

**UM LEGADO DE JOHN DEWEY PARA A ADMINISTRAÇÃO ESCOLAR: UMA  
LEITURA DA OBRA VIDA E EDUCAÇÃO**

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**A LEGACY OF JOHN DEWEY FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION: A READING OF  
THE WORK LIFE AND EDUCATION**

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**RESUMO:** Este artigo tem por objetivo discutir contribuições da obra “Vida e educação”, de John Dewey, para a administração escolar. Para isso, analisam-se os fins da escola propostos por Dewey na referida obra, mediante um conceito de administração escolar como mediação para a realização de fins determinados. Verifica-se que Dewey contribui para a administração escolar, na medida em que propõe a democracia como princípio que deve orientar a educação – entendida em seus aspectos administrativos e pedagógicos, de forma indissociada.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Dewey. Democracia. Administração escolar.

**RESUMEN:** Este artículo tiene por objetivo discutir contribuciones de la obra "Vida y educación", de John Dewey, para la administración escolar. Para ello, se analizan los fines de la escuela propuestos por Dewey en la referida obra, mediante un concepto de administración escolar como mediación para la realización de fines determinados. Se observa que Dewey contribuye a la administración escolar, en la medida en que propone la democracia como principio que debe orientar la educación - entendida en sus aspectos administrativos y pedagógicos, de forma indisociada.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Dewey. Democracia. Administración escolar.

**ABSTRACT:** This article aims to discuss contributions of John Dewey's "Life and education" to school administration. For this, the purpose of the school proposed by Dewey in the referred work is analyzed, through a concept of school administration as mediation for the accomplishment of determined ends. It appears that Dewey contributes to the school administration, in that it proposes democracy as a principle that must guide education - understood in its administrative and pedagogical aspects, in an undissociated way.

**KEYWORDS:** Dewey. Democracy. School Administration.

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## Introduction

In discussing the nature and function of administration in education, Anísio Teixeira (1968) says that school administration requires, above all, knowledge of the educational phenomenon, because he understands that administration must be subordinate to the nature and purpose of the activity that it has as object. Bearing in mind the importance of John Dewey's work for the knowledge of the educational phenomenon, this article aims to discuss implications of the conceptions contained in "Life and education" for School Administration. It takes into account the time in which Dewey lived and produced the work, viewing, however, a philosophical legacy that transcends time.

To meet the proposed objective, the classic "Life and education" written by Dewey in the beginning of the 20th century is analyzed, seeking to understand its main foundations. In order to think about the contribution of the work to the reflection in the area of the current School Administration, the concept of School Administration is used in the texts of Vitor Henrique Paro (2001; 2010a; 2010b; 2012), which, although with theoretical bases different from those of Dewey, proposes a concept of administration as mediation for the achievement of determined ends.

The article is structured in six parts, including this introduction. In the second part, next, the interest and the democratic experience from the work "Life and education", in the context of the New School, is discussed. In the third part, the meaning and importance of direction and control in the child's learning is addressed. In the fourth part, it is the logic of organization of learning contained in the work. In the fifth part, the mediating character of the School Administration is discussed. Finally, we make some considerations about the contributions of "Life and education" to the field of School Administration.

## New School, democratic interest and experience

John Dewey (1859-1952) is one of the forerunners of the New School, a proposal that, although it congregates diverse voices and conceptions, was oriented by the critic to the Traditional School, since the end of century XIX, and gaining expressiveness in the beginning of century XX. The New School questioned the curricular and didactic impositions of the Traditional School, which were done to the detriment of the development of the individuality of the subjects. He proposed the research and free activity of the students, thus moving the center of the educational processes of the figure of the teacher to the students. There were

radical discontinuities of the New School in relation to the Traditional Pedagogy that had been consolidating since the emergence of mass education, since the New School questioned the main conceptions that guided the practices of education in the traditional molds. In the context of modernity, the New School advocated an education based on scientific principles. For example, it opposed school punishments, because it understood that these practices were not based on scientific principles of education.

In this ideological cut, John Dewey finds that "the goal of education is to enable individuals to continue their education - or that the goal or reward of learning is the capacity for constant development" (WESTBROOK, 2010: 73). However, this objective could only be achieved in democratic conditions. That is, when relations between people were mutual and there were suitable conditions for the discussion and reconstruction of customs and social institutions oriented by the equitable distribution of interests.

