Rethinking the Importance of Establishing Adequate Relationships Between Teachers/Educators and Students in Order to Achieve the Best Results in Upbringing and Education

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In this paper, we analyse the phenomenon of education and upbringing, with emphasis on the contemporary educational practice, as it was primarily envisioned by John Dewey, but also by Whitehead, Peterson, and Noddings. We will look into what is today thought of as the role of educators and the importance placed on education for achieving the best possible character traits in students/pupils. We begin by analysing the concept of upbringing and education. Then, we give a short historical overview of the philosophy of education. Next, we take a closer look at the role that educators are expected to fulfil in present circumstances. Our aim is to find out what is really meant when we say that the role has changed from that of firm authority to that of facilitators, and to find out which abilities and dispositions should be developed as part of educating students in the best way possible.

DOI
https://doi.org/10.18690/um.ff.11.2025.14

ISBN
978-961-299-082-4

Keywords:
upbringing, education, the role of educators, traditional and contemporary upbringing, teacher-student relationship

University of Maribor Press

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10.18690/um.ff.11.2025.14

ISBN
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RAZMISLEK O POMENU VZPOSTAVITVE USTREZNEGA ODNOSA MED UČITELJI/VZGOJITELJI IN UČENCI ZA DOSEGANJE NAJBOLJŠIH REZULTATOV PRI VZGOJI IN IZOBRAŽEVANJU

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Ključne besede:
vzgoja,
izobraževanje,
vloga učiteljev,
tradicionalna in sodobna vzgoja,
odnos učitelj–učenec

V prispevku analiziramo fenomen izobraževanja in vzgoje s poudarkom na sodobni vzgojno-izobraževalni praksi, predvsem tako, kot si jo je zamislil John Dewey, pa tudi Whitehead, Peterson in Noddings. Preučili bomo današnjo vlogo vzgojiteljev in pomen izobraževanja za doseganje najboljših možnih značajskih lastnosti učenk_cev. Začenjamo z analizo pojma vzgoja in izobraževanje. Nato podamo kratek zgodovinski pregled filozofije izobraževanja. Nadalje si podrobneje ogledamo vlogo, ki naj bi jo imeli vzgojitelji v sedanjih okoliščinah. Naš cilj je ugotoviti, kaj je v resnici mišljeno, ko rečemo, da se je vloga trdne avtoritete spremenila v vlogo posredovalcev, in katere sposobnosti in nagnjenja je treba razvijati kot del izobraževanja učencev na najboljši možni način.

Univerzitetna založba
Univerze v Mariboru

1 Introduction

No matter what time period one is concerned with or what place we are talking about, one thing remains certain: people always cared about upbringing as well as education, and they assigned great importance to them. Even when they didn't have fancy words or sophisticated educational theories to vindicate their child-rearing or educational decisions and practices, they always considered these decisions and practices to be of crucial significance not just to themselves, but to their societies as a whole and the future generations as well. The reasons for this may not always be as simple as they may seem at first glance, but they are understandable. They may not be simple, because different people set different goals for themselves, especially as parents, and can even be influenced in doing so by unconscious traumas, unfulfilled ambitions, or desires. Still, such reasons can be considered understandable, because it seems to be universally desirable for people that their children, just as the societies they live in, advance and flourish. These reasons, in the end, mostly come down to what kind of people we consider and want both ourselves and our children to be.

Furthermore, it is a question of what kind of societies we want to live in at a future time, and what we want these societies to be based upon. It is, in effect, an exploration of our deeply held values, hopes and ambitions; all those things that we deem important, correct and necessary for life in general, and individual lives in particular, to hold meaning, importance and be considered a life well lived. Such a life is never lived in isolation from, or in wanton neglect of other members of a given society, which makes the task even more daunting. For this reason, the relationships formed between people are of great importance, and this is particularly true for those between teacher and students.

One could claim that most parents, when making decisions concerning their children, have neither the ambition nor the ability to look so far ahead. They only do what they deem best for their children to the best of their ability. Be that as it may, it is clear that all adults were once children and all of them were in no small part shaped or at least affected by the experiences and values they were exposed to in their upbringing. Some fell back on the lessons learned in early childhood, which they cherished as the most important in their lives, to get them through the harshest

of times. Others spend their entire lives trying to get away from what they endured at the hands of their parents or teachers, and try to do everything they can not to repeat any of it themselves. And while the latter are surely not to be considered examples of upbringing of any kind, let alone a good example, they show, just as poignantly as the good ones do, the vital importance of upbringing and education for the quality and nature of the future lives of children and, therefore, of entire societies that these children will inherit and rebuild in their own image.

