically Ecuadorian) context. Nonetheless, there are few philosophical attempts that concretely examine the concept of learning and its relation to the educational field, which is strange and problematic. Strange, because the phenomenon of learning is studied thoroughly in the complex and wide field of cognitive sciences. On the other hand, as argued by José Luis Bermúdez (2014), even though the philosophy of education is an independent discipline, there are few crossovers between it and the philosophy of mind, where undoubtedly learning is important. Regarding its problematic nature, from a conceptual point of view and without a clear delimitation of learning, there is a risk of not providing strict application criteria to experimental approaches. Experimentally, the analysis of results could be vague if directions are not specified and contexts are not delimited. In particular, as pointed out by Terigi (2016) and Baquero (2017), this is probable thinking on the educational field and concretely dealing with formal learning.

This study is aimed at delimiting this deficit or vacuum in the path of a learning philosophy. For that purpose, the concept of 'learning' is examined as an instance of the idea of 'social practices' in a particular

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approach, namely pragmatism, in the version of Robert Brandom (1994, 2001); his development has been called 'semantic inferentialism' because of the thesis that semantic content has an inferential nature. From the conception of normativity of such author, the work defends the normative nature of social practices and warns about the implications of reducing practices to casual or natural regularities. Finally, the viability of analyzing formal learning from this theoretical framework is discussed.

It is expected that this proposal has an impact on the debate, to the interior of the philosophy of English-speaking education, with respect to the importance of the theory in the configuration of the experimental research field in education. On this matter, Siegel (2018) has pointed out the relevance of addressing this point. More broadly, it is expected that it affects the current discussion in the region regarding the foundation of educational policies about academic performance. Although the concept of 'learning' is complex and lacks a unique approach, it is clear that the teaching-learning processes have been object of distrust and scrutiny across Latin America since the middle or end of the past century. According to Tenti Fanfani and Grimson (2015), this phenomenon of 'suspicion regarding school', very much alive at present, has been key in a certain concrete demand from educators, who demand to rethink the structures and traditional processes to create new ways of teaching and, above all, new 'foundations' for learning. On this matter, for example, the data provided by neuroeducation related to how the brain learns, starts to have a noticeable validity for educators. In the same way, the link between cognitive neuroscience and education has been acquiring an increasing spot in the public agenda of our time.

Taking this into account, through the delimitation of learning from the theory of Brandom, it is intended to indicate the importance of understanding this phenomenon in another comprehensive framework, in line with what Bakhurst (2011) calls a process of 'formation of reason'. This fundamentally involves questioning and limiting —not censoring— any scientific-naturalist approach of educational practices. As a result of such interpretation, it is possible to establish dissent in different degrees with the conceptual framework of the neuro-educational project. Nevertheless, this polemic purpose is not a critical part of this work. To guide those who pretend to delve into this line of production, the neuro-educational project is an extreme version of what will be named 'naturalist approach of social practices'. On the contrary, it is indeed part of the objectives of this work to present certain critics of any approach that understands that cognitive sciences 'are enough' to delimit learning as an

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educational phenomenon. The impact of this conclusion in the debate about educational policies is relevant, in contrast with the little place currently assigned to philosophy and sciences of education.

This study is structured as follows: the first section makes a characterization of *pragmatism* to understand the background of the idea of social practices and its relation with the notion of *learning*. The central commitments of the methodology adopted are presented in this journey. The second and third sections describe the naturalist approach to social practices. The example of the anthropologist who arrives to a strange community is used for this purpose. In this way, it is attempted to highlight that social practices offer a specific type of normativity. Sections fourth and fifth present the reasons why certain variables around normativity should be discarded. Additionally, Brandom's argument around normativity is rebuilt, explaining his reasons for rejecting both 'regulism' and 'regularism' of social practices. As a corollary, the final section exposes the conception of normativity implicit in the practices and how learning is analyzed under this perspective. In this way, it is stated that Brandom's pragmatist approach enables to understand two central aspects of the phenomenon of learning: on one hand, its normative nature and, on the other hand, the concrete place that language plays in a teaching-learning process, aimed at intervening in social practices. However, a certain limitation in the brandomian approach may be pointed out (namely: it does not address the link between cognition and emotions), since it highlights the point at which the cognitivist approach still has a hardly questionable impact (specifically: it offers a cognitive development from early stages of understanding, necessary to account for formal learning).

The idea of social practices and the pragmatic movement

The idea of social practices has started to play leading role in recent decades in the denominated *Philosophy of the social sciences* or *Social Ontology*, a specialization space belonging to contemporary philosophy where philosophy of mind, of language, metaphilosophy, epistemology and other disciplines come together. As Epstein (2018) summarizes, the *Philosophy of the social sciences* pursues to delimit the nature of social phenomena. Within the diverse conceptions in such field, a research program has been established whose objective is offering a social approximation of the mind. According to this approximation, endorsed by Haugeland (1990), Satne (2016), Rouse (2007) and Kiverstein (2016), the social practices

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give content to mental states, such as belief, desire, intention and human action. Following this thesis, Satne (2016) also calls this position a "communitarianism of intentionality" (p. 528).

The impact of this approach on conceptual and empirical discussions in social sciences is undeniable. However, in the specification of these debates, two important aspects are often lost: there is a movement that places the conception of 'social practice' at the core of their interests; and given the place of such tradition in contemporary philosophy, any reference to these practices deserves —at least— to be taken into account as a precedent. The movement under consideration is North American pragmatism.

In fact, from their beginnings between the end of the nineteenth century and the start of the twentieth century, pragmatists[1] invoke the conception of practice to establish a contrast with mere theorizations that ignore their effective application in ordinary life[2]. Under this view, the invocation to practices becomes a rule, both indicating the object of study as well as delimiting the intervention area for philosophical reflection.

Pragmatism is a philosophical 'movement' that first arose in informal meetings where William James (1842-1910), Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) and the jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894), among others, took part. Later, these encounters impacted the way to teach philosophy in prestigious universities such as Chicago or Harvard. James (1907), one the most important classic pragmatists, comments in the conferences *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (1907) —text that can be considered as a declaration of pragmatists principles— that among the main motivations of the movement, there was the need to get philosophy out of the university[3]. Precisely, he referred the field of practices, the grounds of the plain man, where what prevails are concrete actions in a framework of daily experience (in the history of the idea there is a clue to this respect: *tá prágmata* in Greek means 'the things' in the ordinary sense of the term, namely, the things of the ordinary or common world). In that sense, pragmatism proposes to address daily problems in contrast with the attitude of a certain way to do philosophy, strongly rooted on tradition, that touches topics in a grade of generality that hardly enables to think about some kind of social impact.

Even if certain philosophies do not intend to solve problems just as if they were providing solutions to public conflicts, Faerna (1996) explains that pragmatism knew how to condemn a gesture of excessive speculation typical of certain philosophical tendencies at the time, especially on the Hegelian realm. Nevertheless, the pragmatist critic to philosophies that do not intend to intervene in public affairs gained resignification in

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Rorty's work (1979), who often simplified some traditional philosophical postures (not without previously recognizing it) to point out their lack of commitment with public affairs and, in many cases, their problematic nature, thinking about the implications for the present. Even recognizing that this pragmatist critic hardly will do justice to the richness of the philosophical tradition, the truth is that pragmatism found a distinctive characteristic in the need of directly addressing topics such as education, communication media, political parties, juridical rulings, topics that in other traditions were treated with a less 'interventionist' profile.

This contrast between a more interventionist philosophy and a less interventionist one, should not be associated to a moral normativity, under which being interventionist or pragmatist is fine and not being such is bad. Precisely, pragmatism has insisted in the need to tolerate diverse points of view at any investigation instance. Possibly, a more questionable gesture of pragmatism would be to show the implications that certain traditional philosophies (such as 'Platonism' or 'Cartesianism') would have nowadays. Implications that are often negative. It exceeds the interest of this paper to extend on that matter, but it is prudent to maintain this tension: the traditions that pragmatism criticizes, rarely point to a particular author, and recognized pragmatists such as Dewey (1921) or Rorty (1979) warn that the recovery of an author leaves aside contextual aspects with the purpose of 'setting to dialogue' certain ideas with current problems. This metaphilosophical decision with respect to not recognizing the importance of the context of an author is questionable, but it also questionable to consider that the context of an author defines his/her ideas and that it is not possible to translate them to conflicts of other eras. In any case, pragmatism justifies the choice using the first way.

Once these clarifications have been made, it is important to note that, for pragmatism, an indisputable priority at the time of thinking is that theory relates to social practices. This is not a mere dogmatic preference, but that it is founded on a critic to a knowledge model strategically referenced in 'Cartesianism'[4]. As held by the notable contemporary pragmatist Richard Bernstein (2013):

> Pragmatism starts with a radical critic of what Peirce called "the Cartesianism spirit". That is how Peirce understood a system of thinking that dominated much of modern philosophy —where marked dichotomies are drawn between what is mental and physic, as well as between the subjective and the objective; where «genuine» knowledge presumably lies on indubitable foundations; and where we can put in parenthesis all prejudices with a methodical doubt (p. 23).

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As it has been pointed out by Faerna (1996) and Malachowski (2013), among others, this criticism characteristic of classic pragmatism survives in its diverse contemporary ramifications. For example, Bernstein (2013) argues that such cartesian assumptions predispose certain interrelated philosophical problems: the problem of the outside world, the problem of our knowledge of other minds and the problem of how to correctly represent reality. In general, pragmatists show that such difficulties may appear very naturally, but are placed on dichotomies exposed in the 'spirit of Cartesianism'. By proposing this diagnosis around Cartesianism, beyond the conditions made, undoubtedly there is a reading that ignores the revolutionary aspects of Descartes' thinking. Among these aspects it should be highlighted, as demonstrated by Harfield (2007), the impact that Descartes had for the science of his time, concretely for mathematics and for the theory of vision, without also recognizing, by the way, his contributions to a mechanist psychology which is still valid. In a different note, Richard Popkin (1979) has pointed out Descartes' influence on the epistemological debates of his time related with skepticism, which had regained an enormous influence at the time through theological debates that led to the problem of the nature of truth[5].

Leaving aside this important idea, the current relevance of the notion of social practices within pragmatism would not have been possible without the recovery that Richard Rorty made of the classic pragmatist tradition, in the tone of a response to the cartesian ideas. From his work, it is also understood the relevance of Brandom's theory in the current philosophical landscape and its possible and effective consequences for the study of education and learning.

Such contextualization is proposed at this point, because the recovery of the idea of social practices is more thoroughly established in recent decades, from a neo-pragmatist version originated from what Maher (2013) systematized as the 'School of Pittsburgh'. This school emerges, among other factors, from the influence of Wilfrid Sellars (professor and researcher at Pittsburgh) and Rorty himself, in the second half of the past century. Additionally, its main contemporary representatives are Brandom himself and John McDowell, both professors at the same university.

Rorty is one of the main contemporary exponents of pragmatism, and maybe the most influential and prolific. He acquired international reputation in specialized media after his famous essay *Philosophy and the Mirror of the Nature* (1979). Over his work he recovers and shows the originality of diverse aspects of classic pragmatism, referenced in three of its pioneering and main figures: Peirce, James, and Dewey (1859-1952). In

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his greatest work as well as in his subsequent papers, Rorty (1979, 1997) revives different elements of these thinkers to suggest a radical critic of knowledge and culture, trusting —in line with classic pragmatism— in the fact that philosophy has a duty in the public agenda.

A fundamental attribute of the pragmatist rescue of Rorty is, precisely, his criticism to the cartesian spirit. Rorty (1979) put into perspective the scopes of this epistemological conception for western culture and highlighted its characteristics in two points: 1) the insistence that knowing is avoiding error, and 2) the obsession to accomplish a *representation* of the world from epistemological solipsism. In opposition to this model and following the critics of classic pragmatists[6], Rorty redeems a way of researching that is based on a community of speakers that discuss and review certain problems presented by the coexistence in a particular environment. In such community of speakers, the skeptical radicalized doubts that obsessed Descartes do not appear to be serious problems; neither appear the disquisitions about how to link the private mind with the external world. The pragmatist terms of discussion break such difficulties in a radical manner.

On the other hand, when speaking about 'revising' knowledge, classical pragmatists put a specific weight. To delve into this aspect, two distinctive qualities that differentiate pragmatism, according to Putnam (1999), should be pointed out: (1) its distrust in the face of skepticism and (2) a fallibilist conception of truth. Distrust in the face of skepticism because, for pragmatists, doubt should have as much justification as belief. Regarding fallibilism, pragmatism states that even the most entrenched beliefs may be subject of revision, if the adequate context emerges; if experience demands a change in beliefs, then they should be revised.

What Kuhn (2006) calls "anomalies" (p. 92) in scientific theories are an example of this. Such anomalies force to modify certain beliefs, giving place to new theories. In line with this idea, Rorty (1997) argues that, in the moral plane, a principle could be inconvenient for a particular case; in some situations, it is better to ignore the principle, for example, that it is bad lying to avoid doubt and inaction. For both peculiarities, pragmatism was consolidated as the American contribution to contemporary philosophy.

In this sense, pragmatism vindicates the idea of purpose and interest as elements that articulate human beliefs and actions. For this reason, it usually criticizes any discourse around the idea of the ultimate representation of the world. Instead, pragmatists state that a theory should be limited to give solutions to certain problems. To justify this conception,

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they claim scientific procedures as an exemplary way of thinking. Historically, pragmatism emerges when Darwin's evolutionism placed itself as a paradigm for the scientific method. As recently demonstrated by Cowles (2020), in Dewey's work, the notable impact of this conception is shown.

Anti-Cartesianism and fallibilism are two permanent elements in the pragmatist movement. With the advent of logical positivism, pragmatism stopped having —at least explicitly— the impact it used to have in the academic field, and went into a long sleep until, mainly, the appearance of Rorty in the contemporary philosophic scene. Rorty considered that pragmatism sufficed to declare the overcoming of epistemology as normative reflection independent of natural sciences. Even this project has not been strictly followed, as shown by Scotto's body of work (2017), epistemology is headed, in many of its central tendencies, in such naturalized direction.

On the other hand, the areas opened by Rorty were deepened by other neo pragmatists. One of his most prominent disciples is Brandom, who takes forward the development of pragmatism within the philosophy of language. Brandom (1994, 2001) addresses two fundamental points: first, he takes the practices as criterion for a sustainable reflection and, in second term, he rejects the priority of the concept of representation to elaborate a theory of the concepts and the meaning. For Brandom, such notion assumes certain commitments that lead to the acceptance that there is a world in itself, independently of social practices.

Brandom (1994) develops his own conception of the meaning from how speakers use his concepts in practice. By this commitment he can be considered a pragmatist, to the extent he put pragmatics before semantics when explaining meaning. On the other hand, like Rorty, he is very skilled in finding elements in authors very different between each other, to back up his theory. Precisely, one of his most distinctive findings is the way in which Wittgenstein —thinker that, as pointed out by Putnam (1999) does not consider himself as pragmatist, but has been placed or regarded as such— invokes the notion of practices in *Philosophical Investigations* (1953).

According to Brandom's semantic inferentialism (1994, 2001), the idea that practices provide a foundation to the notion of rule is a central element in Wittgenstein's philosophy. In other words, the appropriate way of substantiating normativity is found in Wittgenstein (1953). Specifically, his ideas regarding 'following a rule' offer an adequate hermeneutic framework to understand how speakers grasp the uses of a language and act correctly or not based on them. Brandom (2001) calls this a

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"normative pragmatics" and indicates the reaches of the Wittgensteinian idea according to which following a rule is a "practice" that as such cannot be followed "privately" (but, by implication, communally). Wittgenstein wrote paragraphs (1953) that clearly support this interpretation[7]. It's important to mention that Brandom (2011) himself believes that this contribution by Wittgenstein is not an independent attribute that he adds to his adherence to pragmatism. In contrast, the conception of Wittgenstein's practices would place him between the fundamental commitments of the movement.

From Brandom's work, the notion of 'social practices' starts to experience a broad development to the point of transcending the realm of philosophy of language. There are many expansions, and it should be highlighted, first, as done by Kiverstein (2016), the social theory of philosophical roots in the diverse spectrum of the *Social Ontology* or *Philosophy of Social Sciences*. On the other hand, Schauffhauser (2014) has shown how the idea of practices has led to talk about a 'pragmatist turn' in sociology, that can revitalize diverse methodological aspects of the study of social phenomena[8]. Finally, its application is included in the field of epistemology of education, especially of learning. In this case, Brandom's contribution is explicitly recognized.

At least two reasons come together to enable different thinkers to translate specific theses of Brandom about the nature of language to educational practices: i) first, the vindication of the use of reasons as a tool necessary for the acquisition and 'gradual' command of concepts. ii) Its defense with respect to reasoning is a practice of social nature where the observance of rules plays a fundamental role. These two characteristics of his theory make possible to relate it to a conceptual delimitation of the notion of formal learning.

In this way, his pragmatist approach has been applied for diverse pedagogic purposes. Among the most prominent contributions there is undoubtedly Jan Derry's project (2017) to found the didactics of mathematics on semantic inferentialism, and the questioning of the relation between answer and mastery of concepts in multiple choice tests in primary school by Marabini and Moretti (2017). Likewise, at a strictly conceptual level, Derry (2008, 2013) herself has invoked Brandom's (1994, 2001) conception to examine and assess the epistemological practices that occur in the classroom. In such sense, it highlights her defense of an idea of rationality to account for learning facing a strong tendency to reduce the teaching-learning context to a practical response far from any instance of objectivity in knowledge.

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Regarding the latter, the goal of this paper is to contribute to the viability of such application in a strictly conceptual sense. It is assumed that the Brandomian framework of social practices enables to situate learning in an unprecedented place for contemporary thinking, used to (due to the impact of cognitive sciences) associate learning with an analyzable faculty in terms of psychological functions. Thus, this study proposes to place learning 'out of place' (in a theoretical conceptualization sense) by relating it to a phenomenon conceivable from social practices. In the following we delve deeper on this spatial image used to explain the relevance of the present reflection.

The naturalist program and the cognitive sciences

The research program of cognitive sciences proposes to address the naturalist or materialist mind. According to the materialism[9], the mind is or has a causal relationship with physical phenomena and specifically with the brain. As a general focus, its impact can be measured with the way Searle (2004) defines the most important portion of history of the philosophy of mind in the twentieth century, namely "a saga of materialism" (p. 49), with the computational functionalism linked to cognitive sciences undoubtedly being its highest point.

At the same time, cognitive sciences are unthinkable without the computational metaphor that is based on the analogy between the mind and a computer. According to this conception, the brain is a hardware and the mind a software. A key gear to understand this analogy is functionalism. Functionalism, in philosophy of mind, is based on the idea that the concept of function better captures the cognitive nature of mind. Computer sciences offer an appropriate model to characterize the functions. As a consequence, it is possible to talk about a 'computational functionalism'. A third element that is added to this general scheme is that mind, as such, can be conceived as a machine for processing information or calculations. Bermúdez (2014), the prestigious philosopher of cognitive sciences, states that this idea is precisely the general commitment that gathers cognitive sciences. In this materialist framework of approaching the mind, the concept of learning occupies a special place.

Bermúdez (2014) states that the experimental studies about learning have been a priority area of development in cognitive sciences. During recent decades, various technological and experimental extensions of cognitive neuroscience have placed it as something more, namely: a

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promising area. In other words, results of notable impact are expected in coming years, along with this subdiscipline in the cognitivist program.

To strictly confirm this trend, the Swede Academy decided to award a Nobel prize to neuroscientist Eric Kandel in 2000, for his contributions mainly in the field of learning and memory. Based on this and due to other contextual factors, different neuroscientists and educators have attempted to recover an old theoretical proposal of consolidating a 'neuro-education'. The objective of this proposition, as suggested by Bruer (1997), is to substantiate theoretical resources that can guarantee an improvement in educational practices, by giving them a genuine scientific foundation and creating a 'bridge' between neuroscience and education.

This study intends to be separated from this tendency that, starting with materialism in philosophy of mind, articulates the idea of learning as a conceptually psychological phenomenon —in the sense of psychological functions— and established in the brain. In other words, a phenomenon, ultimately, of a neuroscientific nature. This way of conceptualizing learning has consequences outside of the strict realm of philosophy of mind. Its impact in the ways of building subjectivity has been pointed out. For example, it has been stated that it fuels what Rodríguez et al. (2019) call a "neoliberal subjectivity", characterized by a strong individualism that associates academic performance to an unrestricted effectiveness, where risk and failure have no place or are condemned within the educational process. In a similar line of argumentation, but from a focus that crosses philosophy and psychoanalysis, Cepeda (2021) has defended that without an interdisciplinary matrix different from the current one, cognitive sciences are at risk of promoting a "reductionist view of subjectivity" (p. 142), by disregarding aspects like history and subjective constitution of the students. Even if the critic proposed from this reflection is placed in the context of philosophy of mind and of learning, these approaches could be complementary to our goal of discussing the scopes of cognitive sciences for the educational field.

The aim is to achieve it through a 'decentralization' strategy, in a manner of speaking, which is part metaphilosophical and part pragmatist. On one hand, a concept of learning is invoked in the conviction that philosophy, by performing its task, can provide to the conceptual delimitation without being entirely conditioned by science (this is the metaphilosophical commitment of this paper). On the other hand, it is conceived that pragmatism helps to conceptually guide this general commitment, according to which thinking, in a fundamental sense, is a phenomenon that must be placed inside a social (or intersubjective) framework of so-

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cial practices. This does not render pragmatism incompatible with the contribution of neuroscience in line with a brain science for education. It simply 'proposes' limits and dialogues with it in a manner similar to what was proposed by Bakhurst (2008), little more than a decade ago.

If it is taken into account the general framework of cognitive sciences and the pragmatist approach to learning, the focus proposed here can be presented as a form of philosophy 'critical' of cognitive sciences. This is not original either. Brandom (2009) himself assumes such commitment in papers where he discusses, for example, "how analytical philosophy failed to cognitive sciences" (p. 197). With this he states that the theoretical framework assumed by the functionalist analogy and the contribution of computational sciences include to previously discuss a central concept to understand mental states, namely, the concept of 'normativity'. According to Brandom's theory, cognitive sciences fail to explain the normative nature that the mind has in different cognitive tasks.

The naturalist focus of social practices

The mind represents the world. This phrase is not unquestionable, but it is quite intuitive. With the exception of frenzied critics —including Brandom himself (1994)— it can be stated almost unanimously that an important task for philosophy of mind is to explain how the mind makes representations. Cognitive sciences propose a way for explaining this phenomenon. As Skidelsky (2015) summarized it recently in the frame of his cognitivist approach, mental states are carriers of an attribute, which is representing the external world. It is estimated that this representation establishes causal links with cognitive functions that give rise to them. In this way, it is possible to explain the representation if both the causal links and their instantiation are considered.

In this general framework, there are many variants of naturalist explanation in the context of cognitivism. Nevertheless, the central element of this general framework, as stated by Putnam (1994), is that the representation is a phenomenon reducible to casual links. This thesis assumes a type of reductionism of the normative. To make this notion of mental states more understandable, it is necessary to address two topics. On one side, the exposition of the reductionist or naturalist vision of the normative, and for such purpose this paper is proposed as example. On the other hand, it is necessary to expose Brandom's arguments omitting certain technical jargon that, to the specialized purposes of this paper

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about learning, would hamper the feasibility of the conceptual delimitation that development demands. Both topics will enable to put into perspective the cognitivist vision on the mental, and in turn to comprehend the Brandomian critic to the cognitivist or naturalist framework of mind.

The attribution of normativity in human beings

The image of the anthropologist called to investigate a completely unknown community is famed in cinema and literature and, undoubtedly, it is rooted on real or at least credible events. The empathy that this situation generally brings is expressed in the thought of what would be the first steps to achieve a minimum understanding in this foreign community he faces. How could he start to comprehend their behavior? Where would he start to search for? Must the anthropologist use his language to relate it to the behavior of the natives? Or must he abstract himself from his language and judge their lifestyle in an independent manner? Or must understanding take into account both language and behavior? But how to start to translate this language if it is supposed that it is completely unknown?

Someone could reduce this to a disciplinary problem and argue that anthropology should have specialized tools to solve the issue and that, as a result, anthropologist themselves should tackle this challenge. However, as insisted by Geertz (2003), this question has not been foreign to anthropology itself nor to the rest of social sciences —because not only anthropology seeks to analyze of interpret foreign communities— and even more: for a long time, it has been considered as the most important question for social sciences.

However, for a particular tendency of thought, this is not a problem. It is about an approach of scientificist and naturalist type, to which investigating an unknown community and any human action in general is not very different from studying a natural phenomenon such as the photosynthesis, the solar constellations or the structure of atoms. There are many reasonings that lead to naturalism. The most prevalent takes for granted that natural sciences are the ones that describe the world, and that any object of investigative interest is a natural object. In turn, as it has been argued by philosopher Huw Price (2011), this 'ontological naturalism' is usually accompanied by an 'epistemological naturalism', namely: any valid form of knowledge comes from natural sciences.

From a 'naturalist' point of view there are certain 'patterns' or 'regularities' that may be extracted from the behavior of individuals. Here 'behavior' not only refers to the movement of the body of persons, but

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also to their language, often considered as only a physical phenomenon or related to physical processes. In any case, this strategy vindicates as an advantage not invoking the mental or intentional states of the members of a community to explain their way of living (or at least only invoke them in a derived manner). This conviction is based on considering the nature of the mental states as natural phenomena.

