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CRITICAL PEDAGOGY – ONE OF THE FACTORS OF POWERFUL EDUCATION

Abstract

One of the directions of social pedagogy which in its basis integrates discourse and emancipation is critical pedagogy. The power and strength of this school of social pedagogy lie precisely in the constant discourse between teachers and students. The resources of this approach are reflected in the creation of a positive change in the currently existing didactic triangle. Changing the existing paradigm in learning and teaching leads to innovation and strengthening of the potentials of education. Through discourse and emancipation, critical transformative pedagogy promotes ideas such as equality, justice, human and minority rights, which widens the perspectives and increases the power of education.

A curriculum focused on pointing out social issues and bringing students to its centre through interaction, mutual exchange, and thought activation contribute to their intensive intellectual growth and development. In this way, through critical pedagogy, the student is given the opportunity to become an active member throughout the period of its formal education, as well as to think actively about social problems. In order to better understand the theoretical construct of transformative critical pedagogy, this paper will examine the process of its creation, main representatives, basic postulates, as well as the ways of researching current educational reality which aim to further strengthen the process of education in both society and schools.

Keywords*: research, teaching, education, upbringing, transformation.*

INTRODUCTION

Even though the concept of critical pedagogy was created in the 1930s, its relevance did not diminish to this day. Taking into consideration the overall social trends that influence education, as well as its institutionalized form, critical pedagogy (or the critical social theory) continues to explore the practices that could make school more efficient. Critical pedagogy contemplates the active relationship that exists between students and teachers as well as their engagement in class. Schools become places whose purposes are personal growth and development of both students and teachers. Seeing the school as a teaching practicum in the process of the education of students, as well as of a continuing professional development of teachers contributes to the understanding of teaching practice as a space in which the student and teacher become critical thinkers and transformative intellectuals.

In accordance with that, one of the main goals of powerful education can be seen in one of the central principals of critical pedagogy – constituting social justice. In order to achieve well-dispersed social justice, education must become flexible, sensitive, and reflexive systems that encourage the manifestation of these two pedagogical categories. Constant critical insight of both teachers and students into the educational reality provides them with the opportunity to participate in the creation of a better and fairer education of higher quality. Education organized according to the postulate of the critical paradigm becomes a powerful tool in the process of forming students and teachers who constantly reassess their own knowledge, attitude towards nature and society, and the ways the society functions.

TRADITIONAL AND CRITICAL APPROACH TO RESEARCHING THEORY AND PRACTICE

Not many scientific terms had such an impact on the epistemological and methodological deliberation of the 20th century as the term 'paradigm'. This term was coined by Thomas Kuhn, who used it for the first time in his book "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" in 1962. The term 'paradigm' is the central term in Kuhn's work. The term itself is multidimensional and therefore often highly controversial. However, despite that, the root of the word 'paradigm' originates from Greek and it is most commonly used to refer to „demonstration to one another".

However, dictionaries often translate „paradigm" as „an example" or a „declension and conjugation table" (Savićević, 1996, 96). Another definition worth mentioning is: A paradigm is a set of rules and methods that characterize a science or an activity (Mićunović, 2007, 277). The term paradigm has been applied to the field of pedagogical research, where the criterion is based on the choice of the research problem. Many scholars try to accept paradigms as something usual in science, which represents their process of scientific socialization (Savićević, 1996).

According to Husen (1998), paradigm can be considered a cultural artefact and as such it reflects the dominant understanding of the scientific behaviour in a certain scientific com-

munity, whether this community has a national or an international character. Husen also defines the term as a scientific approach and procedure that emerge and serve as examples to new generations of scientists (Husen, 1988).

Kuhn himself used the term "paradigms" in a multidisciplinary and ambiguous way. He identifies twenty uses of the term. One of its meanings that comprehensively covers all the common expenditures of a certain scientific group, while the second sets particular types of commitments and thus represents a subset of the first. A paradigm is what scientists share.

From the standpoint of pedagogy, the paradigm is defined as "model, schema or pattern". Paradigms are not theories, but more like one of the several ways of thinking, or research patterns, which, when applied, may lead to a possible development of a theory.

