

# PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO PAIDOCENTRIC PEDAGOGY

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## Aproximación filosófica a la pedagogía paidocéntrica

ANTONIO GUTIÉRREZ-POZO\*

Universidad de Sevilla, Sevilla, Spain.

agpozo@us.es

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4143-1854>

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### Abstract

The human being is never fully made and finished. In this task of self-realization, the role of education is fundamental. The pedagogy that has traditionally dominated has been based on the teacher and on the contents that the teacher has to transmit to the students. The pedagogical act does not consist merely in teaching content. The educational core is located in the experience of learning. We do not learn because the teacher offers us the contents. We only really learn them when we discover them. A good pedagogy has to try to make the student feel the need for knowledge so that he/she seeks it and discovers it. The teacher must first and foremost teach the desire to learn. Against this education of magistrocentrism and logocentrism, paidocentric education is based on the student's learning because it considers that education is to educate oneself. But teacher remains essential. His function is to make the student learn by himself. What he has to teach is 'to let learn'. To know does not consist in having knowledge, but in being aware of one's own ignorance and, consequently, in being open to learning. To know is to be able to ask questions, because only those who can ask questions, those who want to know, can learn. He has to teach how to ask questions because one only learns by asking questions. The teacher teaches when he himself learns by teaching.

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### Keywords

Education, magistrocentrism, logocentrism, paidocentrism, to teach, to learn.

**Suggested citation:** Gutiérrez-Pozo, Antonio (2023). Philosophical approach to paidocentric pedagogy. *Sophia*, colección de Filosofía de la Educación, 34, pp. 153-172.

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\* Bachelor and Doctor of Philosophy (University of Seville). Professor of Philosophy in High School. Professor of the Area of Aesthetics and Theory of the Arts. He has been a university lecturer since 1998 until today. He has published more than 80 scientific articles in more than 40 different international journals. Thirty-two of these articles are contained in *the Arts and Humanities Citation Index*.

### Resumen

El ser humano nunca está totalmente hecho y acabado. En esta tarea de realización, es fundamental el papel de la educación. La pedagogía que tradicionalmente ha dominado se ha basado en el maestro y en los contenidos que éste tiene que transmitir a los alumnos. El acto pedagógico no consiste meramente en enseñar unos contenidos. El núcleo educativo está localizado en la experiencia del aprender. No aprendemos porque el maestro nos ofrezca los contenidos. Solo los aprendemos de verdad cuando los descubrimos. Una buena pedagogía tiene que intentar hacer sentir la necesidad del saber para que el alumno lo busque y lo descubra. El maestro debe enseñar ante todo el propio afán de aprender. Contra esta educación del magistocentrismo y logocentrismo, la educación paidocéntrica se funda sobre el aprender del alumno porque considera que la educación es educarse: el maestro sigue siendo esencial. Su función es conseguir que el alumno aprenda por sí mismo. Lo que tiene que enseñar es el 'dejar aprender'. Saber no consiste en disponer de conocimientos, sino en tener conciencia de la propia ignorancia; y, en consecuencia, estar abierto al aprendizaje. Saber es poder preguntar, pues solo puede aprender quien puede hacer preguntas, quien quiere saber, tiene que enseñar a preguntar, porque solo se aprende preguntando: el maestro enseña cuando él mismo aprende enseñando.

### Palabras clave

Educación, magistocentrismo, logocentrismo, paidocentrismo, enseñar, aprender.

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## Introduction

In the words of Montaigne (1580), who warns that “nothing offers so much difficulty and importance in human science as that which deals with the education and upbringing of children” (p. 104), this article aims to make a philosophical analyzes into the student-centered educational model, inspired in the socratic view, with the intention of clarifying the concepts of teaching and learning. The problem stated in this article is to move away from the dominant traditional pedagogical theories, based on the teacher and the contents. The idea to be defended is the philosophical renewal of pedagogy centered on the learner, i.e., a paidocentric pedagogy. The importance of the subject is the same that makes it current: it is urgent to free ourselves from rote pedagogies, enslaved by the contents and that forget the essential fact of the student’s learning. The methodology we have used to approach these issues of philosophical pedagogy is hermeneutic, i.e., a method that is aware of the impossibility of completely freeing oneself from prejudices and starting from scratch, and thus tries to understand and present the problems in the clearest and simplest way.

The main idea is structured throughout the work in the following sections. First, we start from the idea of the human being as a being that is self-realized through education, an education that must be student-centered to fulfill its objective. Secondly, this pedagogy means that the student ultimately educates himself, that education is nothing more than educating oneself. Therefore, thirdly, it is considered that studying sub-

jects that were not looked by the student is educationally false. Fourthly, we state that student-centered approach supposes a pedagogy as a test, since it is the student who tests himself in the authentic act of education. Fifthly, we deduce that in this pedagogy the question is fundamental: the student learns by asking, by searching. Finally, in sixth place, we will refer to the role of the teacher in this pedagogy, which is still essential, but which must change its attitude and recognize that it only really teaches if, at the same time, it learns.

