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BIOETHICAL THEMES IN UNIVERSITY TEACHING OF FUTURE EDUCATORS AND TEACHERS

Abstract

Bioethics, as a newer scientific discipline answers questions about the life of the contemporary man in an interdisciplinary way, and we use education to express what kind of a society and what kind of a man we want. Values on which the educational system in the Republic of Croatia is based are viewed as a new possibility to develop the Croatian national, cultural, and spiritual identity within complex globalization processes. In the era of globalization, informational and technological improvement, one of the hardest efforts of the modern age is the upbringing of children in the changed circumstances, which consequently reflects on the style of education and the conditions in which education is conducted. The aims of the upbringing focus the educational practice and the pedagogical action, while the responsibility and the complex task is bestowed upon educators/teachers. The importance of initial education of educators/teachers is irrefutable today. To be an educator is a vocation/profession with specific professional standards and ethical rules of the teaching profession, inspired by the values of social inclusion and the needs of the child/pupil. This paper deals with a comparative analysis of study programmes and learning outcomes in the Integrated Undergraduate and Graduate University Teacher Study, as well as University Study of Early and Preschool Education at the Faculty

of Education in Osijek, focused on the (bio)ethics, education and ethics of the teacher's calling. Students, future preschool/primary school teachers during the study need to be made aware of the sensitivity in ethical decision-making in the future profession, as well as solving the problems which influence on building the character, because ethics and bioethics need to fulfil important social and individual aspects of education.

| **Key words:** education, educators/teachers, study programmes, bioethics

Introduction

Bioethics as a newer scientific discipline answers questions about the life of a contemporary man in an interdisciplinary way and we use education to express what kind of a society and what kind of a man we want. Every new generation takes over the developed cultural aims, norms and values, and changes them as needed. The aims of education focus the educational practice and pedagogical action within it and the responsibility and complex job is the educators/teachers have. In the era of globalization, information and technological improvement, one of the hardest jobs of the contemporary age is the upbringing of children in the changed circumstances, which consequently reflects on the conditions in which education goes on. Due to the crisis of values, we should learn how to live in a “tension” or “conflict” of values because ,within the new context, there is no settled, determined hierarchy of values and an educator and teacher is expected to be sensitive and prepared for the phenomenon of the crisis of values which exists in the social-cultural environment of the wider European context.

Basic moral doubts in future professional work

Education is a complex and sensitive process, as are its result, intention and action, state, as well as conditions, historic and social influences etc. Education is a purposeful process in which the unity of aim and task, principle and method is reflected, which in the realized educational action which was planned, along with the active and harmonious participation of numerous educational elements, strives towards the development of a complete human personality (Vukasović, 1999: 44-45). Education arises from the value of living, from objectively valid values, all authors agree. The area of education “edits values” by giving them direction and character and we can, at the same time, use educational attempts and actions to influence the value changes in people. Given that values are beliefs about what is desirable and what is not, values paint the culture of society and they are quite common to the members of that culture (Rakić and Vukušić. 2010). Brezinka highlights that education is made by social actions with which people try to permanently improve the circuit of psychic dispositions of others or maintain value components of those dispositions (Gudjons 1994:151). The same author highlights that only that group (the people) which is falling apart and is apathetic towards its future allows for its offspring to grow without an education for values. Education for values realized in kindergarten/school is demanding because values cannot be forced as stable norms, habits of people in

an institution, but by personal example, action, advice, and sensitising in order for the children/pupils to open up for creativity and self-realization. Education is considered to be a complex human relationship full of interaction between the educator/teacher and child/pupil, where it is important to raise the child i.e. enable and teach the child to have an independent and active life in society (Švogor-Šipek and Krznar, 2016).

