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Indoctrination and Education: Considerations From the Radical and Inclusive Approach for Teaching

Adoctrinamiento y educación: consideraciones desde el enfoque radical e inclusivo para la enseñanza

Doutrinação e educação: considerações a partir de uma abordagem radical e inclusiva para o ensino



Agustín de la Herrán-Gascón
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
ROR: <https://ror.org/01cby8j38>
Madrid, España

agustin.delaherran@uam.es
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9156-6971>

Pablo Rodríguez-Herrero
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
ROR: <https://ror.org/01cby8j38>
Madrid, España

pablo.rodriguez@uam.es
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2152-0078>

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Abstract:

Introduction. Indoctrination is currently a widely debated topic in social and educational theory, with discussions about its definition, causes, relationship with education, and alternatives. This paper analyzes indoctrination from the point of view of the radical and inclusive approach developed by the authors thirty years ago, incorporating classical Eastern perspectives and concepts into pedagogy and education. **Aims.** The objectives of the study are to examine the relationships between egocentrism, learning, and indoctrination and to outline a consciousness-based educational alternative from the radical and inclusive approach to education. **Discussion.** A dialectical pedagogical essay analyzes indoctrination from human egocentrism and current education based on learning, disciplinary knowledge, and competencies. As an alternative, the paper proposes an education based on consciousness, which includes processes of deconditioning and educational evolution from ego to consciousness. **Conclusions.** Indoctrination is the opposite of education. The primary challenge in educational teaching is determining whether to indoctrinate or educate. Education based on learning and competencies can be compatible with indoctrination. Egocentric systems (national, religious, ideological, military, scientific, cultural, educational, or other) can be sources of indoctrination. The most relevant didactic criterion is whether conscious educational institutions and educators conduct



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teaching. These conclusions have broad implications for the initial and in-service training of teachers and other educators, whether at personal or systemic levels.

Keywords: Indoctrination; education; radical and inclusive approach; egocentrism; teaching; learning; SDG4 quality education; education curriculum.

Resumen:

Introducción. Actualmente el adoctrinamiento es un tema ampliamente debatido en la teoría social y educativa, con discusiones en torno a su definición, causas, relación con la educación y alternativas. Este trabajo analiza el adoctrinamiento desde el punto de vista del enfoque radical e inclusivo de la educación, desarrollado por los autores hace treinta años, incorporando perspectivas y conceptos orientales clásicos a la pedagogía y la educación. **Objetivos.** Los objetivos del estudio son examinar las relaciones entre egocentrismo, aprendizaje y adoctrinamiento y esbozar una alternativa educativa basada en la conciencia desde el enfoque radical e inclusivo. **Discusión.** Mediante un ensayo pedagógico dialéctico se analiza el adoctrinamiento desde el egocentrismo humano y la actual educación basada en el aprendizaje, los saberes disciplinares y las competencias. Se deduce como alternativa una educación basada en la conciencia y que incluya procesos de descondicionamiento y evolución educativa del ego a la conciencia. **Conclusiones.** El adoctrinamiento es un opuesto a la educación; el primer reto de la enseñanza educativa es saber si con ella se va a adoctrinar o a educar; la educación basada en el aprendizaje y competencias es compatible con el adoctrinamiento; los sistemas egocéntricos (nacionales, religiosos, ideológicos, militares, científicos, culturales, educativos o de otro tipo) pueden ser fuentes de adoctrinamiento; el criterio didáctico más relevante es si la enseñanza se desarrolla por centros educativos y educadores conscientes. Estas conclusiones tienen amplias implicaciones para la formación inicial y continua de docentes y de otros educadores, bien personales, bien sistémicos.

Palabras claves: Adoctrinamiento; educación; enfoque radical e integrador; egocentrismo; enseñanza; aprendizaje; ODS4 educación de calidad; currículo educativo.

Resumo:

Introdução. A doutrinação é atualmente um tema amplamente debatido na teoria social e educacional, com discussões em torno da sua definição, causas, relação com a educação e alternativas. Este documento analisa a doutrinação sob o ponto de vista da abordagem radical e inclusiva da educação desenvolvida pelos autores há trinta anos, incorporando perspectivas e conceitos clássicos orientais na pedagogia e na educação. **Objetivos.** Os objetivos do estudo são examinar as relações entre egocentrismo, aprendizagem e doutrinação e delinear uma alternativa educacional baseada na consciência a partir da abordagem radical e inclusiva. **Discussão.** Um ensaio pedagógico dialéctico analisa a doutrinação a partir do egocentrismo humano e a educação atual baseada na aprendizagem, nos conhecimentos disciplinares e nas competências. Como alternativa, propõe-se uma educação baseada na consciência, que inclui processos de descondicionamento e evolução educativa do ego para a consciência. **Conclusões.** A doutrinação é o oposto da educação. O primeiro desafio do ensino educativo é saber se é para doutrinar ou para educar. A educação baseada na aprendizagem e nas competências é compatível com a doutrinação. Os sistemas egocêntricos (nacionais, religiosos, ideológicos, militares, científicos, culturais, educativos ou outros) podem ser fontes de doutrinação. O critério didático mais relevante é saber se o ensino é realizado por instituições educativas e educadores conscientes. Estas conclusões têm amplas implicações para a formação inicial e contínua de professores e outros educadores, sejam eles pessoais ou sistémicos.