The first thing to do is to show the intimate connection between philosophy and pedagogy, already present in the very origin of philosophical thought, especially in the figure of Socrates. There is no doubt that pedagogy has a philosophical foundation, but we must avoid the paternalistic attitude of philosophy towards pedagogy. This attitude can lead philosophy to make the mistake of pretending to direct pedagogy from its concepts. Clarifying in conceptual terms a philosophical problem does not imply that this problem has already achieved a pedagogical solution. Conceptual precision is one thing, and then its implementation in the educational field is another.

We can and must make all the conceptual, philosophical clarification nature in this paper and once they have been made, it is necessary to carry out the second pedagogical reflection, which will consist in putting those clarifications into educational practice. This implies avoiding philosophical intellectualism, which have the risk of believing that a purely theoretical pedagogy is already a complete and finished pedagogy. Dewey (1916) says “Education is the laboratory in which philosophical distinctions are concretized and tested” (p. 276). Basically, the problem we are dealing with here is that of the relationship between theory and praxis. This work intends to limit itself to the theory; and specifically, as we have noted, to the philosophical analysis of teaching and learning in a Socratic or student-centered way. We know that this analysis is not sufficient to cultivate a pedagogy but let us not forget that it is - as an inexcusable first step - absolutely necessary.

## A student-centered pedagogy

As previously stated, the main objective of this paper is to present a renewal of education, which has traditionally been based on the teacher and the contents he explained. Now, the idea is to center it on the student to legitimize the idea that education is ultimately and essentially an edu-

cating oneself, where the student is the basis and the teacher must readapt his role, since he is no longer the center, but must become an -essential- assistant to the student. Around this main issue, this article unfolds a whole series of consequences with pedagogical meaning. Each of the following points develops this main objective while at the same time articulates these fundamental consequences from an educational perspective.

### *a. Animal educandum*

The human being is never done and finished: he is obliged to make himself and is always making himself. It is this ontological openness of pedagogy to carry out its constituent function of the human being. Rousseau (1762) said “living is the trade I want to teach” to the human being (p. 45). Moreover, because they have a given nature, and pre-determined instincts: animals are already all they have to be; whereas the human being - without any previous plan - must construct himself; that is why Kant (1765, p. 29) says “he is the only creature that has to be educated”. As an unfinished, undetermined being, always to be made, Fullat (2000) argues “the human being is inexorably educating (...) animal *educandum*” (p. 75). Education is so constitutive of the human being that it is his very being. Paraphrasing the well-known apothegm of Ortega and Gasset (1935), it could be said that the human being does not have nature, but has ... education (p. 41). Animals do not need to be educated, human beings do: “We may or may not educate the dolphin; we must always be educating man” (Fullat, p. 75). Not only to do this or that, but mainly for self-fulfillment: “only through education can man become a man. He is but what education makes him to be” (Kant, 1765, p. 31). There is no such thing as the essence of ‘humanity’ as something previously given. The human being will be what he makes of himself through education. Pedagogy, therefore, far from being a simple addition to humanity, possesses ontological transcendence; this also implies that education is necessarily a collective, social phenomenon. Basically, there is only social pedagogy. This is how the Greeks understood politics - as social education, not as mere administration - so that, according to Aristotle (1988), the ruler “must concern himself above all with the education of the young” (p. 455), because “where this does not occur, it damages the regimes”. There is no authentic human, social and political development without education, which Dewey (1897) says, is “the fundamental method for progress and social reform” (p. 53). But education is only relevant to society - and concrete individuals - when we truly believe in it, when we truly belie-



ve that it is necessary. This is why Unamuno (1899) considered that the *conditio sine que non* of a valuable pedagogy is “to create faith, true faith in teaching” (p. 9), faith that only comes about when we put it into practice, when we teach based on it. This means that, ultimately, the highest teaching that can be taught consists - according to Unamuno (1899) - in “teaching its own necessity” (p. 9). The worst thing a teacher can do then is to restrain the desire to learn. The teacher, according to Montaigne (1580), must first teach the desire to learn: “Nothing is better than to awaken affection for studying” (p. 130), but achieving this is not easy: there is no method that mechanically turns us into good teachers who stimulate learning. Education is an art, not a science, as Kant (1765, p. 35) and Dewey (1929, p. 8) have repeated. It is an art that is learned by practicing it. It is taught by teaching.