Education and science are recognized by the Republic of Croatia as its own developmental priorities. Every individual should be enabled quality education in a multicultural environment and education and science, as values, are the guarantee of Croatian future. Only that way Croatia can be an equal member of the European Union that wants to build a competitive community of states with a sustainable and inclusive growth and development. The values on which the educational system in the Republic of Croatia is built is seen as a new possibility to develop the Croatian national, cultural, and spiritual identity within complex globalization processes. The National Framework Curriculum (hrv. Nacionalni okvirni kurikulum, 2011), with its openness, democratic nature and inclusion is balanced with the educational area, it has a European dimension of common values and responsibilities for development. In education, the basic values are promoted: human dignity, freedom, justice, patriotism, social equality, solidarity, dialogue and tolerance, work, honesty, peace, health, preserving nature and man's environment, and other democratic values. The values that the National Framework Curriculum for Preschool Education and Compulsory General and Secondary Education (hrv. Nacionalni okvirni kurikulum za predškolski odgoj i obrazovanje te opće obvezno i srednjoškolsko obrazovanje, 2011) gives special attention to are: knowledge, solidarity, identity, and responsibility. The influence of moral values on pedagogy becomes visible in every educational activity in a specific awakening of values in every child/pupil. Awakening, encouraging and developing personal identity assumes respect for differences. Those differences are recognized in the social reality which is today revealed in the light of true value pluralism, and Matulić (2007) implies that the contemporary educational process, instead of the radical "or-or" alternative should opt for the inclusive "and-and" model in speaking and promoting values. According to Vican (2006), values are the source of education i.e. they are not passive in the educational activity nor in the teaching process. They are not neutral practice, moreover, they are morals. One could, therefore, conclude with an observation by Polić:

Even though, at first glance, it looks like a paradox, by separating knowledge from values i.e. the educational content from the educational intent, not

only is the basis for the illusion that they are absolutely valid created, but they themselves become completely irrelevant and, in fact, arbitrary, because their validity is no longer possible to be derived from themselves rationally, but they are valid and available only by the reason and will of the authority which mediates them (Polić, 2015: 379).

Every change in social-historic circumstances actualizes the question of social, and especially personal, values because it is precisely education which affirms a specific social system of values. It is precisely the adoption of values in the life of children and the young which is the most important thing for their growth, acquiring their identity and their general behaviour as responsible and prosocial focused people.

Social values are significantly reflected on defining educational values because it is precisely with the mediation of education that a certain social system of values attempts to be affirmed. By accepting your own culture in meeting with other cultures, the same author continues, getting to know a culture enables us to deepen our own more easily, to support our own way by proving that respecting your own principles and values is the only sure path towards human dignity and future, democracy and freedom, truth and justice. In thinking about the values in kindergarten/school, the need to choose values with which children/pupils as people synchronize their life which aspired to developmental fulfilment is expressed. The humane, democratic, and civil values are intertwined in education, especially the universal ones: love, truth, justice. The educational institution and educational workers are supposed to enable the children/pupils education for the purpose of developing all the potentials they carry in themselves without any form of discrimination – ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural (Peko, Mlinarević and Jindra, 2009).

Every person acquires the value system from the earliest childhood and in the process of acquiring values, all important socialization elements influencing an individual have a certain role; apart from parents and other elements, the educational institutions have an important role. When thinking about values in the kindergarten/school, the need to select values with which children/pupils as people synchronize their life which is aspiring towards developmental fulfilment is expressed. The humane, democratic, and civil values are intertwined in education, especially the universal ones: love, truth, justice. In their educational actions towards pupils in the pedagogical relationship between an educator and the child, educators/teachers are guided by professional competences and a system of values they are living and believe that it is best for their pupils. An educator/

teacher encourages children to have a wholesome growth in all aspects by using the personal model, personal implicit pedagogy and pedagogical strategies. The purpose of education is to help children and focus them into developing their independence i.e. personal integrity. In their educational actions towards pupils in the pedagogical relationship between an educator and the child, educators/teachers are guided by professional competences and a system of values they are living and believe that it is best for their pupils, with the condition that they grow up in an emotionally positive environment in which they feel accepted, loved, and respected from their earliest days. A child needs attention, understanding, patience, and guidance of grown-ups and their adaption to their own rhythm of life, which is much slower than the contemporary rhythm of life of grown people. Aware of the greater number of influences on the upbringing of a child and the weakening of the educational function of the contemporary family, the family has the most influential educational effect on the child. The kindergarten/school as a socialization element cannot replace a parent nor rid them of responsibility for their child's upbringing. Orr (1994: 38) asks the question: "How can we create good schools without first creating a good society which considers values to be the life of the mind and a life lived with a sublime purpose?" Values are present in education, not only in teaching, but the entire culture of school.