Wherever there are people, there are multitudes of reasons, hopes, fears, justifications, and rationalisations behind everything that is said and done; some of them conscious, perhaps many more unconscious. It is often the case that when it comes to upbringing, the parents give little or no second thoughts to their position of supreme authority when deciding what is in their child's best interests. However, parents are not the only ones who take part in the upbringing and education of children, and teachers are often the ones whose influence can, at certain points in life, be of even greater importance to the development of a person's character and the achievement of their full potential. Bearing in mind this *heavy* responsibility, but also this great potential and opportunity, inasmuch as we can all agree that a good education and upbringing both strive to such an ideal, in this paper we try to pinpoint what ingredients such an education would consist of, and which methods it would use to achieve its goals. We will make an attempt to elucidate both those clear and obvious points of upbringing and education, if there are such, and also some that are perhaps more tacit and unclear, in order to try and make a contribution to the overall educational goal of helping to raise a more peaceful, tolerant, and humane society.

2 Definition of and approaches to education and upbringing

To that end, we will begin by trying to define upbringing and education. This is in itself a fairly challenging task, as there are many different definitions depending greatly on the person giving them, and the field from which they come. As many as there are, maybe we could say that they all have in common a general idea that both upbringing and education comprise all those theories and practises that aim to help a person grow in all their potentials and enable them to become capable of creating a happy, meaningful life for themselves, while also contributing to their

communities. In other words, the goal is to help people become capable of contributing to a creation of a better and more humane society. This will necessitate acquiring certain values, facts, skills, experiences, but that is not enough. It will also require finding a way in which all these qualities, and many more, are presented to the persons taught in such a way, and in such an atmosphere, that they can truly make the most of them, but in their own, individual way so as to minimise the opportunity for manipulation. When it comes to upbringing, as we've mentioned earlier, although it is often considered that its goals in most cases are clear, planned and conscious, it is actually often the case that much of it ends up being carried out in an unplanned, almost collateral fashion, and this is especially the case nowadays in the modern world, filled with haste and deadlines.

As this collateral nature of upbringing seems to have great influence on the learning process, it is only natural to try to define collateral learning in general, and one such definition was offered by a great pioneer of contemporary philosophy of education, John Dewey:

"Collateral learning in the way of formation of enduring attitudes, of likes and dislikes, may be and often is much more important than the spelling lesson or lesson in geography or history that is learned. For these attitudes are fundamentally what count in the future. The most important attitude that can be formed is that of desire to go on learning" (Dewey, 1952, p.49).

Historically, approaches to upbringing can, broadly speaking, be classified into two categories: traditional or classical, and contemporary or progressive theories of upbringing and education.[1] The main difference between them is the issue of centre or hierarchy within the educational process. In the so-called traditional approach, it is considered to be beyond question that the teacher is the central figure, the one who has the knowledge, wisdom and the authority to pass them on in ways they find the most effective.[2] The reasons for this seem straightforward. On the one hand, there are teachers, experienced members of society who spent many years acquiring

[1] See more in Cahn Steven M., *Classic and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Education*, New York, 1997. See also Peterson Michael L., *Philosophy of Education (Issues and Options)*, Leicester, 1986.
[2] This is confirmed by the examples of many philosophers who worked as tutors, like Locke, Kant and many others, to name just a few.

knowledge and skills, who know the ways of the society and are well suited to teach its values to youngsters who, on the other hand, lack all these features. If it is claimed that the goal of any given society can justifiably be for that society to prolong its existence by internalising its core values in the minds of its youth, and to prosper in that way, then who could be better suited and equipped for the job than the most experienced and learned members of such a society? And what point would there be in youngsters being expected to add much of their own ideas and doubts to this process, when they are not yet experienced enough to do so themselves?