According to Lourenço Filho (1959), Dewey understands the school as an inherent part of the social totality. It is a school as a small community, in which all life processes should not be different from those around them, but cannot be a miniature artificial representation of society, for Dewey, education is not an a priori preparation for life; is part of life itself. So it is necessary to live in school what is desirable to live in society. Dewey's defense of the need for democratic experience in school has to do with the democratic society he envisions.

The general theory of education which we have expounded [Dewey's] implies that the continuous reconstruction of experience, whether individual or social, can only be accepted and consciously pursued by progressive or democratic societies, aimed not only at the simple preservation of established customs, but its constant renewal and revision (TEIXEIRA, 1959: 31).<sup>2</sup>

The context of the production of Dewey's work is North America in a period of search, through school, of the conformation of citizens in general and especially of immigrants, to the American way of life. In this context emerged, on one hand, the question of the relation between curriculum and the life of children - in which Dewey is inserted - and, on the other hand, the question of the usefulness of education for what these children and young people did - the technicality. And what they did or would do was also connected with industrial work. However, beyond the context of the production of his work, Dewey defends the development of personality, because he is concerned with the specificity of the educational phenomenon: "the

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<sup>2</sup> A teoria geral da educação que vimos expondo [a de Dewey] deixa subentendido que a contínua reconstrução da experiência, individual ou social, somente pode ser aceita e conscientemente buscada por sociedades progressivas ou democráticas, que visem não apenas a simples preservação dos costumes estabelecidos, mas a sua constante renovação e revisão (TEIXEIRA, 1959, p. 31).

ideal is not the accumulation of knowledge, but the development of capacities. To possess all knowledge of the world and to lose one's own individuality is a fate as horrible in education as in religion "(DEWEY, 1959: 55-56).

Understanding that Dewey thought of an education for a democratic society and that aimed at the development of the personality - why not to say to the affirmation of the individual as subject -, the perspective of education of Dewey as a democratic practice in the sense that Paro (2010a: 27) applies to democracy: "peaceful and free coexistence between people and groups who affirm themselves as subjects" (highlights in original).

Anísio Teixeira defines education in Dewey as "a process of reconstruction and reorganization of experience, by which we perceive it more acutely, and thus enable us to better direct the course of our future experiences" (TEIXEIRA, 1959: 8). Like Lourenço Filho, Teixeira (1959) recognizes the education of Dewey as "a direct phenomenon of life, as ineluctable as life itself." He adds: "The continuous reorganization and reconstruction of experience by reflection is the most particular characteristic of human life, since it emerged from the purely animal level" (TEIXEIRA, 1959: 8). In the context of American pragmatist philosophy, Dewey postulates improving the quality of experience through intelligence. He also argues that knowledge does not become an end in itself, but that it integrates into the life of the citizen and becomes useful in it. For this reason, he fears that the school offers a teaching that has nothing to do with life.

For Dewey, education is a phenomenon that takes place privately and internally. Teixeira (1959) clarifies, including using reflexive verbs in the first person:

I educate myself through my experiences lived intelligently. There is undoubtedly a certain amount of time in each experience, but the first and last phases of the educational process are of equal importance, and all collaborate so that I can be instructed and educated - instruction and education that are not external results of experience, but the experience itself reconstructed and reorganized mentally in the course of its elaboration (TEIXEIRA, 1959: 9).<sup>3</sup>

The student educates himself, but this does not exempt the action of the teacher as the one who creates and organizes the conditions for that student to experience and to learn. In fact, for Dewey, education is a constant reconstruction of experience in order to give more and more

<sup>3</sup> Eu me educo através de minhas experiências vividas inteligentemente. Existe, sem dúvida, certo decurso de tempo em cada experiência, mas assim as primeiras fases como as últimas do processo educativo, têm igual importância, e todas colaboram para que eu me instrua e me eduque – instrução e educação que não são os resultados externos da experiência, mas a própria experiência reconstruída e reorganizada mentalmente no curso de sua elaboração (TEIXEIRA, 1959, p. 09).

meaning, a process through which the younger generations are enabled to respond to the challenges they face in life and in society.

In this sense, it is convenient to clarify what Dewey's experience is: "This action on another body and suffering from another body is a reaction, in its own terms, what we call experience" (TEIXEIRA, 1959: 1). Dewey insists that verbalization is subordinated to processes of experience, which are not directly taught by the word. While recognizing that the word can amplify experience, it understands verbal education as subordinate to the understanding and imaginative reconstruction of experience.