The teacher's personality is of special importance, as well as their attitudes, the level of their competences and, of course, their value system. Is it a stable value system and does it change in accordance to the demands and changes in educational policy and how much is the behaviour of the educator/teacher in those condition stable, consistent in the sensitive educational process? (Mlinarević, 2014). The same author further states that the value system or the personal, implicit theory of educator/teacher is not always in line with the system of values which a certain school proclaims or a country prescribes. Teachers can, in no way, be neutral regards to values because their "transfer" is precisely the characteristic of their profession and they should find balance in presenting different perspectives and clarity of their own values, which is certainly not simple. The pedagogical relationship is a complex dynamic process and it determines the behaviour of people taking part in the educational process, as well as the views of a child/pupils. The educator/teacher as a grown professional person which educates and focuses has great responsibility because, apart from the educational content, they "transfer" emotions, opinions, needs, views, personal values. They are required to show expertise, wisdom, ethics, empathy, and readiness for a continual development, self-reflection and lifelong

learning, but at the same time trust, readiness to give and receive and a constant questioning of their actions. A teacher can use his personal professional action in different ways which, consequently, has different effects on the behaviour of pupils. Furthermore, the same author states that pupils learn about values during their entire stay in the school environment in which, by mediation of various social interactions, they receive messages for life and a hidden curriculum can lead to a positive or negative education. The hidden curriculum is reflected by numerous elements such as the type and culture of the school, teacher traits, subject they teach, but also the values that the teacher holds to be important and he/she mediates with didactic materials, their behaviour in class and the relationship they have towards the pupils and themselves (Veugelers and Vedder, 2003, 377-389 according to: Mlinarević, 2014, 156). However, by changing the circumstances, a change in the educator/teacher is also expected, as well as their values, but also the acquiring of new necessary competences, the same author states.

An educator/teacher who has a positive attitude towards their profession shows enthusiasm, creativity, reflection, and includes and takes into consideration the critical thinking of children/pupils. With teachers who advocate negative values: connections and friendships, quick and easy pay, obedience, aggression, unfair treatment, an unjust way of grading etc. pupils cannot develop the socially desirable attitudes. Motivating and creative cooperative work take love, expertise and personal advocacy of education professionals at all levels of education.

Today there are great demands being set forth in front of educational institutions. It is expected that they replace the shortcomings of other responsible parties in the upbringing of children and the young people, and therefore are often unjustifiably criticized. For children to develop into mature, responsible, and moral people who can create a better future, it is necessary to provide a positive role models or witnesses of values. An educator/teacher, as a critical intellectual with the best interest of the children/pupils in mind, should be able to act autonomously and competent in accordance with specific professional standards and ethical rules of the teaching profession. The teaching profession is inspired by the values of active social inclusion and the needs to nurture the potential of every child/student.

The omnipresent interdisciplinary nature leads to a conclusion that there is no »pure« scientific discipline, but rather that each discipline cooperates with its other related disciplines. Bioethics, in its beginning, dealt exclusively with medicinal and ethical questions, and today it is a part of education at the

faculties of humanities and social sciences and, therefore, the matter of bioethical education may be brought up (Gosić, 2005). Pedagogy, in its widest sense, is the science of education, and education in bioethics assumes planned and conscious teaching of students on ethical values and the way of making ethical decisions (Gosić, 2005).

The topic of deontology of teachers is being brought up nowadays i.e. pedagogical ethics within pedagogy. Deontology is a wider notion than pedagogical ethics because it encompasses the legal regulations pertaining to a teacher's work, as well (Rosić, 2011). According to the deontological understanding, a teacher must adhere to certain norms and rules when performing their work in relation to students, colleagues, and parents, that is:

A teacher achieves the basic rule of educational work with pedagogical ethics and deontological duties, which is not only in acceptance but also in everyday action. Teachers are not clerks, but creators of knowledge, development and a happy future (Rosić, 2011: 149).

In deontology, but also bioethics, two important notions are differentiated – morals and ethics. Morals answers the question of what to do, and ethics answers the question why I should do what I should do (Rosić, 2011). The essence of morals is that an individual, in specific situations in life, adheres to certain moral principles (Čović, 2011) and, therefore, ethics can in its wider sense be observed as a theory of morals.

