

INTELLECTIVE VERSUS EMOTIONAL EDUCATION: CONFLICT, LIMITATION OR INCOMPETENCE?

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A review of the Spanish educational system, as that of any other country, nowadays cannot only be centred on knowing more, on knowing in order to do or on knowing in order to think, but also on knowing in order to live and live together. Not only because it is an important personal and social objective, but because it is empirically demonstrated that certain values and cognitive strategies or "mental molds" are better predictors than the IQ for the improvement of academic achievement.

Key Words: Subjective well-being, Socio-affective education, Mental molds, School achievement, Educational reform, Values.

La revisión del sistema educativo español, como el de cualquier otro país, hoy día no sólo puede estar centrado en saber más, en saber para hacer o saber para pensar, sino también en saber para vivir y convivir. No sólo porque sea un objetivo personal y social importante, sino porque se demuestra empíricamente que determinados valores y determinadas estrategias cognitivas o "moldes mentales" son predictores superiores al CI para mejorar el rendimiento académico.

Palabras clave: Bienestar subjetivo, Educación socioafectiva, Moldes mentales, Rendimiento escolar, Reforma educativa, Valores.

THE PISA REPORT AND MORE

Curiously, those who express greater distress with respect to a materialistic, problematic world without principles, and who call for an education in values, are at the same time, those who are the most demanding in increasing curricular contents and students' efforts. Is this contradictory? Initially not, but it could be if we do not aim at the real objectives of an education of quality that responds to the needs of people, of living together and of efficiency, both professional as well as that required for getting along in the world.

On the other hand, when we talk about efficiency, we cannot confuse it with "more of the same", that is: more contents, more information or more "blind" exigency.

The PISA report does not as much show the Spanish students' low results as being due to lack of conceptual or "declarative" knowledge, as to lack of procedural knowledge, especially, skills for the comprehension of written texts, for solving mathematical problems in practical life or knowing how to apply scientific elemental principles to mundane reality.

This fact is a constant throughout the Spanish educational system, at primary, secondary and post-secondary levels. There is a contradiction in that some of our students, the most outstanding, excel in knowledge

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and being "jacks-of-all-trades" with respect to students from other American or European schools or universities; but it is also true that our students in general, in a first contact with other academic realities, feel defenceless when they are subjected to work in tasks of critical analysis, elaboration, investigation or application.

Montaigne's claim "better a well-made head than a well-filled head" has been ringing throughout this debate since the XVII century. It is still difficult to assume a school that teaches "learning to learn" and "learning to think". Many thinkers have been saying the same thing, and it has become a problem and a challenge for all current and future reforms.

This has to do with students' autonomy for learning. However, in all traditional education students have been "excessively autonomous"; so autonomous that they have been the only ones responsible for having to acquire and demonstrate their learning. Nevertheless, autonomous learning is another matter. For example, if we go to universities such as Cambridge or Oxford, we could think that students there are like preschoolers because they have their tutors, whom they visit twice a week for guidance and for work guidelines. Hence, autonomy is not letting each one get by the best they can. Our autonomy is usually translated as "every man for himself!" How often do we see that a student does not have the strategies to solve problems and is not guided in how to solve them? But not only the student who attends university, also the student who is learning plumbing or

how to express himself or write. Many times we encounter the complaints of literature professors alarmed at how their students do not know how to write. "Very well, they do not know how to write –we tell them– but what strategies are you teaching them so that they learn how to express themselves and write?"

TEACHING ADAPTED TO RESOURCES AND CURRENT PROGRESS

Is our school, our educational system assimilating all the technological advances that are developing nowadays? At this moment, advances are impressive and diverse: hundreds of television channels, mobile phones, mini radios, personal computers, digital recorders, internet as an on-line teaching resource, videoconferences, etc. Is the school making these resources profitable in order to promote education? Will it be able to readapt them? Will it be able to canalize and move this scenario to adapt it to education? It is also true that in all periods, there have been important resources and nevertheless, they were not made profitable. What better resources than those of nature itself and of general reality? Let us think of the resources of the countryside, of animals, of towns, of churches, of factories or of museums. Have they been made profitable? Only by a minority of teachers in spite of being the most useful lesson in order to understand and get along in the everyday world. At bottom, lies the idea that the school has been excessively monastic, and when I say this (from monastic life or convent), it is because it has almost always been divorced: the school on one side and the needs of the world and life on another.