However, as plausible as this may sound, what this type of educational atmosphere tends to create is a highly hierarchical relationship between teachers and pupils, one that lacks reciprocity and in which there is a sharp division of experience and knowledge, but sometimes also of rights and abilities, where the pupils can easily find themselves to be little more than passive recipients of fragmentary truths, delivered to them in a monotone, unimaginative fashion, using inappropriate methods. Be it that the teacher is supposed to instil current cultural, intellectual, ethical, and, generally speaking, fundamental values of a society, as it was envisioned by Plato, or that the goal of teaching is to exorcise culture from the pupil, as it was desired by Rousseau, the sharp division in the teacher-pupil relationship remains, and so do all its consequences. With the passing of time came different needs and perspectives, and with them there also appeared the need for a change of perspective on the part of educators and philosophers of education. They realised that this centralised perspective is no longer good enough, and a more nuanced, more collaborative approach is required. As is often the case with great paradigm shifts in any field, so was it the case here that the progressive educators first shifted the focus from one to the other end of the spectrum completely; the pupils came from the periphery to the centre, relegating teachers to the role of mere moderators and facilitators. Gradually, the tide is shifting toward a combination of these two approaches, avoiding either of the extremes. That brings us to the perspective that is gaining importance nowadays, one that we will also advocate here: the most important factor in either upbringing or education, is neither the parent/teacher nor the pupil/student alone. The most important factor is the relationship between them and the atmosphere it creates, which must be conducive to the achievement of needed knowledge, experience, acquisition of values, and all the rest that is needed for the development of a mature, independent, and authentic person.

While in the past it was taken somewhat for granted to be the case that, if there is a proper *'what'* (embodied in the proper subject matter taught by teachers), there will also be a proper *'how'* (embodied in the proper ways of teaching and methods used). This is no longer the predominant view. Today it is getting clearer that what is crucial for any endeavour to be successful, be it in child-rearing or education, is the creation or building of a good, efficient and reciprocal relationship between the tutor/teacher and the pupil/student.[3] This reciprocity should be based on mutual respect, care, and desire to gain knowledge, values, and all inner and outer marks of good conduct and action, which both sides will have to nurture and maintain. Therefore, the wholesome teacher/student relationship is considered the key ingredient needed for the authentic acquisition of knowledge, values, and skills to take place, none of which should be neglected. In other words, this means that what should be in the focus of the process of upbringing and education is the relationship between the one teaching and the one being taught and developed into a mature person.

Even though we have now ascertained that much of upbringing and education is done in collateral fashion, so that how something is said, done, or taught is as important as what is taught, and that historical development of the field seems to have progressed from teacher-centred to student-centred, to, finally, collaboration between the two key parties, dialogue- and reciprocity-centred approaches to education,[4] the main questions to tackle still remain: what does it mean to teach, what should be taught, and how should we do it? We turn to these in the next section.

[3] Nel Noddings – one of the foremost contemporary philosophers of education said in regard to this context: "When I became a teacher, I also entered a very special – and more specialized – caring relation." Noddings, as found in: Cahn, 1997, p. 471. She is referring here to the ethics of care, which she herself advocated.

[4] "A teacher cannot 'talk' this ethic. She must live it, and that implies establishing a relation with the student. Besides talking to him and showing him how one cares, she engages in cooperative practice with him. He is learning not just mathematics or social studies; he is also learning how to be one-caring. By conducting education morally, the teacher hopes to induce an enhanced moral sense in the student." Noddings, as found in: Cahn, 1997, p. 474.

3 Goals of education: What to teach and how to do it

3.1 Balance

Even if we decide that, based on available historical records, the relationship between teachers and students is what matters most if we are to achieve the best possible results, there is still the question of what these results should be, and which educational goals we should set. This leads us to the question of an even more general nature: what does it mean to educate, and are we even allowed to educate anyone, since it will inevitably mean manipulating their development to an extent. Since it is so that people cannot, in most cases, adequately educate themselves, and without educated individuals societies at large cannot prosper, we must conclude that upbringing and education are necessary, considering the fact that no alternative method for achieving the desired goal has yet been found. Then, if it is pragmatic to agree to some extent of manipulation in order to educate and prosper, we must choose the best possible goals to justify our intervention into the development of others. Educating a person, a being of such complexity and potential for both good and bad, cannot be reduced to achieving just a few simple goals; it cannot be just a question of teaching this or that fact, or establishing discipline, just as it should not be a question of mere personal preference for emotion over cognition, or cognition over values for that matter. Rather, it should be a colossal endeavour, an attempt to achieve a synthesis of many different factors, each of which is relevant and has its place in the whole. In practice, this could mean that education is an art of finding a proper ratio of, or balance between, knowledge and wisdom, cognitive and emotional growth, upbringing and morality, discipline and freedom and many other factors.

