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**THE NEW EDUCATION – ELEMENTS THAT MAKE THE  
DIFFERENCE**

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***Abstract***

The whole movement of educational ideas is coming from the beginning of the century until now (*the new schools*, the movement for aesthetical education, the interest for knowledge and optimal evolution of the child as represented by E. Key, the experimental and social education) and it has generated a new conception on education, fundamentally different from the one of the previous century. Its representatives, John Dewey, Maria Montessori, Edouard Claparede, Ovide Decroly, have promoted, compared to the traditional school, a child-based education, not an education focused on the educator, but one that is centered on the needs of the child that is on the path of development, not on the educational content, and this is generating an authentic *Copernican revolution* in education. Essentially, the difference between the classic education and the new one consists of a range of elements: the terminology, the finality of the education, the methods, child related concepts, the role of the teacher, the discipline, but also the new authors.

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## 1. Introduction

The element that has definitely marked the entrance in a new educational point of view is the written paper called *The century of the child* written by Ellen Hey and that has appeared providentially in 1990 and that has a standing ground the words that are so applicable even today, after 100 years: “To all the parents that have the hope they can shape a new man in the upcoming century. The fame that this paper has had in its time is not only due to the actuality of the ideas, but more than that, to the assiduity that the author proves by her attempt to promote, as well as the harsh critic that she is directing towards the schools and traditional teacher, a new educational system.

### 1.1. Piles for reorganizing the education

Key (1978), is practically setting to reorganize the education as being a “new school” that stands on four *angular rocks* (p. 83):

- A specialization that is encountered where there are certain and strong personal qualities;
- The focus on a specific range of disciplines, in certain times;
- Personal work throughout the whole schooling period;
- Contacts with the reality during the schooling times.

### 1.2. Principles of educational thinking

We need to teach the child as fast as possible what does freedom means and also the dangers that lies beneath what they personally choose, the right and responsibility of personal will (Key, 1978):

- The current educational crime is that of repressing the personal nature of the child, of not letting him by his own will and by lapping the nature of the adult;
- Becoming you yourself a child is the first condition to raise children;
- In the close relationships between parents and children almost all the time the most profound characteristics of love is missing, which is the understanding;
- The only one and the most truthful starting point when coming about the child education, child that we want to him to become a social human being, is by treating him like that, steeling in the same way the courage to become an individual human being;
- As long as the mother and father will not lower their head in front of the greatness of the child; as long as they do not understand that the word “child” is just an expression for the idea of *majesty*; as long as they will not feel that in their arms, is the future lying by the expression of the child, that at their feet, it is history that is playing, they will not realize that they will have that less of a right and power to dictate laws to this human being as they do not have actually power and right to impose that laws of the planets of the universe;

## 2. Problem Statement

Among the most important shortcomings that the authors is underlining, we can keep in mind the following: the tendency to repress the nature of the child, shaping people that are triggering at looking more alike one to another rather than differentiating one from another, that are more willing to keep and maintain rather than focusing on change and innovation; the very authoritative character of the education that was

based on an excessive socialization, by means of exaggerated conducting. Talking about this educational shortcoming, Key is claiming that the activity of the teacher should be one of organizing the environment in such a way as to allow the free manifestation of the child, of protecting him by the damaging contacts. By doing that, the intervention of the teacher would not be a source of deforming its nature.

Its *majesty* the child does not have to be seen on other way but that of a free human being, who wants to act corresponding to his nature, outsider any constraint. Because of that kind of ideas, Key (1978) is considered one of the free education representatives, together with Lev Tolstoy. Pleading for respecting the child's individuality, the Swedish teacher appreciates to the fullest the family role that should shape the child up to 15 years old, when he should start frequenting the school: "My first dream is that the kindergarten and also the primary school to be replaced by the family education" (p.89)

**The future school** is occupying a very important place in the analysis conducted by Key (1978). It will be, as per the author, a school for all and will continue the education of everybody, but this will occur following a special plan designed for each individual. The effort of the teacher will be one related to organizing, his main preoccupation being to ensure the best conditions for an active education, in which the personal observation of the pupils is mandatory and it does not substitute to the conferences and observations of the teacher. The author insists on the necessity that the pupil is helped to build up his own way of intellectual working, in an heuristic manner, "his most meaningful work will be to teach the pupil to make his own observations, to make his own homework, to get to find his own ways to use the books, dictionary, maps, to overcome the difficulties encountered and to obtain the moral reward of his own efforts: a bigger understanding, a force that is won!" (p.96).