The cognitivist approach to education

Since it is a way of thinking, naturalism reappears throughout history. Bruner (2005) states that naturalism is currently expressed in a clear way in cognitive sciences. For cognitive sciences, thinking is placed at a sub-intentional level, i.e., it is on a level 'behind' actions or intentional states and that, by general rule, it is an instance which is not accessible to the conscience of agents. Following Bermúdez (2014), it is this way of understanding the nature of the mind that enables to state that "the supposed fundamental orienting cognitive sciences is that minds are processors of information" (p. 37). In this regard, it is possible to point out a central premise that synthesize the 'naturalist approach of social practices': in agreement with the naturalist approach, social practices are reducible to natural phenomena.

¿Are social practices possible because of explicit rules?

If the reductionism typical of the cognitivist approach is put in parenthesis, and even if it is temporarily rejected in a dogmatic manner, it is obtained as advantage to maintain the difference between social practices and behaviors of other species that lack discursive language; and even between them and certain objects in nature that respond to the stimuli of the environment and, hence, establish causal links with such stimuli. This does not imply that these differences are unsolvable, but it does mean that any analysis, even when it decides to further reject them, should not ignore them.

Now, this non-reductionist stance is often associated to an excessive rationalism (sometimes also called 'intellectualism') that, during recent decades, is suspected to have certain academic prejudice. According to Searle (2004), it is about a variant of anthropocentrism that assumes that human beings, by principle, are the model to qualify what thinking is without taking into account the behavior of other species. In this way, since no other specie has the attributes of human beings, the rest of the

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species are a priori left out of any possibility of being attributed concepts or beliefs.

On the other hand, a way of conceiving this 'anthropocentrism' is to offer an image in an implausible point of individuals as ideally rational. In this sense, the most important difficulty to gain some clarity with respect to social practices is to assume that any social practice is inevitably 'putting into action a theory of one or more theoretical approaches' in the sense of an explicit group of principles or rules.

However, this way of stating things leads rapidly to a conceptual confusion. Though it is true that social practices depend on rules, defining the nature of these rules is a point that opens very differing alternatives. If conceivable rules must be 'explicit rules' in practice, as assumed by this alternative, they set a condition that would turn out to be rather restrictive: anyone who carries out a social practice should adopt certain explicit principles as 'condition' to carry out his/her practice. In other words, explicit principles such as judgements or beliefs that an individual puts into action, prior to performing a specific action justified by these judgements. The philosopher Dreyfus (in Schear (ed.), 2013) states that, if this explicit conception of rules is assumed, it would follow that all human behaviors are saturated with "conceptuality" (p. 15) and there would not be the possibility of unreflective behaviors, at least in the case of discursive beings. This consequence seems difficult to adjust with everyday life, where unreflective actions are performed decidedly. Thus, the model of explicit rules does not seem to explain the nature of rules nor social practices.

The pragmatist approach of social practices

The example of the anthropologist states the idea that there is a 'normative specific nature' that characterizes practices, and that it is important to delimit it to not lose sight of a certain image of the social that is distinctive (even when there are aspects that naturalism enables to elucidate inside this image). Now, it is necessary to relate these clarifications with Brandom's theory. For that purpose, the following parallelisms are established.

1) Social practices are not reduced to natural regularities whose players cannot be conscious of the rules that govern their behavior.

When presenting his theory, Brandom (1994) holds that he will offer a point of view on "the nature of language, i.e., of the social practices that differentiate us as rational creatures, factual, logic and users of concept" (p. 10). A key requirement of this conception consists in giving a 'normative

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interpretation' to mental states. The link between language and rule comes from tying the meaning with the normative. For Brandom, this association is clearly expressed by Wittgenstein (1954) in his time: "Our ordinary understanding —he states— of states as acts of meaning, understanding, intending to or believe something is an understanding of them as acts that 'commit or obligate us' to act and think in certain ways" (Brandom, 1994, p. 13). In other words, understanding is something that is recorded in our behavior, because it can be right or wrong.

Now, at first glance the normative accepts multiple definitions. Brandom is aware of this and the first option he discards is the most recognized one and that can be attributed to what has been previously called 'cognitivist approach'. Almost any naturalist approach accepts this conception. It is about 'regularism' of social practices. Regularism states that practices are reducible to causal patterns of stimulus and response, in a way that being considered right is the same as being right (the consciousness of following a rule is left aside as an element that is relevant or worthy of consideration). It has already been argued previously that cognitivism is reductionist. Regularism enables to explain why.

This reduction causes to lose sight of the nature of the normative, because if a rule is reduced to something that can be considered correct without a conscience of rules, then it is possible to attribute normativity not only to non-linguistic beings but also to objects that respond to the medium or the environment. Brandom (1994) calls this consequence 'panpsychism' —the thesis that every object could have mind— and deems a price too high to include other creatures, apart from human beings, as users of concepts (pp. 26-30)

The next point of the summary states that:

2) Social practices can be neither identified with the execution of certain theoretical principles that precede the actuation of practice, as if individuals thought of principles that justified everything they do.

After discarding regularism, Brandom (1994) confronts the idea that following a rule means the application of certain explicit principles. This is what he calls 'regulism' of social practices (p. 20). The problem with this conception is that, if following rules requires explaining them, there is the risk of going back to infinity. Here, his rationale requires invoking a complex argument called 'skeptic', that is far from the objectives of this paper. Thereon, the scopes and complexities of the skeptic argument have been developed in a previous paper (see: Saharrea, 2014). In summary, any application of a rule accepts a possible interpretation. Fol-

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lowing Kripke's (1981) argument, in a conventional universe it could occur that 3 plus 3 equals 7, since it is perfectly possible to expose a formula that offers this result[10]. There is not a semantic fact that avoids interpreting 3 plus 3 in that manner. From common sense it could be reasoned that the result is undeniably 6. Now, this result is correct conforming to the 'normal way of acting', in the common practice of mathematics.

Nonetheless, out of any practice, the free interpretation is possible from a skepticism of the rule. Wittgenstein challenged this objection arguing that, by principle, any rule is interpretable, and where there is interpretation there is never a tule. Relativism swallows any possible action thought a priori, i.e., without invoking a context of practices. This argument is retaken by Brandom to discard regulism (which deserves a more detailed description, but this exceeds the scopes of this paper). The moral of regulism is that, for right or wrong behaviors to exist, it is necessary to place mental states in a context of social practices.

In this way, we reach to a point where an alternative to both regulism and regularism is necessary. Because, on one side, even if regularism gives an objective explanation of rule-following, in its reductionism, it loses sight of the sense of such rule. Regulism, on the other hand, respects this sense but considers all practices to be founded on the ground of free interpretation. Then: what do we reduce the nature of practices to, if they are not regularities nor explicit rules?

It is at this point where Brandom offers a specific understanding about normativity as a solution to the problem. Thinking of language involves thinking of meaning; thinking of meaning leads to thinking on rules; the rules, in turn, are conceivable only in the framework of social practices. In social practices, rules are not natural regularities. Discursive beings can be conscious of the rules they follow. For example, they can explain why would it be correct to advance the car when the traffic light turns green. A dog, instead, would not be able to establish a reasoning for it, even though it could act in a similar manner to a linguistic creature (it could advance in a pedestrian crossing together with other people, when the sign indicates that passing is allowed). This could be attributed to a type of protoconsciousness typical of a case-by-case training, but never by the type of rational conscience that depends on the language understood as the use of reasons.

On the other hand, social practices do not offer explicit rules, but instead implicit rules that are instituted within that same community. This is how, to understand the whole mental life of beings that act correctly or incorrectly, it is necessary to think about mind in the framework of social

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practices. According to Brandom (1994), only in this intersubjective framework, the life of linguistic beings is the life of beings capable of signification. Intersubjectivity is a fundamental element that guarantees that the actions of individuals have meaning. Definitely, the social is what guarantees that human beings can assign meaning. As stated by Brandom:

> In this approach, it is considered that the key to the importance of the social resides on the possibility that the community to which an individual belongs evaluates, responds or tries in practice the actions produced by individual members of a community. It may be considered that an individual assumes or supports an action as correct simply by producing it. As opposed to the individual, the community does not need to be considered as having taken a practical attitude with respect to the property of action only in virtue that such action has been produced by one of its members. Instead, the type of actions produced by its members determines which fall within the scope of communal actions, that are susceptible to communal approval or rejection (1994, p. 37).

The author defends that there is a specific sense of normativity that can only be explained invoking the nature of social practices. These lay the foundation for the life of linguistic beings, explain the functioning of their rationale. In light of this general commitment, he develops his thesis, in which he holds that what gives content to the concepts are the inferential networks derived from their use. Precisely, the centrality of this thesis enables calling Brandom's theory 'semantic inferentialism'.

The idea is putting into practice a pragmatist commitment at a methodological level: it is the use or practice of the concepts which consolidates their content. Brandom (2001) expresses this idea in the thesis that pragmatism precedes semantics and not the other way around, as it is usually stated by cognitivist points of view. Morabini and Moretti (2017) have demonstrated that this inferencialist approach is an adequate mold for pedagogic evaluations that have the intent of knowing if a student grasps a concept or not.

Besides this use of semantic inferentialism at a pedagogic level, at a general level, the framework of social practices enables to conceive learning in an appropriate manner for their educational approach. By placing learning inside this theoretical framework, two of its fundamental aspects may be explained: 1) the normative nature of learning (learning is being able to do or say something correctly or incorrectly in a very basic sense); and 2) the role that rationality and language acquire in the practice of learning, without relapsing in the idea that any learning is to memorize an explicit rule. For Brandom, there are rules that are implicit in practices.

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In this article it is not stated that Brandom's view simply offers a philosophy of learning. On the contrary, an enormous challenge, that proposes this way of understanding the normativity of practices but is not addressed by Brandom, is the following: How can the incorporation of a completely new practice be explained (i.e., from scratch)? Even if the Pittsburgh philosopher gives a specific description of practices very convenient to think of learning, his development does not register an attempt in this sense. On the other hand, as warned by Bermúdez (2014), the cognitivist approach contemplates the development of cognitive functions as the axis of his explanatory models. This point favorable for cognitivism is added to the project —in recent years associated with Damasio (2003)— of linking emotions to cognition. However, this rather relevant articulation for the study of formal learning is not included in the agenda of semantic inferentialism. Nonetheless, Brandom's attention to practices as a type of behavior typical of rational beings in a communal context, rescues an intrinsic complexity of the context of teaching-learning, which is the scope where educational practices develop and are possible.

Formal learning from a pragmatist approach

The application of the pragmatist approach turns out to be plausible with a greater specification in analysis. The pedagogical practices that constitute learning can be judged, on the pragmatist background, as a subgroup of social practices. This point deserves certain precisions and resources.

Does this mean that unique features occur in learning and not in other social practices? In this sense, the answer is negative. However, greater specification is necessary to put into perspective the usefulness of pragmatist theory to this respect. And in this point a disciplinary aspect typical of educators arises: their duties, often, consists of 'introducing' certain individuals into social practices. Their function does not consist in identifying the normative nature in consolidated practices —in other words, normalized practices— but instead, in proposing and perhaps modifying (or intervening) certain specific practices, that maybe such educator can judge, ultimately, as not contributing to any pedagogical purpose.

Taking into consideration this characteristic role of the educator or pedagogue, it can be deduced, at a glance, certain methodological consequences concerning the precise type of normativity that enables social practices and, hence, makes such learning conceivable:

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1 If social practices involve a normativity that does not consist in explicit rules, the role of the educator, for proposing certain practices, would result a failure if it is only limited to transmit particular principles or rules. To educate cannot consist in transmitting information or knowledge data. Why? Because this sole task does not guarantee the acquisition of the social practices, as memorization of the rules of chess does not guarantee that one already knows how to play chess. However, this is not equivalent to denying the need, in certain aspects of teaching, of transmitting contents or working from principles.
2 The logic of practices guides certain criteria for evaluating knowledge: given that practices are not constituted from explicit rules, reducing an evaluation of performance —at any instance— to the repetition of information does not guarantee learning. Learning is always about practices, it could be stated, never about explicit rules. Even if this critic around an intellectualist conception of learning is a *locus communis* in the current pedagogic discourse, it is not usual to do it from a point of view about the nature of social practices[11].
3 Finally, and only to go into more detail, if the rules contained in the practices are neither patterns nor regularities — as natural phenomena operate—, it appears a challenge for many approaches about learning that base themselves on a naturalist conception —at least an extreme one— of social practices.

It is not intended to argue that any naturalist approach to education is irrelevant in all cases, but that, to the purposes of describing learning without major reserves or clarifications, it becomes limited. Otherwise, as derived from Bakhurst (2008), assuming a point of view such as the Brandomian, on one hand, does not prevent to recognize the enormous contributions that have been made by studies about learning from cognitive neuroscience. But, on the other hand, it neither prevents to problematize that the own Brandomian point of view presents some difficulties, like the one previously expressed regarding the introduction of the inferencialist practice from scratch. In other words: even though the manner in which Brandom establishes comprehension is adjusted to different common behaviors (dialogues or conversations), it remains to explain how a child that does not grasp the use of reasons in a natural manner, acquires such practice 'gradually'. Again, it is necessary to make explicit certain limits in this proposal. The pragmatist conception of nor-

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mativity is a mold that has been described in the past sections but, undoubtedly, there is still a long way to go to reach its effective application in the educational field.

Conclusions

In this paper it has been made a brief characterization of pragmatism to refer to the importance of Brandom's theory of social practices of Brandom, within the approaches about learning. It has been argued that, paying attention to this conceptual framework, it is possible to establish certain conceptual limits in specific areas such as formal learning. The second section has focused on describing the naturalist approach to social practices through the example of the anthropologist, which does not have much intent of simplifying but instead going to the point that social practices offer a specific type of normativity. The third section exposed the two previously delimited variants around normativity, associating them to Brandom's strategy. Then, the reasons for rejecting both 'regulism' and 'regularism' of social practices were examined. As a corollary of these points, the final section presents the conception of normativity implicit to practices and, finally, a conceptual delimitation of learning was proposed.

The paper defends that the conceptual framework of social practices enables to rescue two central aspects of formal learning: on one side, its normative nature and, on the other, its relationship with language and specifically with the use of reasons. Before mentioning tasks that can be made from this Brandomiam point of view about learning —barely outlined—, it is important to resolve a respectable objection.

Some naturalists could argue that, for decades, cognitive sciences have served the social factor to explain knowledge; that the dogmatic commitment with methodological solipsism that was criticized by Putnam (1999), among others, has been left behind, and that, as indicated by Scotto (2017), current cognitive sciences have consolidated the concrete field of neurocognition.

This objection aims to mitigate certain reductionism usually thrown as an attack to naturalized conceptions. It is true that, in the diversity of approaches in cognitive sciences —though to a lesser extent in the current neuroeducation trends—, usually the value of the social is recognized in its approaches and experimentations. Even conceding this point, Brandom's theory remarks the fact that the conception of norma-

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tivity typical of the social is irreducible. Acting correctly or incorrectly requires a community of speakers where a discussion in terms of giving or asking for reasons can be given, and where the behaviors of the individuals can be evaluated, and approved or rejected. This context of social practice is irreducible. Its shift to something different loses sight of the normative nature of mental life. And this conceptual limit that Brandom proposes is not a censorship against a type of experimentation —as it is interpreted sometimes—, but a necessary insight to conduct experimentations whose scope is perhaps more bounded. In any case, Brandom's proposal is to sum forces in an interdisciplinary manner to address formal learning. A sole naturalist point of view is not sufficient. The sole Philosophy is not sufficient either.

At last, the task that derives from the framework offered by Brandom is explaining the development that enables individuals to be incorporated in the structure of social practices. This task exceeds Brandom's interests, and it is typical of an educational theory in consonance with a philosophy of education. Besides that, the Brandomian platform turns out to be useful as an evaluation criterion and as foundation of the adequate profile that has to be given to language in learning: nor placing it as the only element nor moving it away from the idea of practice.

Finally, the pragmatist approach to learning proposes breaking the dichotomy between theory and practice, to think about the educational community as a space where right or wrong practices that deserve adjustments, critics and confirmation occur. School, as stated by the traditional pragmatist Dewey (1916), is not a 'medium' for life. It is life itself.

Notes

1 For the historic-conceptual characterization of pragmatism we mostly follow West (2008). Some data were taken from Faerna (1996).

2 Both Rouse and Satne, like the different authors summarized in Kiverstein (2016), point at *Philosophical Investigations* (1953) of Wittgenstein as the foundation of the notion of social practices. As it will be seen throughout this study, this characteristic of Wittgenstein's thinking enables to place him inside pragmatism. Beyond matters of authorship or precedents we propose to interpret, as Brandom does, pragmatism as a type of theory of social practices. Taking into account these conditions, reading Wittgenstein as a pragmatist is plausible (cf. Misak, 2016; Putnam, 1999).

3 Here we cite the work of classic pragmatists using the original publication year. In the references we write the original year and the year of the translation employed, separated by a slash.

4 By "strategic" it should be understood here a description of an author or theory that seeks to back up a theory explicitly. It is not about a mere manipulation but

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a recognition that the purpose of the description is not merely exegetical. Rorty's pragmatism has been fundamentally associated, with its pros and cons, to this way of using the history of philosophy (Faerna, 2014).

5 On the other hand, Descartes was one of the first philosophers in proposing a shared reflection between scientific developments of his era and diverse philosophical matters. Hence, it is at least imprudent to describe Descartes as a thinker that only offered false dichotomies and problems to the history of ideas. Although it is true that pragmatism usually speaks about Cartesianism as a tendency or matrix of thought, it is necessary to place Descartes as a thinker with nuances that enable to recognize the enormous impact that he had on subsequent philosophy. Even one of the most recurring attributes in pragmatism, that is the enormous respect for scientific developments, would not have even been conceivable if it was not for the relevance that modern philosophy conferred to natural sciences. One of the architects of such philosophy, without a doubt, was Descartes. I thank the anonymous reviewers of *Sophia* for warning me about the need of mentioning some collections with the presentation of Cartesianism within the pragmatist tradition.

6 Classical pragmatists seem a simplification. It is. Nonetheless, specialized bibliography is of common use to refer to aspects —fundamentally critical— that Peirce, James, and Dewey share (v.g. West, 2008).

7 Conventionally, *Philosophical Investigations* is cited in this manner (i.e., § 201) referring to the paragraphs in which it is organized. This study subscribes to this general idea, according to which it is not possible to privately follow a rule. However, it exceeds this work to specify in what concrete sense of 'community' is it possible to attribute to Wittgenstein the idea that it is the community that guarantees the conformity of a rule. The debates around Kripke's (1983) interpretation about Wittgenstein show the difficulty of establishing this point.

8 Schauffhauser (2014) has shown how the idea of practices has led to talk about a 'pragmatist turn' in sociology that revitalized different methodological aspects of the study of social phenomena.

9 We follow the characterization of materialism in philosophy of mind by Searle (2004).

10 Saul Kripke thought this example in his famous skeptic objection.

11 An example would be Perkins' attempt (2009) in the context of his theory of comprehension.

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Epistemic connection between humanistic formation and university professional education

La conexión epistémica entre formación humanista y educación profesional universitaria

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Abstract

The conception of an education with humanistic approach has been an omnipresent subject in professional university education. Both in institutional statements and in more specific formative purposes, the relevance of accomplishing an education guided by humanistic foundations seems to appear frequently. The latter, regardless of the debate related to the implications of conceiving the human being as a superior entity in the universe. This paper examines humanistic education from a scarcely thematized but, to our judgement, especially relevant perspective: the epistemic dimension. Accordingly, even though this topic is addressed from a singular theoretical perspective, a hegemonic interpretation of Humanism is not attempted, in contrast with a more classical approach of value orientation. With this background, three domains are proposed to focus the theoretical analysis, namely the practical epistemic, the disciplinary epistemic, and the epistemically human. Thus, it is argued that professional university education based on contemporary Humanism should educationally contribute to develop a comprehension of epistemic problems integrated to the professional performance. This last statement entails, at least, a broad notion of rationality, aware of its limits and scopes, as well as a strict commitment with the inherent complexity of personal and social problems, and ultimately, with the own meaning of professional condition.

Keywords

University education, humanistic education, professional, epistemlogy of practice, critical humanism, philosophy of education.

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Resumen

La concepción de una formación de carácter humanista ha sido un tema multipresente en la educación profesional universitaria. Tanto en declaraciones institucionales, como en propósitos formativos más particularizados, aparece con frecuencia la importancia de alcanzar una educación orientada por principios de inspiración humanista. Esto último, con independencia del debate actual referente a las implicancias de una concepción de hombre como entidad superior en el universo. Este artículo examina el asunto de la formación humanista desde una arista poco tematizada, pero a nuestro juicio especialmente relevante: la dimensión epistémica. En ese sentido, aunque se trata el tema a partir de una perspectiva teórica singular, no se pretende presionar en dirección de una lectura hegemónica del Humanismo, en oposición con un enfoque más clásico de orientación valórica. Con estos antecedentes, se plantean tres dominios para enfocar el análisis teórico, que se nombran como: el epistémico práctico, el epistémico disciplinar y el epistémicamente humano. Así, en este trabajo se arguye que una formación profesional con base en un Humanismo contemporáneo, debe contribuir educativamente a desarrollar una comprensión de los problemas epistémicos integrados a la actuación profesional. Esto supone, al menos, una noción amplia de racionalidad, consciente de sus límites y alcances, así como un compromiso con la complejidad inherente de los problemas individuales y sociales; y con el mismo significado de la condición profesional.

Palabras clave

Educación universitaria, formación humanista, profesional, epistemología de la práctica, humanismo crítico, filosofía de la educación.

Introduction

By definition, a professional is a person institutionally enabled to utilize knowledge, with the purpose of performing a task or facing certain problems. Frequently, this knowledge is developed outside of the professional universe, particularly from the world of scientific research and university activity, that later are interiorized and transformed into tools for the search of concrete solutions. Settled on bases of disciplinary nature, professional activity rotates around the realizations and the execution in a practical and public sphere (Forman, 2012, pp. 60-61).

In professional practice, the appropriation and application of knowledge is a core fact, given that its action tends to the generation of solutions in a bounded framework and in precise timings. Correlatively, a professional is always, in some way, a professional of something. That said, it is always positive to remember that professional education cannot be reduced to obtain knowledge and techniques. It does not consist of just accumulating facts, tools, references and theories: a good professional must have an answer; but also, a way of thinking, a sensibility and a way of situating himself/herself in the world that, articulately and in a special manner, are emancipatory.

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Therefore, considering that simultaneously the knowledge in his/her hands (of the professional) has diverse facets, because any action in this plane along with involving philosophical, scientific and technological aspects, implies ethical, economic, legal and social aspects in their broad extension.

In an epistemological plane, besides, it is evident that professional education depends on the generation of knowledge. On one hand, it is obvious that the development of knowledge represents a multitude of new opportunities for the professional sector. On the other hand, its own evolution causes that professions lose actuality with growing speed, forcing to maintain continuous education processes. Consequently, an essential condition of university education will demand the generation of attitudes to learn, unlearn and relearn.

Hence, the dynamics of knowledge is simultaneously an opportunity, a risk and a challenge for professions and educational institutions. It is not a simple task for a university institution to maintain a high update standard. Especially, because to accomplish it, it is required a collective effort, defined institutional policies, aimed at establishing appropriate exchanges with the environment; and a structure of internal interactions capable of promoting reciprocal learning. This cannot be seen as problem of individual nature, that may be adequately solved by simply adding-up well-meaning endeavors. In summary, this is a matter that concerns the constitution of a broad academic community (García, 2012, pp. 182-189).

On the other hand, under all evidence, it has occurred a formidable increase in the volume of knowledge, a growing and rapid accumulation. Nonetheless, this does not consequently guarantee a shared conscience about the statute of such knowledge. In particular, with respect to its epistemological equivalence, to its complementarity, to its relations of interdependence and hierarchy.

At the same time, hybrid epistemic spaces have arisen, gathering diverse interdisciplinary areas and/or thematic fields conceptually intertwined. This, however, has established barriers for the transposition of the knowledge involved, ranging from methodological dissents to a significative type of incommensurability between languages and practices of different disciplines. Incidentally, this intervenes in a substantial manner at the moment of defining educational projects.

Despite validating the exponential increase in available knowledge, some questions that remain in the contemporary academic space still have not been dissipated; for instance: What does it mean that there are

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more scientists from the middle of the 20th century, compared to all previous history? From this fact: Are we authorized to affirm that the contributions of this broad group of scientists are superior to the contributions of the past? Do they show, in fact, a continuous process of perfectioning and progress? (Thom, 2000, p. 54).

Certainly, and even though it can be pointed out that the increase in the volume of knowledge is effective, this does not say much about its epistemic merit, its complementarity and synthesis; and, especially, about its applicability. The experimental inflation, verifiable from the perspective of modernity, has provoked a considerable production of information and data, but this is not followed by a linear scientific progress of the same magnitude. Knowledge does not develop by simple accumulation. This is a fact that has been discussed many times in critical literature, ancient and recent (Finnur, 2016, pp. 75-76).

The transformations of knowledge force careful choices in the educational plane. No knowledge has a guaranteed value, so rote learnings and discrete applications are doomed to infertility. The need to incorporate a conception of open rationality, with attitudes favorable toward decision making under uncertain evidence, or the possibility of deploying multiple courses of action, surfaces as an unavoidable alternative to any educational project.