INTELLECTIVE EFFICIENCY AND DEFICIENCY

Ausubel's proposal in the sixties in which he asked for only instruction in the classroom not wasting time with anything that was not knowledge or intellect, is at present, for many reasons untenable. An education centred only on efficiency would be truly deficient.

In the first place, in our current reality there are many problems of important social demand. Society is in general concerned about drug addiction, individualism, hedonism, consumerism, stress, violence or abuse, to quote some of the most outstanding issues. The young do not frequently talk about values, but when they become parents they are the most concerned about what values their children will acquire. At this point, the question of values becomes the strongest standard because matters which were not previously considered begin to cause preoccupation. When parents choose a school, they are not only worried about its quality regarding academic

results, but they are also worried about the environment that exists in the centre: bad friends or risks of drug abuse. All this is worrisome because they are problems that are intensified by the media, economic development, destructuring of the family, the social loss of all ideologies and, therefore, the social change in values. Regarding all of this, the school cannot excuse itself. We can understand that it is a difficult environment but we cannot look the other way, among other reasons, because the school has to compensate for all these deficiencies. There are deficits in the family and in society, therefore, the school, as the depository and administrator of culture and values, must compensate or attenuate these limitations through education.

HAPPINESS IN SMALL LETTERS

Individual Subjective Well-being (ISW) is the term with which we designate "happiness" in psychology. It is investigated from different perspectives and different theories are developed. The question is: Will school help us learn how to live? Traditional schooling was concerned about "knowing". Later, in the fifties and sixties, the behaviourist model was concerned about "learning how to do". After that, the cognitive model was concerned about "learning to learn" and "learning to think". Today we begin to see a school worried about "learning to live" and "learning to live together" This has been demanded for different reasons.

One of these reasons is the disillusionment with progress. Thinkers from the XVIII and XIX centuries promised a happy world through science and technology, which would provide goods for everyone and where the school would be the administrator of culture. This promise is in part fulfilled but very far from reality. Although it is true that research indicates that in general people from the richest and the most advanced countries seem happier than those from poorer countries, it is also true that in India, and above all in Bali, people seem happier than in Japan, which is one of the top countries in development according to UN indices.

Aside from the generalized subjective well-being of a country, there are indices of social dissatisfaction. It is not only the issue regarding drugs, delinquency, domestic violence or destructuring of the family but above all something like suicide, particularly in men (in the case of Spain, in one of our studies we observed that since 1982, the suicide line in men curiously shoots up in accordance to the increase in the GDP (gross domestic product), although in women, because of their supposed greater adaptive capacity, the line is more or less flat). That is,

when development increases, the number of suicides and marginality increases in all these aspects. But well, this is only one reason.

The second reason is that there has been a drastic change with respect to the role of women, marriage, the educational role of family, the permanence and duration of children in educational centres...All of this has been causing concern about knowing how to teach how to live.

With all this, there is no stronger reason than to consider that individual subjective well-being is the most important profound goal of all human beings reflected in that phrase by Neill: "Better a happy street cleaner than a neurotic scholar".

Another influence is the importance that emotion has on one's own efficacy and performance, highlighting in this sense, the interest of the business world regarding emotional issues. Today we know that socio-emotional issues bear a great relation to efficacy. For this reason, high-quality companies are preoccupied with improving their socio-affective level because it is highly related to performance and efficacy. This has been highlighted with the paradigm that we could denominate "emotional-personalizing". In fact, there, we have the current movement of alternative intelligence, especially after Goleman's book "Emotional Intelligence". And not only as an individual help approach, but especially from a business standpoint for its importance in productivity.

CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Besides Individual Subjective Well-being (ISW), we usually evaluate Contribution to Community Well-being (CCW) since the emphasis of all current psychology investigation is centred on individual subjective well-being which is no more than a typical approach of our essentially individualistic society. I think that it should be complemented with another reality-community subjective well-being-. Specifically, what do I contribute to community subjective well-being? One thing is that I am happy, but what do I offer so that others are happy since both aspects complement each other?

Happiness and altruism. In this sense, the consistency of the CCW scale indicates that people with a greater contribution to community well-being stand out in aspects such as: personal respect, norm compliance, social skills, collaboration, altruism, social interest, and ethical perspective. However, are they happier than the rest? No, they are not, and that seems surprising. But yes, we must say that individuals with the highest level of happiness are characterized for also having a high CCW. This means that contributing to community well-being is not in itself a

guaranty for being happy, but it is a condition for acquiring great happiness. Therefore, it is an added value for happiness. We are also saying that contributing to community well-being can be a trap for not being happy, that is, many people feel fulfilled through altruism without solving their problems. They often drag along their insecurities, fears, perfectionisms, complexes, stories, and they are not going to feel good no matter how much dedication they offer because deep down lies an element of weakness, insecurity, and dissatisfaction. Well now, when one is well adjusted dedication to others has a multiplier effect on happiness. At bottom, we are repeating from the Gospel: "You shall love your neighbour as you love yourself"; and you cannot love your neighbour if previously you do not love yourself. These are two fundamental things, love for another implies love for oneself, and when they are not found together there could be a breakdown. All this is making an allusion to values.

WHAT VALUES SHALL WE TEACH?

The development of values is the central theme of education through all ages and societies. To the extent that there has been education, there has been transmission of values. Another matter is the type of values that are transmitted. Sometimes the direction those values take, is in overcoming elemental values representative of nature and that are the only ones that small children show. Other times, the direction is in instilling dominant values in society. And other times, it is in fighting against those social values because they are considered inadequate, and in creating alternative values. But, what is it that characterizes values?

- a) Value is expressed by the qualities that things have for us (resistant, beautiful, pleasant, useful...) or by the qualities that our actions have for us or for others (behaving with confidence, being creative, generous, polite...).
- b) Value, however, is constructed in accordance with our own theories, needs, influences, etc. Therefore, value is formed between the objective and cultural reality of the world and our own subjective reality.
- c) Value has different levels of expression and commitment. A value on the declarative plane is not the same as an experienced value, and less a practiced value:
 - In a declarative mode through an explicit or tacit thought (judgement).
 - In an affective mode, associated to an affective and preferential tone (attitude).

- In a connative mode which is apparent in behaviour itself (habit).
- d) Value is an indispensable criterion in order to choose and, in consequence, to exercise our own freedom. This means that each person and each society constructs their own relatively stable system of values that will serve as a preferential menu from which to choose.
- e) Value, in spite of being a more or less stable criterion, is situational and dynamic, since, apart from each one having their own system of predominant values (referential guide), those values are adapted and reinterpreted as a function of each circumstance, context or situation (flexibility, readjustment).
- f) Value is acquired and developed by individuals through an educational process, especially, in the family and school environment, and also, through their group of friends and the influence of the communication media, assimilating the system of values that is predominant in each of those environments.
- g) All individuals and societies, although possessing a system of values, are also self-critical with their system of values at a given moment. This is what allows change and perfectionism to take place.
- h) Value is hierarchical and comparative. Everything has value in itself. The problem is in determining in general terms which values are more valuable than others. This way, a value can become, at a given moment, a counter value in competition with a value of a superior level.

But, what indicates that one value is superior to another? Without doubt, the good that it provides to people and to society. In the last instance, the maximum values are ISW and CCW. What each individual seeks is to find the maximum satisfaction, happiness or Individual Subjective Well-being (ISW). What happens is that not all values or goals lead to happiness. Then, this obliges one to question the system itself. In addition, happiness is not only a matter of one individual but of many; on the contrary the law of the jungle would reign which would mean happiness for only a few. This explains that values also have a social aspect, operationalized through CCW (Hernández, 2002, 2005a).