Bioethics and pedagogy become similar when they place the child/pupil at the centre of their discussion, as well as basic ethical notions such as freedom, responsibility, and care. However, parents should not be forgotten i.e. parental responsibility for a child, the so-called continuity. Parental responsibility does not stop even when the child is not physically with the parents, when they are, for instance, in kindergarten or school (Jurić, 2011). Responsibility for education in the institution is assumed by educators or teachers. In that context, it is important to mention the results of research from 2016 (Blanuša Trošelj and Ivković, 2016). Research was done with two main aims: to research the attitudes of graduate students of early and preschool education on professional ethics; and to establish can a course from the area of ethics increase their professional ethics. Results of research show that the attitudes of students on professional ethics differed before and after taking the course i.e. students are more aware of ethical problems and dilemmas in working with children after the course and they consider it to be important that every kindergarten have an ethical

code. Results of research clearly show that students consider themselves more ethical than colleagues they are working with in the kindergarten. Also, at the Academy of Arts and Culture in Osijek in 2014 a research of similar focus was done with the goal of ascertaining to what degree did the students of *Musical pedagogy* develop intercultural competences. Third year undergraduate and first year graduate students were surveyed with the purpose of ascertaining the view of students in the sense of their own intercultural competences and to establish whether there is a difference in the intercultural competence of students who did not take the *Music of the World* course. Results showed that the course had a positive influence on the views of students i.e. that it raised awareness on interculturalism in the contents of other courses. To conclude, the research showed that students were significantly more aware of living in a multicultural surrounding and that they understand the necessity of intercultural awareness and education. Also, research has proven that students consider the intercultural competences important for the profession they are being educated for (Begić, 2016). The stated results of the research conducted in 2014 and 2016 testifies of the importance of a bioethically focused educational mediated with the certain courses at the university level educational institution.

A comparative analysis of study programmes

For the needs of this paper, the study programmes of the University Study of Early and Preschool Education and the Integrated Undergraduate and the Graduate University Teacher Study at the Faculty of Education of the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek¹ were comparatively analysed. According to the outcomes and content of their courses, both programmes encompasses the integration model of bioethics in the sense of education.

Thirty-two courses were extracted by comparative analysis of study programmes.² Courses belong to the area of pedagogy (general pedagogy,

1 The research does not encompass the dislocated study programme of the Faculty of Education in Slavonski Brod.

2 The courses of the Undergraduate University Study of Early and Preschool Education: General Pedagogy; Ecological education in the kindergarten; Family education and cooperation with parents, Philosophy of education; Healthcare education; Abuse and neglect of children; Psychology of marriage and family; Preventive programmes in family and preschool institution; Parenthood; and Pedagogical communication.

The courses of the University Graduate Study of Early and Preschool Education: Alternative preschool programmes; Pedagogy of sustainable development; Ethics of the teacher's calling; Natural history; Ecology for sustainable development; Research in nature; History of the

pedagogy of early and preschool education; family pedagogy, social pedagogy), educational sciences, biomedicine and health (public health and health protection), psychology (general psychology; school psychology and the psychology of education), philosophy (philosophy of education), interdisciplinary natural sciences (science of the environment), biology, agriculture (ecology and environment protection), history, interdisciplinary technical sciences and integrative biotics.

Also, we highlight the new course *Bioethics* from the academic year 2017/18 which, in content, encompasses the historic and civilization context of the creation of bioethics, the bioethics of Van Rensselaer Potter, Fritz Jahr and the ethics of responsibility of Hans Jonas as ethics for a technological civilization and the ethics of awe according to the life of Albert Schweitzer. The course encompasses integrative bioethics, as well as methodological and subject characteristics of integrative bioethics, bioethics as opposed to the concept of practical (applied) ethics, bioethical sensibility, moral status of animals and their rights, speciesism and anti-speciesism in theory and practice, philosophy and ideology of sustainable development, polluting the environment, climate change and renewable energy sources, biological and social inequality, genetically modified organisms, ecological agriculture and permaculture, bioethics in the context of education, economy and law, the relationship between globalization and local democracy. Furthermore, the course encompasses in its content the problematics of human right in the context of contemporary fight against terrorism, migrations of the population and poverty, clinical bioethics (the relationship physician – patient, ethics of nursery, informed consent, ethics of biomedical research, genetic technology in biomedicine), eugenics, medically enhanced fertilization and abortion, organ transplants and the decision at the end of life: dysphasia, euthanasia, and palliative care. Finally, it encompasses bioethics in a relationship with religion and the theological perspectives in bioethics as a co-relation of the media and bioethics and the contemporary position of bioethics in the Republic of Croatia.

environment; Intercultural education in early and preschool education; Knowing plants and animals; Games in the education for the environment.

The courses of the study programme of Integrated Undergraduate and Graduate University Teacher Study: Pedagogy, Ecology, Research class of nature and society; Natural history II; School hygiene, Abused and neglected children; Interculturalism in education; Non-violent communication; Parenthood; Ecological education; Ethics of the teacher's calling; Extracurricular information and technical activities; and Bioethics.