Palavras-chave: Doutrinação; educação; abordagem radical e integradora; egocentrismo; ensino; aprendizagem; ODS4 educação de qualidade; currículo escolar.

Introduction

Indoctrination has been an object of study in pedagogy for more than a century (Ariso, 2019). The analysis of its concept causes and relations with political and educational systems has been undertaken from the perspective of various paradigms and theoretical and curricular positions. None of these has centred on aspects of the issue as important to education as egocentrism, consciousness, or deconditioning. Therefore, this paper, based on the radical and inclusive approach to education (e. g. de la Herrán Gascón, 1995; 2014), sets out to (1) study the relations of egocentrism and learning to indoctrination, and (2) outline a form of consciousness-based education as an antithesis and alternative to indoctrination.

To this end previous approaches to indoctrination in education are analysed, and the radical and inclusive approach, the theoretical framework on which this study is based, is outlined. Since this theory was developed by the authors, references to their own works, necessary for dating the ideas cited, are inevitable.

Indoctrination and education

Taylor (2017) recognises indoctrination as a threat to education, proposes to identify it and highlights the ethical responsibility of educators in its prevention and education. If education and indoctrination are opposites (Gatchel, 1959), one way of furthering our understanding of education is to study indoctrination as a pedagogically antagonistic socio-educational phenomenon. This is a means of producing knowledge that differs from the normal Western approach (Zhao, 2020), traditionally centred on the positive and desirable qualities of human beings and society (Norrie, 2010).

The most paradigmatic cases of indoctrination occur when force and manipulation are used by states, religious groups, etc., to induce people to accept their ideology (Curren, 2008). This ideology is not necessarily political, although it has been shown that autocratic governments indulge in more political conditioning than democratic states (Diwan & Vartanova, 2020). Indoctrination can be of various kinds: religious, national, cultural, military, sexual, scientific, etc.; and it can also be produced by actions and omissions in education, as Copp (2016) remarks:

Educational practices can be flawed in many ways other than being indoctrinal. For instance, schools might use the threat of corporal punishment to motivate pupils to behave in class. Schools might use outmoded or intellectually flawed textbooks. Curricula can leave out or simply fail to address important topics. To be sure, in some cases, practices or failings of these kinds might be motivated by the desire to shape pupils' beliefs, and in these cases, indoctrination or something that resembles it might be involved. For instance, curricula might be designed to avoid certain topics with the aim that pupils simply not acquire



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certain controversial beliefs. A school might fail to teach biology because the teachers do not want to address evolutionary theory... A school might fail to teach students to think critically even if it does not strictly speaking indoctrinate them... We need to be able to distinguish indoctrination from all the other ways that instruction can be flawed. (p. 151)

Although indoctrination is central to the study of moral education (Copp, 2016), it cannot be limited to this area, but transcends it, affecting all subject fields and cross-curricular content. From the moral education standpoint, a first phase of indoctrination in certain ideas (for example, respect for others, which is not understood in the first years of childhood) can be positive, if it is followed by a subsequent phase based on reason and questioning (Croce, 2019). Other content, for example in science education, can also initially be taught without questions being raised (Smith & Siegel, 2019). Nevertheless, indoctrination cannot be part of the purposes of education, since it is the antithesis of the latter, as Condorcet (2013), Giner de los Ríos (2003) and American progressive educationalists such as Dewey and Kilpatrick (Gatchel, 1959) affirmed.

In terms of how indoctrination is defined, Siegel (1991) suggested three main criteria: (1) content or doctrine, (2) intention and (3) method. Kazepides (1991) argues that the first condition is always linked to the second, since commitment to a specific ideology or doctrine also involves unquestioned beliefs and links the methodological aspect to bad teaching practice rather than indoctrination. For Spiecker (1991), the teaching of certain social rules and values (content, doctrine) does not necessarily lead to indoctrination if intention is absent and the content is open to debate and critical thinking.

Hanks (2008) expresses the “paradox of indoctrination”, which is to say that if indoctrination is the inculcation of beliefs without reasons, and if children lack the capacity to evaluate reasons, it is not possible to cultivate that capacity without indoctrination. It follows that some indoctrination is inevitable and that there are acceptable forms of indoctrination. The author emphasizes McDowell’s (1999) concept of “reasons space”. For de la HerránGascón (2016), reasons are usually biased by the personal and collective ego. A non-dual, non-partial, unbiased reason is truly exceptional and could be assimilated to an “extraordinary conscience”.

Regarding the inevitability of imparting certain content without critical questioning (Croce, 2019; Smith & Siegel, 2019), Ariso (2019) suggests that we draw a distinction between ‘beliefs’ and ‘certainties’. While a certainty does not involve doubt or the possibility of error, a belief can be questioned. For Ariso (2019), teaching children to ignore alternatives to a certainty (for example, the fact that there are living beings on Earth) is necessary for their education. In this context, he argues that we should avoid the term ‘indoctrination,’ particularly when it is used as the opposite of education. Cuypers & Haji (2006) explore the possibility of fostering critical thinking in education by distinguishing between critical thinking with and without indoctrination.