### **The direction and control of pedagogical action of the school of interest**

Contrary to what the criticisms received by the New School have postulated, the direction and control are part of the set of conceptions of the renewed teaching. This becomes clear when Dewey warns of the perils of both the new and the old education.

The "old education" tended to ignore the dynamic quality, the intrinsic strength of the child's development; and hence to assume that direction and control were entirely arbitrary, consisting in putting the child on a certain path and compelling it to follow it. "New education" is in danger of taking the idea of development in a very empty and formal way. The child is expected to develop this or that fact or idea, of his own spirit. We want her to think about things or to act, without suppressing them from the conditions necessary to awaken and guide thought (DEWEY, 1959: 66, highlights in the original).<sup>4</sup>

It is not excessive to remember, after this quotation, that functional teaching is a means and never an end to renewed education. By this quote it is still perceived that centering education on interest is not dispensing the adult's action in the child's education. The teacher continues to play an important role. It turns out that centrality no longer belongs to only one of these subjects.

Understanding that education is an internal and individual process, Dewey postulates that the direct means of directing education - that is, the means by which the educator's action is to be carried out - is "to prepare the environment in which the child acts, thinks and feels" (TEIXEIRA, 1959: 19). The intervening actions of educators will then occur within the scope

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<sup>4</sup> A "velha educação" tinha a tendência para ignorar a qualidade dinâmica, a força intrínseca de desenvolvimento da experiência infantil; e daí pressupor que direção e controle eram inteiramente arbitrários, consistindo em pôr a criança em determinado caminho e compeli-la a segui-lo. A "educação nova" está em perigo de tomar a ideia do desenvolvimento de um modo muito vazio e formal. Espera-se que a criança desenvolva este ou aquele fato ou ideia, de seu próprio espírito. *Queremos que ela pense sobre as coisas ou que ela aja, sem supri-la das condições indispensáveis para despertar e guiar o pensamento* (DEWEY, 1959, p. 66, grifos no original).

of the possibility of action on the environment, in its modification, alteration, intentional organization for the educational effect.

Schools, in turn, are also intentionally organized means for the express purpose of influencing morally and mentally their members. It is, therefore, in the preparation of this special means of education - the school - that we can and should dispose of the conditions by which the child grows in knowledge, in strength, in happiness (TEIXEIRA, 1959: 20).<sup>5</sup>

The idea of intentionality in the preparation of the conditions for learning allows to refute criticisms of the "school of interest", in which children are supposed abandoned in their own interests when the subject is the direction of the learning process. But neither is the reverse. It does not become coercion, because it takes into account the active role of the individual in his own learning. Anísio Teixeira points out that the direction, as a possibility of intervention and conduction of the educational process, is not, in any way, in the Deweyian pedagogy, as coercion or compulsion. "We are far from the old assumption that the natural tendencies of the individual are all egotistical or antisocial, constituting education in the effort to subordinate them to an exact sense of collective life." (TEIXEIRA, 1959: 22) Dewey understands the individual as a social being that only exists in society. In this he does not suppress his individuality, but accomplishes it.

"Thus, the task of management is important in selecting, focusing and ordering the response to the situation, giving orientation, coordination and continuity to the multiple reactions of our organism" (TEIXEIRA, 1959: 23, highlights in the original). It is important to note that the response here is not understood as a predicted consequence determined by a specific stimulus, but is linked to the reactions that have to be born from existing trends in the individual. That is, the direction cannot be exclusively external. It has to co-operate with the individual's own direction over his actions, "on pain of being incomplete or harmful" (TEIXEIRA, 1959: 23).

For Dewey, learning that integrates directly with life must consider at least five principles: 1) One only learns what one practices; 2) Practicing is not enough. The intention of the learner is of singular importance; 3) Learn by association. Other learning is associated with the clear objective of the activity; 4) One never learns one thing. One learning does not occur

<sup>5</sup> As escolas, por sua vez, são também meios organizados intencionalmente para o fim expresso de influir moral e mentalmente sobre os seus membros. É, pois, na preparação desse meio especial de educação – a escola – que podemos e devemos dispor as condições pelas quais a criança venha a crescer em saber, em força, em felicidade (TEIXEIRA, 1959, p. 20).

in isolation, but simultaneously with others; 5) All learning must have real meaning and be lived in a real life experience (DEWEY, 1959; TEIXEIRA, 1959).