We intend to approach the pedagogical problem philosophically: education is not just any object for philosophy. It is not a question of analyzing it philosophically because - that is what philosophy does with all the realities that constitute our vital world - from history, language or science to gastronomy, animals or soccer. According to Dewey (1916) there is an “intimate connection between philosophy and education” (p. 275), since the latter “offers a vantage point from which to penetrate the human significance of philosophical discussions” (p. 275). The educational perspective allows us to deal philosophical issues from a practical point of view. Pedagogically driven, philosophy ceases to be mere theory and becomes practical rationality, the education of the human being. However, the significant function, which education has in philosophy, can only be because philosophy itself has an educative sense. Philosophy itself educates and models more human lives; hence Socrates, a model philosopher according to Tubbs (2005): “does not establish any distinction between philosophy and education” (p. XIV). But not only education is important for philosophy, philosophy is also a fundamental knowledge in education, insofar as it forms the intellect, consolidates the faculty of reasoning or judgment and teaches how to live.

This is why Montaigne (1580) considers it a mistake to characterize philosophy as “inaccessible to children and endowed with a face that is unkind, torpid and horrible”, because this denies young people the possibility of living serenely and rationally, “since it is philosophy that instructs us in life” (pp. 115-17). Philosophy teaches how to conduct oneself in life and therefore cannot be left until life has passed. Before moving on, let us clarify that we are aware that “education is something more than teaching, since it alludes to broader formative processes” that refer to personality,

values, citizenship and respect for others, etc., processes that - according to Gimeno Sacristán (2012) “go beyond what we can do through teaching, understood as the transmission of content to be learned as knowledge” (p. 139). However, having made this clarification, this paper uses education and teaching indistinctly, because the main purpose of this paper is to positively evaluate a student-centered pedagogical method nature for the acquisition of knowledge to the detriment of others, based on the teacher and the contents. It is limited to a theoretical level in which educating and teaching are perfectly compatible verbs. What interests us in this work is to philosophically deepen the fact of teaching and learning.

### *b. Student-centered education*

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The pedagogical phenomenon involves three members: the subject who teaches: the teacher; the one who learns: the student; and the thing to be taught and learned: the content. García and Gavari (2021) mention that the pedagogy that has traditionally dominated has been based on the teacher and the contents (*logoi*) that the teacher has to transmit to the students. It has been a magistocentric and logocentric pedagogy. In this scheme, the student, relegated to a simple addressee of the emission of contents by the teacher, is displaced out of the main center of the educational experience. If magistocentrism bases education on the teacher, logocentrism bases it on the logos or contents that the student must learn and that the teacher is obliged to transmit. Lacking positive activity, the student only receives, is reduced to passivity. This pedagogy clearly marked where power is. According to Spring (1987), “the traditional school was a perfect example of open authority: the teacher confronted the students directly with his own power; and the students were always aware of where the power came from” (p. 31). In this situation, of course, it was easier to rebel since one knew the locus of power against which one had to act.

In our world, the center of power is more difficult to identify and, therefore, more difficult to rebel in a meaningful way. Faced with this traditional understanding, the modern pedagogical position is based on Rousseau who, in a Socratic view, tries to base education on the pupil and his activity. What has been done then, Ortega says (1930), is “to transfer the foundation of pedagogical science from the teacher and knowledge to the disciple” (p. 327), to establish that only the unique characteristics of the student should serve as the basis and orientation of teaching. This Socratic and Rousseauian scheme represents a true radical turn towards

student-centered: the center of the pedagogical experience is now placed on the pupil.

With Russell (1926), we defend that “the spontaneous desire to learn of every normal child should be the educational guiding force” (p. 31). Rather than taking the learner from the outside, educating is now taking from the inside (of the learner) to the outside. If traditional education was carried out ‘from the outside’, from the teacher and the contents he projected on the student, Socratic education is verified ‘from the inside’, from the disciple, the new pedagogical axis. The authentic educational phenomenon can only be rooted in the pupil and not imposed on him from outside. When one teaches ‘from the outside’, one does not really teach - nor learn - one only transmits content.

While pedagogy was based on the contents and the teacher, in education the verb ‘to teach’ prevailed, but with the appreciation of the student, the new educational verb is ‘to learn’. Does ‘teaching’ make sense without ‘learning’? It also makes no sense to consider content without taking learning into account. The main effect of this educational shift initiated by Socrates is that knowledge cannot simply be taught; far from it, the contents must be learned. The shift from teaching to learning implies the emergence of a pedagogy centered on experience and, as Sáenz Obregón (2012) points out, “the teacher has no right to deprive the student of the understanding he has gained through his own experience” (p. 170). The pedagogical act does not consist merely in teaching content, in transmitting knowledge. Now the educational nucleus is located in the experience of learning. Student-centered is an empirical pedagogy. Schopenhauer (1851) distinguishes a *natural education*, in which concepts are extracted from experiences, and an *artificial education*, purely theoretical, with *a priori* concepts that are then applied to the educational experience (§ 372, p. 639). In artificial education, centered on the teacher and the *logoi*, Schopenhauer (1851) adds, “the educators, instead of developing in the boy the very capacity to know, to judge and to think, endeavor only to fill his head with extraneous and finished thoughts” (§ 372, p. 640). It is evident that in a balanced pedagogy the theoretical elements must be based on and emerge from the intuitions and experiences of the pupil.