The books will have a more dynamic and practical content and it is the school's mission to put at pupil disposal the original volumes, so that the written works are known in a complete and direct manner. The author is pleading for that kind of library that we can call "getting back to the real library". The library will be a bigger room, the most beautiful, the most important, and renting books will be the essential part of the didactic activity.

In the future school, the sense of beauty and practical activities are very important. The esthetical education will be done in a diffuse way, indirectly by architecture and decoration inside school, by works of art that will make the inside beautiful and that will create the possibility to admire the works with no constraints, by people taking their time and be free to admire whenever they want. About the schooling context, it fortunately needs to have also a garden, a dancing area and for games that truly frees the soul, for movements and sports. There will be no classroom but rooms that have complete material for tackling certain and different area with areas that are especially designed for each and one's personal work. Visiting the museums will also be park of the educational process.

Disciplines that will be studied with need to be in accordance to the pupils' ages. The school will do nothing more but presenting, not imposing to anybody. Going through those disciplines will be done also according to the seasons (for instance, mathematics will be taught on winter because it is suitable for the cold and pure air of this season).

### **3. Research Questions**

From the E. Key perspective, the main research question is how to find that meeting point between the education and the child's psychology and also which exactly is the position of the child, in the middle of the educational process.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The finalities that the author is referring are of a different nature. What is essential is that the pupils are shaping the custom to make their own mind by using their free will. This way, conditions are created so that the young people and their families get rid of the profound fear of "being got through" because the truth underlined by Key (1978) related to the people appreciation is not the words, but the actions and the way they truly are (it can be easily noticed the inner state of the criteria, the impossibility to clearly emphasize this parameter in a different way rather by behavior). Finally, the purpose of education is to ensure the necessary grounds for permanent education, a valuable idea that was viable then and now. "The school cannot be other than a preparation for the young people to continue by themselves, throughout their whole life, the work of self-improvement" (p.102)

Having an insight regarding the educational activities and permanent education, E. Key is getting very serious when it comes to the non-directive education, which greatly diminished the role of the teacher at an age when the pupils cannot take their own control of their development.

### **5. Research Methods**

This research explore the elements that make the difference in the context of new education with almost a century before. This study aims to become a being an exploratory fundamental research that reveals how visionary the *new education* was. The next researchers in educational area as John Dewey, Maria Montessori, Edouard Claparede and Ovide Decroly had developed their work on these principles.

### **6. Findings**

From the beginning of this century until now, the entire movement of education ideas, "the new school", movement of aesthetic education, the interest for knowledge and the optimal evolution of the child expressed by Key (1978), the experimental and social education) has generated a new conception on education, fundamentally different from the previous one. Its representatives, Dewey, Montessori, Claparede and Decroly, have promoted an education focused on the child, not on the teacher, which is centered on the needs of the young person in the process of shaping and not on the educational content, generating by this means, an authentic "copernican revolution" in the area of education.

Basically, the difference between the classic education and the new one consists of the following elements, as underlined by the promoters of the new education trend (Delors, 2000, p.216)