If we take a closer look at knowledge and wisdom, we can remember that, for instance in antiquity, there was an idea that wisdom is the superior goal, but it cannot arise without deep knowledge preceding it. Only if a deep enough level of knowledge is achieved, if theory and practice are thoroughly intermingled, then wisdom, in the form of skilled and virtuous living, will surely follow. Today, on the other hand, the emphasis seems to be on knowledge in the form of memorising large amounts of facts, which will lead to living some form of *successful* lives. Both of these approaches, when analysed in isolation, run into problems, as it was frequently the case that

theory did not lead to practice, and factual knowledge does not translate into living successful or well-adapted lives, let alone happy ones. This idea was very poignantly captured by Alfred N. Whitehead, who said: "/.../ though knowledge is one chief aim of intellectual education, there is another ingredient, vaguer but greater, and more dominating in its importance. The ancients called it 'wisdom'" (Whitehead, as found in: Frankena, 1965, p.76).

If there is no wisdom without deep knowledge, which is perhaps also internalised emotionally, and no theory, no matter how well memorised, guarantees that it will be turned into practice, then *how* something is taught could very well be of more significance than the mere facts being taught. The key ingredient then becomes the ability of the teacher to understand the personalities, experiences and needs of the students in such a way[5] so as to be able to present the lessons so artfully and skilfully that it appeals to the natural need in them to search for more than just facts. This potential exists in each person, but it must be brought to the surface. It needs to be carefully guided (Noddings, as found in: Cahn, 1997, p. 473). In Whitehead's wonderful observation:

"Education is the guidance of the individual towards a comprehension of the art of life; and by the art of life I mean the most complete achievement of varied activity expressing the potentialities of that living creature in the face of its actual environment. This completeness of achievement involves an artistic sense, subordinating the lower to the higher possibilities of the invisible personality. Science, art, religion, morality take their rise from this sense of values within the structure of being. Each individual embodies an adventure of existence. The art of life is the guidance of this adventure" (Whitehead, as found in: Frankena, 1965, p. 83).

[5] Or, in the words of Nel Noddings: "The teacher receives and accepts the student's feeling toward the subject matter; she looks at it and listens to it through his eyes and ears. How else can she interpret the subject matter for him? As she exercises this inclusion, she accepts his motives, reaches toward what he intends, so long as these motives and intentions do not force an abandonment of her own ethic. Inclusion as practiced by the teacher is a vital gift" (Noddings, as found in: Cahn, 1997, p.473).

It is now a bit clearer what was meant earlier, when we chose the word colossal to describe the undertaking of upbringing and education of even a single person, let alone of entire classrooms and generations of people. If it brings about an immediate sense of apprehension at the thought of such an enormous responsibility, the feeling is hardly unjustified, for it is truly a great responsibility; one that should not be taken on lightly. This responsibility still undoubtedly rests far more on the shoulders of teachers, since they are the ones who must ensure there is a good relationship between them and the students. However, regardless of all possible hardships, once we realise the potential rewards of boldly continuing in the face of such hardships, it is of no wonder that so many continue to do so. It is perhaps in philosophy that we can find the most inspirational idea for such a feat, when we are continuously encouraged to develop a love for wisdom and persevere in our search for it for its own sake, and for the sake of us all. Finding balance between knowledge and wisdom could then come down to not just choosing what to teach, but also teaching in such a way, and in such an atmosphere, that the students, while not being afraid to ask questions and give ideas, learn not just the facts, but also how to learn, why learning is rewarding, the value of knowledge (and wisdom), and how it is to be used, not just to the advantage of oneself, but even more so to the advantage, or at least not detriment, of others. Knowledge delivered in such a way, as challenging as it is to do so, already has in it the seeds of future wisdom; such a theory is already halfway there to practise. Whitehead offers additional support for such a view by stating: "Now wisdom is the way in which knowledge is held. It concerns the handling of knowledge, its selection for the determination of relevant issues, its employment to add value to our immediate experience. This mastery of knowledge, which is wisdom, is the most intimate freedom obtainable" (Whitehead, as found in: Frankena, 1965, p. 76).