### *c. Education is to educate oneself*

The essential thing in pedagogy is not to construct a theory to know what education consists of, but to learn effectively and to teach adequately. No theory will make us good teachers or good learners. Only the practice of

both activities will transform us into good teachers and learners. Specifically, and given that we have located the essence of pedagogy in learning, we will only learn by learning. Teacher-centered so relegated learning to teaching that it was convinced that the student learned simply when the teacher taught him and because he taught him. Student-centered, on the other hand, considers that the student only learns by learning; that is, by learning himself, by doing the task of learning himself, the task of discovering the contents; he does not learn because he passively receives the knowledge transmitted by the teacher.

This pedagogical empiricism is expressed in Dewey's well-known learning by doing (1916, pp. 74, 161). One does not learn because the teacher offers the contents. They learn when they are discovered, when one appropriates them by learning them oneself. This is what Kant (1781-87) suggested when he argued that philosophy - except from a historical perspective - cannot be learned, since one can really "at most learn to philosophize" (p. 650). Besides affirming that philosophy is not a theory already given for learning, Kant implies that the essence of learning is in praxis. Knowing the history of philosophical ideas is no small thing, but what is fundamental is to think and to learn how to do it. Moreover, only by learning to think will we be able to truly learn the historical/philosophical concepts. Therefore, more than the teacher teaches, the student learns. For this reason, and in accordance with the fact that the learner is the basis of pedagogical reality, Gadamer (2000) has emphasized that "education is educating oneself, that training is training oneself", i.e., that "we educate ourselves, that one educates oneself and that the so-called educator participates only with a modest contribution" (pp. 11, 15). For this reason, Lessing (1780) could write that "education does not give the human being anything that he cannot attain by himself; it gives him what he could attain by himself, only he has it more easily and more quickly" (p. 574). Education does not impose from outside some contents that the student cannot learn from within by discovering them. If the student does not actively intervene, the teacher cannot teach.

From this student-centered turn we should not deduce the lesser-price of the teacher or of the contents. The teacher has to continue with his work of teaching content. However, since the student is the new pedagogical center, the teacher must teach with a different method, based on the student and his learning. He is as responsible for the educational process as before -or even more so- but he has changed his way of being it: he is no longer the one who teaches content, the one who transmits truths -now he is the one who helps the student to learn by himself- he must





teach not so much content as that the student learns the content himself. The fact that the student learns and educates himself does not mean that he does not need a teacher to facilitate the discovery of knowledge. Educating oneself is a student's own activity. The teacher's task is to promote and lead this new way of understanding learning, which is discovery. To really teach a truth, the teacher must first avoid teaching it and help the student discovering it by himself, the only way for him to truly learn it. According to Ortega (1914), "whoever wants to teach us a truth should not tell it to us: he should simply allude to it" (p. 335), so that "we may reach the new truth", so that, he concludes, "whoever wants to teach us a truth, should situate it so that we may discover it for ourselves" (p. 336). Only when the teacher helps the student to discover the truth, situating and alluding to it, only then does he teach -this happens because only then it is learned- something is really learned when it is discovered. The teacher teaches by helping to discover through allusions. Hence this pedagogy of discovery was called by Ortega the *pedagogy of allusion*. In this pedagogy, knowledge is not simply given to the student, but is shown, alluded to. The teacher begins discovering it, initiates his thought, so that the student culminates this movement. Truths are not said, they are alluded to. Only in this way are they taught (learned). By allusions -this is how the Socrates teacher teaches- being a (Socratic) teacher in the student-centered paradigm is more difficult than being one in the teacher-centered paradigm.

#### *d. Studying is fake*

As opposed to intellectualism, this student-centered pedagogy is philosophically based on a vitalist understanding of truth and knowledge. Idealist intellectualism conceives knowledge as an autonomous reality that comes from pure consciousness and feeds on itself. Vitalism considers, on the contrary, that the purely abstract ideas produced by this pure intellect are worthless, since only ideas that arise in response to vital needs are valuable. Only the concepts that arise from the problems of life and to meet the needs of life are valuable. Intellectual curiosity did not arise from pure intellect but rather, according to Unamuno (1912) from "the need to know in order to live" (p. 42). Life is the foundation of knowing. Thinking, then, cannot be understood as a simple intellectual activity. Thinking is basically a vital exercise. Hence, only thoughts that have arisen from vital experiences are valuable. This vitalist foundation of knowledge undoubtedly affects education. Now we can understand the

absurdity of the activity of learning something that the teacher teaches the student as a transmission from intellect to intellect, since this learning activity lacks the dimension of vitality that gives it meaning. It can only be learned when it is lived, I.e., when it is discovered by the student. Contrary to the intellectualism that beats behind teacher-centered, there is no doubt that the intellect is never on the margin of life. To discover that knowledge it is necessary to search for it. One seeks only what one needs, what one's life demands.