In the middle of this complexity, humanistic education has a place indicated, particularly given its broad and integrating nature. In fact, a good portion of higher education institutions worldwide, show to be favorable to recognize the positive benefits brought by an educational model with these features.

Alternatively, humanism brings to view an extensive hermeneutic, not only traceable from a historical analysis of the concept, but also from its own critical reflection. In fact, an unequivocal panorama will be very hardly found in the hundreds of pages that have been written to reconfigure it. In this sense, the study of humanistic thinking by academic community has given rise to a wide variety of interpretations, understanding that each one of them brings a new comprehension horizon to the original ideas (Chatelier, 2016, pp. 1-2; Said, 2004, pp. 53-80).

From a methodological point of view, this work corresponds to a philosophical-conceptual research. In other words, it is equivalent to a model of intellectual work that starts with an exhaustive selection and bibliographic review (documentary), and is deployed interpreting, contextualizing and projecting critically the elements selected, according to criteria coherent with the definition of a problematic core, as is the epis-

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temic link between humanistic and professional university education. Fundamentally, their purpose, development and conclusion, framed in a conceptual environment, focus on handling a specific problem, that by definition allows multiple approaches, and presents varied opportunities to propose derivations and theoretical relations.

Concretely, this paper examines the epistemic dimension of humanistic education, and the possibility of its coherent articulation with contemporary professional education. The discussions and debates that have occurred around the matter of value are ultimately avoided, without pressing for an incompatible interpretation. Under this assumption, and integrating the ideas of critical Humanism, it is stated that a professional university education guided by the standards of current Humanism may be reconstructed through a broad understanding of rationality and professional knowledge[1].

Then, it will be attempted to show that a humanist education, under no circumstances, can be analyzed under a unique type of scientific rationality. Especially when the latter, inside an epistemic domain, appears permeated by irreducible factors to an exclusively instrumental sense. Guided by this motive, the argument integrates historical-critical notions committed to the meaning of Humanism, with an approximation to university education, understood as an intellectual and educational task.

Shortly, the paper will try to respond to the articulation of these humanist ideals, especially those associated to the epistemic critics, when it is attempted that they take part of a project of university education. Furthermore, and without invoking an argumentative reductionism, it will be express the unfinished nature of an unambiguous theoretical integration of the humanist project.

Section (1) shows a brief historical vision of Humanism. Some considerations about its classical origin are made, and simultaneously, meeting points between them and the demands for a professional university education are suggested. With the lens of Humanism, and based on the exercise of criticism as its praxis, three dimensions for the analysis of the epistemic point of view of contemporary university education are proposed, whose sections correspond to: the practical epistemic domain (2), the disciplinary epistemic (3), and the epistemically human (4). In each of these realms, arguments regarding the way in which a humanist education broadens the comprehension of educational processes are offered, and at the same time, how the exercise of criticism as an expression of humanist thinking should influence current professional university education.

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Humanism: preliminary considerations

Humanism is a term full of history, with plenty of meanings and enormous current resonance. Polysemic by excellence, it is initially associated to a Renaissance spiritual stream that contemplates a high assessment of the human being, and of humanity as a supreme value. In a defined sense, it is applied to a movement that emerged in Italy towards the end of the fourteenth century, and then extended to other European countries during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Apart from this origin, and even when it has been called the "philosophy of the Renaissance", Humanism has experienced a broad deployment that surpasses these limits, reaching our days with a significant vitality (Aloni, 2003).

A general conception of life is called this way, contemplating all of its aspects, founded on the conviction of the superiority of the human condition. It is rooted on a firm belief on the resources that human beings possess to assume their development, drive their searches and reach their plenitude. With a strong emphasis on the values of creativity, freedom, and happiness, as well as universal human rights (López Pérez & Saavedra, 2020, pp. 2-6).

Careful of his wording, philosopher Jorge Millas asks himself: and what is this? His answer is brief: "Simply, the superlative interest and appreciation of mankind in itself" (1960, p. 43). Human beings are a microcosm, a totality in themselves: in the world and open to it, permanently in the process of being, as a possibility. Hence, two extremes will historically be in conflict: the emphasis on personal autonomy and the search for a broad conception of universal humanity (Veügelers, 2011, pp. 1-7).

If something differentiates Humanism as a timeless quality, it is an evident unrest that results from the multiple attempts of understanding it. In its genesis, it derives from humanitas (humanity), word that gave rise to studia humanitas (teacher of humanities), individual that initially taught disciplines such as grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history and moral philosophy. These expressions were used in Rome before our time, and were maintained by the medieval educational system, integrating the so called seven liberal arts. At least since the twelfth century, medieval university recognized at least seven arts, grouped in two unequal categories: the secrets of language and the secrets of nature. The first included the Trivium (rhetoric, grammar and logic), and the second the Cuadrivium (music, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy). Medicine was later incorporated to this second group (Moller, 2019, p. 221).

Fundamentally, they referred to a genuinely human form of education. It was much later, in the nineteenth century, when these expres-

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sions were resumed with the purpose of highlighting the educational value of the Greek and Latin classics. In this manner, it was attempted to relieve the unit of thinking and the action centered on a specific human ideal, characterized by its creative potential. The encounter of an active and a contemplative life, an articulation between the transforming action and the intellectual and ethical education, between politics and its study.

As it has been already highlighted, unambiguously reformulating the meaning of Humanism would prove endless. Nonetheless, it is possible to differentiate at most two theoretical paths: a trail of Germanic origin, where a profuse connection with the idea of *bildung* (education) is found; and another more traditional branch, whose lines can be appreciated as a product of the different historical, sociocultural and political movements that took place in the rest of Europe and America. The latter is the branch that this paper intends to explore (Zovko & Dillon, 2018, pp. 555-557).

Among the highlighted classifying tasks, widely recognized today, it is included the work by the Israeli philosopher Nmrod Aloni (2003), in his famous book *Enhancing Humanities. The Philosophical Foundations of Humanistic Education*. Aloni's work not only stands out because of its descriptive richness, but also because of the heuristic that he proposes to approach a term as dilemmatic as Humanism. Concretely, and after a comprehensible exam as a historic rationality, he presents a classification of Humanism from four paradigmatic periods, namely: classic-cultural, naturalistic-romantic, existential and, finally, critical-radical. It escapes from the purposes of this article to focus on each one of these periods, however, a deserved attention to some ideas seems to be required when Humanism converges as the basis of institutional educational projects.

At the beginning, for the classical conception of Humanism, the main function of education had a civilizing nature, an invitation to cultivate beauty, virtue and righteousness, from the most human expression: the use of rational faculties. The beauty of forms, justice, prudence, balance and good, would be found in the proportion in which cognitive resources provided by reason guided man to his encounter. The shape of good would only be reached through the metaphysical/normative notion of knowledge, and the latter was the Socratic means to goodness. In this regard, it is necessary to consider Plato, particularly the *Republic* and *Laws* dialogues. Certainly, with the passing of time, this classical conception has been discussed and subject to extensive debates. There is a questioning of the western way to conceive rationality, accusing it of forming a type of Europeanizing control on the rest of civilizations worldwide.

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Through it, only one type of intellectual orientation would prevail, an exclusive condition of knowledge, and finally, a unique idea of world and progress (Chatelier, 2016, pp. 4-5). Similarly, it produced certain aristocratic or intellectually elitist behaviors, because only the social groups of the nobility would access the literature in their mother tongues.

In this same manner, classical Humanism was accused of transmitting a kind of exaggerated confidence in the reaches of rational faculties, noticing that behaviors exclusively oriented to that idealization end up causing the collapse of other dimensions of the individual that only emerge as a product of the subjectivation of existence. The critics made by Heidegger and Sartre on this respect are classic. For example, Sartre (2012) out:

> Man is the only one that not only is as he conceives himself, but also as he wants himself. Man is no other thing than what he does to himself. (…) Man begins to exist, i.e., begins to be something that is directed to a future, and is conscious of projecting himself to the future (pp. 138-39)

Presented in this manner, the role of Humanism is both complex and difficult, moreover, it is responsible for making a contribution to the education of human beings that is irreplaceable. Additionally, it is almost mandatory that it accomplishes a task that is pending, which consists in completing these ancient conceptions with more recent approaches and demands. Today, we need to perceptively add contents that were not considered in other eras. In a critical relationship, it is mandatory to take charge of the need to integrate the cultural elements that come from non-occidental ways of being, incorporate post-human positions, the statements made from gender perspectives, and incidentally the ecologic view, which relativize the super hegemonic nature of the man, situating him in a more harmonious relationship with nature. Edward Said (2004), for example, expresses:

> As I currently understand its relevance, humanism is not a way of consolidating and affirming what 'we' always have known and felt, but instead a medium to question, refute and reformulate most of what is presented to us as certainties already merchandized, bottled, incontrovertible and uncritically coded, including the ones contained in the masterpieces grouped under the rubric of classics (p. 49).

Said's citation is illuminating and expresses with clarity, on one hand, the critical sphere of humanist thinking, placing it as a dynamic intellectual position and in permanent change and, on the other hand,

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noticing the possible deficit in historical understanding, which to his judgment has closed the reconstructions of human reason. Likewise, in the core of humanist thinking, criticism will be found as praxis. In fact, the author himself will point out:

> Humanism is not related with distancing from reality nor exclusion. Instead, on the contrary: its purpose consists in subjecting to critical scrutiny more topics, like the product of human doing, human energies orientated to emancipation and illustration or to, which is equally important, the erroneous human interpretations of the collective past and present (pp. 42-43).

Practical epistemic dimension

At present, professional education proposes a challenging scenario. First, in what is related to determining the theoretical and methodological foundations aimed at guiding this task.

Relative to the latter, the mastery of the practical in the professional field of action presents particular characteristics that must be considered when designing educational proposals. Subsequently, and in varied occasions, the practical realm will be invaded by epistemic conditions of indeterminacy. Because of that, the factors determining the events will often be impossible to control and determine in its entirety —as opposed to experimental scenarios—, all of them will simultaneously come together, rendering the judgments of agents always incomplete, whether due to insufficient information obtained, or by an inappropriate selection. Due to this, the behavior of the professional will have a relevant quota of uncertainty (Schön, 1983).

Let us think of a current example: let us imagine the practical scenario that health professionals face in the middle of the current COVID-19 pandemics. Consider the quantity of undetermined variables (even by contemporary epidemiology) related to the behavior of the virus in the guests (patients), the clinical manifestations, the interaction with other comorbidities, the clinical evolution, the associated functional deterioration, etc. All of these put professionals in a scenario of very high uncertainty. Their behavior, as a result, will be governed by little precedents and highly insufficient predictive information.

Another epistemic element of the practical sphere could be named as the condition of *incompleteness*. Together with the above mentioned, the courses of action and judgments of agents will not always report the

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desired results and, even more, the subjects will not be in conditions of recognizing the factor or factors that prevented the goal to be met. In this sense, the professionals will have to fight with a significative sensation of unsatisfaction and vagueness with the final product of their determinations. Dewey (1916)[2], for example, will propose the path of reflection to remedy this epistemic limitation.

Facing a panorama as the one described, there is no doubt that formative processes committed with practice are required, in which the development of reflective thought is an essential objective. The multiple dimension of practical mastery is not reducible to a productive technique; there are no methods outside of the conditions of agency of the subject. Now, how to treat this elusive nature of practice from a humanist education?

Within the foundations of contemporary Humanism, it is admitted with relative naturality the condition of cognitive finitude of the individual. To a large extent, the latter recognizes the unavoidable limitations of epistemic access that individuals possess when attempting to learn and act in the world. Since classical times, humanist education highlights the incompleteness of thinking and human reason. Even the Kantian conception of pedagogy, which could be understood as an idealization of the normativity of reason, admits and advocates that idea of finitude of rational thought. In fact, seated on these same principles of criticism, Kant states that the conduction of understanding and judgment are always constrained by the possibilities of apprehension of the object. It is not possible to act beyond what our daily sensible experience offers us at a sensory level (Kant, 1960; Chatelier, 2015, pp. 83-84).

For humanist education, this approximation to the perceptible highlights the need to handle a sensation of being devoted to an experience which is unfinished and endless by definition. For this reason, it will always be precise to warn about the need of refining the look, as well as returning out attention to the learning of thinking itself, developing comprehension and creativity. Knowledge expires, but thinking will prevail.

On the other hand, involving Humanism as a core axis for an educational project implies valuing certain intellectual dispositions that have a direct relation with the dilemma of practice. Then, it should be admitted that professional exercise does not simply consist of having at disposal mere partitioned knowledge and specific techniques: a professional must provide an answer, but also a way of thinking, a sensitivity, and a way of placing himself/herself in the world, that articulately and in some special manner, is emancipatory and projects an identity. This dialectic sense (projective and stationary) of action, at the time that it makes vis-

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ible a defined position of the subject, manifests a way of being, denoting that the behaviors taken by the professional vivify his/her own identity construction, which further promotes the development of professional drift (Copson, 2015, pp. 9-14; Tubbs, 2013, pp. 480-483).

In these terms, the humanist task in university education demands careful definitions. First, any educational process tends to surpass the limits of its direct programmatic objectives, given that it unavoidably links itself with all the dimensions of the existence of the individual. Not only the behaviors of the professional are expressed in such intentionally declared educational matters, but also the significations and subjectivations themselves are presented, along with their permanent relationship with life experience (Kincheloe, 2017, pp. 95-96).

An educational project founded on the bases of Humanism, by its own nature, must then necessarily problematize about the temporality of action, seeking to fill it with purpose. In other words, humanist education is oriented both to conservation and change; to the past, present and future; it supports itself both in epistemic and non-epistemic recent values; it places itself in a concrete reality and in another imagined. In this context, it must be capable of preserving and transmitting the past; those who assume the educational labor should select what matters of the past, with the purpose of thinking about the present and projecting the future. The educational labor, as emphasized by Hanna Arendt (2016), unequivocally has a preserving function, that is easily shadowed in the name of some future purpose; but it is precisely to guarantee evolution and progress, to generate the best conditions of personal and social update, that has to handle the historical element.

This last point can be also examined from a different perspective, though not dissociated from the core matter. In a sense, there is a coincidence in the theoretical understanding of education as a phenomenon of intracultural transmission and replication. Thus, professionals tend to reproduce and legitimate their practical knowledge throughout time, having as guide and model their own peers. There is a kind of communion of the senses in action. This enables to comprehend how an epistemic dimension of practice lies on processes of temporary preservation of actions to the inside of communities. So much so that the professional field will manifest acts of ritualization, consecration and ontologization of some behaviors, problems, answers and knowledge, which will tend to be perpetuated (Latour, 1984; Abbott, 2001, pp. 121-153).

The previous demands an educational task crucial to Humanism: emphasizing the fact that in the realm of practical knowledge in the pro-

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fessional domain; a conception of open rationality[3] will be better prepared to assume, through individual decisions and collective efforts, the epistemological problems that are stated each time with more urgency in practice. As it has been pointed out, the attributes of practical episteme, using Foucauldian jargon, given that they admit nonlinear causalities, supervenience relationships, recursiveness relationships and epistemic circularity, do not have a prefigured path and cannot be understood by a closed system of thinking.

For this reason, humanist education will have to relieve the notion of knowing to think, that is, being capable of recurring with autonomy to the resources typical of thinking, in presence of problems, challenges or opportunities, conscious of a concept as vague as that of limit. Consistent with that, it should be deployed in contexts and situations of permanent conflict, for example: How to develop a global and complex vision, from the fertile speculation of humanities, the fragmentation of scientific culture and the technification of professions? How to gather the reflexivity of humanist culture, to articulate it with the objectivity of scientific culture? How to satisfy the aspiration for a genuine knowledge, considering that practical knowledge presents an indissoluble relationship with human agency? How to surpass the limits of specialization, without falling in imprecise theoretical generalizations, guaranteeing a competent action?

The disciplinary epistemic

For various centuries, scientific knowledge has occupied a place of prestige in contemporary societies. In parallel, it can be also verified that as it has evolved, the specialization, specification and atomizing of knowledge areas generate knowledge increasingly elaborated. From this perspective, the disciplinary development has become the natural result of the sophistication and deepening processes of scientific knowledge. Thus, once knowledge is organized through a discipline, a series of event occur in its internal logic, whether ways of production, replication or legitimation of knowledge. In the same way, when knowledge takes part of such disciplinary structure, it will often constitute an effort to systematically describe, understand and/or explain the reality from multiple aspects, but always from differing emphases (Becher, 1994, pp. 151-153; Turner, 2000, pp. 46-55).

On the other hand, the disciplinary system, understood as a group of epistemic practices, that hold certain epistemic values, represents a model for the production of discourses and narratives and, more im-

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portantly, sets rules and specifies theoretical limits. This regulates in an invisible manner what type of relationships, methods, assumptions, procedures, problems, among others, can be solved inside the scientific community (Donald, 2002, pp. 7-30; Politi, 2018, pp.130-132).

Conceiving the nature of disciplinary knowledge as a human product, humanist education must open horizons of understanding, insert critical questionings and reflections there where the confidence on disciplines lies comfortably. There is no discrepancy in which an ethically responsible professional exhibits a level of epistemic justification to back up his/her judgments and decisions, many of them housed inside disciplinary narratives. Very different is, however, who notices a type of reason founded on only one justificatory notion. That said, a humanist education is oriented to show that there where theoretical reflection does not exist, disciplinary knowledge is simply a collection of archives, data and statistical numbers and, besides, its results will presumably become unapplicable in specific and local scenarios. The great scientific advances are not only a result of finding new facts, but new ways of thinking and interpreting known facts. Scientific progress does not occur exclusively through formalization and abstraction processes, but instead by the ability to contextualize, reinterpret and relate previously theorized facts.

Considering such epistemic task of humanist education, its purpose will be to develop a kind of intellectual orientation for the subjects to be aware of their own assumptions and implications, as well as the reasons and evidences that back up their conclusions. Capable of examining their methodologies, procedures, and points of view; preparing professionals to identify the factors that lead to partiality, prejudice, and self-deception; stimulating the reflection about cognitive processes in the same way that the object is thought about. Favoring the appearance of a rational capacity to problematize practice with a criterion of viability, and with organizing principles that can articulate knowledge and confer them with purpose, warning to face unavoidable uncertainties and educating for human understanding. Only in this way it will be possible to learn the value of knowledge, its scopes and restrictions. Only in this way it will be possible to educate professionals that essentially may notice the difference between having knowledge and being capable of access it, when necessary, between possessing a competence and applying it to their advantage; between knowing methods and techniques, and knowing when, where, how and why to utilize them. Moreover, only through this will it be possible to transcend instrumental thinking, moving away from the meager relationship between means and purposes, and incorpo-

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rating in the process what is not subject to calculations or measurements; those aspects such as suffering, dignity, and the tissue of intersubjective interactions.

Another critical consideration that humanist education has in mind for professional education is problematizing the statute of the scientific method and of the evidence. As it is known, from many decades ago it is resounding in education a quasi-apology to infallibility of empirical research, in particular, to the related with promoting a dedicated search for evidence of this sort. Apparently, the understanding that knowledge is only the result of an exclusive type of processes to form epistemically justified beliefs, has taken control of the narrative and built an imaginary of indisputable verisimilitude. Of course, a narrow conception of what is evidence has been enthroned, without it being assessed rationally. In fact, and even when it is known that his writings are of candid interpretation to us, Wittgenstein (1999) already noticed it in the paragraph 5.1363 of the Tractatus "If from the fact that a proposition is obvious to us is not followed that it is true, then evidence is neither a justification for our belief in its truth" (p. 39).

Likewise, German thinker Gert Biesta (2010) has systematically questioned the idea of education being an endeavor whose core theoretical attribute is disciplinary ideological neutrality. His critics are directed at the renowned project of "Education based on evidence". On this respect he states:

> The project of practice based on evidence needs, because of this, to urgently be thought in ways that take into consideration the limits of knowledge, the nature of social interaction, the ways in which things work, the processes of power that are involved in them and, more importantly, the normative values and orientations that constitute social practices such as education[4] (p. 201).

To humanist contemporary education, the current reconstruction of the evidentialist discourse produces an impoverishment of diverse key formative realms for university education: value-wise, ethical, affective, democratic, among others. In these conditions, only a deficient vision of science would reduce the multiple dimensions of knowledge to a programmatic activity or to a productive technique. There is no method outside of the conditions of the subject that researches in his/her discipline. Theoretical cores that are admitted and others that are excluded will always exist, there will always be some anomaly that the discipline itself does not explain. Likewise, (the method) cannot present itself as a

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closed resource, prior to experience, because in its genuine sense it only emerges as part of the search, and just finishes configurating itself at the end of the journey. Any method, conceived as such, remains available for new inquiries.

The task of humanist education is not boxed, and it neither subscribes only to the inherited categories, and as such it admits that an improvised path, an exploration which is free and not without risks, will be part of the scientific task. The latter can be expressed with essayistic, genealogic and ethnographic approaches, which have to be incorporated as legitimate and necessary aspects for professional education. In the same way, it disputes heavily with the so called "method centrism". The belief that certain predetermined methods are conditioning factors of the validity and importance of the quality of educational research. In this line of thought, is does not discards the possibilities of accomplishing a humanist praxis understood as a critical and dialogical intellectual exercise of the disciplinary limits (Biesta, 2007, pp. 18-20; Weaver & Snaza, 2016).

Knowledge that gains meaning, that appears equipped with sense and integrated in a duty or in a perspective, is always and everywhere a result that contains and fulfills its own process (Mure, 1998). There is no other path, because thinking is necessarily a circular process. Any procedure, centered in fragmentation, no matter how didactic it may be, it will cause the loss of unity once more. Developing a conscience of objects, without simultaneously and parallelly developing a conscience of itself, would be below the educational needs that should be promoted (Dewey, 1916).

Finally, it does not seem like a simple literary sense, the one that leads Edgar Morin (2001) to state that the biggest contribution of knowledge in the twentieth century has been the knowledge of the limits of knowledge; it leads Pascal to hold that the two biggest excesses are excluding reason and not admitting more than reason, and it leads Paul Valery (cited in López, 2009) to notice that the two dangers that incessantly threaten the world are order and disorder.

The epistemically human

The educational task of humanist education, if it is accepted its emancipatory nature as its core idea, is not defined to write the future of people or to impose a destiny, but to pursue that everyone may discover and obtain the best for himself/herself, both as individual and at a social level. Between that swinging, the drift of the professional is also constructed.

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As it happens in the journey of Odysseus: each human being has the inalienable task of finding the concordance with himself/herself; and, above all, his/her own place in the world. No matter how many gods there are in the conscience, at the end determination and personal effort always matter. The sinuous, rough and uncertain path of Odysseus, according to the narrative of Homer, is one the most potent metaphors in western literature, in its ultimate sense puts into play a practical wisdom. It refers to a project that is never given (not revealed), because it is not presented as an imposition or a gift, but as a personal construction. It is about a life that accepts its finitude and precariousness, but bets for a realized existence in harmony with itself and with others (López, 2010, pp.167-174).

Such encounter between the search for autonomy (agency) and the gregarious impulse toward a universal humanity, constitutes one of the pillars of contemporary humanist education. In this link certain historical challenges are also represented, for example: how the individual —the self-definition and self-realization of personal projects— does not end undermining the possibilities for coexistence and fraternity with peers?

For questions such as the previous, a critical humanist education does not elude or disregard the intellectual orientation provided by human reason. Simply, it moderates its reaches and evaluates its limitations, being aware of its finitude and imperfection.

As opposed to common opinion, the development of general intellectual abilities enables a better performance of particular or specialized competences. The more powerful the thought, in its broadest sense, better its ability to address bounded and positioned problems. Thinking is an endless resource and with a wide range of applicability, both in instrumental and reflective terms. It does not deplete or vanish with time nor with use: the more it is used, the more it is perfected and stays available linked to all the aspects of experience. Emphasizing artificial dichotomies, like the pretended contrast between thought and emotion, for example, lacks foundation. Thinking is a resource of enormous potentiality to produce all types of learning and addressing matters as diverse as problem solution, coexistence, self-knowledge, formation of attitudes, decision making and expression of feelings. Simultaneously, the potentiality of thinking collaboratively admits the integration of the otherness and the development of a sense of epistemic humility according to the noble value of empathy as propulsor of understanding and reflecting orientation (Damasio, 2006).

Historically, there has been an opposition between two ways of using reason in human dilemmas, that can be traced throughout philosophy. On one hand, a closed rationality, where reason is confused with

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logic, and that inevitably results in auto-sufficient, coherent and consistent systems, but without relationship with life and the immensity of human agreements and disagreements. And, in contrast, an open rationality, where logic is important but it does not become the only penalizing element during the course of thought and, especially, its desires of understanding. The latter surpasses the singular fact and projects it towards the past and its future, and in all directions of the present, attempting to maintain the cultural heritage, the loyalty to roots; searching for a way of living that does not deny of a functional nature, but adds a profound human component (Cordua, 2013, pp. 14-17).

Morin (2001), though not identified as a humanist thinker, states the urgent need for a reform of thinking in this direction, from which the disjunctive and reductive approaches are overcome, advancing to a way of knowing from distinction and conjunction. A thinking equipped with a general aptitude to state and address problems, and of organizational principles aimed at joining knowledge, giving sense to them. His proposition encompasses, precisely, the historic, cultural and social nature of human knowledge, adding to it a powerful concept: the chance. Even though everything that is reachable is systematically and justifiably planned, the unexpected will always be present, whether in favor or in opposition.