As important as establishing and maintaining a delicate balance between knowledge and wisdom is, it is not enough in itself to ensure a wholesome educational process. One other important part was already hinted at in the previous paragraph, and that concerns the balance between discipline and freedom. Just as it was the case with knowledge and wisdom, so it will also be with freedom and discipline that neither of them should have dominance over the other; rather, they should be complementary. At certain situations or phases of development, more freedom is required; at others,

more discipline.[6] However, discipline should never just be in the service of maintaining a formal position of authority; just as authority, if exercised properly, can be conducive to a good working atmosphere. Similarly, freedom should not be used as a substitute for creating a good relationship with pupils. This delicate balance between freedom and discipline can at times be the trickiest for the teachers to navigate, because it often entails walking the thin line between being overly permissive and too rigid or authoritarian in behaviour. As Whitehead again points out: "The only avenue towards wisdom is by freedom in the presence of knowledge. But the only avenue towards knowledge is by discipline in the acquirement of ordered fact. Freedom and discipline are the two essentials of education/…/" (Whitehead, as found in: Frankena, 1965, p. 76). And, furthermore:

"The real point is to discover in practice that exact balance between freedom and discipline which will give the greatest rate of progress over the things to be known. I do not believe that there is any abstract formula which will give information applicable to all subjects, to all types of pupils, or to each individual pupil; except indeed the formula of rhythmic sway which I have been insisting on, namely, that in the earlier stage the progress requires that the emphasis be laid on freedom, and in that in the later middle stage the emphasis be laid on the definite acquirement of allotted tasks" (ibid., p. 80–81).

As we can see, it is very difficult to find the right way for students to be able to acquire all the necessary knowledge, experiences, and values efficiently, and to, on top of that, be able to apply them when appropriate circumstances arise. For this reason it is crucial to recognise who should be doing what and in what ways. In other words, it is very important to *set* the proper roles (or, to put it differently, to properly calibrate the teacher/student relationship) in the best way possible.

We can now get a better grasp on the meaning of the term *finding delicate balance between different aspects of education*, not just in general, but in working with every individual in particular. When we consider the teacher/student relationship, one could in a way

[6] This aspect was considerably researched and developed by well-known psychologists, such as Piaget and Kohlberg, but also by their colleagues Gilligan and Noddings.

draw a parallel between a teacher and a doctor, the kind of which was drawn by Peterson.

"The art of teaching must rather be compared to the art of medicine. The teacher works with the inner principles of human nature in somewhat the same way as the physician works with the physical principles of health. Just as the physician attempts to get the body to the point where it can heal itself, the teacher must help bring students to the point at which they can learn on their own" (Peterson, 1986, p. 113).

What is particularly significant about this parallel is that it also emphasises the importance of both cognitive and affective dimension of teaching. Just as a physician must simultaneously have all the cognitive and factual skills necessary for them to properly do their job, so must a teacher possess thorough knowledge of all the subjects that the students are to be taught, and be skilful and meticulous, one could even say *wise*, in the manners in which all this can be properly used in practice. However, as necessary as such competence is, it is not enough, as both physicians and teachers must be at the same time motivated by deep and sincere care for people in general, and every patient/student they meet in particular.[7] While this genuine emotional drive is welcome to propel them forward against any obstacle they encounter, they must still be vigilant lest they allow their emotions to cloud their judgement or make them favour some patients/students over others. So, one could say that in this one metaphor, all the balance we discussed so far is included: wisdom and knowledge, reason and emotion, facts, values, morality, but also freedom and discipline, because everything should be incorporated in one's personality, and yet nothing should dominate over other factors to the detriment of the overall goal. Thus, we are once again made aware of the great complexity involved in creating just the right kind of relationship between teachers and students.

