The Continuity of Action and Thinking in Learning

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Abstract

In recent years, there have been many attempts at defining learning as a social phenomenon as opposed to an individual and primarily psychological matter. The move towards understanding learning as social processes has also altered the concept of knowledge as a well-defined element stored in books, brains, CD-Roms, disks, videos or on the Internet. Instead, knowledge has been perceived as a social and context related construction. The roots of the social angle within theories on learning and knowledge are much older than the current literature suggests. This paper illustrates how these theories can be traced back to pragmatism as a philosophy and foundation for an educational approach introduced by the American, John Dewey, more than one hundred years ago. The paper also suggests that Dewey avoids some pitfalls that have come with the new theories, particularly the strong division between individual vs. social and school vs. everyday life learning.

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