This vitalist rejection of intellectualism is what Ortega (1933) states when he writes: "to study would be a falsehood" (p. 545). The ideas -in principle true- that constitute a scientific system were found by some individuals, "but if they found them it is because they looked for them, and if they looked for them it is because they had needed them" (p. 546), so we can say that "we have found the ideas that constitute a scientific system" (p. 546). 546), so that we can say that "we have found a truth when we have found a certain thought that satisfies a previously felt intellectual need", and from here we deduce that, as Ortega says (1933), "truth does not properly exist except for those who have needed it; science is not such a science except for those who eagerly seek it" (p. 546). Therefore, he can maintain that studying is something vitally false, because the creator did not find the truth already given, but discovered it because he vitally needed it, while the student has to study a science that he has found already given and that he vitally did not need. The creator of science feels that he lacks that science, so he seeks it and discovers it and creates it. Hence -the truth discovered- is authentically a truth for him. For the student, that same truth preached and studied is really nothing but a series of ideas, and he may believe that he understands them in a purely intellectual way, but Ortega concludes (1933), "to truly understand something it is not necessary to have that called talent, nor to have great previous knowledge: what is necessary is to need it" (p. 546). And this is precisely what the student lacks. Therefore, from the vitalist foundation of knowledge, studying is a falsehood. Objectively what the student studies may be true, but vitally and/or subjectively it will be false because it is a truth that he has not needed. The student studies science, but does not create it, because science is to create, to investigate, to discover - so that - following Ortega (1930), "neither learning a science, nor teaching it, nor applying it is science" (p. 336). But not only this: he discovers and creates knowledge who needs it, but only he questions any truth that is presented to him, precisely because he is always driven by the need for truth. He who simply studies accept the truths that others have discovered: he learns them



without questioning them. The seeker, on the other hand, is not satisfied with what is given and criticizes from the outset what he finds. Therefore, the vital need for knowledge is not only the method of discovery, but also that of criticism.

In short, this epistemological vitalism shows that it was certainly mistaken to teach knowledge without further ado. To understand knowledge, it is not enough to study and pretend to need it. According to Ortega (1933), it is necessary that the one who pretends to understand it “authentically feels the need for it, that his questions concern me spontaneously and truly”, and he adds, “no one can understand an answer when he has not felt the question to which it answers” (pp. 553f.). To know, then, it is not enough to be a good student - it is necessary to feel the need to know - it is not a question of doing away with students and study; it is a question of reforming the method of pedagogy. It is normal that people, for the most part, do not experience the need to know, the one that made the creators discover it. What teaching must try to do is that students come, through it, to feel the need that lies at the origin of the discovery of knowledge.

A good pedagogy must try to make students feel the need for knowledge so that they seek it and discover it, since they will only learn if they manage to live -experience- the discovery of knowledge. According to this pedagogical reform, Ortega (1933) maintains, “to teach is not fundamentally to teach the necessity of science, and not to teach the science whose necessity is impossible to make the student feel” (p. 554). The ultimate goal of student-centered pedagogy, its method of learning, is to make the student feel the need to know. Then the student will be the true center of education: he will seek for himself the knowledge he needs. Of course, it does not pretend, nor should it pretend, that the student becomes a scientist, but that he truly understands his science, experiencing the activity of discovery and creation that is at its base. Only then will teaching achieve its goal: that the student learns.

With this idea we do not mean that a truth is true because it is needed. One thing is the vital or subjective value of a truth, which is only assured when it is needed and lived by a subject, and quite another thing is to reduce the objectivity of truth to the vital fact of discovery, something against which we must guard against. Indeed, a good vitalism avoids subordinating the objective value of a truth to its vitality. A balanced vitalism seeks to save the role of the concrete, living subject, but without reducing objectivity to living subjectivity. Truths must be drawn from experiences, but their truth-value - far from being based on those

experiences - attends to pure objectivity. Rather, precisely because these truths are objectively so, we can use them later in life.

Ortega (1923) emphasizes that “if I do not think the truth” I cannot think in a useful way to serve my vital interests, so that “a thought that would normally present us with a world divergent from the true would lead us to constant practical errors” (p. 166). A truth is only vitally or subjectively true for the one who discovers it because he needs it, but it does not become objectively true because he needs it and discovers it. In fact, because he needs it, he needs it to be objectively true. Our vitalism concerns only the fact of the discovery of truth, not its objective dimension, which is alien and independent of vitality.