Thus, there is no agreement amongst scholars on the actual concept of indoctrination and all its root causes, nor on its relationship to education. Thus, this paper sets out to provide an analysis of indoctrination from a different perspective, based on constructs that are not normally associated with education. During the study, we attempt to identify the basic causes of indoctrination and to make a theoretical contribution to the development of its concept and the exploration of its relationship with education.

The radical and inclusive approach to education

The radical and inclusive approach to education (e. g. de la Herrán Gascón, 1995; 2014) is part of a pedagogical theory through which the root causes of social and educational phenomena, both real and potential, can be analysed. In this theory the metaphor of a tree is used to yield insights into the situation of education. The most vital part for the tree's growth is the roots, which are normally hidden from sight and therefore absent from theory. In the tree of education, the internal part is the deepest-rooted, the most radical, while at the same time the least perceptible, clear, and socially acknowledged. The external features –the trunk, branches, leaves, blossoms, fruit etc.– are also parts of the tree, and these are the most well-known and well-established. The tree's vigour, however, depends on the roots, along with the soil and fungi that feeds them. This radical portion has a beauty distinct from that of the trunk, the branches, the blossoms, or the fruit. The roots can be distinguished from the above-ground parts, and project themselves into them, but not vice-versa. Thus, the roots are the essential yet undervalued part.

In conventional education, the external part corresponds to what is most obvious and socially acknowledged. It represents the education required for every circumstance, social moment, and development in pedagogical knowledge. For example, in Western education systems, it corresponds to the competencies, the content of the subjects and cross-curricular topics, values, emotional education, active methodology, ICTs, critical and creative thought, etc. The visible part of education is called for explicitly by society, the educational community, political actors, etc. There are factors, topics, and phenomena, however, that are of great value for a more complete or full education since they are crucial to our development but not called for by society. These correspond to the roots of education, which, despite their essential nature, are absent from the discourse of international educational organisations, curricula, and specific school projects.

The radical and inclusive approach to education sets out to complement the paradigm of socially accepted ways of understanding education: hence the adjective 'inclusive'. It does not call into question the value of the competences, for example, while on the other hand it does draw attention to their *a priori* incompleteness for a full, holistic education. It stresses the radical,



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due to its the importance in education and its scarce theoretical and political development. It advocates a form of 'complete' or 'higher' education understood as the synthesis of East and West or the awakening of the consciousness of the Buddhas combined with the excellence of competency development (de la Herrán Gascón & Sabbi, 2021). Its process moves from the ego to consciousness and its orientation is towards education for conscious living. From the perspective of the radical and inclusive approach, both the ego and consciousness are basic constructs dating back to the Eastern classics. Both the Western tradition, however, and Habermas' widely accepted theses on interests and rationalities (Habermas, 1968), have ignored the importance of these constructs for the education of the whole human being, and this has led to serious conceptual and interpretative lacunae.

Here we outline some distinguishing features of the radical and inclusive approach to education. (a) It enables us to view and interpret differently the same commonly observed situation. (b) It identifies and addresses the educational needs of the human being as paramount, regardless of whether society requires this or not. (c) It transcends the educator-educated duality, arguing that the first to be educated should be the educators themselves and that the educated can also be educators. (d) It does not place the student only at the core of education, but sees education as having various centres, and argues that the key to all of these lies in knowing that the self is at the centre of education and that one should fulfil one's own education before that of others. (e) The purposes of education are seen as based on consciousness, unlike generally accepted purposes, with the aim of awakening the consciousness and unity of human beings on both personal and social levels. (f) It sees itself as an education for humanity and for the universality of the human being, including all human singularities. (g) It complements learning-based education and competency development with an education that contributes to an understanding of life and of oneself, going beyond the acquisition of knowledge in its different fields and including the loss of meaning (unlearning), non-knowledge (meditation), deep self-knowledge, etc. (h) It situates the focus of education in self-education as the essential root of all education, and not in others (students, children) or in external objects (the curriculum, methodology, technology, etc.). (i) It sets out to educate people for a less egocentric and more conscious society, based on a common, shared consciousness in which education would be a priority in all activities. (j) It does not centre on learning as the fundamental purpose of education, but consciousness, which, subsuming learning, has clear educational goals. (k) It accepts the importance of education that pays attention to diversity but sees this as partial; it also pays attention to the identity, similarity, and uniqueness of every human being as the main and complementary aspects of inclusive education and social inclusion. (l) It identifies non-linear phases in the development of self-education: conditioning (the current normal phase), deconditioning (an exceptional and liberating phase), reconditioning (an exceptional and dialectical phase), self-knowledge (a hitherto unprecedented phase) and emptiness or full awakening (also unprecedented); and this sequence defines normal, conventional education as

a first-phase process, embryonic, during which meditation is essential. (m) From the standpoint of these pedagogical orientations, the concept of education, its application and the curriculum are redefined: what is commonly called education is not a full or complete education but a quasi, pseudo-education or simulated education, in the sense given it by [Cebes \(2010\)](#), a disciple of Socrates whose importance has been little studied in pedagogy.