All of the guidelines mentioned until now really in a way presuppose that teachers, if they are even to see value in all these ideals and attempt to realise them, must themselves be virtuous people to begin with, or at least strive towards it (Comp. Noddings, as found in: Cahn, 1997, p. 473). That means that they were taught or

[7] "Besides engaging the student in dialogue, the teacher also provides a model. To support her students as ones-caring, she must show them herself as one-caring" (Noddings, as found in: Cahn, 1997, p. 473).

helped to become this way by some people who worked with them in their own upbringing and education, which in turn seems to suggest that virtue can be taught. As intuitive as it sometimes seems to make this claim, it is not uncontroversial, since the debate about whether or how virtue can be taught, or even what virtue really is, has been going on since the very beginning and it is showing no signs of reaching a state of lasting consensus. One of the many authors who were keenly aware of this problem was Richard Peters, who wrote:

"Is it the 'correct opinion' and conventional behavior of well-brought-up people? Or is it conduct based on a grasp of fundamental principles? There is a corresponding difference in what is emphasized in moral education. On the one hand there is an emphasis on habit, tradition, and being properly brought up; on the other hand there is emphasis on intellectual training, and on the development of critical thought and choice" (Comp. Noddings, as found in: Cahn, 1997, p. 473).

Still, as we can see, it would seem very difficult and, even perilous, to completely separate education for cognitive growth and critical thinking from education for morality and values, so teaching about virtue should, by all means, in some form also be presented as part of the teaching process and the relationship we have been constructing.[8] But how is it that we should go about doing that? An author that can be of great assistance on this issue is one of the greats of philosophy of education, John Dewey.

3.2 Dewey's insights regarding upbringing and education

John Dewey is one of the greatest pioneers and innovators in the field of philosophy of education in contemporary times, so it should not come as a surprise that he was aware of all the factors we have discussed and has tried to find ways in which all of these can be used to achieve the best possible educational results. These can be laid out in terms of helping people develop their innate potential for living in creative, humane, democratic and prosperous societies. The best way to do this is by teaching

[8] "Everything we do, then, as teachers, has moral overtones. Through dialogue, modelling, the provision of practice, and the attribution of best motive, the one-caring as teacher nurtures the ethical ideal. She cannot nurture the student intellectually without regard for the ethical ideal unless she is willing to risk producing a monster, and she cannot nurture the ethical ideal without considering the whole self-image of which it is a part" (Noddings, as found in: Cahn, 1997, p. 474).

them to embody all these virtues as individuals. To this purpose, he was preoccupied with achieving a synthesis of all the seemingly opposed factors of life, which manifest in the microcosm of education:

"/…/ to external discipline is opposed free activity; to learning from texts and teachers, learning through experience; to acquisition of isolated skills and techniques by drill, is opposed acquisition of them as means of attaining ends which make direct vital appeal; to preparation for a more or less remote future is opposed making the most of the opportunities of present life; to static aims and materials is opposed acquaintance with a changing world" (Dewey, 1952, p. 5–6).

Most of his ideas which we shall analyse come from the work he wrote in the later part of his life, *Experience and Education* (1952). It is there that he discussed the relationship and the differences between traditional and progressive approaches to education, himself being the bearer of many progressive ideas and practices. To him it went without saying that the moral component of education cannot and should not ever be separated from the cognitive one, but should instead be deeply intertwined with it. He was a resolute opponent of any traditional sense of morality based on enforcement of obedience to authority, conventional thinking, or dogmas of any kind, and advocated for an open society that would be in constant search for new and better solutions to any existing problems. These solutions would also be put to constant tests to determine their efficacy, and then be readily substituted for better ones as soon as it would be possible. He wanted to accentuate the need for continual reassessment and the need to continually update our moral influences and practices, not so much when it comes to individuals, but more so because of societal influences. He was a staunch believer in democracy, and believed that if democracy is to be properly exercised, personal experiences of the students must be given enough space and value in the educational process, since it is these children that will create future societies. The emphasis is not on any kind of objective understanding or value being placed on a child's personal experience; it is unclear whether it is even possible to do that. Rather, the main idea is that each experience carries in itself a potential, a pragmatic value which, if properly recognized and used, can lead to a multitude of other quality experiences, which will merge to create a life of rich and meaningful experiences. It is precisely here that the crucial role of the teacher enters the stage, for it is completely up to the teacher to be mindful and artful in creating

such an atmosphere and making such use of the subject at hand, so it will serve as an impetus for the students to come up with new ways of thinking and reasoning, and in such a way their current experiences can become springboards for future, novel ones. In Dewey's own words: "It thus becomes the office of the educator to select those things within the range of existing experience that have the promise and potentiality of presenting new problems which by stimulating new ways of observation and judgement will expand the area of further experience" (Djui [Dewey], 1966 [1970], p. 90). And also: "/…/ the central problem of an education based upon experience is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences" (Dewey, 1997, p. 28).