In his own way, Teixeira (1959) anticipates Paulo Freire's critique of the pedagogy of Dewey, which would give meaning to the term "banking education". Thus, he says: "Everything was taught in its logical order, independent of the application and real relations. Later the student would draw against this accumulated capital, to use it in real life " (p. 39, our highlights)

The student, seeing no relation of "matter" to his present life or any undertaking in which he is engaged, cannot have reason to strive; having no motive, cannot have desire or intention to learn (save artificial or false motives); not intending to learn, cannot actively assimilate matter, integrating it into his own life (TEIXEIRA, 1959: 40).<sup>6</sup>

Dewey's concept of education and learning is not static, because life is not static. The process of learning at a certain point in life or schooling is not definitively completed. Then, for him, "the end of education is not the complete life, but the progressive life, life in constant expansion and constant ascension" (TEIXEIRA, 1959: 47).

For Dewey, the educational process consists in the proper interaction between the child's immaturity and certain ideas and values represented by the matured adult. "The conception of the relations between one and the other, tending to make this interaction easy, free and complete, is the essence of educational theory" (DEWEY, 1959: 50, our highlights). Dewey recognizes that learning is not effective as satisfying a need once and for all.

Man does not learn from a need that, satisfied, makes that ability disappear. Learning, on the contrary, is a permanent function of your organism; it is the activity by which man grows, even when his biological development has long since been completed. This ability to learn allows indefinite education, indefinite growth (TEIXEIRA, 1959: 27, highlights in the original).<sup>7</sup>

"Learning, by the way, besides being the way to acquire habits, can become a habit in itself" (TEIXEIRA, 1959: 29). In this way, the ends of education follow each other progressively. As they come to fruition, they become means to achieve new ends in ever wider perspectives. In education, the child is the measure and the judgment, because it is "the starting point, the center and the end" (DEWEY, 1959: 55). In his criticism of the traditional school,

<sup>6</sup> O aluno, não vendo nenhuma relação da "matéria" com sua vida presente ou qualquer empreendimento em que esteja empenhado, não pode ter motivo para se esforçar; não tendo motivo, não pode ter desejo ou intenção de aprender (salvo motivos artificiais ou falsos); não tendo a intenção de aprender, não pode assimilar ativamente a matéria, integrando-a à sua própria vida (TEIXEIRA, 1959, p. 40).

<sup>7</sup> O homem não aprende por uma necessidade que, satisfeita, faça desaparecer aquela capacidade. Aprender é, muito pelo contrário, uma função permanente do seu organismo, é a atividade pela qual o homem *crece*, mesmo quando seu desenvolvimento biológico de há muito se completou. Essa capacidade de aprender permite uma educação indefinida, um indefinido crescimento. (TEIXEIRA, 1959, p. 27, grifo no original).

which he calls the old school, Dewey draws a parallel between what this school advocates and the proposed renewal, especially as regards discipline and control: "'direction and control' are one school magic words; 'Liberty and initiative', those of the other" (DEWEY, 1959: 57, quotes from the original), but is aware of the mutual criticisms of the new and old school:

Inertia and routine on the one hand, chaos and anarchy on the other, are the mutual condemnatory accusations. The school that makes the child the center of everything is accused of despising the sacred authority of duty; it, in turn, attacks on its opponent the suppression of individuality through a tyrannical despotism (DEWEY, 1959: 57).<sup>8</sup>

According to Dewey (1959), these positions are rarely taken to the ultimate logical consequences. They would also lead, according to the author, to a theoretical dispute while in practice an indefinite eclecticism would predominate. He writes an item entitled "The Exaggerations of Old and New Education," in which he places in due form the interpretations and practices of these educational perspectives and the practices that flow from them. On the one hand, it criticizes the old education by comparing it between the immaturity of the child and the maturity of the adult and the consequent belief in the need to liberate immaturity. On the other, it warns of the danger of considering the child's interest as having a definitive meaning. For him, the child's interest is their attitudes toward possible experiences. The value of the child's capacity lies "before propulsion to a higher level that can result from them" (DEWEY, 1959: 63).