Through these criteria, the insufficiency of normal curricula for a complete education has been described ([de la Herrán Gascón, 2019b](#)) and the radical curriculum has been identified as consisting of those radical topics that, while not required by society or included in the educational content of the curriculum, are essential for a consciousness-based education. These topics are of a universal (synchronic) and eternal (diachronic) nature. Some are positive and desirable – for example consciousness, humility, doubt, self-knowledge, universality, meditation, love and the awareness of death and finiteness – and some undesirable – such as egocentrism, ignorance, lack of consciousness, inanity, stupidity, fanaticism, hatred, barbarism, the overall immaturity of society, etc. A certain amount of empirical research has been carried out on some of these aspects, demonstrating their absence from curriculum design. From the perspective of the radical and inclusive approach, if these deep educational fields are not addressed there can be no full or complete education. Our education is clearly incomplete and partial, and thus potentially a form of indoctrination since it is oriented towards the egocentric interests of personal and social systems.

The bases of indoctrination from the perspective of the radical and inclusive approach

Learning

Traditionally, learning has been seen as the main object or aspiration of education, in line with the predominant purposes of the curriculum. This is common throughout the history of the curriculum, from efficiency school theorists, progressive educators, reconstructionists and transformationalists. In recent decades, since the Delors Report it has emerged as lifelong learning and the basis of education linked to key competences ([European Commission, 2018](#)). Consistent with this, the importance of learning to learn has been emphasised. In all these approaches, learning, i.e. “the activity of gaining knowledge”, according to the Cambridge Dictionary, has been the common denominator. In other words, learning as a fundamental construct of education has not been questioned. However, from the point of view of the radical, integrative approach, an education based on the acquisition of knowledge is an incomplete education compatible with indoctrination.

Why has learning been put forward as the fundamental goal of the educational process? This is mainly due to the psychologization of education and the lack of epistemological and social leadership from pedagogy in the field of its main object of study. Often in the recent



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history of education, psychology, a health science, has engulfed the fields of education and training with constructs that have then been swallowed wholesale and expanded out of all measure by education researchers and professionals. Years ago, the invasive psychological theory was behaviourism; later constructivism; then cognitive theory; later still the emotions, and throughout all of this, learning. The logic of this discourse has led to the erroneous definition of some educational issues, for example when the term “cooperative learning” is used to refer to teaching techniques based on cooperation, or “universal design for learning” when it is teaching that is being designed. This psychologising discourse in education has had deep and lasting effects. When psychological theory has intruded into pedagogy and didactics and become established as the norm it has stamped its own partial vision on the field, and this has damaged education. The most serious harm stems from its epistemological short-sightedness and lack of pedagogical lucidity, which has obviously gone undetected. In other words, it has not been clearly aware that it does not know what it does not know (Confucius, in Gardner, 2007) of pedagogy and didactics, regardless of whether what pertains to psychological intervention in education has been well done or not.

This has meant that education has centred itself on learning. This is a psychological and didactic construct that has been extrapolated and expanded so much that it has lost its very nature. The educational community accepts without debate or criticism that the end purpose of education and teaching is significant and relevant learning. That learning is the goal of education is also clear from the guidelines of all international educational organisations.

The interpretation given this by the radical and inclusive approach is that it is an error to see learning as the core and primary aspiration of education. The purpose of education cannot be learning. Education requires learning, but not all learning, while it may be significant and relevant, is educational (de la Herrán Gascón, 1995). Learning is instrumental, manipulable, interpretable; it has no end point or teleological orientation. For this basic, constitutive reason, learning can be broken down into modules; it can be channelled and manipulated both in terms of content and the type of knowledge it favours. It can be motivated by goals as different as indoctrination and more complete or holistic education. An education based on learning does not make sense, since it can be used for any kind of objective and to underpin all types of orientations whether educational or not. A didactic aspiration built on and for significant and relevant learning outcomes is, at the very least, a short-sighted form of educational action; it sees well, but only at short range. Without an in-depth, long-range view, however, there are no purposes in education. Since this depth and range are lacking, national curricula and international education systems often must create external forms of endorsing their own proposals. It is enough for pedagogy and didactics to merely observe and be silent, thereby shirking their responsibility as observers, whistle-blowers and social guides, a responsibility of all sciences towards their objects of study. If learning is acquiring knowledge, we should

remember that knowledge is a malleable construct. When it is imbued with egocentrism it becomes 'biased knowledge' (de la Herrán Gascón, 1995), in line with partial interests and systems. Learning can create extrinsic needs that can be labelled 'education' although they distort the subject. In short, the predominance of the construct of 'learning' in education is an error, since it can drain educational action of its formative meaning.