From the perspective of our Pentatriaxios model (five areas and three levels), the most important challenge of education is the transit from "what is pleasant to what is adequate" and "from what is adequate to what is full". That is, from the primary level (values of immediate satisfaction) to the adaptation level (values of control for efficiency and avoidance of conflict). And, finally, from this last level to that of self-fulfilment, enjoying tasks

through the involvement of pupils in projects characterized by being significant and having a significant goal to achieve.

We cannot overlook any of these planes, each one proves important, although that of adaptation is the most inexcusable.

- The *primary* plane provides elemental, spontaneous enjoyment in affinity with nature, the senses, instincts and impulses of the self, which is an incentive for others.
- That of *adaptation* prevents suffering, brings possibilities for being efficient and facilitates living together.
- That of *fulfilment* helps one dream, be a creator of one's own life, make sense of one's footsteps and feel fulfilled.

Many times, adaptation and fulfilment overshadow primary values. Fulfilment can also be a subterfuge for evading those of adaptation. For example, people that are intensely dedicated to an altruistic job can do it with all their heart, but on the contrary, may be annulling their own selves, which is a sign of lack of adaptation, and keeps them from real happiness.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND MENTAL MOLDS

Values, in the very end, are desirable goals, but how do we develop them? What do they depend on? No doubt, on the emotional intelligence of each person. Nevertheless, from the perspective of several authors, Goleman's exposition of emotional intelligence leaves a lot of gaps due to its indiscriminate character since it embraces not only cognitive aspects but also personality traits and motivations (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000), and also to its generic character or of product, just as these authors originally proposed (discriminate, channel and make profitable one's emotions and those of others), whose level of prediction for satisfaction, adaptation and performance criteria is still poor. That is why we defend an approach more of process than of product, just as what happened with rational intelligence, highlighting the cognitive-emotional strategies committed to the way of anticipating, reacting and reinterpreting reality through what we denominate "mental molds". But, what are mental molds?

In the movie "The Sea Inside", Amenábar focuses on several occasions on the cover of our book "Mental Molds: Beyond Emotional Intelligence", especially when Rosa attempts to make the tetraplegic Ramón Sampedro, in his desire to die with dignity, change his molds: "I saw you on T.V. and I noticed your eyes, which are wonderful,



those eyes full of life and I thought: how can somebody with those eyes want to die? ... We all have problems and you cannot escape from them, you know? ... I've come here to tell you that life is worth living". In this attempt to change his molds, Sampedro replies, exploring her profound motivations "Why don't we talk about the real reason you are here? Why don't we talk about how you are clearly a frustrated woman who has woken up today, Saturday feeling like finding a meaning to your own life?"

The theory of Mental Molds (Hernández, 1997, 2002, 2005a, 2005b) defends that through reiterative situations, we create thinking formats that are the key pieces for a better understanding of the puzzle of emotional intelligence. Mental molds are cognitive-emotional approaches or strategies constructed in the interaction between genetic dispositions and learning. They are like human "psychoma", responsible for our beliefs, emotions and behaviour. Through factorial analysis, starting from a group of assertions about the way of thinking before, during and after emotionally implicating situations, we have extracted *thirty mental molds* that seem the most dominating in our way of reacting, interpreting or valuing reality (Hernández, 2002). For example, attributions, following Weiner's model, are like a type of mental mold or a "thinking format", as a usual manner of explaining failures and successes.

A mental mold is a "dynamic and flexible format" with which we "configure" the contents that we interpret in a peculiar and usual way. Thus, for a job interview, people generate types of thoughts with a similar format or mold even if the situations are very different (consistency). Examples of these thoughts and formats are: "I am going to dazzle the interviewer and she will accept me as soon as she hears me speak" (Inflation-deception); "And what if I get tongue-tied when they ask me? (Aversive anticipation); "The interviewer will probably try to demoralize me" ("Hostiligenic" predisposition); "I prefer to not think that I have an interview" (Cognitive obliquity); "Why show up? In the end everything is the same...(Devaluative anticipation); "I will remain calm when they ask me an unexpected question" (Anticipatory emotional control); "Go for it! I am sure that after the first few minutes everything will go fine!" (Proactive motivation); "I have to realise that there could be some difficult questions but also some easy ones, in any case everything will go fine and if not, it will be one more experience" (Prudent constructive anticipation), etc.