From an educational point of view, then, the matter of how to guide and lead the aforementioned processes, with the purpose that they are recognized and integrated in a model of thinking, imposes an enormous educational challenge. Nonetheless, some potential ideas could be outlined, namely: its development cannot be an isolated act nor an independent process. There can only be learning of thought when people value what they do, mobilize favorable dispositions regarding learning to think, with a desirable capacity and of broad possibilities. One thing is to have disposition and another, to have the ability to use it and develop it. The development of isolated intellectual abilities is not useful in itself, unless a disposition is cultivated in parallel to think in contexts where doing so acquires a sense. The rational dispositions govern the development of thought and are really transformed in the core of every good thought (Parfit, 2011).

To think and think about a conception of rationality arranged to critically examine the extended belief that transforms a type of science (empirical) in the highest degree of knowledge possible; and in a privileged discourse of universal truth. This normative scientism, direct heritage of modernity and illuminism, is increasingly difficult to sustain; and not only in social sciences, but also in physics or biology, including, by the way, all practical domains of professional action (Cartwright, 1999).

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Consequently, a humanist education will always raise its hand and ask: Can we, really, keep stating that science is equivalent to a unified ensemble of knowledge, expressed rigorously in formal languages? Can we accept that scientific activity does not have limits and can be extended to every corner of nature and to all realms of experience and human life? Can we sidestep that science does not have epistemic assumptions? Can we repeat that the methods that guide scientific labor guarantee the universal nature of their results? Can we trust that there is no more criterion for truth than correspondence? An important task of humanist education is not, of course, to promote an anti-scientism discourse or a scientific denial, that would be so little humanist as the object of its criticism itself. But, indeed, to warn, show and discuss its limits, whereas science is a cultural product typical of constitutively imperfect beings (Aloni, 2003; Joyce & Cartwright, 2020, pp. 1068-1071).

Joined to this narrative and founded on a critical humanist praxis, it is also evident to recognize the incubation of a "new post metaphysical and post Nietzschean humanism", as expressed by Luc Ferry (2008, p.105), who does not place the epistemic values (true, rationality, evidence, validity, etc.) in a superior plane of ideal nature, separated and finally in conflict with life. In this new approximation, many people, young and old, quit conceding importance to sacrificial entities placed above concrete experience. This transgresses and attacks all major discourses of professional university education; rules, authorities, demands, values, strategies, etc; will be challenged, if they do not connect with the subject in multiple existential dimensions.

Conclusions

All the above represents a rather broad picture as to now reduce it to simple affirmations. In principle, and in terms of coherence, the following axes are postulated to guide the university humanist educational efforts:

Constitute an maintain academic community, understood as a fundamental key to respond to the need of generating a humanist culture, with wide disposition to dialogue and capacity to contribute to production, divulgation and application of knowledge. A self-conscious and active academic community, where all the debates and disagreements typical of university life are included, transformed in depositary of the responsibility of maintaining an intense and permanently critical view of its educational plan.

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Recognize and share a plural and complex conception of the entire universe of knowledge. Plurality focused both on stimulating a complex and multidisciplinary thinking, and on addressing epistemological, theorical and methodological aspects and all their educational implications; as a way to meet the demands presented by the context of contemporary knowledge, passed by dilemmas and debates of noticeable complexity. Admitting a complex conception that in its core sense rejects the dichotomous representations of reality, that often assume an ingenuous realism, and certain explanatory formats strictly based on a linear correlation or causality. We postulate the idea of current knowledge as equivalent to a tissue of heterogeneous elements, with high levels of differentiation and dispersion, that render infertile the scholastic resources centered in the construction of reductionist hierarchies, simple taxonomies and artificial organizations.

Establish an option regarding a pluralist education in the theoretical, epistemological and methodological, with the purpose of developing in future professional competences aimed at recognizing, facing and articulating the polarities, discontinuities and tensions that characterize current knowledge and by extension professional practice. An education centered in the objective of favoring the development of an autonomous subject, prepared to contextualize, materialize and understand the complexity of the human being and his/her environment. Capable of taking charge of his own development and of the community he belongs to, with ethical and social sense.

Notes

1 This practical-epistemic realm (professional knowledge) where professionals act, can be traced back from Schön (1983) as "Epistemology of practice", Foucault (1966) as "Episteme", Polyani (1958) as "Tacit knowledge" and Anscombe (1957) as "Intention knowledge"

2 Naturally, commenting on the notion of reflection in Dewey as guidance to action, exceeds the purposes of this paper. All left to say is that, for Dewey, the link between knowing and reflecting is epistemically constitutive.

3 The notion of rationality employed here assumes a substantive nature, and consistent with what was pointed out by Scanlon (1998); the reasons are considerations that count in favor of a Ø. Where Ø is referred to as a verb in infinitive form.

4 "Therefore, the 'project' of evidence-based practice urgently needs to be rethought in ways that take into consideration the limits of knowledge, the nature of social interaction, the ways in which things can work, the processes of power that are involved in this and, most importantly, the values and normative orientations that constitute social practices such as education".

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Political relations between philogenic-ontogenic metaphor and "being an adult" as school telos

Relaciones políticas entre la metáfora filogenia-ontogenia y el "ser adulto" como télos escolar

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Abstract

There are situations in which, instead of a referentially rigorous, formalized, structured and controlled language, sciences appeal to explanatory resources that do not come from the disciplinary activity itself. This phenomenon creates metaphors that eventually become part of the common scientific lexicon, as they are effective in increasing our understanding. However, if metaphors were removed altogether, many scientific explanations would not sustain, since their own meaning does not depend on other 'more literal' expressions. The phylogeny-ontogeny metaphor had a very strong influence in the way that, for example, the emerging anthropology and sociology, but also pedagogy, would think about human beings and society. Through the analysis of bibliographical sources and specialized papers, this paper seeks to carry out a modest analysis of its internal logic to examine some of the effects of this metaphor on the educational field. It does not advocate to stop using metaphors, it rather seeks to raise awareness of how they hinder divergent ways of thinking. It is especially interesting to stand out that the aforementioned metaphor has sustained the construction of a body of knowledge about childhood and education which works before the concrete realization of any educational situation. The problem is that this a priori knowledge, in the manner of epistemological obstacles, restricts the emergence of new ideas and/or solutions for the difficulties that schooling is facing today.

Keywords

Evolution, childhood, political philosophy, colonialism, teacher education, power.

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Resumen

Hay ocasiones en que, en lugar de un lenguaje referencialmente riguroso, formalizado, estructurado y controlado, las ciencias apelan a recursos explicativos que no provienen de la actividad disciplinar misma. Este fenómeno va creando metáforas que se vuelven paulatinamente parte del léxico científico corriente al ser eficaces para aumentar nuestra comprensión. Pero si se quitaran del todo las metáforas, muchas explicaciones científicas no se sostendrían, puesto que su significación propia no depende de otras expresiones 'más literales'. La metáfora filogenia-ontogenia marcó fuertemente el modo en que, por ejemplo, las incipientes antropología y sociología, pero también la pedagogía, pensarían al ser humano y a la sociedad. Mediante el análisis de fuentes bibliográficas y artículos especializados, este trabajo busca hacer un modesto análisis de su lógica interna para revisar algunos efectos de esta metáfora en el campo educativo. No aboga por dejar de usar metáforas, antes bien pretende lograr mayor conciencia de cómo obstaculizan modos de pensar divergentes. En especial interesa destacar que la mencionada metáfora ha sustentado la construcción de un cuerpo de saberes acerca de la infancia y la educación que operan antes de la concreta realización de cualquier situación educativa. El problema es que esos saberes *a priori*, al modo de obstáculos epistemológicos, restringen la emergencia de nuevas ideas y/o soluciones para las dificultades que enfrenta la escolaridad hoy.

Palabras clave

Evolución, infancia, filosofía política, colonialismo, formación de docentes, poder.

Introduction

This work will seek to analyze the assumptions that support an epistemic metaphor that has been key both in the development of modern science and in the construction of positions of power, that is, the metaphor of phylogeny-ontogeny homologation. Starting from the analysis by Fallilone (2017), it may be argued that this metaphor constitutes a landmark in the formation of the mythical story of Eurocentric Modernity, and that dismantling its scaffolding can contribute to think of a 'Trans-Modernity' from Latin America. The consequences of the development of the aforementioned metaphor range from anthropology to biology, particularly passing through the field of education; it has given rise to the construction of effective and 'scientific' knowledge about education and schooling, which in turn have concrete consequences on what happens in the classroom. This is why it will also seek to establish some political perspectives —in a broad sense— to think about educational practices. To achieve this, an analysis of historical sources and specialized bibliography will be conducted; the journey may seem somewhat erratic at times, but everything tends to a common point of confluence.

This article will begin with a historical review of some elements that were key in the construction of an imaginary scale of the evolutionary development of human beings and their culture, with a special focus on the political-colonialist decision to place a particular figure as telos

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on that scale, and not others. Then, it will be analyzed a very significant example of the marks that this metaphor can print in education. Finally, with the categories of epistemological and pedagogical obstacle, some final considerations on the subject will be articulated, pursuing to provide some elements that may eventually contribute to consolidate a field of political philosophy of education.

Epistemic metaphors and education

The use of literary resources, such as metaphors and analogies, to explain complex phenomena is not something strange or infrequent since modernity; its literary value is undeniable. It is impossible to talk about phenomena without using adjectives and descriptive images. They have generally been allowed or tolerated in scientific discourses because they would presumably help the non-specialized reader to better understand them, with the consequence that such discourses stripped of all paraphernalia are considered 'more scientific'. But the presence of these expressive resources does more than just add a literary or decorative value to the explanations; on the contrary, they enable any reader to increase his/her possibilities of understanding the world and reality. If metaphors and images were completely removed, many scientific explanations would not sustain, since they effectively provide a cognitive value, i.e., they have their own meaning that does not depend on other 'more literal' expressions. Precisely, the professor and researcher Héctor Palma (2014; 2015) has dedicated himself to examining this aspect of the use of metaphors in science, which he names as an epistemic function.

> The use of metaphors in scientific dissemination or teaching is tolerated as a mere didactic-pedagogical resource and the standard philosophy of science, in the twentieth century, has recognized in metaphors, at most, a heuristic role without cognitive value. However, the profusion of metaphors in sciences enables us to suspect that their presence is more the rule than the exception. Just as an example: the universe is an organism, or a machine; society is an organism; social conflict is a disease [...]. It is difficult to attribute to the preceding expressions only didactic, heuristic or rhetorical functions. First, because the theoretical, practical and instrumental consequences of these metaphors are part of science and, second, these expressions do not replace any other literal expression that the scientist would have for himself/herself and his/her peers. Perhaps, then, the epistemic status and cognitive functions of these true 'epistemic metaphors' should be rethought [...] (Palma, 2014, p. 107-108).

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Sometimes, science appeals to explanatory resources that do not come from scientific activity itself[1], instead of appealing to a rigorous, formalized, guided and controlled referential language. Thus, metaphors are created that gradually become part of the current lexicon of science, as they are effective to increase the possibilities of understanding the world and reality. According to Palma (2014), it occurs with these metaphors that what begins as a discursive novelty, a resource that presents a novel and unexpected point of view, over time becomes an expression considered literal and typical of scientific discourse, and then, they come to be analyzed epistemologically rather than literarily. In this sense, Palma (2014) states:

> An important attribute of EMs [epistemic metaphors] is that they strongly restrict the field of the possible and, above all, clearly delimit the field of the impossible, of what is already discarded because it cannot be thought of in terms of the rationality of the era (p.112).

The arrival of European neighbors to the American continent contributed to the formation of one of those metaphors, one that had a great and long-lasting impact on subsequent theorizations, giving rise to the construction of a larger theoretical corpus. The objective of this work is to make a contribution to consider the effects of this metaphor and the scope it has had in a realm not always related to it, such as school education, since the metaphor and its associated corpus contribute, following the remarks of Fallilone (2017), to reduce education "to an uncritical transmission of knowledge and the adaptation to a series of rules to be promoted" (p. 234), hiding any "reference that makes us particular" (p. 234). Retracing the path of crystallized constructions using this epistemic metaphor will result in a contribution to elaborate, as proposed by Fabelo Corzo (2021), an 'epistemological resistance'.

The European view about America

In a work about the graphic representations of the 'New World' made by Europeans, Alfredo Bueno Jiménez (2015) states that the first contacts of chroniclers and conquerors, at the time of being represented by European illustrators, were assimilated to the strangest elements that European imagination admitted. Between the direct contact that European travelers had with local populations and the illustrations that were made in European lands, it took place the mediation of the narratives that the former elaborated. In this regard, Bueno Jiménez (2015) claims:

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> Due to the difficulty that existed to describe American reality, chroniclers and conquerors often cataloged the unknown as 'monstrous' or 'strange' and resorted to the imagination to turn reality into something different that artists would be in charge of illustrating. The representation of the monster was not only that which exceeded the normal with respect to the physical, but also the social and cultural habits of Western man (p. 108).

What these European men experience in the American lands is the encounter with radically other societies and cultures, and consequently they need to give sense to these differences. These initial marks of the colonial relationship, tinged with monstrosity, bestiality and mysticism, far from being refuted or questioned, will be consolidated over time. Bueno Jiménez's analysis leads to think that, in principle, the explanations had a more magical than empirical tone. In such work, Bueno Jiménez makes a very precise journey through illustrations that artists made —or that editors asked for— from the letters and travel diaries they received from the 'new' continent. Then, he examines these illustrations in the light of traditional European myths and legends or popular stories of the time, in order to show how the holes and missing in the descriptions and narratives of the travelers were filled with elements from those other stories. To mention just one example, when analyzing the illustrations made by Levinus Hulsius in 1599 to represent the inhabitants of the region they called 'the Amazon'[2], Bueno Jiménez (2015) points out how the representations of American women resemble the representations of the Greco-Roman goddesses and even of the biblical Eve. In all three cases, the naked bodies, lines and proportions, and the long and wavy hair, coincide (pp. 95-101).

Although many of these magical elements were abandoned as contact deepened and European powers consolidated their dominance over America, it should be pointed out that the marks of this first perspective at the 'New World' survived and were perpetuated in later explanations. Fabelo Corzo (2021) emphasizes on the epistemic violence implied by this, while "modern, classical, Eurocentric and colonial western thought" (p. 48) presented "its studies on the human-particular, fundamentally on what is proper and European, [...] as the knowledge of the human universal. Its particular experiences were elevated to the rank of universal knowledge" (p. 48).

Specially one idea had a strong impact, the idea that life in America represented 'primitive' life, i.e., life as it would have been in the past, stripped of 'civilization' in early human times, as infant children that would not yet have 'apprehended the culture'. There were even those who

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thought that America represented the biblical paradise[3]. However, sustained from a universalist perspective of culture, that neither gave Americans a better status, as pointed out by Adriana Puiggrós (2003):

> The Spaniards established themselves as the only ones with the right to educate, a task that they identified with evangelization. They not only considered the Hispanic a superior culture, but the only education worthy of the name. They felt that it was a duty to impose themselves on the indigenous people, as they had done with the Moors and the Jews (p. 27).

How did these explanations operate, years later, to continue having repercussions on the way to understand and give sense of cultural differences? Conducting this analysis is not an easy task, particularly because it crystallizes as a perspective of an era, a perspective in which theories from various disciplines converge. Addressing this point would only merit a more extensive work. This writing will limit itself to mention some fundamental aspects to understand that vision of the era, a vision that impregnated Latin American fibers, causing that, as stated by Fabelo Corzo (2021), "[e]ven the self-image of the own (ex)colonized subject, depends to a large extent on the discourse that Europe, the West, has built about him/her" (p. 46). Three issues will be especially addressed here: the spirit of indefinite progress carried by positivism it; the explanatory resource to the study of 'the wild man' for understanding the present; and the consolidation of colonial relations.

The positivist perspective with its idea of indefinite progress, flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries[4], established its own way to think about history, not only to imagine the future, but also to imagine the past. Although at that time it prevailed the interest of picturing the future, it was the same logic that simultaneously projected future events and gave meaning to past events. Hence, if predictions and speculations about the future could be made, it was because it was known that humanity had followed a path of continuous improvement, i.e., it had progressed. In other words, the current state of humanity was explained by the orderly concatenation of causes in the past, causes that had not been random but teleological, and whose effect implied an improvement with respect to the previous state of affairs, leading to the learned, industrial and European republican man. Now, which would be the previous state of affairs?

Man was thought of as tied, like all things, to the 'laws of nature', laws of perfect and synchronized operation, like a clock mechanism. The certainty about natural laws and their causality was what enabled to reconstruct the imagined previous state of affairs. There was talk, then, of

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'the wild man', and analyses and descriptions of how life had been and how humanity had been in those now forgotten times were provided to explain —and clearly justify— the way of being and living of contemporary man —read, the European man. Examples of this are stories such as the *Discourse about the origin and foundations of inequality among men*, or the descriptions made by Hobbes or Locke among their political reflections. These reconstructions were of vital importance because they enabled providing naturality to the social and productive changes that were taking place, while simultaneously enabling highlighting some particular feature such as a defect or virtue. If a feature had enabled and favored the 'advancement' of culture in that teleological causal concatenation, then that feature was considered essential, and had to be protected and safeguarded. On the other hand, if a feature had been abandoned on 'the path of progress', then it would have to be considered undesirable, atavistic, primitive, uncivilized, and therefore should be 'surpassed' or 'corrected' if it is found in the present. The 'New World' confronted Europe with modes of social organization quite different from those known by them until then. And every different feature was captured with that look of progress.

Thus, thus created the figure of the 'other', these stories about an original past of humanity offered a justification for the superiority of some cultures over others, depending on whether they possessed these 'advanced' features. In the argumentative trick, it was necessary to have this 'other' to consolidate productive domination. But it should not be forgotten that it is, after all, an artifice.

The theoretical constructions seemed to find their support on reality, in contact with these 'new evidences', and the consolidation of colonial relations ended up ordering the world with this criterion, shaping a meticulous hierarchy of peoples. All this eventually translated into an 'international division of labor', an assignment of tasks and functions, of permissions and prohibitions, of possibilities and limitations to each population and each geographical region according to their way of life in relation to those original stories[5], consolidating, as stated by Fallilone (2017), the story of the 'modern myth'.

In the eyes of Europeans from that time, these ways of thinking presented no major drawbacks, and the stories derived from them were considered perfectly scientific. However, as can be easily seen, these stories do not even meet their own scientificist criterion, since there is really no evidence that life has ever been as it is described, for example, by the contractualist myth. All these explanations are based on elements with a high epistemic-metaphorical and literary load, not recognized as such, of course.

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This way of thinking about culture could seem very foreign to our times, however, there is still one more issue to be pointed out that contributed to the unification of this perspective, which gave it solidity and strength to such an extent that even today, even though they have been questioned and widely discussed, we find policies and public opinions based on the same assumptions. A certain interpretation of the theory of evolution was added to the three issues mentioned. It is necessary to clarify that when we speak here about 'evolutionism' or 'evolutionary theory' we will not be referring to the work by Charles Darwin, but following the anthropologists Boivin, Rosato and Arribas (1989), to the anthropological interpretation opened by E. Tylor and H. Morgan[6].

Boivin et al. (1989) indicates that it was at the end of the nineteenth century when these interpretations began to spread, which, through explanations that made use of criteria and mechanisms taken from biological evolution, they intended to make sense of the differences observed between the different human groupings of which there was a record. Within the framework of these perspectives, and unlike what was proposed by Darwin, evolution was loaded with a strong teleological weight. The hypothesis was that certain individuals among the great apes were creating a differentiation through a process of evolution, genetic variation, and natural selection that ultimately made humanity to emerge as a species well differentiated from the great apes. In this way, following the analysis of the authors, it could be affirmed that the human species constituted a uniform unit in its growth and biological aspects.

But the physiological animal aspects were not enough to define the specificity of man, and, according to Boivin et al. (1989), Tylor proposed that what differentiates men from the great apes is the ability to generate culture. This, besides including man among the generality of animals, removing any special or divine dignity, linked the natural being of man with his spiritual being, attempting to explain cultural development as a branch of the natural sciences. Hence, man would be more properly human, and less animal, the more flourished his capacity to generate culture. According to this perspective, it is imagined that the evolution process that humanity would have followed would go from the great apes without behaviors or creations beyond survival instincts, to the current human, creator of science and the arts. And as the great multiplicity of individuals make up a single species, with the same nature, human evolution is one, unified and unique, both physiologically and culturally. Therefore, evolution follows a single path that all humanity will eventually follow, as an unfolding, development of the human specificity itself.

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Consequently, we could know the level of evolution of human groups according to the cultural development present in them. Measuring in some way, the 'amount' of culture generated, the different human groups could be easily placed on an 'evolutionary scale', depending on whether they were closer to the merely animal or closer to the specifically human.

Boivin et al. (1989) point out three criteria with which human groups are classified within this evolutionary scale (p. 29), according to a growing complexity of the 'levels of culture', that is, an increase or multiplication of cultural products and greater specialization and differentiation. The first criterion is the degree of accumulation of culture, according to which a greater number and complexity of cultural productions denote a 'more advanced' culture. The second criterion is of a certain causal action in that supposed path of cultural evolution. That is, the 'simple' and 'primitive' cultural forms are the cause of the next and immediately higher degree. The 'new' cultural productions of a human group, and their consequent accumulation, produce a sort of qualitative leap towards greater and later degrees of culture. The third classification criterion is the temporal relationship, which places this causality in the framework of successive chronological time. Thus, the 'primitive' human groups would be the antecedent and past of the 'advanced' ones. It in turn implies that all human groups that have 'advanced' features today, at some point were necessarily 'primitive'. In the colonial world of the nineteenth century, authors maintain, "the contemporary 'other', distant in space, represents the footprints of the past in the present (notion of survival). Spatial and cultural distance lively describes temporal distance" (Boivin et al., 1989, p. 29). In other words, these theories make Europeans think that in America —or rather in other colonies— they come face to face with the primitive past of themselves and of humanity.

From these reflections, it is possible to locate three key points in this supposed evolutionary scale. At one extreme, the zero degree would be the origin of humanity, the most primitive, apelike, or animalistic. Somewhere nearer the opposite end of the scale would be the man of today. Between those two points would be located qualified, hierarchical, and ordered all American societies and other colonies. Ancient Greek and Roman cultures are also assigned a place on the scale, at a point well beyond the 'New World' societies. Since this is a teleological approach, the third key point on the scale, the opposite end of zero, represents the ideal of humanity, or ideal model of human fulfillment. Indeed, this way of conceiving the differences between human groups only makes sense when placing a model at the end of that scale, to which the entire scale is

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supposed to tend. That ideal extreme may or may not coincide with the colonizing European man, but what is certain is that European culture is the one that is more advanced in the scale.

This enables to highlight how the selection of whoever or whatever occupies the final position, may modify the interpretation and the sense of the scale. For example, it would not be the same to put a Guaraní of the fifteenth century instead of an Englishman of the nineteenth century as a final-ideal model; the scale would be totally resignified. And the choice of terms is not accidental. We say 'ideal model of human fulfillment' and 'final-ideal' because explanations of this type have marked Aristotelian resonances. 'Fulfillment' goes hand in hand with the idea that each thing has an *ousía* or essential form that must unfold in its entire being. In this case, the essential thing that must unfold to be fully human is culture, and in particular erudite culture. We will return to this issue a little further below.

While this explanatory scheme, to put it in Aristotelian terms, makes the formal cause coincide with the final cause, it is not enough to speak of 'ideal' or 'final' separately, and the expression 'ideal-final' makes sense. In other words, this ideal is conceived as the full or finished expression of human essence (formal cause). But at the same time, making a phylogenetic reading, that ideal is placed as the most evolved version of the species, as the objective to which evolution would tend (final cause). In this way, it would be justified the 'natural disposition' of all human groups to ever be like such ideal, in the evolutionary path of fully displaying or realizing the essential features of humanity.

Then, although the 'primal' or 'primitive' groups have not yet realized or achieved that ideal, i.e., they were not yet fully human, it could be said that they would possess within themselves that ideal of potential humanity. And that formal- final cause is what moves these most 'primitive' groups along the path of becoming that ideal. Just as an oak seed is a potential oak, so a 'primitive' human grouping is a fully human society in potential. At this point it becomes clear how the chain of development is resignified depending on how that final-ideal of humanity is thought of in one way or another, like the Guarani of the fifteenth century or the English of the nineteenth century. Well then, due to historical and power factors —which exceed the scope of this work—, the position of ideal humanity was occupied by the Western European Judeo-Christian culture, of the Industrial Revolutions, the French Revolution, and the Copernican Turn, and within it, by the male, Caucasian and learned human.

But there is still another aspect of this matter which is certainly well known, but sometimes forgotten. It is about a characteristic that

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sneaks into the description of that ideal of humanity along with that of being erudite. To become erudite implies for individuals to reach the legal age. And along with this assessment of illustration and the legal age, an implicit assessment of adulthood is played to the detriment of childhood or infancy. Some of the political consequences of this implicit assessment have not yet been fully worked out. It will take a little detour to address this issue.

A well-known version of what is being discussed here is found in Auguste Comte's work called *Course in positive philosophy*. In such course, Comte resorts to the so-called 'analogy between phylogeny and ontogeny'. In other words, the origin and evolutionary development of the human species (phylogeny) is placed in parallel with the origin and evolutionary development of the individual (ontogeny). Take a single fragment as an example:

> This general revolution of the human spirit can be widely verified, in a sensible but indirect way, when considering the development of individual intelligence. The starting point, being necessarily the same in the education of the individual and of the species, implies that the various main phases of the first must represent the fundamental epochs of the second. Thus, each one of us, when examining his/her own history, does not remember having successively been, with respect to his/her most important notions, a theologian in his/her infancy, a metaphysician in his/her youth, and a physicist in his/her maturity? This verification will be easy for all those spirits who feel in unison with the level of their century (Comte, [1830-42] 2004, p. 24).