Dewey is primarily concerned with students' growth, and therefore the main role of the teacher is to facilitate such growth – cognitive, moral, emotional, psychological, and creative. In general terms, Dewey defines any growth as any considerable improvement in one's living experience, and this is a process that should be in motion as long as we live (Dewey, 1952, p. 42). This is achieved through creative use of various techniques and methods at the teachers' disposal. It will take skill, perseverance, and dedication to be able to adjust to all different situations that arise, and to find ways to personalise the approach when needed, so that, whenever possible, every student can get the most out of any situation. That can be a daunting experience, but that is where the challenge lies. Sometimes this will entail helping and guiding students, especially the younger and more inexperienced ones, to learn how to make decisions for themselves, and in this process to build their character (Dewey, 1997, p. 12). Another crucial aspect of this growth, according to Dewey, is the development and continual refinement of the students' skills of critical thinking.

Reflective thinking is a matter of particular significance in Dewey's theory, since it is, on the one hand, unequivocally connected to the refinement of moral sensibilities in students, with which it develops concurrently; and on the other hand, it encompasses a wide variety of different abilities and skills within itself, all of which require time and effort to be properly developed. Some of these abilities and skills are classified as observational, emotional, questioning, imaginative, inferential, experimenting, and consulting abilities, as well as the abilities of argument analysis, judging, and deciding (Hitchcock, 2018). Due to the limited scope of this paper, we shall say a bit more only about emotional and consulting abilities. When it comes to

emotional abilities, they are of vital importance to the healthy development of children, but are frequently unwisely neglected in education in favour of exclusive rationality, especially nowadays (Hitchcock, 2018).

This is potentially a grave mistake, since children are emotional by nature (just like adults), and if they are not taught how to relate with their emotions, as well as adjust them to the occasion from an early age, they will suffer consequences for the rest of their lives. Emotions are an integral part of any healthy personality and should, just like curiosity and enthusiasm for discovering the world around us, which children have in abundance, be encouraged instead of suppressed. Suppressing them can only result in them erupting back to the surface later on, usually in unpredictable and harmful ways. As for consulting abilities, these are primarily concerned with teaching students to always look for credible and trustworthy sources of knowledge or veracity in any given field of interest, which is again closely tied with morality, as well as with many of the aforementioned parts of critical thinking abilities (Hitchcock, 2018). To sum up, it is clear that both emotional and consulting abilities, as parts of the same *package*, which we call critical or reflective thinking, depend on their proper implementation on the establishment of wholesome relationships between people, in particular between teachers and students, but also between all members of a given society. Therefore, it is also clear that these relationships really determine the quality of upbringing and education.

Again, just as it was the case with all of the factors analysed before, all of these abilities are inseparable from one another, and each and every one of them has an important role to play in a life of a truly well-developed and humane individual, the kind of which would be the desired end result of a formal, wholesome process of upbringing and education, which was succinctly described here. It is to be remembered, however, that these are just guidelines, ideals to strive for, not to be imposed on anyone, and that there are many different ways in which they can be implemented and taught. Furthermore, it is worth noting that a true process of education and upbringing is a lifelong process, filled with mistakes, doubts, problems, and obstacles, all of which can become milestones on the way to ultimate success. Still, they all invariably depend on the quality of the relationships we establish between each other.

4 Conclusion

In this paper, we discussed the importance of upbringing and education for the development of happy, well-balanced and humane individuals and societies. We gave a short overview of what is usually thought of as upbringing and education, what can be said to be the most commonly held goals of these endeavours, and briefly described what was historically considered to be of most importance to the educators advocating either traditional or progressive educational approaches. Between these two perspectives, most commonly placing the focus of their attention either exclusively to teachers or students, we advocated the view that contemporary developments ask for a middle way – placing the relationship between them and their collaboration in search for knowledge and acquisition of basic, fundamental values in the centre. This view gives them equal importance, with teachers being the ones tasked with creatively guiding, nurturing, and creating the atmosphere and conditions conducive to achieving the best possible results. More precisely, we described parts of what should be taught in such a process, and how it could be done, using primarily (but not exclusively) the insights of John Dewey to create a compelling case for a truly contemporary upbringing and education, based on wholesome relationships, primarily between teachers and students, and then everybody else. The finer details and intricacies of this relationship can serve as basis for a future paper related to this topic.

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