Moreover, through learning it is possible to become a competent person, but not a whole person. A full or complete education cannot be arrived at through learning. Complete, holistic education (awakening plus excellent competence) requires on the one hand the opposite of learning or acquiring knowledge – in other words, it calls on us to unlearn and shed knowledge – and on the other meditation (which is neither knowledge or non-knowledge). This is a central concept-phenomenon of the radical and inclusive approach to education and a basic model through which we examine what is called education and detect its epistemological weakness and insufficiency. The cause of this is its focus on learning. From the perspective of the radical and inclusive approach, education should guide us towards a more conscious and competent individual and collective life. Consciousness becomes self-knowledge, interiorisation, maturity, sensitivity, awareness of death and finiteness, understanding and open-mindedness. And awareness, as the purpose of education, goes beyond learning, as the capacity to become aware is sometimes favoured by learning, sometimes impaired, and sometimes does not depend at all on the acquisition of knowledge (de la Herrán Gascón, 2018). The loss of prior knowledge can be basic to a more complete education and awareness. For example, lying, prejudice, bias, triviality, bigotry, imbalance, dependency, duality, hatred, stupidity, etc. can be learned. But awareness through loss, detachment, deconditioning or meditation can be key to evolving towards a more complex consciousness, freed from conditioning, from ballast.

Although classical pedagogues such as Freire postulated that consciousness was to guide transformative action and educational purposes (Goodall, 2018), it was applied to the social and existential realm. He did not theorise from an essential or deep perspective, like Krishnamurti (2013), nor did he link it to unlearning or deconditioning. It could be objected that 'unlearning' can be just one more type of 'learning'; yet if learning is seen as the acquisition of knowledge, it cannot be identified with its opposite. 'Unlearning' educationally oriented towards consciousness, requires letting go, shedding the knowledge that conditions the person, the knowledge that is partial, wrong, biased, egocentric, or doctrinaire. Learning and unlearning are as different as nutrition and defecation. In this sense, learning to unlearn is an apprenticeship. But unlearning, detaching, eliminating, forgetting, losing, meditating, etc. is not learning at all.

The essential reason for the problem lies in the fact that, as learning has no intrinsic teleological or educational meaning, we cannot claim that it is desirable or not for education. Its pedagogical centrality in conventional discourse informs a foundation that favours indoctrination. Even more so when *a priori* the acquisition of knowledge can have egocentric biases, since it responds to personal or collective egos, i.e. the egos of individuals, cultures, nations, religions, political movements, military groups, economic lobbies, etc., whose main goal is to survive and flourish, thereby increasing



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individual and collective conditioning in line with their ideologies and doctrines. In fact, in societies where conditioning has acquired a central position, the alternative when the doctrine collapses is unlearning and shedding knowledge stemming from the ruling ideology. This is why 'pedagogues of reparation' (Zembylas, 2018) cannot base themselves solely on learning anew. In order to build in freedom it is as important to destroy as it is to construct. Firstly, it is necessary to dismantle what came before through a coming to awareness oriented towards unlearning and deconditioning, in order then to build forms of reason that can foster greater individual and collective consciousness. Education for a more conscious life goes further than that based on teaching and learning. It is the opposite of indoctrination, since it is associated with open-mindedness, the complexity of consciousness and the recognition of the partiality of all ideas.

Also, education based on learning invites us to think of the student as the centre of education, and this could not be more inaccurate. Just as there is no significant learning without teaching, one can be educated without an educator; and the educator is the result of her/his training. Thus, if students are the centre of education, then educators have to be at the centre before them; and families are another prior centre. We can also see friendships, educational institutions, society, etc. as centres of education. Therefore, the model figure, in the radical and inclusive approach, is not a circumference with a centre; but instead, a blackberry with various globules, each one its centre. Furthermore, there is a centre to these centres –the centre of the blackberry– representing the primary root of a well-planned education, which coincides with the self.

Egocentrism

Since learning is an acquisitive construct, it fits well with the 'egocentric society' (de la Herrán Gascón, 1995). Egocentrism develops, essentially, through processes that start with and for oneself. It develops through accumulation, monopolises things and is motivated by the fear of loss. Social and personal systems, in general, are driven by egocentrism and organised around their own interests and equifinality. Education systems tend to mix national, ideological, educational, religious, etc. objectives, sponsored by those who define and promote them, thus mingling quality education and substitutes for it. All this fits into the amalgam that, under the name of 'education', defines what has been termed the 'shameless curriculum' (de la Herrán Gascón, 2003, 2019a; de la Herrán Gascón & González Sánchez, 2002), which allows various processes of pseudo-educational adulteration while in other aspects educating in a desirable way. It is for this reason that the final products of each system, far from being education, are in fact forms of pseudo-education. In fact, there are as many 'educations' as there are social and education systems, which shows that education largely responds to situated demands rather than deep, universal, enduring educational needs. If the interpretation of the educational phenomenon is framed from the perspective of egos (national, religious, ideological, etc.), imbued with fanaticism, it is not that these may be wrong, it is because they are developed in error. Given this situation, how can we imagine that they can educate people?



