

Summary

Social and cultural identity of school: curriculum perspectives

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Every reflection on 'school' usually does not go further than considering its educational and pedagogical function. The school's public role is also commonly narrowed and brought down to what literally happens within its walls, disregarding its wider cultural significance. As the social role of school is readily politicised and its educational role exceedingly seen through the lens of pedagogy, it is evident that school is commonly seen as a place of instruction, training and pragmatical formation of the 'functional citizen'. For this reason we need to ask ourselves: what is the quality of school today? Does it prepare the children and youth for the challenges of everyday life and existence in the 21st century? School has always been easily closed off within its walls, separated from the outside social and cultural world. The postmodernist thought has brought back and directed the image of school towards some of the original meanings of the Greek word *shole* and/or Latin *schola*, implying a unity of free time and education, of play and work, spiritual and physical development, natural and institutional learning, spontaneous and creative expression, individual and social behaviour, civic and public responsibility, technological skill and media communication – all of which implies a 'return to nature' and a (self)revocation of its traditional role. However, our post-transitional age of 'anything goes' still necessarily requires that school be based on a democratic order and that it bears multiple responsibilities.

This may not be easily or promptly achieved. Just as education represents a complex and difficult process of human development, the educational changes need to be gradual (although not too slow), as well as balanced so as not to unnecessarily upset the system. As much as school needs to be changed and modernised so that it may keep pace with the world of tomorrow, the changes must be planned; they should be as radical and imposed as they are natural and evolutionary. We should take small, continual and gradual steps in developing the existing system rather than building anew after some pedagogical revolution. In doing so we should free the school from the traditional images and fears of its supposed solemnity; however, we should not fall into the trap of embracing ephemeral and transient values. The pedagogical-social and humanist-cultural spirit of school, which represents its inner curriculum structure and functional status, need to focus on the philosophical idea of man. The teacher and the pupil, as partners and constituents of the teaching and educational process, need to work on permanent and functional knowledge, skills and requirements of the real world.

The theoretical analysis applied in this article aims to point to the changes awaiting the schooling system in terms of the pedagogical, social and cultural identity the school represents, at the time when it is expected to prepare the pupils for the nearby future of democratic citizenship and for the global world full of challenges, and to do so starting from the fundamental and differential curriculum perspectives.

Keywords: school, culture, social communication, environment, education, pupil, teacher, curriculum.