### **Organization of learnings – the psychological logic and interest**

For Dewey, the logical organization of learning over the psychological has a double contradiction. The child does not take advantage of the logical systematization of the adult nor the possibilities of apprehension according to his abilities. But Dewey remembers to refute the false psychological arrangement of the stories. That is, interest must be linked to what one learns. There is no need for tricks and external motivations to "make the subject interesting" (DEWEY, 1959: 76). By the legitimate principle of interest, the individual "recognizes an identification between the fact that must be known or the action that must be practiced and the agent that by this activity will develop" (DEWEY, 1959: 88, highlights in the original). The

<sup>8</sup> Inércia e rotina por um lado, caos e anarquia do outro, são as mútuas acusações condenatórias. A escola que faz da criança o centro de tudo é acusada de desprezar a autoridade sagrada do dever; ela, por sua vez, ataca na sua opositora a supressão da individualidade através de um despotismo tirânico (DEWEY, 1959, p. 57).



very etymology of the word "interest" - being between - would explain that interest suppresses the distance between learners and the content of learning and the results of their action.

As for the arrangements made for the subjects in order to make them "interesting", Dewey totally condemns the idea that the subject is first chosen and then made interesting in the student's eyes. For the author, the interest is normal, educationally legitimate and trustworthy, to the extent that the activity it involves can develop progressively.

For Dewey, when true interest occurs, "it means, then, that a person identified with himself, or found himself in the course of an action. And from there he identified with the object or form of skill necessary for the happy pursuit of his activity" (DEWEY, 1959: 120). The author does not deny the role of effort, but also clarifies what is the valid effort for the New School. Effort only makes sense in view of the end to be achieved. However, it is an effort as "persistence, continuity of action: tenacity despite obstacles and difficulties. Effort, understood as a simple expenditure of force and energy, is not, however, what should concern the educator "(DEWY, 1959: 122, highlights in the original). In view of the mediating perspective of education, Dewey conceptualizes the "motive." Reason, for him, is the name given to the "end," when considered from the perspective of his ability to influence action in the present. In old school,

It was believed that pure willpower, arbitrary effort, was only what was needed. In practice, this has always meant, as we have seen, an appeal to extrinsic sources of motivation: respect for the authority of the book or the master; fear of punishment or of displeasing others; success in adult life; winning prizes; appear better than others; fear of not being approved, etc. (DEWEY, 1959: 134-135).<sup>9</sup>

Another damaging consequence "of a very personalistic concept of motivation is the narrow and external conception of the use of teaching materials. It is justifiable to inquire into the usefulness of any teaching material" (DEWEY, 1959: 136-137). As this utility could be questioned from different points of view, Dewey clarifies that it comes from the mediating character of the education he postulates. Still in view of the mediating nature of teaching, it is important to consider its concept of activity.

There is nothing new or sensational about this concept of activity as an important educational principle. In the sense of 'self-activity' in particular, activity has long been the name for an ultimate end of education. It was,

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<sup>9</sup> acreditava-se que pura força de vontade, esforço arbitrário, era somente o de que se precisava. Na prática, isso sempre quis dizer, como vimos, apelo a fontes extrínsecas de motivação: respeito pela autoridade do livro ou do mestre; medo de castigo ou de descontentar os outros; sucesso na vida adulta; conquista de prêmios; aparecer melhor que os outros; receio de não ser aprovado, etc. (DEWEY, 1959, p. 134-135).

however, interpreted in a sense of inner activity becoming a sterile and uninfluential ideal in practice, sometimes not more than a simple phrase, which received only honors from the lips of the educators (DEWEY, 1959: 138, highlights in the original).<sup>10</sup>

The conception of play and work exposed by Dewey places the intentionality and condition of the subject as a necessity of the learning process. "Understanding, however, work as an activity that requires intermediate means to be effective, play and work cannot be distinguished from each other by the presence or absence of interest in what is being done" (DEWEY, 1959: 150, Highlights in the original). Dewey completes:

Defining work as we define it, this expression encompasses all activities involving the use of intermediary material, apparatus, and skill forms, consciously applied in the realization of certain results. All forms of expression and construction with instruments and materials, all forms of manual and artistic activity, constitute works, whenever they require conscious or reflected effort to be realized (DEWEY 1959: 152).<sup>11</sup>

If it is not possible to distinguish work from play, one must recognize that the child's action in the learning process is also work. It works to objectify what it has established previously and internally - it works driven by the interest that accompanies a deliberately established goal of its own.

### **The mediating character of school administration - current discussions**

It is not intended here to compare Dewey with the current discussions of the educational field, since the context of the author's life and the production of his work are present. However, his work left a legacy for education. It is in the sense of comparing the contributions that can still be observed in the educational field in the specific discussion of School Administration that seeks to understand, in this section the concept of School Administration.