The resources of the ego work by calling what they do 'education', by dispensing with pedagogues who are experts in education (including pedagogy's teleological view), by focusing on learning, by promoting psychology as a substitute for pedagogy, by manipulating assessment data, by taking educational decisions in line with the non-pedagogical interests of greater social systems, etc. Where there is no honesty, it is possible to lie; and this is the case of educational systems that falsely claim to possess widely accepted features, proclaiming themselves promoters of democracy, human rights, equality, inclusion, justice, equity, etc. It is the same with those who make illusory claims, for example, that they can educate people through learning, knowledge, competencies, etc., which is an anthological and ontological impossibility, a 'pedagogical contradiction'. In short, the construct of 'learning' is framed as an 'educational lighthouse'; its light, however, does not guide us, but can be arbitrary and lead us onto the rocks.

In the radical and inclusive approach education is seen as an inner development consisting in the shift from the ego to consciousness (de la Herrán Gascón, 1995), and 'full, complete or higher education' (de la Herrán & Sabbi, 2021) is that of the person who is fully educated, the person who has completely abandoned their ego and is capable of living consciously while at the same time being highly professionally competent. In this context 'egocentrism' is seen as the root cause of immaturity, inanity, stupidity, and greed. This may be personal, collective, institutional, professional, national, religious, sexual, racial, class-based, sporting, cultural, scientific, etc. Egocentrism is the main cause of educational and teaching bad practice. Consciousness can be understood as the capacity for awareness, lucidity, deep understanding, clarity, wisdom, decency, maturity, congruence, love; and the 'ways of consciousness' (de la Herrán Gascón, 1995), can be applied to disciplines, values and virtues, competencies, teaching, research, daily life, etc.

Normal, habitual education, that of the globalised Western education systems, is not situated at either pole, whether egocentrism or full consciousness. It is situated in the middle, in a grey area, clear or obscure. This is the reason why it is intermediate, average or 'mediocre', as Ingenieros (2000) describes it. Its function, purposes and theory are not meant for the extremes –and neither are they meant for full or complete education– but for normality and 'ordinary or systemic consciousness'; in other words, for living for and according to the social systems (de la Herrán Gascón, 1995), without educating for forms of consciousness and non-ego that would be able to transcend these. We educate to keep the egocentric society alive, through generalised ignorance and unconsciousness. For this purpose, indoctrination is key, favoured by obsession, insensitivity, lethargy, conformism and collective hypnosis and stupefaction.

If this were not true and our schooling really led to a full and complete education, its most outstanding products (doctors, professors, etc.) would be lucid, mature, humble, wise, loving, without arrogance, greed, vanity, etc. human beings. However, this is not always the case, on the contrary, our education half-educates people and normally in schools and families we contribute to the indoctrination of the child in the name of education, in such a way that the human being stops his educational development, his inner evolution in full immaturity, with more ego than conscience.



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Perhaps in the West we have not addressed the need for a deep understanding of egocentrism as the main cause of indoctrination because the Western reading of pedagogy leaves out the teachings of the Eastern classics, particularly the Buddha and the taoist masters. The complementarity of East and West has been remarked on by writers such as Dewey, Confucius and Makiguchi when discussing topics such as the human–nature interconnection, self-cultivation, value creation, associated living and the joy of learning/happiness of living (Fang He, 2016). Yet little or nothing of this is included in theories of teaching and education, the curriculum and training, or in Western pedagogy and didactics.

A holistic or truly universal view of education and pedagogy is not possible without the epistemological audacity to include and understand Asian educational traditions, complementary to the comparatively more superficial Western Pythagorean and Socratic heritage, based on learning, knowledge, and philosophy, and far removed from the sublime education of the Eastern classics, based on constructs such as egocentrism, consciousness, and essential self-knowledge (de la Herrán Gascón, 1995). The completion of education should also come from the pedagogical recognition and respect due to indigenous and original cultures, which also place consciousness at the core of education (Sosa-Provencio et al., 2020). Thus, the opportunity of creating a more complete epistemological base, closer to the complex phenomenon and potential of education (de la Herrán Gascón, 2018) and oriented towards fuller, more holistic schooling, should be the epistemological aspiration of all education science.

The teaching, institutional, collective, parental, political etc. ego requires the conditioning of others and the extinguishing of conscious self-criticism, because what it sets out to do is precisely the opposite: to nourish itself and grow, bypassing its own radical education, which it does not desire. To this end its essential orientation is towards indoctrination, both subtle and shameless. Studying indoctrination only in terms of the message, content/doctrine, intention, and methodology (Siegel, 1991) is not enough to understand it completely, since indoctrination is also based on the personal and collective ego, which attempts to preserve itself and to flourish through conditioning itself and others.

Consciousness, freedom, and indoctrination

Education opens potential avenues of formation and leads to a greater personal openness based on consciousness, complexity, and complementarity. It is necessary to distinguish this openness from false openness since the latter exists in some places. Often true openness is not desired, as it can be seen as undesirable and/or it may not be relevant to social demands.