Conclusion

By taking the premise that every education also necessarily must include an upbringing component, and that students, future educators and teachers, during the course of their studies need to be made aware of the sensitivity of ethical decision-making in the future profession, as well as in solving the problems which influence the forming of the identity, because ethics and bioethics need to fulfil important social and individual aspects of education, this paper has done a comparative analysis of the University Undergraduate and Graduate Studies of Early and Preschool Education and the Integrated Undergraduate and Graduate Teacher Study programmes, according to the outcomes of learning and the content of the courses, at the Faculty of Education of the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, focused on the area of (bio)ethics, education and the ethics of the teacher's calling.

By comparative analysis, the following has been determined: 10 courses with a (bio)ethical component at the University Undergraduate Study of Early and Preschool Education, 10 courses at the University Graduate Study of Early and Preschool Education, and 13 courses at the Integrated Undergraduate and Graduate University Teacher Study, which makes up a total of 33 courses of the Faculty of Education of the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek. It can be concluded that the Faculty has a high awareness in the aspect of (bio)ethical subjects. It is certain that a high contribution to the development of bioethics in the Republic of Croatia is given by the Osijek Days of Bioethics, held in 2018 in Osijek for the second time and with an announcement of future conferences, which will also establish a continuity of the conferences on bioethics at the University of Osijek. When talking about the value of gatherings in the sense of establishing the bioethical science in the Republic of Croatia, one should highlight that it was "precisely (...) the gathering which gave a key incentive to further and faster development of bioethics in Croatia, because they enabled a fruitful dialogue and networking of scientists interested in bioethical questions" (Zagorac and Jurić, 2008: 605). The newly formed Croatian constituent of the UNESCO department of bioethics got involved in the organization of the *Second Osijek Days of Bioethics* (November 5th and 6th 2018) (University of Haifa, Israel), placed at the Faculty of Education of the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek. By founding the unit, the leader of which is the holder of the course *Bioethics* at the Faculty of Education, the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University and the Faculty have become a part of the international network of the UNESCO

department of bioethics which has its affiliates in around 70 countries, with the goal of strengthening a bioethically focused education.³

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BIOETIČKE TEME U VISOKOŠKOLSKOJ NASTAVI BUDUĆIH ODGOJITELJA I UČITELJA

Sažetak

Bioetika kao novija znanstvena disciplina interdisciplinarno odgovara na pitanja o životu suvremenog čovjeka, a odgojem i obrazovanjem izričemo kakvo društvo i kakvog čovjeka želimo. Vrijednosti na kojima se temelji odgojno-obrazovni sustav u Republici Hrvatskoj sagledava se kao nova mogućnost razvoja hrvatskoga nacionalnoga, kulturnoga i duhovnoga identiteta unutar složenih globalizacijskih procesa. U eri globalizacije, informacijskog i tehnološkog napretka jedan od najtežih poslova modernog doba je odgoj djece u promijenjenim okolnostima što se posljedično reflektira na stil odgoja i uvjete u kojima se odvija odgoj i obrazovanje. Ciljevi odgoja usmjeravaju odgojno-obrazovnu praksu i pedagoško djelovanje u njoj, a odgovornost i složenu zadaća imaju upravo odgojitelji/učitelji. Važnost inicijalnog obrazovanja odgojitelja/učitelja neupitna je danas. Biti odgojiteljem/učiteljem je zvanje/profesija s jedinstvenim profesionalnim standardima i etičkim pravilima učiteljske profesije nadahnuta vrijednostima društvene uključenosti i potrebama njegovanja potencijala svakog djeteta/učenika. Rad se bavi komparativnom analizom

studijskih programa i ishoda učenja u Sveučilišnom studijskom programu ranoga i predškolskog odgoja i obrazovanja i u Integriranom preddiplomskom i diplomskom studijskom programu za učitelje na Fakultetu za odgojne i obrazovne znanosti u Osijeku usmjerenih na područje (bio)etike, odgoja te etike učiteljskoga poziva. Studente, buduće odgojitelje/učitelje tijekom studija, potrebno je senzibilizirati za osjetljivost u budućoj struci u etičkom odlučivanju i rješavanju problema koji utječu na oblikovanje karaktera jer etika i bioetika trebaju ispunjavati važne društvene i individualne aspekte odgoja i obrazovanja.

Ključne riječi: odgoj i obrazovanje, odgojitelji/učitelji, studijski programi, bioetika