According to this, the various phases of the individual's intelligence represent the fundamental epochs of the species, while the human spirit is one in all its manifestations. The evolutionist look that Comte holds believed that there would be a 'childhood' of humanity, a 'youth' and a 'maturity'. Later in the chapter mentioned, the author goes into more detail about all this. A human being is born a baby, knows little, is dependent, has no autonomy or ability to make his/her own decisions. All these attributes are incorporated as he/she grows. He/She incorporates language, the ability to reason correctly, poetic understanding. But being still young, he/she cannot control his passions and he/she is impulsive. Neither he/she can, according to this view, differentiate fantasy from reality, i.e., the mythical or religious explanations from the scientific ones. Being able to differentiate and appreciate the latter is one of the fundamental attributes of the individual's rational maturity. Political participation, the development of science, the cultivation of arts, are other

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attributes typical of adulthood. From this point of view, the origin and evolutionary development of children is to be born to become adults, and in the same way, according to this analogy, humanity as a whole was born to be scientific, republican and mercantilist —just as the most booming European countries are. Following this teleological evolutionary reasoning, adulthood and European culture occupy the same hierarchy, so they are made to coincide and credited with the same attributes. Thus, European, Caucasian, scientific, erudite men are the best and most faithful expression of the ideal of humanity; they are more fully human because they have more fully developed those features thought to be essential to humanity.

At the level of phylogeny, this would be: human groups begin to produce culture 'childishly', to eventually become human groups with 'mature' or 'adult' culture. The side effect of the analogy between ontogeny and phylogeny is that the characteristics of childhood begin to be considered as undesirable because they are associated with 'simple', 'coarse', 'magical', 'barbaric' and 'involuted' forms of culture. And at the same time, the attributes of adulthood come to be valued as an ideal model of humanity, because they are the ones attributed to 'complex', 'fine', 'scientific', 'civilized' and 'evolved' cultures.

To understand the consequences of this analogy, it should not be forgotten another evaluating movement that produces, that is to accompany the 'lack of evolution' with an attribute of inferiority. At this point it is worth returning to the words of the Indian researcher Ashis Nandy (1985), who analyzes the relationships between childhood metaphors and colonial imperialism:

> To the extent adulthood itself is valued as a symbol of completeness and as an end-product of growth or development, childhood is seen as an imperfect transitional state on the way to adulthood, normality, full socialization and humanness. [...] The result is the frequent use of childhood as a design of cultural and political immaturity or, it comes to the same thing, inferiority" (Nandy, 1985, p. 360).

The aforementioned evaluating movement places childhood on a par with the 'primitive' stages of the evolutionary scale. Thus, whether between human groups or between ages, the difference is perceived as inferiority, and as a natural inferiority, while the inequalities between human groups would be a consequence of a 'natural order of things'. In the end, being a child is something as little worthy of esteem as being 'indigenous'.

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Nandy (1985) also refers to the Scottish philosopher James Mill (1773-1836), who was part of the English East India Company, as the best example to show how British imperialist intervention in India is legitimated. A curiosity that Nandy highlights is that, although Mill provides an intellectual framework to indirectly justify and defend British imperialism, he does not do so with a special feeling of xenophobia. Rather, Nandy argues that Mill was positioned in a patriarchal perspective. According to it, just as parents have authority and responsibility in directing the lives of their children, in the same way the 'more mature' societies have authority and responsibility in directing the lives of 'younger' and immature nations. With this, it is not necessary to explain too much the legitimation of the colonial system that this perspective produces. Suffice it to add that the intervention is carried out in the name of humanity, in the name of culture and progress, but not with feelings of hatred or contempt, but with the superiority and benevolence of a father who knows what is best for his son. Of course, nothing else is expected from the child other than to gladly accept the paternalistic gesture.

A little further ahead, Nandy adds a consideration regarding the metaphor of childhood in post-medieval Europe. Nandy (1985) considers that Calvinism and the Protestant spirit also played a very important role in this configuration of childhood. On one hand, they spread the vision of "the adult male as the ultimate in God's creation and as the this-worldly end-state for everyone" (Nandy, 1985, p. 361). This is, as seen before, the evolutionary and teleological view. And, on the other hand, Nandy states, Calvinism and the Protestant spirit consolidated the idea that the physical weakness or fragility of children goes hand in hand with moral and emotional weakness. This again legitimizes imperialist-colonialist intervention, since such significant weaknesses must be 'corrected' and 'straightened out' with the help of 'more mature' people. In the words of Nandy (1985), "without this correction, the child was seen to stand midway between the 'lower' animals and humanity" (Nandy, 1985, p. 361).

Phylogeny and ontogeny in education

Some aspects of the possible relationships between the phylogeny-ontogeny analogy and education have already been studied by important researchers. A brief review will be provided below to bring other elements to the analysis conducted here.

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Following the research conducted some years before by Adriana Puiggrós (1990) and Pablo Pineau (1997)[7], Marcelo Caruso and Inés Dussel (1999) show the great influences that 'normalizing' pedagogues and positivist positions have had on the Argentine educational system. Among the referents of the normalizers, it is worth mentioning Herbert Spencer, who in his *Essays on pedagogy* of 1861 exposed the following pedagogical principles:

> 1) go from the simple to the compound;
> 2) from the undefined to the defined;
> 3) from the concrete to the abstract;
> 4) the education of the child must agree, in its mode and order, with the progress of humanity. The assumption is that ontogenesis (development of an individual) repeats phylogenesis (global development of the species), and that, to advance in the child, science follows the same steps as in social history;
> 5) go from the empirical to the rational;
> 6) stimulate the spontaneous development of the child, saying as little as possible and forcing him/her to find out as much as possible, trusting in the discipline of Nature;
> 7) be guided by the interests and arousals of the child: if a knowledge is pleasant for him, it is the surest indication that we are on the right track. If this does not emerge spontaneously, his/her interest should be promoted, motivating him/her for the experience (Spencer, 1983, in Caruso and Dussel, 1999, p. 153).

In point 4 there are some first consequences of the phylogeny-ontogeny analogy in schooling, since it exposes very clearly how should it be the ordering principle of education. Juxtaposed to point 6, it is worth asking ourselves what is intended to be called as "spontaneous" in this context, since the development of childhood would be tied to universal laws of history and nature. Then, what is really what would be left to spontaneous decisions? Point 7 indirectly tells the reader that, if a child does not like knowledge on its own and 'spontaneously', if it encounters difficulties or fells repudiation, then it is a more than sure indication that we are going the wrong way and, consequently, the teacher must encourage and motivate the child to be interested. And not only that he/she should encourage and motivate the child to be interested, but he/she should encourage him to experiment empirically and by himself/herself. It is believed that contact with the world and with nature will lead the child along the path of the evolution of the spirit, 'spontaneously'. This implies that there would be things that would interest the child 'naturally',

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and if any individual did not find this 'spontaneous' interest in himself, then such individual would be in disarray with nature and his/her deviation would admit the application of correctives. Raised in this way, it seems that spontaneity is limited to following and assuming as its own —or on the contrary not doing so— the path of the spirit and of science, the path of the maturity of humanity that are represented by the teacher and the curriculum in the classroom.

It is also interesting to highlight another issue. In the quoted passage, Spencer openly points out that the assumption he works with is "that ontogenesis repeats phylogenesis" (point 4). However, it may be found that there is a prior assumption operating behind that statement. That assumption is the path of progress mentioned earlier in this paper. In other words, to sustain that assumption, it is necessary to assume beforehand that a certain causality links different human stages, so that the consequent states are 'overcomer' of the antecedent states and therefore 'better'. This assumption of causality is essential to explain why those who are in consequent states would be authorized to guide, evaluate and normalize those who are in antecedent states. This explanation, placed in the chronological framework of human existence, leads to the conclusion that Nandy (1985) invites to think about: that, without adult and erudite intervention, children would stay halfway between animality and humanity.

Among the normalizing pedagogues, Caruso and Dussel also highlight Rodolfo Senet (in Caruso & Dussel, 1999), who knew how to introduce some variations on the global classroom method:

> [...] a very strong emphasis appeared on the need to adapt pedagogy to the psychology of the learner, not only in terms of his/her interest, as Herbart said, but of more sophisticated measurements about what is the attention threshold of a child (20 minutes, between 7 and 10 years old, and 25 minutes, between 10 and 14 years old, Senet said), what memories can be exercised, what images should be stimulated (p. 151).

This clarification by the authors is interesting because it highlights how scientific resources —the aforementioned 'more sophisticated measurements'— come to collaborate in the construction of a body of knowledge about children, which exists a priori of any contact that a teacher might have. Psychology is focused from the positivist spirit with the same imprint that we saw in Spencer, i.e., with the idea that universal laws govern the 'correct' order of interests and learning. Psychology overlaps pedagogy to such an extent that Senet indicates to order and

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organize school contents and activities according to the attention threshold corresponding to each age, assuming that these thresholds express the natural evolution of the spirit if they have been measured with sophisticated scientific tools. Consequently, school logic is made with a whole body of knowledge about children, validated and guaranteed by their scientific imprint, even before any flesh and blood subject enters their premises. Before meeting any group of children, the teacher thus trained already knows what to expect from them, what and how much they can learn and at what speed.

This a priori knowledge ends up functioning as epistemological obstacles in the teaching view. As stated by Bachelard ([1948] 2013), "it is to fall into a vain optimism when someone thinks that *knowledge* automatically serves to know" (p. 17). In other words, that knowledge that seems immediate and spontaneous, on some occasions may hide more than illuminate. It appears accurate in itself due to the ease with which it emerges before our senses or our consciences but hides the fact that it was once the hypothesis to solve a problem, the answer to a question. At the moment that such question-knowledge relationship blurs, is scattered, it dissolves into 'obvious' statements and the problem that initially gave it meaning is lost, then that knowledge begins to function more as an obstacle than as an incentive for future research. It is that "between observation and experimentation there is no continuity, but rupture" (Bachelard, [1948] 2013, p. 22). And in the place of that discontinuity is where the obstacles are installed, which can be both knowledge of science and knowledge of everyday life, generating an apparent sense of continuity.

When Bachelard ([1948] 2013) speaks about the pedagogical obstacle as a type of epistemological obstacle, he analyzes the case of science teaching. And he affirms that one of the main errors on the part of science teachers is to believe, when designing their classes, that the work starts 'from scratch', that is, with students who do not have any knowledge about what is going to be taught. like *tabula rasas*. But this is not the case, students have knowledge based on everyday life and oral transmissions, and science teaching encounters similar difficulties every time. Bachelard ([1948] 2013) explains it as follows:

They have not reflected on the fact that the adolescent arrives at the Physics course with empirical knowledge already established; it is not about, then, acquiring an experimental culture, but changing an experimental culture, of breaking down the obstacles piled up by everyday life (p. 20).

This makes it necessary to think about teacher training, where teaching can too easily focus on solving the vicissitudes of practical work

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to the detriment of the analysis of the assumptions that each teacher assumes to face their task. Focusing only on developing the planned activities and fulfilling the curricular contents, postponing again and again the questions about all those ideas that are the basis for pedagogical decisions in the classroom, it carries the risk of believing that some things are being transformed, which are really being surreptitiously affirmed and reified being the supposed sustainers.

It can be affirmed that something very similar to what Bachelard describes happens at the moment when a young adult is being prepared to be a teacher. It is forgotten that these young people already have some ideas about education, elaborated from their extracurricular experiences, but also —and very especially— from their school experiences as primary and secondary students. Starting from the consideration that the evolutionary and positivist anthropological and epistemological assumptions, addressed above, are part not only of the foundations that structure the school division into years, levels and cycles, but are also part of popular knowledge and opinions about education, it should be taken into account that this is the starting point for teacher training and not a kind of inaugural ignorance. The idea of 'training adults' —an idea that inspires the title of this work— is strongly impregnated by the revised theories and ideas. And since "in the face of the mystery of the real, the soul cannot, by decree, become naïve" (Bachelard, [1948] 2013, p. 16), it is necessary to begin the work knocking down, or at least questioning, the obstacles acquired by students in previous years. It is necessary that future teachers at least know that these ideas are conditioning the view, so that they can acquire 'the sense of the problem' to which Bachelard refers.

Conclusions

It might seem that the argument elaborated here intends to delegitimize or tear down the educational structure as it is today, but that is not the intention. The many questionings that are made to the way in which the school teaches today are well known; and yet, despite everything, it continues functioning. The school institution lasts through time and is maintained, fueled by social hopes and even being affected by academic, union and financing problems —because there is something that it can still do. It is necessary to insist that the aim here is not to discredit current schooling nor to knock it down with a radical critic. Rather, it seeks to point out some issues that block a deeper reflection about what is unders-

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tood by education and about the conditions of existence of the school institution. Through a slightly broader examination of school logic, it has been sought here to contribute to identify some of the deep assumptions that constitute it.

Evolutionary theory grew out from the study of nature, providing a fruitful framework for explaining changes in species and their variety. And at the same time, it engendered concepts perceived as natural, objectives and independent of the subjectivities of those who investigated precisely because they originated in the study of nature. When the logic or rationality of this theory was extrapolated to the social and cultural fields, it produced important consequences. In particular, it was key in the formation of one of the epistemic metaphors that conditions the contemporary view of childhood, the phylogeny-ontogeny metaphor. In its historical origins, it emerged to give meaning to the cultural differences that America posed to Europe, linking cultural changes with the changes that any living being experiences when growing up. According to this metaphor or analogy, what happens inevitably for a puppy (growing up to become an adult), would inevitably happen for culture as well. This supposes that in some way the adult-being is already contained in the cub-being, at least in a latent form as a final cause. In the case of physiological development, it is difficult to discuss and/or refute growth development, but in the case of cultures there are many questions that emerge from this perspective. Is there something equivalent to adult-being in cultures? If so, what would guarantee that such adult-being adopts a single characterization, unequivocal and universal, as an expression of an essence?

In animal physiology, humans cannot voluntarily choose or decide which adult-being occupies the end of a growth process. In other words, the specific mechanisms by which a tadpole turns into a frog, a chick into an eagle, or a human baby into an adult human are—at least for now—neither under human control nor under human power. However, although the physiological source of the metaphor does not support it, in cultural terms the researchers made a contrived decision when conceiving who or what was placed at each end of the puppy-adult development chain. It was such an action that later gave meaning and legitimacy to the power relations that were being built. The consequence of all this was that cultural differences were invested with a strong moral and political value, which not only had consequences in the theoretical field, but also in economic and commercial, social, and even educational decisions. Placed in the chronological framework of human existence, it leads to the conclusion that Nandy (1985) invites to think about, which is that, without

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adult and erudite intervention, childhood would remain halfway between animality and humanity. The greatest problem with this perspective is that it takes off political subjectivity from anyone who is either not in school or is underage. Perhaps more than taking off political subjectivity, it enables only one possible.

The being-citizen is considered one of the attributes of the complete adult, so it could not be said about children —or those who do not attend school— that they are citizens, and it is worth thinking about what are the consequences produced by this situation. The question at stake is what place children have in the *polis*. If it is not desired to assign childhood a mere passive place of gladly accepting paternalistic gestures, the alternative that first comes up is that children make their own decisions. But it does not seem that this is a real or valid alternative, since, in general, as Dussel and Quevedo (2010) state, given the withdrawal of nearby adult figures, whoever occupies the place of reference is not a supposed 'pure nature of children', but the reason of the market, the logic of consumption, the marketing and the cultural industries through screens and electronic devices. And then, children are considered 'immature' to discuss certain topics, to think, ask questions and have ideas about certain issues, but they are carelessly exposed to stimuli of high political and symbolic significance (such as commercial advertisements, moral judgments of the great audiovisual production companies for children subtly mixed in colorful and cheerful stories, or the historical-cultural insights mixed in video games[8], to name just a few). Ultimately, the question about the political place of childhood is a question about identity, about the degree of involvement that children can have in the cultural game of their own culture.

From another point of view, it can be said that the phylogeny-ontogeny metaphor functions by giving a retroactive sense to training/education. Considering the current state of human societies and what is the 'most evolved state' that they should achieve, it would be possible to know with a simple and quick review what things each one needs to change, add, or remove for not blocking 'the natural development'. The same is raised in relation to morality; it is intended to find the causes of adult discomfort in the training received as children, and how the connection between these states is conceived in a linear manner, the development of the childhood begins to be an explanatory factor of the present. First, this explanation is elaborated from the present to the past, arguing that today's adults are such and such because as children they were such and such, and then the direction of the discourse is reversed from the

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past to the present, considering that if we get children to be in a certain way then we will get or it will result in adults that way. Thus, childhood becomes almost the only target of moral social policies and judgments.

Precisely what was sought to be done here is to question all that is believed to be known with certainty about children, all that knowledge that is presented as immediate and that does not enable other questions to be asked and other necessary debates to be thought of today. The problem with this a priori knowledge is that it is so naturalized, so incorporated into the supposedly intuitive knowledge of a teacher, that it is forgotten that they are cultural, historical, theoretical, political, situated and complex constructions, but constructions at last. It is worth saying that they are not a problem in themselves and by themselves, and it would even be worth the audacity to say that these types of statements are inevitable in the political-social life of institutions, which are constituted based on various assumptions without which they could not exist. But pedagogically and philosophically, it is pertinent to take the time to put them into perspective and think about and analyze the symbolic game they produce, what they enable to name and what remains hidden. It is not relevant, but also necessary. Because when this knowledge takes on the character of epistemological obstacles, it has the effect of blocking certain questions about schooling and childhood, about 'erudite' and adulthood, and therefore about limiting any ability to really think about other alternatives, pedagogical or institutional, to the problems that current schooling carries.

At the time in which the making of these positions is no longer perceived as making, the complex web of senses, practices and meanings that sustain the state of things stays involved and forgotten. In this sense, Collado Ruano (2017) states:

> The repercussion of the formal education system cannot be considered neutral, since all these elements of power and knowledge harbor the capacity to epistemically colonize individuals in order to sustain the purposes of economic fundamentalism [...] (p. 77).

Following Palma (2014), it should be highlighted that while literary metaphors do not completely lose their expressive sense over time, epistemic metaphors are successful and are installed in a given context, at a given time. Therefore, due to the objections that have been raised so far, it can be said that the time has come to review and rethink this evolutionary metaphor, not so much to make it work in a renewed context, but to seek new ways of thinking about the relationships with childhood,

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growth and education. Dismantling the metaphor and all its implications requires a long and arduous task. A task that certainly does not end here, but which, hopefully, will be enriched by this work.

Notes

1 We say 'scientific activity itself' in reference to the specific technical activities of research in science, since this same exposition accompanies the question of Palma, and other researchers along the same line, about whether we can really say that there is something 'scientific' ' that does not appeal to extra-technical explanations, or if science would exist without the use of literary and imaginative resources.
2 It received this name precisely because of the similarities that European eyes found with the Greek legend of the Amazon female warriors.
3 See Todorov (2007); also, Puiggrós (2003).
4 See 'Positivism or the principle of the Baron Von Münchhausen' in Löwy (1986). And also 'Saint Simon and the administration of the industrialists' in Cappelletti (1968).
5 In the debates prior to the May Revolution, and even afterwards, we may find references to these discussions. The writings by J. B. Alberdi and D. F. Sarmiento are two clear examples.
6 For a brief review of this difference, see Palma (2014, pp. 113-115). There the author stops to point out the differences between the principles followed by H. Spencer and those followed by C. Darwin.
7 Caruso and Dussel refer to: Puiggrós (1990), and Pineau (1997).
8 The references are essays such as Dorfman and Mattelart (1972), or videogames such as Counter Strike or Medal of Honor, to cite two examples.

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Editorial guidelines / *Normas editoriales*

Publication guidelines in «Sophia»

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1. General Information

«Sophia» is a scientific publication of the *Salesian Polytechnic University of Ecuador,* published since January 2006 in an uninterrupted manner, with a fixed biannual periodicity, specialized in Philosophy of Education and its interdisciplinary lines such as Epistemology, Deontology, Aesthetics, Critical Studies, Hermeneutics, Axiology, Ontology, Philosophical Anthropology, Sociology, Philosophical Analytics, among others, all linked to the field of Education.

It is scientific journal, which uses the peer-review system, under double-blind review methodology, according to the publication standards of the American Psychological Association (APA). Compliance with this system allows authors to guarantee an objective, impartial and transparent review process, which facilitates the publication of their inclusion in reference databases, repositories and international indexing.

«Sophia» is indexed in (**SCOPUS**) Emerging Sources Citation Index (**ESCI**) from Web of Science; in Scientific Electronic Library Online (**SciELO**); in the Scientific Information System (**REDALYC**); in the directory and selective catalog of the Regional Online Information System for Scientific Journals of Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal (**LATINDEX**), in the Matrix of Information for the Analysis of Journals (**MIAR**), in Integrated Classification of Scientific Journals (**C.I.R.C**), in the Academic Resource Index (**Research Bible**), in the Ibero-American Network of Innovation and Scientific Knowledge (**REDIB**), in the Portal for the dissemination of scientific production (**Dialnet**); in Latin American Bibliography in Journals of Scientific and Social Research (**BIBLAT**); in the Directory of Open Access Journals **DOAJ** and in repositories, libraries and specialized catalogs of Latin America.

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2. Scope and policy

2.1. Theme

Original contributions in Philosophy of Education, as well as related areas: Epistemology, Deontology, Aesthetics, Critical Studies, Hermeneutics, Axiology, Ontology, Philosophical Anthropology, Sociology, Philosophical Analytics,... and all interdisciplinary related disciplines with a philosophical reflection on education

2.2. Contributions

«Sophia» publishes critical studies, reports and proposals, as well as selected state-of-the-art literature reviews related to Philosophy of education. Accepting also results of empirical research on Education, written in Spanish and/or English.

The contributions can be:

- **Reviews**: 10,000 to 11,000 words of text, including charts and references. Justified references would be specially valued. (current and selected from among 70 works)
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- **Reports, studies and proposals:** 8,000 to 9,500 words of text, including title, abstracts, charts and references.

2.3. Characteristics of the content

All works presented for publication in «Sophia» must comply with the characteristics of scientific research:

- Be original, unpublished and relevantAddress issues that respond to current problems and needs
- Address issues that respond to current problems and needs
- Contribute to the development of scientific knowledge in the field of Philosophy of Education and its related areas
- Use adequate, clear, precise and comprehensible language
- Not have been published in any medium or in the process of arbitration or publication.

Depending on the relevance of the article, it will be considered as special contributions and will occasionally be published:

- Works that exceed the stated extent
- Works that do not correspond to the subject of the reflection foreseen for the respective issue

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2.4. Periodicity

«Sophia» has a biannual periodicity (20 articles per year), published in January and July and counts by number with two sections of five articles each, the first referring to a **Monographic** topic prepared in advance and with thematic editors and the second, a section of **Miscellaneous**, composed of varied contributions within the theme of the publication.

3. Presentation, Structure and Submission of the Manuscripts

Texts will be presented in Arial 12 font, single line spacing, complete justification and no tabs or blank spaces between paragraphs. Only large blocks (title, authors, summaries, keywords, credits and headings) will be separated with a blank space. The page should be 2 centimeters in all its margins.

Papers must be submitted in a Microsoft Word document (.doc or .docx), requiring that the file be anonymized in File Properties, so that the author/s identification does not appear.

Manuscripts must be submitted only and exclusively through the OJS (Open Journal System), in which all authors must previously register. Originals sent via email or other interfaces are not accepted.

3.1. Structure of the manuscript

For those works that are empirical investigations, the manuscripts will follow the IMRDC structure, being optional the Notes and Supports. Those papers that, on the contrary, deal with reports, studies, proposals and reviews may be more flexible in their epigraphs, particularly in material and methods, analysis, results, discussion and conclusions. In all typologies of works, references are mandatory.

A. Empirical research

Its purpose is to contribute to the progress of knowledge through original information, following the IMRDC structure: Introduction (objectives, previous literature). Materials and methods, Analysis and Results, Discussion, integration and conclusions. Following the criteria set by UNESCO, it is these types of scientific texts are also called as: "original memories"

The recommended structure, especially in works that include empirical research, is the following:

1) Title (Spanish) /Title (English): Concise but informative, in Spanish on the first line and in English on the second. A maximum of 85 characters with spaces are accepted. The title is not only the responsibility of the authors, changes being able to be proposed by the Editorial Board.

2) Identification data: Of each of the authors, organized by priority. A maximum of 3 authors will be accepted per original, although there may be excep-

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tions justified by the topic, its complexity and extent. Next to the names must follow the professional category, work center, email of each author and complete ORCID number. Aspects that must be included in the Cover Letter, must also be uploaded to the OJS system of the journal, in the Metadata section and /or in a word document attached to the file containing the work proposed for the evaluation.

3) Abstract (Spanish) / Abstract (English): It will have a minimum length of 210 and a maximum of 220 words in Spanish; and 200 and maximum 210 words in English. The abstract will describe concisely and in this order: 1) Justification of the topic; 2) Objectives; 3) Methodology; 4) Main results; 5) Main conclusions. It must be impersonally written "This paper analyzes...". In the case of the abstract, the use of automatic translators will not be accepted due to their poor quality.