Cognitive-affective mental molds have as their closest references causal thought in the Attribution Theory (Weiner, 1972); logical errors in Beck's Cognitive Model

of Depression (1974); coping self-regulation in the Cognitive-emotional Theory by Lazarus (1968), as well as the working models based on the processes of affective regulation (Mikulincer, 1998).

Each mold constitutes a loose piece of great value that when assembled with others responds to certain objectives. Specifically, we observe that a mold such as anticipatory hypercontrol can be related to greater academic achievement, but not with greater enjoyment of life. There is a group of molds that perfectly predict happiness or community subjective well-being, others predict greater community subjective well-being, while others predict greater efficacy, distinguishing between efficacy in business, in study or in chess.

All this indicates that using cognitive-affective molds, we are able to better intervene on them, since they are specific and operative strategies of easy diagnosis and modification. Also, that we have material that is more flexible in order to understand personality and human behaviour.

WHEN THE AFFECTIVE IS EFFECTIVE

Different investigations are demonstrating how these molds predict to a high degree adaptation and subjective well-being (Hernández, 2002), how they are related to the educational style of parents (Hernández, 2005c), and what is most surprising, how they predict academic achievement in a manner that stands out. Initially, we can say that most molds are related to learning and performance. In our investigations it is confirmed that the predictive capacity of mental molds with respect to performance in mathematics is superior to the predictive capacity of rational intelligence measured by Raven's test (Hernández, 2005b, c). Students with worse performances are characterized for having negativistic molds, such as focalization on shortcomings and selective negative evaluation; non-operative molds, anticipating effort and costs; evasive molds, disconnecting from problematic reality (emotional dissociation and inhibitory self-conviction); reactant molds, showing lack of emotional adjustment; molds of external attribution of success or failure ("hostiligenia" and of social dependence); impulsive molds or molds of vital implication; as well as impoverishment of optimizing molds (prudent constructive anticipation and volitive self-conviction).

In addition, it was confirmed that Mental Molds and Intelligence distinguish those who improve their performance and those who do not from one evaluation to the next. Specifically, the variance explained by intelligence was of 5% while the variance explained by the group of mental molds was of 39%, grouping correctly



76% of the cases in the discriminant analysis performed (canonical correlation = .63; Willis'Lambda = .61; Significance level = .002) (Hernández, 2005b).

This highlights that mental molds are a sort of "emotional intelligence" that regulate learning and that are independent of "rational intelligence", showing us the importance of strengthening and self-regulating certain cognitive-affective molds in order to be efficient.

These results do not correspond to one sample, one study or one subject matter, but they correspond to different subject matters, different situations and different students, using diverse measures of performance (Hernández, 2005b). Now then, mental molds have an influence in general but also in a differential manner. All this shows its functional value for explaining and improving performance in different contexts. The most evident proof is the superiority in competition of chess players who had undergone a program for the modification of mental molds compared to those who did not undergo this program despite having started from an equal level measured by the ELO rating (Hernández & Rodríguez-Mateo, 2005b).

These facts demonstrate the power, not only the predictive power of mental molds with respect to performance, but also the importance of taking them into account and improving them in order to optimize school achievement. Likewise they suggest that the school should not be centred only on intellectual competencies to achieve efficiency but also on emotional self-competencies or mental molds. The school is no different than life since many aspects that help us learn how to live also help us be more efficient.

THE RESPONSE OF THE SCHOOL

Considering the importance of socio-affective education from both the perspective of values and mental molds, will the school become involved in this? Where is the greatest difficulty? In its inertia, focalized on the merely intellectual, but, above all, the greatest difficulty lies not so much in that teachers be well-balanced and full of values, but more that teachers, school centres and society in general become conscious of its importance and get enthusiastic about an exciting project for the transformation of people and society, including in that process the teachers' own personal change. It is not about requesting competences for doing this, but is more about living a school project of greater meaning.

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