When, during our schooling and upbringing, indoctrination is confused with education, freedom with slavery, other dimensions can radically change or shift. The surface can be mistaken for the depths and the outer appearance can be taken for the inner reality. In this case both the process and the product, characterised by poor vision, are disastrous for personal and social development. For example, people may see clearly but act badly, since the education of consciousness has not found a way to evolve and has remained stuck at the beginning of the road, believing it has arrived



at the destination. One intermediate educational objective is the awareness of and liberation from conditioning and freedom from indoctrination. This is an intermediate goal because deconditioning is normally partial. But not, however, freedom: "There can be no compromise with freedom. The partial freedom of the individual is not freedom. No conditioning, whether it be political or religious, is freedom, and it can therefore never bring peace" (Krishnamurti, 2013, p. 22).

If we take up Plato's allegory of the cave it is not simply a question of the student or the teacher becoming aware of their situation and distinguishing the shadows in the depths of the cavern from external reality and the bad smell from the fresh air outside, but of the person, at the outset, being able to free themselves from their chains (deconditioning). Advancing still further, however, we find that complete and conscious freedom means not only being able to leave the cavern but also, if one should decide, going back into it to see friends, dialogue with them, sleep, eat, etc. (reconditioning). The educational process moving from the ego to consciousness includes, from the state of normal conditioning, a long critical and self-critical phase of shedding and, in this case, a return to a third state of 'reconditioning', where externally everything may appear to be in the same conditioned phase, but deeply and radically it has nothing to do with it.

The zen idea of 'shadows in a mirror or the reflection of the moon on the water' coincides with Plato's images in the cavern. When we call a shadow a shadow, when we call a reflection a reflection and when projected images are not taken for external reality, not only are we educating people to think we are educating them to live well based on the rigour that reason fosters; an educated form of reason, however, more conscious and above all not dual. In short, an education based on consciousness should guide students, and all human beings, to help them free themselves from their own self-centredness. This includes the possibility of error or of leaving decisions aside since they may come too early in the context of each person's development. In issues of consciousness and depth education it is preferable not to go too fast, not to rush towards false closures with borrowed knowledge. In contrast, education and training should lead from the ego towards consciousness, through a process of de-identification or deconditioning which can evolve towards a more complete, dialectical phase based on the conscious will and a gradual opening.

Education which openly indoctrinates learners is egocentric and damaged and has a conditioning, toxic effect. It can only be educational reactively; that is, by guiding people along the path of education through its opposite. Clear consciousness and pedagogical competence are needed to distinguish between indoctrination, which stems from the ego, and education based on openness, consciousness, and disinterest. Curricula do not include such a competency; and nor do they include any kind of negative competency or competency-ballast, formulated in terms of gaining through shedding (de la Herrán Gascón, 1995). A form of curriculum development centred on egocentrism could be the beginning of a process of conscious liberation based on understanding, which could educationally and individually define freedom as liberation from conditioning (Krishnamurti, 2013). Thus education, seen as conscious liberation supported by inner change, is based on processes of



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unlearning or deconditioning, which have little to do with the current direction of schooling. All education systems – and people are also education systems – should be free to see, to question, to doubt and to choose; and even to prefer, as an effect of consciousness, the more easily recognised dimensions of duality and partiality, if they judge these to be more correct.

An education that is distinct from indoctrination requires complexity, breadth, self-criticism and a profound questioning of established practices. For example, education centred only on the learner is limiting, pedagogically contradictory and can be radically erroneous. All real education begins by paying attention to its roots, which lie in the education of the educators themselves: teachers, parents and even politicians, journalists, etc. when their action has educational effects (or their opposite). Thus the first consciousness-based pedagogues, [Lao Tse \(1983 and Confucius in Gardner, 2007\)](#), set out to train the leaders of society. If the people who organise and direct education according to their egos are not able to recognise their own partiality or to distinguish what stems from the ego and what from the consciousness, they will probably indoctrinate people. Those who hold responsibility for education should be those who are most fully conscious and should begin the educational process by training themselves in depth, and not only in the technical-reflexive dimension ([de la Herrán Gascón, 2011](#)). The normal approach prioritises what is external to the educator (the curriculum, competencies, students, methodology, resources, reflection, practice, etc.) because it identifies the waves with the ocean, education with the surface of education. Although the social setting is important, it is from the standpoint of individual consciousness that education naturally becomes collective and from where it can promote an education unadulterated with indoctrination. This has already been attempted in the past, particularly in [Condorcet's \(2013\)](#) still untested project. [Condorcet](#) was an influential educationalist who proposed a political reform in France to create an independent educational administration. The organism tasked with safeguarding this was to be called the 'National Society of the Sciences and Arts'. In his scheme this institution would not depend on any branch of government. Its aim was to establish a form of education free from ideology, religion, party politics, military influence, lobbies, and all types of non-pedagogical doctrines, and it would be run by wise people. Its purpose was to foster an education in reason for all, without exclusion or conditioning. The most difficult thing, however, is to transcend the ego, since in the framework of the party-based rule under which we live, who would give up their preferred forms of schooling so that real education could emerge?

Conclusions

In the light of the above discussion from the perspective of the radical and inclusive approach to education, we can summarise our contribution by drawing several conclusions.