**Table 01.** The traditional education versus the new education. Similarities. Diferences

Characteristics	Traditional education	New education
<b>Terminology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Traditional conception</li> <li>▪ Enclosed and stickler language</li> <li>▪ Mechanical approach</li> <li>▪ Encyclopedic vision</li> <li>▪ Dogmatic education</li> </ul> <p><b>School centered attention</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New conception</li> <li>▪ Active school</li> <li>▪ Functional education</li> <li>▪ Renewed school</li> <li>▪ Organic approach</li> <li>▪ Open and informal vision</li> </ul> <p><b>New school – Child focused education</b></p>
<b>Finality of education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transmitting the “ objective” culture to the future generations</li> <li>▪ Child shaping</li> <li>▪ Objective values: the Good, the Beauty, the Truth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transmitting the culture starting from the real strengths that belong to the child</li> <li>▪ Facilitating the development of the inner strengths of the child, personal and subjective values</li> </ul>
<b>Methods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Education from the “ outside” to the “ inside”</li> <li>▪ Starting point: the objective system of the culture that consists of “ parts” that need to be taught</li> <li>▪ Effort based education</li> <li>▪ Passive school</li> <li>▪ Encyclopedia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ education from the “ inside” to the “ outside”</li> <li>▪ the meeting point: the subjective personal part of the child</li> <li>▪ interest based education</li> <li>▪ active school</li> <li>▪ functional education</li> </ul>
<b>Conception about the child</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the child is flexible, can be maneuvered like the wax</li> <li>▪ the child has less value compared to the adult</li> <li>▪ action needs to be taken upon the child</li> <li>▪ intelligence is the most important</li> </ul> <p>the child is following a predefined program that is beyond him, beyond his possibilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the child has a wide range of needs, interests, a creative energy</li> <li>▪ the childhood has a very special value</li> <li>▪ the child acts</li> <li>▪ there is an integral development of the educated ones, the program is gravitating around the child</li> </ul>
<b>Conception about the program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ content that needs to be taught to the pupils does not take into account their interests (objective culture)</li> <li>▪ the program is idealist (decontextualized content)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the interest of the pupils are determining the program (both the structure and the content)</li> </ul> <p>The program is a realistic one (the content is related to the environment that the child is belonging to)</p>
<b>Conception about the school</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ artificially created environment</li> <li>▪ the distance towards emotions</li> <li>▪ glorifying the school that existed in the past</li> <li>▪ solving those artificial problems</li> </ul> <p>The school is concerned about the child’s future without thinking about his present</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ natural social environment, where the child’s life is happening (school as a life environment)</li> <li>▪ the children spontaneity</li> <li>▪ here and now</li> <li>▪ solving the real issues of the child</li> </ul> <p>The school is trying to bring to surface the real issues of the child</p>
<b>Teacher’s role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the teacher is leading</li> <li>▪ the teacher in the most important: he is the one delivering the information</li> <li>▪ the teacher is active; he is the one performing in front of the child, he is the role model to be followed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the teacher is guiding, is offering advice, is arising the need of knowledge that the child possesses. He is the kind of resource person</li> <li>▪ the child is the most important</li> <li>▪ the child is experimenting, is open to active exercise</li> </ul>
<b>Discipline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ authoritative discipline (extrinsically to the person: rewards/punishments)</li> <li>▪ external discipline based on constraint</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ personal discipline (based on inherent interests)</li> <li>▪ the discipline comes from the inside</li> </ul>
<b>Authors</b>	<p>The tradition is lost from the very old times</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Montessori</li> <li>▪ Decroly</li> <li>▪ Claparede</li> <li>▪ Ferriere,</li> <li>▪ Cousinet,</li> <li>▪ Freinet</li> <li>▪ Dewey</li> </ul>

## 7. Conclusion

The comparative analysis is putting into emphasize a range of common issues that were of great interest to the new educational representatives, each one of them focusing primarily on certain types of issues, as followed (table 01):

- J. Dewey, issues as the practical activity, source of knowledge;
- Maria Montessori, issues as the child's manifestation freedom, a fundamental condition of education;
- Ed. Claparede, issues as child needs satisfaction, a topic of functional education;
- O. Decroly, issues as the child's interest, a main criterion when it comes to organizing the content and making the instruction.

### 7.1. Conclusions through the eyes of the practical experience

The conclusions related to education are one of a kind, as long as it can understand education as a growing process "the purpose of education in schools is to ensure the continuity of the education by organizing the set of skills that are supporting the growth". In my opinion, to educate means to cultivate the capacity to readapt the activity to new conditions or in other terms, to organize and reorganize the experience that, adding to the previous experience, it increases the capacity to guide the evolution of the following experience. An educated man is that who has the power to move on, to make new experiences for the sake of the experience that has already occurred (Stanciu, 1995). The educated one needs to be a "profiteer", that exploits the already happened experiences in order to go further to the new experiences that are about to happen. The present experience is important as long as it trains the individual for future experiences. The ideas are true as long as they are used and as they are helpful in addition to playing a role to the effective transformation of the reality. In other words, the ideas are not true but they become true by actual action, whenever the idea becomes practice.

The role of mindsets in educational achievement is a nascent but intriguing field of study. Recent research has examined the impact of traits including passion, perseverance and, growth mindsets, curiosity, conscientiousness, optimism, and self-control in children's success (Dweck, 2016). While some researchers claim that mindsets can be taught, others have questioned both the magnitude of the effect, and the usefulness of interventions in this area (Credé, Tynan, & Harms, 2016).

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