### *e. Essayistic pedagogy*

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The student-centered pedagogy intends that students live in class the creative experience of knowledge, making them feel the need for it. Thanks to this, students will seek and discover knowledge. In a word, they will create it. In the end, student-centered education is an education of creativity. Now, to be creative is to be critical, because to create implies going beyond what is established. If one does not transcend the given, there is no true creation. Therefore, when we create, we question what already exists and, thus, we exercise criticism - all creation rebels against what is established by the fact of creating - he who creates rebels against what already exists. Ortega (1930) stated that “the only true rebellion is creation” (p. 347 n). But the educational reality is quite different. Current pedagogy, including the so-called ‘humanities’, is dominated by the criterion of utility as the only effective value. The mass media promote knowledge that increases well-being and material progress. Without logically disdaining scientific and technical education, it is considered that humanistic education is increasingly necessary, if only as a counterweight to the growing power of the calculating mentality and productive morality. Against utilitarianism, humanism must watch over the health of the soul to prevent us from becoming mere beings devoid of humanity. Heidegger (1935) referred that the falsification of the spirit “in the form of intelligence declines to the role of a tool at the service of other things” (p. 50). The reduction of the spirit -to instrument- is at the basis of the conversion of education into a mere adaptation that serves the interests of the power system. Utilitarian education thus loses its character of a thinking, critical and creative experience, to become one more element at the service of the established power. Indeed, Pérez-Luna (2003) indicates

that “the pedagogy that submitted itself to the guidelines of instrumental reason attacked freedom” (p. 94), and became “pedagogy without voice, being a reduction project of man and of all emancipatory ideas” (p. 94). Resistance to the calculating will to power, the basis of utilitarianism, is especially relevant in teaching, since the -pedagogue- for Mèlich (2002), instead of being the one who “creates the integration cultural programs (...) in charge of transmitting the scientific contents and the constitutive values of a social system” (p. 51), is above all, “the one who unmasks the forms of social control of discourse production” (p. 52).

The main objective of education must be to teach that the human spirit is not reduced to calculating intelligence, to a mere instrument. To this end, far from adapting to what already exists, education must foster the spirit of creation and discovery. However, even though the pedagogical system raises the banner of reflective and critical thinking as a goal, the reality is that adaptation continues to be the predominant educational value. The education that continues to rule is -unidimensional- i.e., following Marcuse (1964), an education that does not promote the emergence of a second critical dimension that challenges the positive already given and that unfolds “another dimension of reality” (p. 87). Instead, it encourages adaptation, even if it sells the idea of critical and reflective thinking. Against this positivist and adaptationist view, we need an education that is two-dimensional, that teaches us to really think, to dare, to not follow the given, but logically without falling into nonsense and unfounded whimsy. An education of trial and error: it must be an education of risk, because only risk teaches us. It must therefore prepare us to make mistakes and, above all, to recognize the error and to rethink with a will to truth. Because, Gadamer (2000) clarifies, “who has really learned if he has not learned from his own mistakes” (p. 48). Instead of becoming adapted machines, what is proper to human beings is to dare to think, to learn, to make mistakes and to try again. When the teacher alludes to the truth that the student must discover, he invites to do mistakes. The student-centered pedagogy of allusion is a pedagogy of risk and error, a pedagogy of rehearsal. In order to create and discover, it is necessary to rehearse.

#### *f. To learn one needs to ask*

It is a truism that education has to do mainly with learning and teaching, and that it seems logical to affirm that -only those who know can teach- and that in order to know, one must learn. Aristotle (1998) stated that “what distinguishes the wise from the ignorant is the ability to teach” (p.



8). Being able to teach distinguishes the one who knows, so that if someone is not able to teach it is because he really does not know. Aristotle (1981) specifies that all knowledge, “all science seems susceptible of being taught; and everything that is known can also be learned” (p. 204.) This means that all knowledge can be taught and learned. The criterion of the fact of knowing is nothing but the ability to teach. Whoever does not teach does not really know. Now, this perspective assumes the concept of knowledge as the possession of ideas, of contents. From this, we deduce that clarifying the educational question implies first clearing up the problem of the nature of knowledge. There is no educational theory that does not assume a certain understanding of knowledge. The consequence of teaching and learning must in principle be the increase of the student’s knowledge. But nothing can be elucidated in this area if it is not previously clarified what knowledge is. According to Heidegger (1935), “simply to have knowledge is not knowledge at all” (p. 29). One can have a lot of knowledge and not know, because to know is to place oneself before the truth, to remain on it, to unveil it, to discover it - in short - to think it. But this idea of knowing tells us even more. The usual understanding affirms that he who knows no longer has - logically - to learn, since he already knows, and this means that his stage of learning has concluded. But this common logic forgets, in Heidegger’s view (1935), that “to know means to be able to learn”, so that “only he knows who understands that he must constantly relearn” (p. 29). This is the radical meaning of the Socratic *I only know that I know nothing*: that to truly know is to understand that we can always continue to learn. Far from representing the conclusion of learning, true knowing is to be always open to learning, because one never fully knows. Underlying this idea of knowing is an understanding of the finite nature of humanity, which is the cause of learning: only he who is aware that he does not know can really learn. He who thinks he knows does not learn.