4) Keywords (Spanish) / Keywords (English): A maximum of 6 keywords must be presented for each language version directly related to the subject of the work. The use of the key words set out in UNESCO's Thesaurus and of the journal itself, located in the following link: https://sophia.ups.edu.ec/tesauro_sophia.php, will be positively valued.

5) Introduction and state of the issue: It should include the problem statement, context of the problem, justification, rationale and purpose of the study, using bibliographical citations, as well as the most significant and current literature on the topic at national and international level..

6) Material and methods: It must be written so that the reader can easily understand the development of the research. If applicable, it will describe the methodology, the sample and the form of sampling, as well as the type of statistical analysis used. If it is an original methodology, it is necessary to explain the reasons that led to its use and to describe its possible limitations.

7) Analysis and results: It will try to highlight the most important observations, describing them, without making value judgments, the material and methods used. They will appear in a logical sequence in the text and the essential charts and figures avoiding the duplication of data.

8) Discussion and conclusions: Summarize the most important findings, relating the observations themselves with relevant studies, indicating contributions and limitations, without adding data already mentioned in other sections. Also, the discussion and conclusions section should include the deductions and lines for future research.

9) Supports and acknowledgments (optional): The Council Science Editors recommends the author (s) to specify the source of funding for the research. Priority will be given to projects supported by national and international competitive projects. In any case, for the scientific evaluation of the manuscript, it should be only anonymized with XXXX for its initial evaluation, in order not to identify authors and research teams, which should be explained in the Cover Letter and later in the final manuscript.

10) The notes (optional) will go, only if necessary, at the end of the article (before the references). They must be manually annotated, since the system of footnotes or the end of Word is not recognized by the layout systems. The

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numbers of notes are placed in superscript, both in the text and in the final note. The numbers of notes are placed in superscript, both in the text and in the final note. No notes are allowed that collect simple bibliographic citations (without comments), as these should go in the references.

11) References: Bibliographical citations should be reviewed in the form of references to the text. Under no circumstances should references not mentioned in the text be included. Their number should be sufficient to contextualize the theoretical framework with current and important criteria. They will be presented alphabetically by the first last name of the author.

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Literature reviews are based on the analysis of major publications on a giveLiterature reviews are based on the analysis of major publications on a given topic; Its objective is to define the current state of the problem and to evaluate the investigations carried out. Its structure responds to the phases of the theme/problem, contributions of researchers or teams, changes in theory or main theoretical currents; unsolved problems; current and future trends (Giordanino, 2011). According to UNESCO, this type of work is also known as "recapitulative studies"

1) Title (Spanish) /Title (English): Concise but informative, in Spanish on the first line and in English on the second. A maximum of 85 characters with spaces are accepted. The title is not only the responsibility of the authors, changes being able to be proposed by the Editorial Board.

2) Identification data: Of each of the authors, organized by priority. A maximum of 3 authors will be accepted per original, although there may be exceptions justified by the topic, its complexity and extent. Next to the names must follow the professional category, work center, email of each author and complete ORCID number. Aspects that must be included in the Cover Letter, must also be uploaded to the OJS system of the journal, in the Metadata section and /or in a word document attached to the file containing the work proposed for the evaluation.

3) Abstract (Spanish) / Abstract (English): It will have a minimum length of 210 and a maximum of 220 words in Spanish; and 200 and maximum 210 words in English. The abstract will describe concisely and in this order: 1) Justification of the topic; 2) Objectives; 3) Methodology; 4) Main results; 5) Main conclusions. It must be impersonally written "This paper analyzes..." In the case of the abstract, the use of automatic translators will not be accepted due to their poor quality.

4) Keywords (Spanish) / Keywords (English): A maximum of 6 keywords must be presented for each language version directly related to the subject of the work. The use of the key words set out in UNESCO's Thesaurus and of the Journal itself will be positively valued.

5) Introduction: It should include a brief presentation of the topic, the formulation of the purpose or objective of the study, the context of the problem and the formulation of the problem that is proposed, the presentation

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of the idea to be defended, the justification explaining the importance, the relevance of the study; the methodological framework used, and finally, a brief description of the structure of the document. In the justification it is necessary to use bibliographical citations as well as the most significant and current literature on the subject at national and international level.

6) Body or development of the document: It implies putting into practice throughout the text, a critical attitude that should tend towards the interpellation, in order to attract the attention of the topic and the problem treated. The writer must generate in the reader the capacity to identify the dialogical intention of the proposal and to promote an open discussion.

7) Conclusions: Objectively state the results and findings. Offer a vision of the implications of the work, the limitations, the tentative response to the problem, the relations with the objective of the research and the possible lines of continuity (to fulfill this objective it is suggested not to include all the results obtained in the research). The conclusions should be duly justified according to the research carried out. The conclusions may be associated with the recommendations, evaluations, applications, suggestions, new relations and accepted or rejected hypotheses.

8) Bibliography: It is the set of works used in the structuring of the scientific text. It should include only the reference of the works used in the research. Bibliographical references should be ordered alphabetically and conform to the international APA standards, in their sixth edition.

3.2. Guidelines for references

Periodic Publications

Journal article (author): Valdés-Pérez, D. (2016). Valdés-Pérez, D. (2016). Incidencia de las técnicas de gestión en la mejora de decisiones administrativas [Impact of Management Techniques on the Improvement of Administrative Decisions]. Retos, 12(6), 199-2013. https://doi.org/10.17163/ret.n12.2016.05

Journal Article (Up to six authors): Ospina, M.C., Alvarado, S.V., Fefferman, M., & Llanos, D. (2016). Introducción del dossier temático "Infancias y juventudes: violencias, conflictos, memorias y procesos de construcción de paz" [Introduction of the thematic dossier "Infancy and Youth: Violence, Conflicts, Memories and Peace Construction Processes"]. Universitas, 25(14), 91-95. https://doi.org/10.17163/uni.n25.%25x

Journal article (more tan six authors): Smith, S.W., Smith, S.L. Pieper, K.M., Yoo, J.H., Ferrys, A.L., Downs, E.,... Bowden, B. (2006). Altruism on American Television: Examining the Amount of, and Context Surronding. Acts of Helping and Sharing. Journal of Communication, 56(4), 707-727. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00316.x

Journal article (without DOI): Rodríguez, A. (2007). Desde la promoción de salud mental hacia la promoción de salud: La concepción de lo comunitario en la implementación de proyectos sociales. Alteridad, 2(1), 28-40. (https://goo.gl/zDb3Me) (2017-01-29).

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Books and Book Chapters

Full books: Cuéllar, J.C., & Moncada-Paredes, M.C. (2014). El peso de la deuda externa ecuatoriana. Quito: Abya-Yala.

Chaprter of book: Zambrano-Quiñones, D. (2015). El ecoturismo comunitario en Manglaralto y Colonche. En V.H. Torres (Ed.), Alternativas de Vida: Trece experiencias de desarrollo endógeno en Ecuador (pp. 175-198). Quito: Abya-Yala.

Digital media

Pérez-Rodríguez, M.A., Ramírez, A., & García-Ruíz, R. (2015). La competencia mediática en educación infantil. Análisis del nivel de desarrollo en España. Universitas Psychologica, 14(2), 619-630. https://doi.org.10.11144/Javeriana.upsy14-2.cmei

It is prescriptive that all quotations that have DOI (Digital Object Identifier System) are reflected in the References (can be obtained at http://goo.gl/gfruh1). All journals and books that do not have DOI should appear with their respective link (in their online version, if they have it, shortened by Bitly: https://bitly.com/) and date of consultation in the indicated format.

Journal articles should be presented in English, except for those in Spanish and English, in which case it will be displayed in both languages using brackets. All web addresses submitted must be shortened in the manuscript, except for the DOI that must be in the indicated format (https://doi.org/XXX).

3.3. Epigraphs, Figures and Charts

The epigraphs of the body of the article will be numbered in Arabic. They should go without a full box of capital letters, neither underlined nor bold. The numbering must be a maximum of three levels: 1. / 1.1. / 1.1.1. A carriage return will be established at the end of each numbered epigraph.

The charts must be included in the text in Word format according to order of appearance, numbered in Arabic and subtitled with the description of the content.

The graphics or figures will be adjusted to the minimum number required and will be presented incorporated in the text, according to their order of appearance, numbered in Arabic and subtitled with the abbreviated description. Their quality should not be less than 300 dpi, and it may be necessary to have the graph in TIFF, PNG or JPEG format.

4. Submission Process

The receipt of articles is permanent, however, considering that the publication of the Sophia Journal is bi-annual, the manuscripts must be sent at least one period before the date stipulated in the corresponding Call.

The manuscripts must be sent through the OJS (Open Journal System) system of the journal, for which it is necessary that the author previously registers in

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the respective space (enter in the following link: http://sophia.ups.edu.ec/index.php/sophia/user/register, complete the form and follow each of the suggested steps).

The two documents that must be sent are:

1) Presentation and cover (Use official model), which will appear:

Title. In Spanish in the first line, in letter Arial 14, with bold and centered, with a maximum of 85 characters with space. In English in the second line, in letter Arial 14, in italics and bold.

Full names and surnames of the authors. Organized in order of priority, a maximum of 3 authors are accepted per original, although there may be exceptions justified by the topic, its complexity and extent. Each name must include the name of the institution in which he/she works as well as the city, country, email and ORCID number.

Abstract (Spanish) It will have a minimum length of 210 and a maximum of 220 words. It must include 1) Justification of the topic; 2) Objectives; 3) Methodology; 4) Main results; 5) Main conclusions. It must be impersonally written "The present paper analyzes..."

Abstract. Summary with all its components, translated into English and in cursive. Do not use automatic translation systems.

Keywords (Spanish): 6 standardized terms preferably of a single word and of the UNESCO and the Journal's Thesaurus separated by commas (,).

Keywords. The 6 terms above translated into English and separated by comma (,). Do not use automatic translation systems.

In addition, a statement must be included (using a template called: Presentation) in which it is explained that the submitted manuscript is an original contribution, not sent or being evaluated in another journal, confirmation of the signatory authors, acceptance (if applicable) of formal changes in the manuscript according to the norms and partial transfer of rights to the publisher. This document must be signed and recorded through the OJS system, in the section: "Complementary files".

2) Manuscript totally anonymized, according to the guidelines referred in precedence.

All authors must register with their credits on the OJS platform, although only one of them will be responsible for correspondence.No author can submit or have in review two manuscripts simultaneously, estimating an absence of four consecutive numbers (2 years).

5. Publication interval

The interval between receipt and publication of an article is 7 months (210 days).

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Normas de Publicación en «Sophia»

ISSN: 1390-3861 / e-ISSN: 1390-8626

1. Información general

«Sophia» es una publicación científica de la Universidad Politécnica Salesiana de Ecuador, editada desde junio de 2006 de forma ininterrumpida, con periodicidad fija semestral, especializada en Filosofía de la Educación y sus líneas interdisciplinares como Epistemología, Deontología, Estética, Estudios Críticos, Hermenéutica, Axiología, Ontología, Antropología Filosófica, Sociología, Analítica Filosófica... vinculadas al ámbito de la educación.

Es una revista científica arbitrada, que utiliza el sistema de evaluación externa por expertos (*peer-review*), bajo metodología de pares ciegos (*doble-blind review*), conforme a las normas de publicación de la American Psychological Association (APA). El cumplimiento de este sistema permite garantizar a los autores un proceso de revisión objetivo, imparcial y transparente, lo que facilita a la publicación su inclusión en bases de datos, repositorios e indexaciones internacionales de referencia.

«Sophia» se encuentra indexada en (**SCOPUS**) Emerging Sources Citation Index (**ESCI**) de Web of Science; en Scientific Electronic Library Online (**SciELO**); en el Sistema de Información Científica (**REDALYC**); en el directorio y catálogo selectivo del Sistema Regional de Información en Línea para Revistas Científicas de América Latina, el Caribe, España y Portugal (**LATINDEX**), en la Matríz de Información para el Análisis de Revistas (**MIAR**), en Clasificación Integrada de Revistas Científicas (**C.I.R.C**), en Academic Resource Index (**Research Bible**), en la Red Iberoamericana de Innovación y Conocimiento Científico (**REDIB**), en el Portal de difusión de la producción científica (**Dialnet**); en Bibliografía Latinoamericana en Revistas de Investigación Científica y Social (**BIBLAT**); en el Directorio de Revistas de Acceso Abierto **DOAJ** y en repositorios, bibliotecas y catálogos especializados de Iberoamérica.

La revista se edita en doble versión: impresa (ISSN: 1390-3861) y electrónica (e-ISSN: 1390-8626), en español y en inglés, siendo identificado además cada trabajo con un DOI (Digital Object Identifier System).

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2. Alcance y política

2.1. Temática

Contribuciones originales en materia de Filosofía de la Educación, así como áreas afines: Epistemología, Deontología, Estética, Estudios Críticos, Hermenéutica, Axiología, Ontología, Antropología Filosófica, Sociología, Analítica Filosófica,... y todas aquellas disciplinas conexas interdisciplinarmente con una reflexión filosófica sobre la educación.

2.2. Aportaciones

«Sophia» edita estudios críticos, informes, propuestas, así como selectas revisiones de la literatura (*state-of-the-art*) en relación con la Filosofía de la Educación, aceptando asimismo trabajos de investigación empírica, redactados en español y en inglés.

Las aportaciones en la revista pueden ser:

- **Revisiones:** 10.000 a 11.000 palabras de texto, incluidas tablas y referencias. Se valorará especialmente las referencias justificadas, actuales y selectivas de alrededor de unas 70 obras.
- **Investigaciones:** 8.000 a 9.500 palabras de texto, incluyendo título, resúmenes, descriptores, tablas y referencias.
- **Informes, estudios y propuestas:** 8.000 a 9.500 palabras de texto, incluyendo título, resúmenes, tablas y referencias.

2.3. Características del contenido

Todos los trabajos presentados para la publicación en «Sophia» deberán cumplir con las características propias de una investigación científica:

- Ser originales, inéditos y relevantes
- Abordar temáticas que respondan a problemáticas y necesidades actuales
- Aportar para el desarrollo del conocimiento científico en el campo de la Filosofía de la Educación y sus áreas afines
- Utilizar un lenguaje adecuado, claro, preciso y comprensible
- No haber sido publicados en ningún medio ni estar en proceso de arbitraje o publicación.

Dependiendo de la relevancia y pertinencia del artículo, se considerarán como contribuciones especiales y ocasionalmente se publicarán:

- Trabajos que superen la extensión manifestada
- Trabajos que no se correspondan con el tema objeto de la reflexión prevista para el número respectivo

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2.4 Periodicidad

«Sophia» tiene periodicidad semestral (20 artículos por año), publicada en los meses de enero y julio; y cuenta por número con dos secciones de cinco artículos cada una, la primera referida a un tema **Monográfico** preparado con antelación y con editores temáticos; la segunda, una sección de **Misceláneas**, compuesta por aportaciones variadas dentro de la temática de la publicación.

3. Presentación, estructura y envío de los manuscritos

Los trabajos se presentarán en tipo de letra Arial 12, interlineado simple, justificado completo y sin tabuladores ni espacios en blanco entre párrafos. Se separarán con un espacio en blanco los grandes bloques (título, autores, resúmenes, descriptores, créditos y epígrafes). La página debe tener 2 centímetros en todos sus márgenes.

Los trabajos deben presentarse en documento de Microsoft Word (.doc o .docx), siendo necesario que el archivo esté anonimizado en Propiedades de Archivo, de forma que no aparezca la identificación de autor/es.

Los manuscritos deben ser enviados única y exclusivamente a través del OJS (Open Journal System), en el cual todos los autores deben darse de alta previamente. No se aceptan originales enviados a través de correo electrónico u otra interfaz.

3.1. Estructura del manuscrito

Para aquellos trabajos que se traten de investigaciones de carácter empírico, los manuscritos seguirán la estructura IMRDC, siendo opcionales los epígrafes de Notas y Apoyos. Aquellos trabajos que por el contrario se traten de informes, estudios, propuestas y revisiones sistemáticas podrán ser más flexibles en sus epígrafes, especialmente en Material y métodos; Análisis y resultados; Discusión y conclusiones. En todas las tipologías de trabajos son obligatorias las Referencias.

a. Investigaciones empíricas

Su objetivo es contribuir al progreso del conocimiento mediante información original, sigue la estructura IMRDC: Introducción (objetivos, literatura previa), Materiales y métodos; Análisis y Resultados; Discusión, integración y conclusiones. Siguiendo los criterios planteados por la Unesco, es este tipo de textos científicos se llaman también como: "memorias originales"

La estructura recomendada, especialmente en trabajos que incluyen investigaciones empíricas, es la siguiente:

1) Título (español) / Title (inglés): Conciso pero informativo, en castellano en primera línea y en inglés en segunda. Se aceptan como máximo 85 caracteres con espacio. El título no solo es responsabilidad de los autores, pudiéndose proponer cambios por parte del Consejo Editorial.

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2) Datos de Identificación: Nombres y apellidos completos de cada uno de los autores, organizados por orden de prelación. Se aceptarán como máximo 3 autores por original, aunque pudieren existir excepciones justificadas por el tema, su complejidad y extensión. Junto a los nombres deberá incluirse, el nombre de la institución en la que trabaja así como la ciudad, el país, el correo electrónico y número completo de ORCID de cada autor aspectos que deberán constar de modo obligatorio en la Carta de Presentación, además deberán ser cargados en el sistema OJS de la revista, en la sección Metadatos y/o en un documento word adjunto al archivo que contiene el trabajo que se propone para la evaluación.

3) Resumen (español) / Abstract (inglés): Tendrá como extensión mínima de 210 y máxima de 220 palabras en español; y de 200 y máximo de 210 palabras en inglés. El resumen describirá de forma concisa y en este orden: 1) Justificación del tema; 2) Objetivos; 3) Metodología y muestra; 4) Principales resultados; 5) Principales conclusiones. Ha de estar escrito de manera impersonal "El presente trabajo analiza...". En el caso del abstract no se admitirá el empleo de traductores automáticos por su pésima calidad.

4) Descriptores (español) / Keywords (inglés): Se deben exponer máximo 6 términos por cada versión idiomática relacionados directamente con el tema del trabajo. Será valorado positivamente el uso de las palabras claves expuestas en el Thesaurus de la UNESCO y en el de la propia revista localizado en el siguiente enlace: https://sophia.ups.edu.ec/tesauro_sophia.php

5) Introducción y estado de la cuestión: Debe incluir el planteamiento del problema, el contexto de la problemática, la justificación, fundamentos y propósito del estudio, utilizando citas bibliográficas, así como la literatura más significativa y actual del tema a escala nacional e internacional.

6) Material y métodos: Debe ser redactado de forma que el lector pueda comprender con facilidad el desarrollo de la investigación. En su caso, describirá la metodología, la muestra y la forma de muestreo, así como se hará referencia al tipo de análisis estadístico empleado. Si se trata de una metodología original, es necesario exponer las razones que han conducido a su empleo y describir sus posibles limitaciones.

7) Análisis y resultados: Se procurará resaltar las observaciones más importantes, describiéndose, sin hacer juicios de valor, el material y métodos empleados. Aparecerán en una secuencia lógica en el texto y las tablas y figuras imprescindibles evitando la duplicidad de datos.

8) Discusión y conclusiones: Resumirá los hallazgos más importantes, relacionando las propias observaciones con estudios de interés, señalando aportaciones y limitaciones, sin redundar datos ya comentados en otros apartados. Asimismo, el apartado de discusión y conclusiones debe incluir las deducciones y líneas para futuras investigaciones.

9) Apoyos y agradecimientos (opcionales): El Council Science Editors recomienda a los autor/es especificar la fuente de financiación de la investigación. Se considerarán prioritarios los trabajos con aval de proyectos competiti-

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vos nacionales e internacionales. En todo caso, para la valoración científica del manuscrito, este debe ir anonimizado con XXXX solo para su evaluación inicial, a fin de no identificar autores y equipos de investigación, que deben ser explicitados en la Carta de Presentación y posteriormente en el manuscrito final.

10) Las notas (opcionales) irán, solo en caso necesario, al final del artículo (antes de las referencias). Deben anotarse manualmente, ya que el sistema de notas al pie o al final de Word no es reconocido por los sistemas de maquetación. Los números de notas se colocan en superíndice, tanto en el texto como en la nota final. No se permiten notas que recojan citas bibliográficas simples (sin comentarios), pues éstas deben ir en las referencias.

11) Referencias: Las citas bibliográficas deben reseñarse en forma de referencias al texto. Bajo ningún caso deben incluirse referencias no citadas en el texto. Su número debe ser suficiente para contextualizar el marco teórico con criterios de actualidad e importancia. Se presentarán alfabéticamente por el primer apellido del autor.

b. Revisiones

Las revisiones de literatura se basan en el análisis de las principales publicaciones sobre un tema determinado; su objetivo es definir el estado actual del problema y evaluar las investigaciones realizadas. Su estructura responde a las fases del tema/problema, aportes de investigadores o equipos, cambios en la teoría o las corrientes teóricas principales; problemas sin resolver; tendencias actuales y futuras (Giordanino, 2011). De acuerdo con la UNESCO, este tipo de trabajos se conocen también como: "estudios recapitulativos"

1) Título (español) / Title (inglés): El título del artículo deberá ser breve, interesante, claro, preciso y atractivo para despertar el interés del lector. Conciso pero informativo, en castellano en la primera línea y en inglés en la segunda línea. Se aceptan como máximo 85 caracteres con espacio. El título no solo es responsabilidad de los autores, también los Miembros del Consejo Editorial puede proponer cambios al título del documento.

2) Datos de Identificación: Nombres y apellidos completos de cada uno de los autores, organizados por orden de prelación. Se aceptarán como máximo 3 autores por original, aunque pudieren existir excepciones justificadas por el tema, su complejidad y extensión. Junto a los nombres deberá incluirse, el nombre de la institución en la que trabaja así como la ciudad, el país, el correo electrónico y número completo de ORCID de cada autor aspectos que deberán constar de modo obligatorio en la Carta de Presentación, además deberán ser cargados en el sistema OJS de la revista, en la sección Metadatos y/o en un documento word adjunto al archivo que contiene el trabajo que se propone para la evaluación.

3) Resumen (español) / Abstract (inglés): Tendrá como extensión mínima de 210 y máxima de 220 palabras en español; y de 200 y máximo de 210 palabras en inglés. El resumen describirá de forma concisa y en este orden: 1) Justificación

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del tema; 2) Objetivos; 3) Metodología; 4) Principales resultados; 5) Principales conclusiones. Ha de estar escrito de manera impersonal "El presente trabajo analiza...". En el caso del abstract no se admitirá el empleo de traductores automáticos por su pésima calidad.

4) Descriptores (español) / Keywords (inglés): Se deben exponer máximo 6 términos por cada versión idiomática relacionados directamente con el tema del trabajo. Será valorado positivamente el uso de las palabras claves expuestas en el Thesaurus de la UNESCO y en el de la propia revista.

5) Introducción: Deberá incluir una presentación breve del tema, la formulación del propósito u objetivo del estudio, el contexto de la problemática y la formulación del problema que se propone enfrentar, la presentación de la idea a defender, la justificación que explica la importancia, la actualidad y la pertinencia del estudio; el marco metodológico utilizado, y finalmente, una breve descripción de la estructura del documento. En la justificación es necesario utilizar citas bibliográficas así como la literatura más significativa y actual del tema a escala nacional e internacional.

6) Cuerpo o desarrollo del documento: Implica poner en práctica a lo largo de toda la exposición, una actitud crítica que deberá tender hacia la interpelación, a efectos de concitar la atención del tema y el problema tratados. El escritor deberá generar en el lector la capacidad de identificar la intención dialógica de la propuesta y propiciar en él una discusión abierta.

7) Conclusiones: Expone de manera objetiva los resultados y hallazgos; ofrece una visión de las implicaciones del trabajo, las limitaciones, la respuesta tentativa al problema, las relaciones con el objetivo de la investigación y las posibles líneas de continuidad (para cumplir con este objetivo se sugiere no incluir todos los resultados obtenidos en la investigación). Las conclusiones deberán ser debidamente justificadas de acuerdo con la investigación realizada. Las conclusiones podrán estar asociadas con las recomendaciones, evaluaciones, aplicaciones, sugerencias, nuevas relaciones e hipótesis aceptadas o rechazadas.

8) Bibliografía: Es el conjunto de obras utilizadas en la estructuración del texto científico. Deberá incluir únicamente la referencia de los trabajos utilizados en la investigación. Las referencias bibliográficas deberán ordenarse alfabéticamente y ajustarse a las normas internacionales APA, en su sexta edición.

3.2. Normas para las referencias

Publicaciones periódicas

Artículo de revista (un autor): Valdés-Pérez, D. (2016). Incidencia de las técnicas de gestión en la mejora de decisiones administrativas [Impact of Management Techniques on the Improvement of Administrative Decisions]. *Retos, 12*(6), 199-2013. https://doi.org/10.17163/ret.n12.2016.05

Artículo de revista (hasta seis autores): Ospina, M.C., Alvarado, S.V., Fefferman, M., & Llanos, D. (2016). Introducción del dossier temático "Infancias

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y juventudes: violencias, conflictos, memorias y procesos de construcción de paz" [Introduction of the thematic dossier "Infancy and Youth: Violence, Conflicts, Memories and Peace Construction Processes"]. *Universitas, 25*(14), 91-95. https://doi.org/10.17163/uni.n25.%25x

Artículo de revista (más de seis autores): Smith, S.W., Smith, S.L. Pieper, K.M., Yoo, J.H., Ferrys, A.L., Downs, E.,... Bowden, B. (2006). Altruism on American Television: Examining the Amount of, and Context Surronding. Acts of Helping and Sharing. *Journal of Communication, 56*(4), 707-727. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00316.x

Artículo de revista (sin DOI): Rodríguez, A. (2007). Desde la promoción de salud mental hacia la promoción de salud: La concepción de lo comunitario en la implementación de proyectos sociales. *Alteridad, 2*(1), 28-40. (https://goo.gl/zDb3Me) (2017-01-29).