Firstly, if education can be seen as an unending process leading towards openness and the complexity of consciousness, there is nothing further from education than indoctrination ([de la Herrán Gascón, 1995](#)); or, at the very least, we can conclude that education and indoctrination are opposites ([Gatchel, 1959](#)). It is unacceptable that indoctrination, disguised as truth or education, should make up a concealed part of 'hidden curricula' ([Cornbleth, 1984](#)), or when out in the

open, of 'shameless curricula' in any education system. This is compatible with not discussing some certainties or specific content with students at some stages (Ariso, 2019). An education based on consciousness is oriented towards openness, through the in-depth self-education of the educator. It is the opposite of indoctrination, which is based on closure and on conditioning people through individual and collective mental programming. The awareness of indoctrination allows us to better understand full or complete education, based on consciousness and human and social competence (de la Herrán & Sabbi, 2021).

Secondly, the antithesis of indoctrination cannot be learning-based education since, in fact, learning linked to the learner, seen as the centre of education, underpins the pedagogical unconsciousness that upholds and drives indoctrination, which in turn feeds the system that indoctrinates. Education cannot be understood apart from deconditioning, and therefore unlearning based on consciousness, understood as an important part of the process of the complete education of a human being. Nor can other constructs be understood as knowledge, critical thinking, cooperation, creativity, empathy, etc. The reason is that these and other everyday constructs in education can indoctrinate and deform if they operate from and for the ego and decondition and liberate if they are developed from and for the lucidity and complexity of consciousness, beyond the ego (de la Herrán Gascón, 2016).

Thirdly, egocentrism –that of educators, religions, politics, culture, etc.– is a root cause of indoctrination, since it attempts always to survive and flourish through its profitability and efficacy as a system, both intentionally and unconsciously. To the extent that an egocentric society is made up of social systems, mostly egocentric (de la Herrán Gascón, 1995), indoctrination is a human tendency that will also affect national and international education systems. This has important implications for the pre- and in-service training of teachers and other educators. Equipping educators to recognise ideas and processes that can lead to the indoctrination of students and children is an inescapable challenge in training (Taylor, 2017). Nevertheless, the beginning of this task is self-education, in Gadamer's (2001) sense.

A fourth conclusion is that, according to Spiecker (1991), teaching a dogma or a belief may not necessarily respond to an intention to indoctrinate people, since an educator may be strongly committed to this belief but at the same time aware of its partiality. Even less when, like an interpretative vaccine, the educator communicates their own partiality or epistemological blind side. Carr (1978) recommended something similar for the teaching of history, opting to show historiographical biases as a measure of respect for the reader. In self-educational processes, identification with a partial view will have greater educational meaning if it has been preceded by a phase of conscious deconditioning. Moreover, in our view the third criterion discussed by Siegel (1991) –teaching methodology– is not necessarily a condition of indoctrination. Active education, supposedly oriented towards reflection or based on guided discovery, can respond to an indoctrinating intention; and a lecture can be liberating, favouring creativity. and creating consciousness of the self. An educator in whose training awareness of the ego and consciousness-based educational communication have predominated can be a



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methodological factor for a fuller, more complete education, based on a form of consciousness going beyond methodologies or resources, including ICTs. Thus, the quality of the educator's training and the intention to indoctrinate are fundamental criteria in defining indoctrination, with at least two identifiable causes: the egocentrism that organises or emits ideology and learning-based education. The intention to indoctrinate may be willed or unconscious.

In a society that we have described as a "society of egocentrism" (de la Herrán Gascón & Muñoz Diez, 2002), indoctrination may or may not be what it seems. For example, indoctrination may be overt and recognised, especially once more awareness is acquired, either through training, distancing, or the passage of time. This is usually the case with political and religious indoctrination (e.g. Garrido García, 2022; Mahamud, 2016). However, the dual qualifications of indoctrination in others are often elaborated from partial identifications with collective egos and disguised as consciences, especially when carried out from the other ideological shores. The radical process of change always starts with oneself. In this context, it would consist of first observing one's own conditioning and only then talking about the conditioning of others. Any other alternative that consists of surrounding or bypassing oneself can describe what we have called "error No. 1 of the Diactic" (de la Herrán Gascón & González Sánchez, 2002). Otherwise it will not be possible to understand and develop an education with a capital letter, conceived as an evolutionary process from ego to consciousness.

In this study, based on the radical and inclusive approach to education, we have attempted to contribute an alternative and complementary view to the traditional one. This view enables us, based on new theoretical foundations, to continue investigating into and deepening our awareness of indoctrination to strengthen the epistemology of pedagogy and didactics and to understand education more fully, not only for life but also to build a life that is increasingly more conscious of itself.

Declaración de contribuciones

Las personas autoras declaran que han contribuido en los siguientes roles: **A. dI H. G.** contribuyó con la escritura del ensayo; la gestión de recursos y apoyo tecnológico y la conceptualización, definición de objetivos y desarrollo del ensayo. **P. R. H.** contribuyó con la escritura del ensayo; la gestión de recursos y apoyo tecnológico y la conceptualización, definición de objetivos y desarrollo del ensayo.

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