According to the current understanding, he who knows does not have to ask because he does not need to learn. On the contrary, he who asks does so because he does not know. But once it is established that knowing does not consist of having knowledge, of theories, but -being aware of one’s own ignorance- consequently, in being open to learning. We can deduce with Heidegger (1935) that to know is “to be able to ask”, since only he who can ask questions, who wants to know, can learn (p. 29). We have established that he who knows, first of all -knows that he does not know- and that he has to learn constantly. Now, learning means asking questions. Only the one who really asks because he is aware of his ignorance, only he, can learn and come to know. Santos Gómez (2008)

confirms that “in order to learn, we must be willing to criticize our own convictions”, and “we must know that we know nothing” (p. 223). From this we conclude that the essence of knowledge is in the question. He who asks, already knows something about what he does not know. What he knows, and this is the main thing, is that he does not know, that is why he asks. Gadamer (1960) considers that there is no true asking without knowing that one does not know: “In order to be able to ask, one must want to know, i.e., to know that one does not know”, for “he who is sure of knowing everything cannot ask” (p. 440). In turn, to really know is to never stop asking. Only one person can really ask, the one who is aware that he does not know. Therefore, we deduce, to ask is a difficult art, since, Gadamer (1960) conceives, “there is no method that teaches to ask, to see what is questionable” (p. 443). If one asks is because one knows that one does not know and, consequently, one wants to know. The art that involves the greatest difficulty is that of knowing how to ask, since in order to be able to access the ‘not knowing that one knows’ and to ask accordingly, one must be simultaneously on both sides of the question: on the side of knowing and on the side of not knowing. For this reason, Gadamer (1960) concludes, “to ask is more difficult than to answer” (p. 440). This conscious not-knowing is what is called ‘thinking’. Gadamer (1960) stresses that the “art of pre-questioning” is the “art of thinking” (p. 444). When one thinks one knows everything about something, one does not really think. Thinking is walking, blazing a trail, into the unknown, constantly wondering about the next step we have to make in the new terrain we have never been. Questioning is therefore not simply something prior to knowing, assuming that the real knowing is in the answering and that questioning as such is something external to knowing itself. Heidegger (1933) confirms that “questioning will no longer be the mere preliminary step towards answering, knowing, but questioning will become the supreme figure of knowing” (p. 12). But the question is the essence of knowing because, Gadamer (1960) specifies, something is truly understood, something is known, only when the question has been found to which what is to be understood is an answer: “We understand something only when we understand the question to which something is an answer” (p. 453). In short, according to Gadamer (1960), to understand an idea or a theory really means to understand it as an answer to the question we have discovered (p. 454). To know, to think then will be to discover the questions. This inquiry provides us with the most appropriate educational method to carry out our student-centered pedagogy: helping the student to discover is equivalent to helping him to find the questions to

which we intend to transmit him the answers. A true pedagogy must be guided by questions rather than by contents and doctrines.

*g. Someone who teaches learns by teaching*

Teaching offers something: it gives. In a Socratic view, Heidegger (1936) maintains that “in teaching one does not offer what is learnable but gives the pupil only the indication to take for himself what he already has”, because “when the pupil adopts only something offered, he does not learn” (p. 62). The learner does not learn when the contents are transmitted and given to him. He has to discover them in order to learn them and really know them. He only learns when he experiences, lives and discovers what is offered to him, i.e., when he gives it to himself. To really learn is not the same as merely studying. One only learns oneself and, as Gadamer would suggest, the teacher participates modestly. Now, this contribution of the teacher in learning will be simple, but fundamental. Inquiring into what this contribution consists of will allow us to specify the teaching in this student-centered pedagogy. As already noted, it is not a teaching that simply gives the pupil what he or she has to learn, but one that initiates the gesture that allows the pupil to follow the movement that leads him to discover for him what he is trying to transmit. If the pupil is given what he has to learn, he does not learn. But so that the student can learn from himself, the only authentic learning, it is necessary to avoid reducing teaching to the simple communication of contents and letting him *learn*. Heidegger (1936) emphasizes that “teaching is nothing other than letting others learn” (p. 62). In fact, Heidegger (1951-52) adds, “the true teacher does not let learn anything other than learning” (p. 20). The goal of teaching can be none other than to let the pupil learn for himself. Far from transmitting knowledge, the purpose of true teaching is to form the mind of the pupil so that he can discover it for himself. Descartes (1628) already assumed this Socratic pedagogy: “to direct the mind in such a way that it forms solid and true judgments of everything that is presented to it, such must be the aim of studies” (p. 95). For this reason, those who continue to maintain that learning is receiving content think that this student-centered teacher does not teach and that, therefore, nothing is learned with him. But they forget that this (true) Socratic and student-centered teaching teaches only one thing, the most important thing: to learn. It teaches only by helping the student to think - and then to learn. If by means of indications the teacher gets the student to learn, then the transmission of knowledge is already secondary, because the student’s