Libros y capítulos de libro

Libros completos: Cuéllar, J.C., & Moncada-Paredes, M.C. (2014). *El peso de la deuda externa ecuatoriana.* Quito: Abya-Yala.

Capítulos de libro: Zambrano-Quiñones, D. (2015). *El ecoturismo comunitario en Manglaralto y Colonche.* En V.H. Torres (Ed.), Alternativas de Vida: Trece experiencias de desarrollo endógeno en Ecuador (pp. 175-198). Quito: Abya-Yala.

Medios electrónicos

Pérez-Rodríguez, M.A., Ramírez, A., & García-Ruíz, R. (2015). La competencia mediática en educación infantil. Análisis del nivel de desarrollo en España. Universitas Psychologica, 14(2), 619-630. https://doi.org.10.11144/Javeriana.upsy14-2.cmei

Es prescriptivo que todas las citas que cuenten con DOI (Digital Object Identifier System) estén reflejadas en las Referencias (pueden obtenerse en http://goo.gl/gfruh1). Todas las revistas y libros que no tengan DOI deben aparecer con su link (en su versión on-line, en caso de que la tengan, acortada, mediante Bitly: https://bitly.com/ y fecha de consulta en el formato indicado.

Los artículos de revistas deben ser expuestos en idioma inglés, a excepción de aquellos que se encuentren en español e inglés, caso en el que se expondrá en ambos idiomas utilizando corchetes. Todas las direcciones web que se presenten tienen que ser acortadas en el manuscrito, a excepción de los DOI que deben ir en el formato indicado (https://doi.org/XXX).

3.3. Epígrafes, tablas y gráficos

Los epígrafes del cuerpo del artículo se numerarán en arábigo. Irán sin caja completa de mayúsculas, ni subrayados, ni negritas. La numeración ha de

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ser como máximo de tres niveles: 1. / 1.1. / 1.1.1. Al final de cada epígrafe numerado se establecerá un retorno de carro.

Las tablas deben presentarse incluidas en el texto en formato Word según orden de aparición, numeradas en arábigo y subtituladas con la descripción del contenido.

Los gráficos o figuras se ajustarán al número mínimo necesario y se presentarán incorporadas al texto, según su orden de aparición, numeradas en arábigo y subtituladas con la descripción abreviada. Su calidad no debe ser inferior a 300 ppp, pudiendo ser necesario contar con el gráfico en formato TIFF, PNG o JPEG.

4. Proceso de envío

La recepción de artículos es permanente, sin embargo, considerando que la publicación de la Revista Sophia es semestral, el envío de los manuscritos deberá efectuarse al menos un período antes de la fecha estipulada en la Convocatoria correspondiente.

Los manuscritos deberán remitirse a través del sistema OJS (Open Journal System) de la revista, para lo cual es necesario que el autor se registre previamente en el espacio respectivo (ingrese en el siguiente link: http://sophia.ups.edu.ec/index.php/sophia/user/register, complemente el formulario y siga cada uno de los pasos que se sugieren).

Los dos documentos que deben ser enviados son:

1) Carta de presentación o Cover letter (usar modelo oficial), en la que aparecerán:

Tìtulo. En castellano en la primera línea, en letra Arial 14, con negrita y centrado, con un máximo de 85 caracteres con espacio. En inglés en la segunda línea, en letra Arial 14, en cursiva y con negrita.

Nombres y apellidos completos de los autores. Organizados por orden de prelación, se aceptan como máximo 3 autores por original, aunque pudieren existir excepciones justificadas por el tema, su complejidad y extensión. Junto a cada uno de los nombres deberá incluirse, el nombre de la institución en la que trabaja así como la ciudad, el país, el correo electrónico y número de ORCID.

Resumen. Tendrá como extensión mínima 210 y máxima 220 palabras. El resumen describirá de forma concisa y en este orden: 1) Justificación del tema; 2) Objetivos; 3) Metodología; 4) Principales resultados; 5) Principales conclusiones. Ha de estar escrito de manera impersonal "El presente trabajo analiza...".

Abstract. Resumen con todos sus componentes, traducido al inglés y en letra cursiva. No utilizar sistemas de traducción automáticos.

Descriptores. Máximo 6 términos estandarizados preferiblemente de una sola palabra y del Thesaurus de la UNESCO y de la propia revista, separados por coma (,).

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Keywords. Los 6 términos antes referidos traducidos al inglés y separados por coma (,). No utilizar sistemas de traducción automáticos.

Además, se deberá incluir una: **Declaración** (usar modelo denominado: Presentación) en la que se explica que el manuscrito enviado es una aportación original, no enviado ni en proceso de evaluación en otra revista, confirmación de las autorías firmantes, aceptación (si procede) de cambios formales en el manuscrito conforme a las normas y cesión parcial de derechos a la editorial. Este documento deberá ser firmado y consignado a través del sistema OJS, en la sección: **"Ficheros complementarios".**

2) Manuscrito totalmente anonimizado, conforme a las normas referidas en precedencia.

Todos los autores han de darse de alta, con sus créditos, en la plataforma OJS, si bien uno solo de ellos será el responsable de correspondencia. Ningún autor podrá enviar o tener en revisión dos manuscritos de forma simultánea, estimándose una carencia de cuatro números consecutivos (2 años).

5. Intervalo de publicación

(El tamaño y estilo de la letra tal como se encuentra el numeral 4 (Proceso de envío)

El intervalo comprendido entre la recepción y la publicación de un artículo es de 7 meses (210 días).

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Indications for External Reviewers of «Sophia»

The **Board of External Reviewers of** «**Sophia**» is an independent collegiate body whose purpose is to guarantee the excellence of this scientific publication, because the blind evaluation - based exclusively on the quality of the contents of the manuscripts and carried out by experts of recognized International prestige in the field - is, without a doubt, the best guarantee for the advancement of science and to preserve in this header an original and valuable scientific production.

To this end, the **Board of External Reviewers** is made up of several scholars and international scientists specialized in **Education**, essential to select the articles of the greatest impact and interest for the international scientific community. This in turn allows that all the articles selected to publish in «**Sophia**» have an academic endorsement and objectifiable reports on the originals.

Of course, all reviews in «**Sophia**» use the internationally standardized system of double-blind peer evaluation that guarantees the anonymity of manuscripts and reviewers. As a measure of transparency, the complete lists of reviewers are published on the official website of the journal http://Sophia.ups.edu.ec/)

1. Criteria for acceptance/rejection of manuscript evaluation

The editorial team of «**Sophia**» selects those that are considered more qualified in the subject of the manuscript from the list of reviewers of the Board of Reviewers. While the publication requires the maximum collaboration of reviewers to expedite the evaluations and reports on each original, acceptance of the review must be linked to:

a. **Expertise**. Acceptance necessarily entails the possession of competences in the specific theme of the article to be evaluated.
b. **Availability**. Reviewing an original takes time and involves careful reflection on many aspects.
c. **Conflict of interests**. In case of identification of the authorship of the manuscript (despite their anonymity), excessive academic or family closeness to their authors, membership in the same University, Department, Research Group, Thematic Network, Research Projects, joint publications with authors... or any other type of connection or conflict / professional proximity; The reviewer must reject the publisher's invitation for review.
d. **Commitment of confidentiality.** Reception of a manuscript for evaluation requires the Reviewer to express a commitment of confidentiality, so that it cannot be divulged to a third party throughout the process.

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In the event that the reviewer cannot carry out the activity for some of these reasons or other justifiable reasons, he/she must notify the publisher by the same route that he/she has received the invitation, specifying the reasons for rejection.

2. General criteria for the evaluation of manuscripts

a) Topic

In addition to being valuable and relevant to the scientific community, the topic that is presented in the original must be limited and specialized in time and space, without excessive localism.

b) Redaction

The critical assessment in the review report must be objectively written, providing content, quotes or references of interest to support its judgment.

c) Originality

As a fundamental criterion of quality, an article must be original, unpublished and suitable. In this sense, reviewers should answer these three questions in the evaluation:

- Is the article sufficiently novel and interesting to justify publication?
- Does it contribute anything to the knowledge canon?
- Is the research question relevant?

A quick literature search using repositories such as Web of Knowledge, Scopus and Google Scholar to see if the research has been previously covered, may be helpful.

d) Structure

Manuscripts that refer to «Sophia» must follow the IMRDC structure, except those that are literature reviews or specific studies. In this sense, the originals must contain summary, introduction, methodology, results, discussion and conclusion.

- The **title, abstract, and keywords** should accurately describe the content of the article.
- The **review of the literature** should summarize the state of the question of the most recent and adequate research for the presented work. It will be especially evaluated with criteria of suitability and that the references are to works of high impact - especially in

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WoS, Scopus, Scielo, etc. It should also include the general explanation of the study, its central objective and the followed methodological design.

- In case of research, in the **materials and methods**, the author must specify how the data, the process and the instruments used to respond to the hypothesis, the validation system, and all the information necessary to replicate the study are collected.
- **Results** must be clearly specified in logical sequence. It is important to check if the figures or charts presented are necessary or, if not, redundant with the content of the text.
- In the **discussion**, the data obtained should be interpreted in the light of the literature review. Authors should include here if their article supports or contradicts previous theories. The conclusions will summarize the advances that the research presents in the area of scientific knowledge, the future lines of research and the main difficulties or limitations for carrying out the research.
- **Language**: It will be positively assessed if the language used facilitates reading and is in favor of the clarity, simplicity, precision and transparency of the scientific language. The Reviewer should not proceed to correction, either in Spanish or English, but will inform the Editors of these grammatical or orthographical and typographical errors.
- Finally, a thorough **review of the references** is required in case any relevant work has been omitted. The references must be precise, citing within the logic of the subject at study, its main works as well as the documents that most resemble the work itself, as well as the latest research in the area.

3. Relevant valuation dimensions

For the case of empirical research articles**,** «**Sophia**» uses an evaluation matrix of each original that responds to the editorial criteria and to compliance with the publication guidelines. In this sense, the reviewers must attend to the qualitative-quantitative assessment of each of the aspects proposed in this matrix with criteria of objectivity, reasoning, logic and expertise.

If the original is a review of the literature (status of the matter) or other type of study (reports, proposals, experiences, among others), the Editorial Board will send to the reviewers a different matrix, including the characteristics of Structure of this type of originals:

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STUDIES, REPORTS, PROPOSALS AND REVIEW	
Valuable items	**Score**
01. Relevancy of the title (clarity, precision and with a maximum of 85 characters).	0/5
02. They summarize (In an alone paragraph and without epigraphs, minimum / minimal: 210-220 words).	0/5
03. Introduction (brief presentation of the topic; formulation of the problem; it designs to defending or hypothesis to demonstrating; I target; importance of the topic; current importance; methodology; structure of the document).	0/5
04. Review of the bibliographical foundation (Beside using current bibliography to consider the incorporation of Sophia's documents).	0/10
05. Structure and organization of the article (argumentative capabilities, coherence and scientific redaction).	0/10
06. Original contributions and contextualized analyses.	0/5
07. Conclusions that answer to the topic, to the problem and to the raised aim.	0/5
08. Citations and references of agreement to the regulation and to the format requested by the magazine (Any document and author who consists in the section of bibliography must consist in the body of story and vice versa).	0/5
Maximun total	50 points

RESEARCHES	
Valuable items	**Score**
01. Relevancy of the title (clarity, precision and with a maximum of 85 characters).	0/5
02. They summarize (In an alone paragraph and without epigraphs, minimum / minimal: 210-220 words).	0/5
03. Introduction (brief presentation of the topic; formulation of the problem; it designs to defending or hypothesis to demonstrating; I target; importance of the topic; current importance; methodology; structure of the document).	0/5
04. Review of the bibliographical foundation (Beside using current bibliography to consider the incorporation of Sophia's documents). Methodological rigorous and presentation of instruments of investigation.	0/10
05. Structure and organization of the article (argumentative capabilities, coherence and scientific redaction). Analysis and results of investigation with logical sequence in the text. Presentation of tables and figures without duplicity of information.	0/10

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06. Original contributions and contextualized analyses of the information.	0/5
07. Discussion, conclusions and advances that answer to the topic, to the problem and to the raised aim.	0/5
08. Citations and references of agreement to the regulation and to the format requested by the magazine (Any document and author who consists in the section of bibliography must consist in the body of story and vice versa).	0/5
Total	50 points

4. Ethical issues

a. **Plagiarism***:* Although the journal uses plagiarism detection systems, if the reviewer suspects that an original is a substantial copy of another work, he must immediately inform the Editors citing the previous work in as much detail as possible.
b. **Fraud**: If there is real or remote suspicion that the results in an article are false or fraudulent, it is necessary to inform them to the Editors.

5. Evaluation of the originals

After the quantitative-qualitative evaluation of the manuscript under review, the reviewer may make recommendations to improve the quality of the manuscript. However, the manuscript will be graded in three ways:

a. **Rejection** due to detected deficiencies justified and reasoned with quantitative and quantitative assessment. The report should be longer if a score of less than 40 of the 50 possible points is obtained.
b. **Acceptance without review**
c. **Conditional acceptance** and therefore review (greater or lesser). In the latter case, it is necessary to clearly identify which review is necessary, listing the comments and even specifying paragraphs and pages suggesting modifications.

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Indicaciones para revisores externos de «Sophia»

El **Consejo de Revisores Externos de** «**Sophia**» es un órgano colegiado independiente cuyo fin es garantizar la excelencia de esta publicación científica, debido a que la evaluación ciega —basada exclusivamente en la calidad de los contenidos de los manuscritos y realizada por expertos de reconocido prestigio internacional en la materia— es la mejor garantía y, sin duda, el mejor aval para el avance de la ciencia y para preservar en esta cabecera una producción científica original y valiosa.

Para ello, el **Consejo de Revisores Externos** está conformado por diversos académicos y científicos internacionales especialistas en **Filosofía de la Educación**, esenciales para seleccionar los artículos de mayor impacto e interés para la comunidad científica internacional. Esto permite a su vez que todos los artículos seleccionados para publicar en «**Sophia**» cuenten con un aval académico e informes objetivables sobre los originales.

Por supuesto, todas las revisiones en «**Sophia**» emplean el sistema estandarizado internacionalmente de evaluación por pares con «doble ciego» (*doble-blind*) que garantiza el anonimato de los manuscritos y de los revisores de los mismos. Como medida de transparencia, anualmente se hacen públicos en la web oficial de la revista (www. http://Sophia.ups.edu.ec/) los listados completos de los revisores.

1. Criterios de aceptación/rechazo de evaluación manuscritos

El equipo editorial de «**Sophia**» selecciona del listado de evaluadores del Consejo de Revisores a aquellos que se estiman más cualificado en la temática del manuscrito. Si bien por parte de la publicación se pide la máxima colaboración de los revisores para agilizar las evaluaciones y los informes sobre cada original, la aceptación de la revisión ha de estar vinculada a:

a. **Experticia.** La aceptación conlleva necesariamente la posesión de competencias en la temática concreta del artículo a evaluar.
b. **Disponibilidad**. Revisar un original exige tiempo y conlleva reflexión concienzuda de muchos aspectos.
c. **Conflicto de intereses.** En caso de identificación de la autoría del manuscrito (a pesar de su anonimato), excesiva cercanía académica o familiar a sus autores, pertenencia a la misma Universidad, Departamento, Grupo de Investigación, Red Temática, Proyectos de Investigación, publicaciones conjuntas con los autores... o cualquier otro tipo de conexión o conflicto/cercanía profesional; el revisor debe rechazar la invitación del editor para su revisión.
d. **Compromiso de confidencialidad**. La recepción de un manuscrito para su evaluación exige del Revisor un compromiso expreso de

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confidencialidad, de manera que éste no puede, durante todo el proceso, ser divulgado a un tercero.

En caso que el revisor no pueda llevar a cabo la actividad por algunos de estos motivos u otros justificables, debe notificarlo al editor por la misma vía que ha recibido la invitación, especificando los motivos de rechazo.

2. Criterios generales de evaluación de manuscritos

a) Tema

La temática que se plantea en el original, además de ser valiosa y relevante para la comunidad científica, ha de ser limitada y especializada en tiempo y espacio, sin llegar al excesivo localismo.

b) Redacción

La valoración crítica en el informe de revisión ha de estar redactada de forma objetiva, aportando contenido, citas o referencias de interés para argumentar su juicio.

c) Originalidad

Como criterio de calidad fundamental, un artículo debe ser original, inédito e idóneo. En este sentido, los revisores deben responder a estas tres preguntas en la evaluación:

- ¿Es el artículo suficientemente novedoso e interesante para justificar su publicación?
- ¿Aporta algo al canon del conocimiento?
- ¿Es relevante la pregunta de investigación?

Una búsqueda rápida de literatura utilizando repositorios tales como Web of Knowledge, Scopus y Google Scholar para ver si la investigación ha sido cubierta previamente puede ser de utilidad.

d) Estructura

Los manuscritos que se remiten a «**Sophia**» deben seguir la estructura señalada en las normas de publicación tanto para las investigaciones empíricas como para revisiones de la literatura o estudios específicos. En este sentido, los originales han de contener resumen, introducción, metodología, resultados, discusión y conclusión.

- El título, el resumen y las palabras clave han de describir exactamente el contenido del artículo.

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- La revisión de la literatura debe resumir el estado de la cuestión de las investigaciones más recientes y adecuadas para el trabajo presentado. Se valorará especialmente con criterios de idoneidad y que las referencias sean a trabajos de alto impacto —especialmente en WoS, Scopus, Scielo, etc. Debe incluir además la explicación general del estudio, su objetivo central y el diseño metodológico seguido.
- En caso de investigaciones, en los materiales y métodos, el autor debe precisar cómo se recopilan los datos, el proceso y los instrumentos usados para responder a las hipótesis, el sistema de validación, y toda la información necesaria para replicar el estudio.
- En los resultados se deben especificar claramente los hallazgos en secuencia lógica. Es importante revisar si las tablas o cuadros presentados son necesarios o, caso contrario, redundantes con el contenido del texto.
- En la discusión se deben interpretar los datos obtenidos a la luz de la revisión de la literatura. Los autores deberán incluir aquí si su artículo apoya o contradice las teorías previas. Las conclusiones resumirán los avances que la investigación plantea en el área del conocimiento científico, las futuras líneas de investigación y las principales dificultades o limitaciones para la realización de la investigación.
- Idioma: Se valorará positivamente si el idioma utilizado facilita la lectura y va en favor de la claridad, sencillez, precisión y transparencia del lenguaje científico. El Revisor no debe proceder a corrección, ya sea en español o inglés, sino que informará a los Editores de estos errores gramaticales u ortotipográficos.
- Finalmente, se requiere una profunda revisión de las referencias por si se hubiera omitido alguna obra relevante. Las referencias han de ser precisas, citando en la lógica de la temática a estudiar, sus principales obras así como los documentos que más se asemejen al propio trabajo, así como las últimas investigaciones en el área.

3. Dimensiones relevantes de valoración

Para el caso de artículos de investigaciones empíricas, «**Sophia**» utiliza una matriz de evaluación de cada original que responde a los criterios editoriales y al cumplimiento de la normativa de la publicación. En este sentido los revisores deberán atender a la valoración cuali-cuantitativa de cada uno de los aspectos propuestos en esta matriz con criterios de objetividad, razonamiento, lógica y experticia.

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Para el caso de artículos reflexivos, estudios, revisiones de literatura (estado de la cuestión) u otro tipo de estudio (informes, propuestas, experiencias, entre otras), el Consejo Editorial remitirá a los revisores una matriz distinta, comprendiendo las características propias de estructura de este tipo de originales:

ESTUDIOS, PROPUESTAS, INFORMES Y EXPERIENCIAS	
Ítems valorables	**Puntaje**
01. Pertinencia del título (claridad, precisión y con un máximo de 85 caracteres).	0/5
02. Resumen (En un solo párrafo y sin epígrafes, mínimo/máximo: 210-220 palabras).	0/5
03. Introducción (breve presentación del tema; formulación del problema; idea a defender o hipótesis a demostrar; objetivo; importancia del tema; actualidad; metodología; estructura del documento).	0/5
04. Revisión de la fundamentación bibliográfica (Además de usar bibliografía actual considerar la inclusión de documentos de Sophia).	0/10
05. Estructura y organización del artículo (capacidad argumentativa, coherencia y redacción científica).	0/10
06. Aportaciones originales y análisis contextualizados.	0/5
07. Conclusiones que respondan al tema, al problema y al objetivo planteado.	0/5
0.8. Citaciones y referencias de acuerdo a la normativa y al formato solicitado por la revista (Todo documento y autor que conste en la sección de bibliografía debe constar en el cuerpo del artículo y viceversa).	0/5
Total máximo	50 puntos

INVESTIGACIONES	
Ítems valorables	**Puntaje**
01. Pertinencia del título (claridad, precisión y con un máximo de 85 caracteres)	0/5
02. Resumen (En un solo párrafo y sin epígrafes, mínimo/máximo: 210-220 palabras).	0/5
03. Introducción (breve presentación del tema; formulación del problema; idea a defender o hipótesis a demostrar; objetivo; importancia del tema; actualidad; metodología; estructura del documento).	0/5
04. Revisión de la fundamentación bibliográfica (Además de usar bibliografía actual considerar la inclusión de documentos de Sophia). Rigor metodológico y presentación de instrumentos de investigación.	0/10

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05. Estructura y organización del artículo (capacidad argumentativa, coherencia y redacción científica). Análisis y resultados de investigación con secuencia lógica en el texto. Presentación de tablas y figuras sin duplicidad de datos.	0/10
0.6. Aportaciones originales y análisis contextualizados de los datos.	0/5
0.7. Discusión, conclusiones y avances que respondan al tema, al problema y al objetivo planteado.	0/5
0.8. Citaciones y referencias de acuerdo a la normativa y al formato solicitado por la revista (Todo documento y autor que conste en la sección de bibliografía debe constar en el cuerpo del artículo y viceversa).	0/5
Total máximo	50 puntos

4. Cuestiones éticas

a. Plagio: Aunque la revista utiliza sistemas de detección de plagio, si el revisor sospechare que un original es una copia sustancial de otra obra, ha de informar de inmediato a los Editores citando la obra anterior con tanto detalle cómo le sea posible.
b. Fraude: Si hay sospecha real o remota de que los resultados en un artículo son falsos o fraudulentos, es necesario informar de ellos a los Editores.

5. Evaluación de los originales

Una vez realizada la evaluación cuanti-cualitativa del manuscrito en revisión, el revisor podrá realizar recomendaciones para mejorar la calidad del original. Sin embargo, se atenderá a la calificación del manuscrito de tres maneras:

a. **Rechazo** debido a las deficiencias detectadas, justificadas y razonadas con valoración cualitativa y cuantitativa. El informe ha de ser más extenso si obtiene menos de los 30 de los 50 puntos posibles.
b. **Aceptación sin revisión.**
c. **Aceptación condicionada** y por ende con revisión (mayor o menor). En este último caso, se ha de identificar claramente qué revisión es necesaria, enumerando los comentarios e incluso especificando párrafos y páginas en las que sugieren modificaciones.

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Protocol of Manuscript Evaluation for External Reviewers

Instructions

- The fulfillment of each one of the articles will be valued in agreement to the following protocol.
- The total sum of the articles will determine the approval or rejection of the article.
- The minimal puntaje in order that the article is approved will be of 44/50.

Article Details		
Date of submission for evaluation:	Date of return of evaluation:	Article code:
Title of the article to be evaluated:		
SECTION: REPORTS, STUDIES, PROPOSALS AND REVIEWS		

01.- Relevancy of the title (clarity, precision and with a maximum of 85 characters)	Mandatory comments:
	Value from 0 to 5
02.- They summarize (In an alone paragraph and without epigraphs, minimum / minimal: 210-220 words).	Mandatory comments:
	Value from 0 to 5
03.- Introduction (brief presentation of the topic; formulation of the problem; it designs to defending or hypothesis to demonstrating; I target; importance of the topic; current importance; methodology; structure of the document)	Mandatory comments:
	Value from 0 to 5
04.- Review of the bibliographical foundation (Beside using current bibliography to consider the incorporation of Sophia's documents).	Mandatory comments:
	Value from 0 to 10

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05.- Structure and organization of the article (argumentative capabilities, coherence and scientific redaction)	Mandatory comments:	
	Value from 0 to 10	
06.- Original contributions and contextualized analyses	Mandatory comments:	
	Value from 0 to 5	
07.- Conclusions that answer to the topic, to the problem and to the raised aim	Mandatory comments:	
	Value from 0 to 5	
08.- Citations and references of agreement to the regulation and to the format requested by the magazine (Any document and author who consists in the section of bibliography must consist in the body of story and vice versa)	Mandatory comments:	
	Value from 0 to 5	
OBTAINED PUNCTUATION	Of the total of 50 predictable points, this assessor grants:	

REDACTED OPINION More detailed if the work does not get 44 points, to inform the autor (s). This text is sent verbatim to the autor (s) amonymously	

RECOMMENDATION ON HIS PUBLICATION IN SOPHIA			
Validation criteria	**Result**		
	Yes	**Yes, with conditions**	**No**
01. Widely recommended			
02. Recommended only if his quality is improved attending to the totality of the suggestions realized by the revisers			
03. His publication is not recommended			
PROPOSED CHANGES (In case of "Yes, with conditions")			

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Instrucciones

- El cumplimiento de cada uno de los ítems será valorado de acuerdo al siguiente protocolo.
- La suma total de los ítems determinará la aprobación o rechazo del artículo. El puntaje mínimo para que el artículo sea aprobado será de 44/50.