Paro (2012: 25) states that "administration is the rational use of resources for the realization of certain ends". So he postulates that, thus understood, administration is also an

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<sup>10</sup> Não há nada de novo ou sensacional nessa concepção de atividade como um importante princípio educativo. No sentido de '*self-activity*', em particular, atividade tem sido desde muito tempo o nome para um fim último da educação. Foi, entretanto, interpretada num sentido de atividade interna tornando-se um ideal estéril e sem influência na prática, não sendo algumas vezes mais do que uma simples frase, que recebia somente homenagens dos lábios dos educadores (DEWEY, 1959, p. 138, grifo no original).

<sup>11</sup> Definindo trabalho como o definimos, essa expressão abrange todas as atividades que envolvem o uso de material intermediário, de aparelhos e de formas de habilidade, conscientemente aplicados na realização de certos resultados. Todas as formas de expressão e de construção com instrumentos e materiais, todas as formas de atividade manual e artística, constituem trabalhos, sempre que requeiram esforço consciente ou refletido para se realizarem (DEWEY, 1959, p. 152).

exclusively human activity, for only the human species is capable of freely establishing goals for its actions. Hence the importance of management. As a mediator, it makes it possible to achieve the established goals (PARO, 2010b; 2012). Therefore, only man is able to rationalize resources (objective and subjective) for their attainment. According to the author, objective resources designate "the objective conditions present in the performance of the work or of the works that contribute to the accomplishment of the ends of the company or organization" (PARO, 2010b: 767). The subjective resources refer to what Marx called the work force.<sup>12</sup>

Paro (2012), in dealing with the necessary relations between men in the production of their existence, affirms that these relations involve human effort and that although nothing prevents application to an isolated action, the principles of the rational use of resources focus especially on the collective human effort. To this rational use of collective human effort, the author calls "coordination of collective human effort" (PARO, 2012: 31). In this way, "rationalization" refers to the relationship between man and nature and "coordination", to the relations of men to each other. It is these two fields that interpenetrate and characterize management. Still according to the author,

the material and conceptual elements do not fulfill their function in the process if they are not associated with the collective human effort; in the same way, collective human effort needs the material and conceptual elements to be applied rationally (PARO, 2012: 32).<sup>13</sup>

Still on the mediating character of the School Administration, Paro (2010) highlights the convergence of opinions about the importance of school organization and management in academic texts, in governmental discourse, in media and in common sense. In these last three, the understanding is that if education goes bad, much of the blame lies with the administration that focuses on it. The fact is that, critically or otherwise, its attributed an importance to the administration of education, which makes it possible to reaffirm it as "mediation for the achievement of ends" (p.765).

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<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that this approach differs from the approach: human resources/material resources. In this, the conceptual elements would be human resources and human effort would not take place. Paro (2012), on the contrary, does not consider man as "means", but as "end". That is, not as an object in the process of pursuing ends. To consider it means implies domination. Domination disregards what characterizes man. He is a man because he dominates nature. As a man, one needs to recognize in the other this ability. This is why we defend cooperation instead of domination (PARO, 2012).

<sup>13</sup> os elementos materiais e conceptuais não cumprem sua função no processo se não estiverem associados ao esforço humano coletivo; da mesma forma, o esforço humano coletivo necessita dos elementos materiais e conceptuais para ser aplicado racionalmente (PARO, 2012, p. 32).

The initial concept adopted by the author is general. It encompasses all types of administration, regardless of the nature of what is administered, the sector, moment or process to which it refers. "This allows us to speak in personnel management, material management, financial management, as well as middle-management, end-of-activity management<sup>14</sup>, etc." (p.765). Mediation, in this case, is not restricted to the middle activities, but is extended by the end-activities, in the pursuit of the objectives. According to the author, the notion of administration only linked to the middle activities, that is, that does not take into account the administrative nature of the pedagogical process leads to value only the role of the school director. Positioning itself against this perspective, the author notes that the concept of management that commonly anchors studies on school management separates middle-activities and end-activities as mutually exclusive, "thus covering the necessarily administrative character of all pedagogical practice and disregarding the pedagogical potentialities of administrative practice when it refers specifically to education" (PARO, 2010b: 766).