own learning will have been awakened. This student will discover himself, because he knows how to learn. But teaching to learn is a difficult task. The teacher, following the Socratic view, has to practice the indication, the question, until the student is capable of doing it by himself -in short, of thinking- by posing the question alluding to an idea so that the student concludes by discovering it, the teacher teaches the student to learn. Gilson (1960) argues, teachers succeed in “making us think for ourselves, or at least helping us to do so” (p. 38). The student-centered teacher has to be an artist of questioning, because only by knowing how to question does he place the pupil in the position of discovery. Only by asking questions does the teacher teach and only by being well questioned does the student learn. Good teaching then has to do with asking and answering, i.e., with dialoguing, in the words of Freire (1967), with Freire’s “active, dialogical and participatory method” (p. 104). Gadamer (2000) has stated that “one can only learn through conversation” (p. 10).

To truly teach - by letting the other learn - is one of the most difficult activities. The teacher can only truly teach if he learns in the educational action. Teaching to learn, letting to learn, can only be done by those who can learn, because those who believe they already know everything, logically teach by transmitting the knowledge they possess. Teacher-centered education does not allow learning, it does not teach. The Socratic teacher knows that he can only teach if he re-lives the student’s experience - learning - if he himself discovers knowledge instead of simply projecting it outside. He learns by teaching. Only he who can learn can teach. Only if the teacher learns can he teach how to learn, because one can only teach how to learn by putting one’s own learning into practice, by learning. One cannot teach to learn by theorizing about the subject but by exemplifying it, by putting learning itself in front of the student’s eyes. But, as Freire (1970) warns, “reflection, if it is true reflection, leads to practice” (p. 67). The teacher teaches - when he thinks before the student - when he carries out the activity of discovering knowledge by asking himself questions. Nothing teaches like the living example of the learning process itself. Above all, the teacher must avoid transmitting what is to be taught as knowledge already given, mastered and known by him. He must live the act of learning it. Paradoxically, when the teacher learns, he teaches. For the teacher, teaching the student means learning himself. This should be the norm of good pedagogy. This is why Dewey (1916) wrote that “the teacher is an apprentice, and the apprentice is, without knowing it, a teacher” (p. 141). But then, what distinguishes the teacher from the learner? Would not the magisterium thus disappear? Not at all. Not only does it not disappear but, as already mentioned, the

Socratic magisterium is the most demanding because, Heidegger (1951-52) affirms, “teaching is more difficult than learning”, and this because “to teach means to let learn” (p. 20). It is more difficult not because the teacher has more knowledge and more knowledge to be able to teach, but because his knowledge must consist in the fact that he can learn, since, in the words of Heidegger (1936), “only he who can truly learn - and only while he can - is the one who can truly teach” (p. 62). One can only believe that learning is more difficult than teaching when one assumes, in a magistocentric and logocentric view, that the one who teaches knows everything he has to know in order to teach and does not need to learn. However, in this case, the teacher no longer teaches to learn, since he will naturally teach everything he knows. On the contrary, only he who knows that he does not know learns and, for this very reason, can teach what is fundamental, learning itself. Consequently, the student-centered teacher, far from being irrelevant, has, according to Heidegger (1951-52), “the only privilege to learn much more than they do, namely: to let-learn” (p. 20). Hence Heidegger (1936) can assure that “in teaching the one who learns the most is the one who teaches” (p. 62). The difference between the teacher and the pupil is that the teacher is capable of learning more, and this is because he is more aware of his ignorance and, therefore, knows that he cannot fail to learn - like Socrates - the true teacher. The best teacher is the one who is most aware that he does not know. That is why he is a teacher, that is why he can teach.

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## Conclusion

The result of this research has been that a truly balanced education, a Socratic education, is made from the pupil, the true core of pedagogical praxis. This conclusion leads to the transformation of the educational system and especially the role of the teacher. This education proposes to the teacher the most difficult task: to teach while being aware that it is the student’s learning that is substantial. This implies that the teacher should be less concerned with the contents he teaches and more with the fact that the student learns. This is the future line of this study: pedagogical techniques in particular, and the system in general, must pay special attention to this fact and be articulated in such a way as to take care of the student’s learning. This task is solved by the teacher teaching how to learn, not just teaching -transmitting- knowledge. To achieve this, the teacher, like Socrates, must revive discovery and learning. The student, accompanied by the teacher’s questioning, by living the discovering thin-

king, learns. By assisting the student through questions that allow him to discover knowledge, the teacher allows the student to learn, i.e., he really teaches. This is the demanding mission of a student-centered teacher.

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Document reception date: June 20, 2022  
 Document review date: August 25, 2022  
 Document approval date: October 20, 2022  
 Document publication date: January 15, 2023