Datos del artículo		
Fecha envío evaluación:	Fecha devolución evaluación:	Código artículo:
Título del artículo a evaluar:		
SECCIÓN: ESTUDIOS, PROPUESTAS, INFORMES Y REVISIONES		

01.- Pertinencia del título (claridad, precisión y con un máximo de 85 caracteres)	Comentarios obligatorios:
	Valore de 0 a 5
02.- Resumen (En un solo párrafo y sin epígrafes, mínimo/máximo: 210-220 palabras).	Comentarios obligatorios:
	Valore de 0 a 5
03.- Introducción (breve presentación del tema; formulación del problema; idea a defender o hipótesis a demostrar; objetivo; importancia del tema; actualidad; metodología; estructura del documento)	Comentarios obligatorios:
	Valore de 0 a 5
04.- Revisión de la fundamentación bibliográfica (Además de usar bibliografía actual considerar la inclusión de documentos de Sophia)	Comentarios obligatorios:
	Valore de 0 a 10
05.- Estructura y organización del artículo (capacidad argumentativa, coherencia y redacción científica)	Comentarios obligatorios
	Valore de 0 a 10

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06.- Aportaciones originales y análisis contextualizados	Comentarios obligatorios:	
	Valore de 0 a 5	
07.- Conclusiones que respondan al tema, al problema y al objetivo planteado	Comentarios obligatorios:	
	Valore de 0 a 5	
08.- Citaciones y referencias de acuerdo a la normativa y al formato solicitado por la revista (Todo documento y autor que conste en la sección de bibliografía debe constar en el cuerpo del artículo y viceversa)	Comentarios obligatorios:	
	Valore de 0 a 5	
PUNTUACIÓN OBTENIDA	Del total de 50 puntos previsibles, este evaluador otorga:	

OPINIÓN REDACTADA (Más detallada si el trabajo no tiene 44 puntos, para informar al autor/es) Este texto se remite textualmente al/los autor/es de forma anónima			
RECOMENDACIÓN SOBRE SU PUBLICACIÓN EN SOPHIA			
PUBLICABLE	**Resultado**		
	SI	**Sí, con condiciones**	**NO**
01. Ampliamente recomendado			
02. Recomendado sólo si se mejora su calidad atendiendo a la totalidad de las sugerencias realizadas por los revisores			
03. No se recomienda su publicación			
MODIFICACIONES PROPUESTAS (En caso de «Sí, con condiciones»)			

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Checklist prior to sending the manuscript

1. CHECK OF THE MANUSCRIPT, PRIOR TO SENDING	
To facilitate the process of evaluation of the manuscript and to accelerate the report of its possible publication, a final self-review of the manuscript is advised, checking the following questions.	
COVER LETTER	
Title of the manuscript in spanish (maximum 85 characters).	
Title of the manuscript in english (maximum 85 characters).	
The two versions of the title of the manuscript are concise, informative and collect as many identifiable terms as possible.	
The abstract in spanish is included, in a single paragraph and without epigraphs (minimum / maximum: 210/220 words).	
The abstract in english is included, in a single paragraph and without epigraphs (minimum / maximum: 210-220 words).	
Abstracts in spanish and english respond in order to the following issues: justification of the subject, objectives, study methodology, results and conclusions.	
It includes 6 descriptors (in english and spanish) (only simple words, not phrases or combinations of words), with the most significant terms, and if possible standardized.	
The texts in english (title, abstract and descriptors) have been written or verified by an official translator or expert in this language (The use of automatic translators is prohibited).	
All the identification data of the authors are included in the order stipulated in the norms: identification and correspondence data, professional filiations, last academic degree...	
The first and last name of the authors has been normalized.	
Each author is identified with their ORCID code.	
The maximum number of authors is three, with the exception of those works that justify a higher but limited number of authors	
The author(s) have duly signed the letter of presentation of the article, which includes the partial transfer of rights and the declaration of conflict of interest.	
MANUSCRIPT	
It includes title of the manuscript, abstract, and keywords. All in spanish and english.	

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An introduction is included that in order contains: brief presentation of the subject; problem formulation; Idea to defend or hypothesis to prove; objective; Importance of the theme; relevance; methodology; structure of the document.	
The text is within the minimum and maximum extension: In the Review sections: 10,000/11,000 words of text (including references). In the research section: 8,000/9,500 words of text (including references). Reports, Studies: 8,000/9,500 words of text (including references).	
In case of research, the manuscript responds to the structure required in the guidelines (IMRDC).	
In the case of a report, study or review, the manuscript respects the minimum structure required by the guidelines.	
The review work includes three citations from three previous issues of Sophia Journal.	
The manuscript explicitly cites and cites the used sources and materials.	
The methodology described for the research work is clear and concise, allowing its replication, if necessary, by other experts.	
The conclusions follow on objective and problem raised are supported by the results obtained and presented in the form of a synthesis.	
If statistical analyzes have been used, they have been reviewed/contrasted by an expert.	
The citations in the text are strictly in accordance with the APA 6 regulations, reflected in the instructions.	
In case of use of final notes, it has been verified that these are descriptive and cannot be integrated into the general citation system. Footnotes are not acceptable.	
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The final references conform in style and format to the international standards used in Sophia.	
The number of references is according to the theoretical basis of the study carried out	
DOIs have been included in all References that carry it in the following format: doi: https://doi.org/XXXXXX	
All web addresses of references have been shortened with Google Url Shortner	
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The number of charts and / or figures does not exceed 6	
If the case, financial support is declared.	

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ASPECTOS FORMALES	
The rules have been strictly observed in the use of bold, capital letters, italics and underlines.	
Arial font, size 12 has been used.	
A single line spacing (1) has been used without tab.	
The epigraphs have been properly and hierarchically numbered in Arabic.	
Double spaces have been deleted.	
The typographic quotes « » (with alt + 174 and alt + 175 for opening and closing) have been used.	
Word dictionary for surface spelling has been used.	
The text has been supervised by external staff to ensure grammar and style.	
PRESENTATION	
Attached is a cover letter indicating originality, novelty of the work and section of the journal to which it is addressed, and if appropriate, informed consent of experimentation.	
The cover letter includes an attachment signed by all authors, being responsible for the authorship and giving the copyright to the publisher.	
The manuscript is uploaded to the platform in Word format and without authors identification	
ANNEXED DOCUMENTS	
Attached are the two attached documents: the cover letter and the manuscript.	
The accompanying documents and annexes have been published with Figshare.	

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Chequeo previo al envío del manuscrito

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Para facilitar el proceso de evaluación del manuscrito y acelerar el informe de su posible publicación, se aconseja una autorevisión final del manuscrito, comprobando las siguientes cuestiones.	
DOCUMENTO PORTADA (Cover Letter)	
Se incluye título del manuscrito en español (máximo 85 caracteres).	
Se incluye título del manuscrito en inglés (máximo 85 caracteres).	
Las dos versiones del título del manuscrito son concisas, informativas y recogen el mayor número de términos identificativos posibles.	
Se incluye resumen en español, en un solo párrafo y sin epígrafes (mínimo/máximo: 210/220 palabras).	
Se incluye abstract en inglés, en un solo párrafo y sin epígrafes (mínimo/máximo 210-220 palabras).	
Los resúmenes en español e inglés responden ordenadamente a las siguientes cuestiones: justificación del tema, objetivos, metodología del estudio, resultados y conclusiones.	
Se incluyen 6 descriptores (en español e inglés) (sólo palabras simples, no sintagmas o combinaciones de palabras), con los términos más significativos, y a ser posibles estandarizados.	
Los textos en inglés (título, resumen y descriptores) han sido redactados o verificados por un traductor oficial o persona experta en este idioma (Se prohíbe el uso de traductores automáticos).	
Se incluyen todos los datos de identificación de los autores en el orden estipulado en la normativa: datos de identificación y correspondencia, filiaciones profesionales, último grado académico.	
Se ha normalizado el nombre y apellido de los autores.	
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MANUSCRITO	
Se incluye título del manuscrito en español, inglés, resumen, abstract, descriptores y keywords	

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Se incluye una introducción que en orden contiene: breve presentación del tema; formulación del problema; idea a defender o hipótesis a demostrar; objetivo; importancia del tema; actualidad; metodología; estructura del documento.	
El trabajo respeta la extensión mínima y máxima permitidas: Sección de Revisiones: 10.000/11.000 palabras de texto (incluidas las referencias). Investigaciones: 8.000/9.500 palabras de texto (incluidas referencias). Informes, Estudios: 8.000/9.500 palabras de texto (incluidas referencias).	
En caso de investigación, el manuscrito responde a la estructura exigida en las normas (IMRDC).	
Si se trata de un informe, estudio o revisión, el manuscrito respeta la estructura mínima exigida en las normas.	
En los trabajos de revisión se incluyen tres citas de tres números anteriores de la Revista Sophia.	
El manuscrito explicita y cita correctamente las fuentes y materiales empleados.	
La metodología descrita, para los trabajos de investigación, es clara y concisa, permitiendo su replicación, en caso necesario, por otros expertos.	
Las conclusiones responden al objetivo y al problema planteados, se apoyan en los resultados obtenidos y se presentan en forma de síntesis.	
Si se han utilizado análisis estadísticos, éstos han sido revisados/contrastados por algún experto.	
Las citas en el texto se ajustan estrictamente a la normativa APA 6, reflejadas en las instrucciones.	
En caso de uso de notas finales, se ha comprobado que éstas son descriptivas y no pueden integrarse en el sistema de citación general. No se aceptan notas a pie de página.	
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Se han incluido los DOI en todas las Referencias que lo lleven con el siguiente formato: doi: https://doi.org/XXXXXX	

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Todas las direcciones web de las referencias han sido acortadas con Google Url Shortner	
Si se incluyen figuras y tablas éstas deben aportar información adicional y no repetida en el texto. Su calidad gráfica se ha verificado.	
El número de tablas y/o figuras no sobrepasa las 6.	
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Se ha utilizado letra Arial, tamaño 12.	
Se ha usado un interlineado sencillo (1) y sin tabulaciones.	
Se han numerado los epígrafes en arábigo de forma adecuada y jerárquicamente.	
Se han suprimido los dobles espacios.	
Se han empleado las comillas tipográficas « » (con alt+174 y alt+175 para apertura y cierre).	
Se ha utilizado el diccionario de Word para corrección ortográfica superficial.	
Se ha supervisado el trabajo por personal externo para garantizar la gramática y el estilo.	
PRESENTACIÓN	
Se adjunta carta de presentación indicando originalidad, novedad del trabajo y sección de la revista a la que se dirige, así como, en su caso, consentimiento informado de experimentación.	
La carta de presentación incluye un anexo firmado por todos los autor/es, responsabilizándose de la autoría y cediendo los derechos de autor al editor.	
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Los documentos complementarios y anexos han sido publicados con Figshare.	

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Cover Letter

Section (Mark)
Monographic Dossier ___
Miscellaneous ___

Title in Spanish: Arial 14 bold and centered.
Maximum 85 characters with spaces
Title in English: Arial 14 cursive. Maximum 805characters with spaces

Name author 1 (standardized)
Professional category, Institution, Country
Institutional email
ORCID

Name author 2 (standardized)
Professional category, Institution, Country
Institutional email
ORCID

Name author 3 (standardized)
Professional category, Institution, Country
Institutional email
ORCID

Abstract (Spanish)

Minimum 210 and maximum 220 words. It must include 1) Justification of the topic; 2) Objectives; 3) Methodology; 4) Main results; 5) Main conclusions. It must be impersonally written "The present paper analyzes..."

Abstract (English)

Minimum 200 and maximum 210 words. It must include 1) Justification of the topic; 2) Objectives; 3) Methodology; 4) Main results; 5) Main conclusions. It must be impersonally written "The present paper analyzes..." Do not use automatic translation systems.

Keywords (Spanish)

6 standardized terms preferably of a single word and of the UNESCO Thesaurus separated by commas (,).

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Keywords

The 6 terms referred to in English separated by commas (,). Do not use automatic translation systems.

Financial Support of Research (optional)

Entity:
Country:
City:
Subsidized project:
Code of the project:

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Cover Letter

Sección (Marcar)
Dossier Monográfico ___
Miscelánea ___

Título en español: Arial 14 negrita y centrado.
Máximo 85 caracteres con espacios
Title in English: Arial 14 cursiva. Máximo 85 caracteres con espacios

Nombre autor 1 (estandarizado)
Categoría profesional, Institución, País
Correo electrónico institucional
ORCID

Nombre autor 2 (estandarizado)
Categoría profesional, Institución, País
Correo electrónico institucional
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Nombre autor 3 (estandarizado)
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Resumen

Mínimo 210 y máximo 220 palabras. Debe incluir 1) Justificación del tema; 2) Objetivos; 3) Metodología; 4) Principales resultados; 5) Principales conclusiones. Ha de estar escrito de manera impersonal "El presente trabajo analiza..."

Abstract

Mínimo 200 y máximo 210 palabras cursiva. Debe incluir 1) Justificación del tema; 2) Objetivos; 3) Metodología; 4) Principales resultados; 5) Principales conclusiones. Ha de estar escrito de manera impersonal "El presente trabajo analiza..." No utilizar sistemas de traducción automáticos.

Descriptores

6 términos estandarizados preferiblemente de una sola palabra y del Thesaurus de la UNESCO separados por coma (,).

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Keywords

Los 6 términos referidos en inglés separados por coma (,). No utilizar sistemas de traducción automáticos.

Apoyos y soporte financiero de la investigación (opcional)

Entidad:
País:
Ciudad:
Proyecto subvencionado:
Código de proyecto:

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PRESENTATION
Cover Letter

Mr. Editor of «Sophia»

Having read the regulations of the journal «Sophia» and analyzed its coverage, thematic area and approach, I consider that this journal is the ideal one for the dissemination of the work that I hereby attach, for which I beg you to be submitted for consideration for publication. The original has the following title "_____", whose authorship corresponds to _____.

The authors (s) certify that this work has not been published, nor is it under consideration for publication in any other journal or editorial work.

The author (s) are responsible for their content and have contributed to the conception, design and completion of the work, analysis and interpretation of data, and to have participated in the writing of the text and its revisions, as well as in the approval of the version which is finally referred to as an attachment.

Changes to the content are accepted if they occur after the review process, and also changes in the style of the manuscript by the editorial process of «Sophia».

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It is also declared that they have respected the ethical principles of research and are free from any conflict of interest.

In ____(city), by the____ days of the month of _____ of 201_

Signed. (By the author or in the case, all the authors)

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PRESENTACIÓN
Cover Letter

Sr. Editor de «Sophia»

Leída la normativa de la revista «Sophia» y analizada su cobertura, área temática y enfoque, considero que esta revista es la idónea para la difusión del trabajo que le adjunto, por lo que le ruego sea sometida a la consideración para su publicación. El original lleva por título "_____", cuya autoría corresponde a _____.

El/los autor/es certifican que este trabajo no ha sido publicado, ni está en vías de consideración para su publicación en ninguna otra revista u obra editorial.

El/los autor/es se responsabilizan de su contenido y de haber contribuido a la concepción, diseño y realización del trabajo, análisis e interpretación de datos, y de haber participado en la redacción del texto y sus revisiones, así como en la aprobación de la versión que finalmente se remite en adjunto.

Se aceptan la introducción de cambios en el contenido si hubiere lugar tras la revisión, y de cambios en el estilo del manuscrito por parte de la redacción de «Sophia».

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Announcements 2021-2025 / *Convocatorias 2021-2025*

Announcements 2021-2025

Sophia 33
Philosophy of the mind and education

Descriptors: Effects and causes of mental states; The nature of mental states and their importance in education; Monistic responses to the mind-body problem; Theories about the philosophy of mind; The philosophy of mind at the present; Philosophy of mind and its relationship with other sciences; Foundation of mental activity and behavior; Relationship of the philosophy of mind with psychology; Philosophy of mind and education; The power of the mind in education; Pedagogical strategies for the development of the mind; Concept of disability or mental dysfunction: implications and proposals in education.

Generation of articles from representatives of philosophy prominent in the central theme and its implications in psychology, pedagogy or other disciplines.

Deadline for receipt of manuscripts: December 15, 2021

Publication date of this issue: July 15, 2022

Sophia 34
Philosophy, anthropology and education

Descriptors: Philosophical foundations of ethnography; Philosophical basis of cultural theories; Contributions of cultural and social anthropology to education; Philosophical foundation of dialogue between cultures; Interculturality, multiculturalism and education; The task of philosophy in intercultural dialogue; The thought of diversity and its educational importance; Global citizenship, cosmopolitanism and education; Ecosophy, culture and transdisciplinarity.

Generation of articles from representatives of philosophy prominent in the central theme and its implications in psychology, pedagogy or other disciplines.

Deadline for receipt of manuscripts: July 15, 2022

Publication date of this issue: January 15, 2023

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Sophia 35
Philosophical currents and their impact on pedagogical orientations

Descriptors: Philosophy as the fundamental basis of pedagogical orientations. Idealism as the basis for the generation of pedagogical orientations; Rationalism as the foundation of pedagogical orientations; Empiricism as the basis of educational realism; Illustration as support of educational enlightenment; Other philosophical currents as the basis of theories or pedagogical orientations throughout history; Philosophical foundations of the new pedagogies; Philosophy of technology in the educational field; Philosophical basis of constructivism and other pedagogical theories; Ethical thinking and pedagogy; Philosophical critique of current educational models; Philosophy of dialogue and education; Hermeneutics and their contributions to the current pedagogy.

Generation of articles from representatives of philosophy prominent in the central theme and its implications in psychology, pedagogy or other disciplines.

Deadline for receipt of manuscripts: December 15, 2022

Publication date of this issue: July 15, 2023

Sophia 36
Philosophical approach to learning as a cognitive process

Descriptors: Philosophical basis of learning; Learning as a cognitive process; Learning as a product and as a process of knowledge; Philosophical foundation of learning theories; Psychological and pedagogical foundations of learning; Philosophical foundations of multiple intelligences and education; Emotional intelligence and its impact on educational processes; Science and philosophy of human emotions: educational repercussions; Sense and meaning of cognitive processes; Memory, thought and language as the main cognitive processes of the human being; Cognitive processes and meaningful learning.

Generation of articles from representatives of philosophy prominent in the central theme and its implications in psychology, pedagogy or other disciplines.

Deadline for receipt of manuscripts: July 15, 2023

Publication date of this issue: January 15, 2024

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Sophia 37
Physics, metaphysics and education

Descriptors: Philosophical reflections on the interpretation of physics; Metaphysics in the twenty-first century; History of physics and its educational approach; Relations between conceptions of physics in the history of philosophy; Problem of sense and truth in the philosophy of physics; Nature and implications of thermodynamics; Epistemology and guiding principles of current physical theories; Philosophical foundations of quantum mechanics; Philosophical implications of quantum theory; Philosophical implications of Newtonian physics; Philosophical implications of the theory of relativity; Pedagogical strategies in the teaching-learning of physics; Educational proposals to boost the understanding of physics; Philosophical implications of current theoretical physics.

Generation of articles from representatives of philosophy prominent in the central theme and its implications in psychology, pedagogy or other disciplines.

Deadline for receipt of manuscripts: December 15, 2023

Publication date of this issue: July 15, 2024

Sophia 38
The inductive method in the humanities and pedagogy

Descriptors: Scientific activity and reflection on the method of knowledge; The inductive method in the social sciences; Induction, experience and action as the foundation of pedagogy; The methods of knowledge and learning in the humanities; Value and limits of the experimental method in the human sciences; Value and limits of pedagogical positivism; Reflections on the scientific method and implications in the learning processes; Applications of the inductive method in education; Usefulness of the inductive method for psychology; Pedagogical proposals of an inductive character in the human sciences.

Generation of articles from representatives of philosophy prominent in the central theme and its implications in psychology, pedagogy or other disciplines.

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Convocatorias 2021-2025

Sophia 33
Filosofía de la mente y educación

Descriptores: Efectos y causas de los estados mentales; la naturaleza de los estados mentales y su importancia en educación; respuestas monistas al problema mente-cuerpo; teorías sobre la filosofía de la mente; la filosofía de la mente en la actualidad; filosofía de la mente y la relación con otras ciencias; fundamento de la actividad mental y de la conducta; relación filosofía de la mente con la psicología; filosofía de la mente y educación; el poder de la mente en la educación; estrategias pedagógicas para el desarrollo de la mente; concepto de discapacidad o disfunción mental: implicaciones y propuestas en educación.

Generación de artículos desde representantes de la filosofía destacados en el tema central y sus implicaciones en la psicología, en la pedagogía o en otras disciplinas.

Fecha límite para la recepción de manuscritos: 15 de diciembre de 2021
Fecha de publicación de esta edición: 15 de julio de 2022

Sophia 34
Filosofía, antropología y educación

Descriptores: Fundamentos filosóficos de la etnografía; bases filosóficas de las teorías culturales; aportaciones de la antropología cultural y social a la educación; fundamentación filosófica del diálogo entre culturas; interculturalidad, multiculturalidad y educación; el quehacer de la filosofía en el diálogo intercultural; el pensamiento de la diversidad y su importancia educativa; ciudadanía global, cosmopolitismo y educación; ecosofía, cultura y transdisciplinariedad.

Generación de artículos desde representantes de la filosofía destacados en el tema central y sus implicaciones en la psicología, en la pedagogía o en otras disciplinas.

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Sophia 35
Corrientes filosóficas y su incidencia en las orientaciones pedagógicas

Descriptores: La filosofía como base fundamental de las orientaciones pedagógicas. El idealismo como base para la generación de orientaciones pedagógicas; el racionalismo como fundamento de orientaciones pedagógicas; el empirismo como sustento del realismo educativo; la ilustración como apoyo del iluminismo educativo; otras corrientes filosóficas como base de teorías u orientaciones pedagógicas a través de la historia; fundamentos filosóficos de las nuevas pedagogías; filosofía de la tecnología en el ámbito educativo; bases filosóficas del constructivismo y de otras teorías pedagógicas; pensamiento ético y pedagogía; crítica filosófica a los modelos educativos actuales; filosofía del diálogo y educación; la hermenéutica y sus aportaciones a la pedagogía actual.

Generación de artículos desde representantes de la filosofía destacados en el tema central y sus implicaciones en la psicología, en la pedagogía o en otras disciplinas.

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Sophia 36
Enfoque filosófico del aprendizaje como proceso cognitivo

Descriptores: Bases filosóficas del aprendizaje; el aprendizaje como proceso cognitivo; el aprendizaje como producto y como proceso del conocimiento; fundamento filosófico de las teorías del aprendizaje; fundamentos psicológicos y pedagógicos del aprendizaje; fundamentos filosóficos de las inteligencias múltiples y educación; la inteligencia emocional y su incidencia en los procesos educativos; ciencia y filosofía de las emociones humanas: repercusiones educativas; sentido y significado de los procesos cognitivos; memoria, pensamiento y lenguaje como principales procesos cognitivos del ser humano; procesos cognitivos y aprendizajes significativos.

Generación de artículos desde representantes de la filosofía destacados en el tema central y sus implicaciones en la psicología, en la pedagogía o en otras disciplinas.

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Sophia 37
Física, metafísica y educación

Descriptores: Reflexiones filosóficas acerca de la interpretación de la física; la metafísica en el siglo XXI; historia de la física y su planteamiento educativo; relaciones entre concepciones de la física en la historia de la filosofía; problema del sentido y de la verdad en la filosofía de la física; naturaleza e implicaciones de la termodinámica; epistemología y principios rectores de las teorías físicas actuales; fundamentos filosóficos de la mecánica cuántica; implicaciones filosóficas de la teoría cuántica; implicaciones filosóficas de la física newtoniana; implicaciones filosóficas de la teoría de la relatividad; estrategias pedagógicas en la enseñanza-aprendizaje de la física; propuestas educativas para dinamizar la comprensión de la física; implicaciones filosóficas de la física teórica actual.

Generación de artículos desde representantes de la filosofía destacados en el tema central y sus implicaciones en la psicología, en la pedagogía o en otras disciplinas.

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Sophia 38
El método inductivo en las humanidades y en la pedagogía

Descriptores: La actividad científica y reflexión sobre el método de conocimiento; el método inductivo en las ciencias sociales; inducción, experiencia y acción como fundamento de la pedagogía; los métodos de conocimiento y aprendizaje en las humanidades; valor y límites del método experimental en las ciencias humanas; valor y límites del positivismo pedagógico; reflexiones sobre el método científico e implicaciones en los procesos de aprendizaje; aplicaciones del método inductivo en la educación; utilidad del método inductivo para la psicología; propuestas pedagógicas de carácter inductivo en las ciencias humanas.

Generación de artículos desde representantes de la filosofía destacados en el tema central y sus implicaciones en la psicología, en la pedagogía o en otras disciplinas.

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