Understanding school as an organized human enterprise to achieve certain ends through collective effort, it is convenient, finally, to highlight the radical position of Anísio Teixeira as mediator character of the School Administration.

The intention [...] was rather to emphasize the character and nature of school administration as a function that can only be exercised by educators and which is intrinsically of subordination and not of command of the work of education that effectively takes place between the teacher and the student, the two factors that really determine their efficiency (TEIXEIRA, 1968: 16-17).<sup>15</sup>

In this quote, Anísio Teixeira makes clear the need for the administration to take to the final consequences its mediation character. The subordination to which he refers concerns to the function of the administration to provide the conditions for the work of the teacher and student to be accomplished. In this way, Teixeira proposes the inversion of the way in which school administration is usually carried out until nowadays - from subordinating to subordinate.

It is important to see how the principles of pedagogy advocated by Dewey allow us to reflect on the policies and practices of the current school administration. In a growing context of demands for high scores in large-scale student testing, where principles such as

<sup>14</sup> The same author, in another book (PARO, 2001), defines as activities-means those that enable the pedagogical process, such as management and administrative activities, and as end-activities those that refer to teaching and learning, that is, those that deal directly with pedagogical issues such as supervision, guidance and teaching. Importantly, this definition is only didactic, since the author opposes the dichotomy between these activities.

<sup>15</sup> A intenção [...] foi antes a de sublinhar o caráter e natureza da administração escolar como função que somente pode ser exercida por educadores e que é intrinsecamente de subordinação e não de comando da obra de educação que, efetivamente, se realiza entre o professor e o aluno, os dois fatores realmente determinantes da sua eficiência (TEIXEIRA, 1968, p 16-17).

accountability and quasi-market tend to (re)introduce or reinforce in school management the principles of State Management, the legacy of "Life and education" allows us to turn our gaze to the heart of the educational phenomenon, to which the school administration is subordinate.

Paro's question (2009: 456): "How can the same principles and administrative methods of the capitalist enterprise be applied to the school (an institution known in the context of dialogue and affirmation of subjectivities, not domination), without the means contradicting the ends? In view of this question, it should be remembered that, in the present context, the concern with accountability and managerial processes, of the necessary instruments that should help in the achievement of the ends of education, become the very ends of education.

### **Final Considerations**

Obviously, Dewey must be situated in his time. However, his work leaves a legacy for Education, through concepts and principles that can guide a discussion of school administration nowadays.

These "Life and Education" contributions to school administration are in at least four premises. The first is Dewey's statement that the intervention (or direction) of the educational process is at the heart of the preparation of favorable conditions for the individual to be interested and involved in the learning process, because it is understood that the action of the learner is decisive for the effectiveness of learning, not the teaching method. The second is that "management is the rational use of resources for the achievement of specific ends" (PARO, 2012: 25). That is, the school administration is subordinated to the ends of the activity that it aims at. The third is Dewey's conception of education and school, which is fundamentally a mediator for ever-widening learning. Finally, the importance of democratic experience in Deweyan pedagogy in relation to the centrality of the activity of the individual who learns - not as a mere activity, but in the exercise of the role of subject.

To administer is, therefore, to provide and make rational use of the necessary conditions for the development of interest and, ultimately, for the development of personalities for a democratic society. The administrative character of this school also does not allow a dichotomous understanding of the middle-level activities as exclusively administrative or the end-activities as exclusively pedagogical, since it will be the function of all the instances of the school to provide and make use of the resources and conditions to take the student to become interested and learn.

If the direction of the educational process - that is, intervention - is based on the need to create interest, the provision of the necessary conditions for the creation of this interest will be an administrative activity, involving these actions the management of the necessary material resources or the coordination of the collective human effort. In this collective human effort, the student is included, who acts, works, learns. To speak of the direction of the process of learning by the teacher is nothing other than to recognize the administrative character that pervades also the pedagogical activities.

Considering the mediating character of the School Administration that was taken as reference in this text and the understanding of the educational philosophy in "Life and education", it can be deduced that the school administration that takes into account the contributions of such work should focus the student, considering the condition of subjects of the target individuals of their action. It is an administration that is done in a democratic way, not as a mere imitation, but as a real process, whereby the discussion of social practices and institutions demands the equitable distribution of interests. If the direction of the educational process is not coercive, but must combine external and internal direction, school management cannot be carried out vertically, otherwise it will contradict the educational philosophy, through which the ends of education and school are established.

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