As seen from the previous claims, the term „paradigm" in epistemology and methodology of pedagogical research has many meanings. Kuhn (1962) manages to identify twenty such definitions. Despite the lack of a unique definition and the meaning of the term, its importance in organizing research should not be overlooked. During the process of planning a research in education (whether experimental or non-experimental), the researcher often understands that constructing a paradigm of the research would be of great use. It is precisely the paradigm that can serve as a way of orientation which will contribute to a more efficient disposition of its intellectual powers.

Ever since 1960 up until the early 1970s the number of existing research paradigms began to skyrocket. Some of these paradigms include hermeneutical, critical, neo-Marxist, as well as those that appeared as counterbalance and criticism, as an alternative to or a substitute for the positivist paradigm, quantization paradigm, hypotheses testing and generalization (Savićević, 1996). The general conclusion that emerges here is that epistemology and methodology of pedagogical research do not have a common, dominant paradigm, as it was previously believed, but there is a paradigmatic pluralism or a group of paradigms which enables every paradigm to be useful in its own way - of course, in relation to the research problem and the social context in which the research is conducted (Kellner, 2000; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Gojkov, 2007; Maksimović, 2011).

An important thing to be discussed is something that can often be found in pedagogical literature – the attitude that there is no true „pedagogy, but rather different pedagogical concepts („paradigms") that have many differing elements: basic terms, research methods and its effects on the practical work. "(Gojkov, 2007, 42).

Furthermore, considering the issue of pluralism of pedagogical paradigms, it is to be noted that for the last twenty years the European pedagogical scene has been designed according to Kuhn's three basic paradigmatic orientations:

1. hermeneutics;

2. empirical-analytical (experiential-scientific);

3. dialectical or critical-emancipatory pedagogy (Gojkov, 2007, 42).

What is more, American pragmatism, symbolic interactionism, and phenomenology exist in both epistemology and methodology (Gojkov, 2007; Brašanac, 2008). In this regard a decade ago a step forward was made towards the approximate paradigm and the acceptance that an intelligent combination of qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches could in many cases be efficient (Maksimović, 2011).

The following lines will attempt to theoretically determine the above mentioned paradigmatic orientations. The first in a series of paradigms is hermeneutics, which clearly manifested itself in spiritual-scientific pedagogy, the successor of herbartism.

The main feature of spiritual-scientific pedagogy is precisely the educational practice, which implies the whole, with the scientific task of hermeneutical pedagogy to recognize educational reality. The methodology of hermeneutical pedagogy consists of observing a specific situation, searching for one's own and social experience and respecting historical development (Gojkov, 2007).

However, the second half of the 20th century saw the rise of a new wave of science, which directly affected pedagogy as well. In fact, a new paradigmatic orientation was formed. Although entirely new, it served as a counterbalance to the already existing hermeneutical pedagogy (it indicated a lack of expertise because, according of its representatives (Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuze, Habermas), it no longer represented science). Hence that is a critical theory. The basic starting point for critical theory is reflected in the following theses:

1. science is an activity, part of community work, not a system of knowledge;
2. the aim of critical theory is to clarify the social context of the shaping social facts and, by doing that, to contribute to the change of existing social relations (the aim of clarification is emancipation, freeing one from social stigma);
3. The methodological basis of critical theory is "an objective understanding of meaning";
4. the interest that governs knowledge is emancipation;
5. the model of social practice without subordination and successful commitment is practical discourse (Gojkov, 2007, 36).

In addition to the basic starting points, some other theses that are characteristic of critical theory are as follows:

1. critical theory turns against both behavioural and spiritual-scientific pedagogy;
2. The mission of critical pedagogy is mostly a critical ideology that reveals the dependence of education on social processes;
3. methodology is the characteristic link between experience and hermeneutics (Gojkov, 2007, 45).

Considering everything already stated, it is to conclude that parallels are not compatible, although there are touching points between them (at the level of basic understanding, methodological level, and finally in practical procedures). On the other hand, it would be wrong to conclude that the differences between terms and paradigms are insignificant. On the contrary,

paradigmatic pluralism encourages the development of different research strategies. Different paradigms alert the researchers that there are different conceptions of the problem, and not only the ones that the researcher had defined. Identifying multiple epistemological and methodological approaches can only stimulate the dynamics of the research process and provide more valid data, facilitate interpretation and result in more reliable conclusions.

The development of science and using its results cause the need to raise the issue of critical appraisal of its founders and assumptions, as well as the question of the growth of scientific knowledge. These questions relate to issues of general epistemology or philosophy of science. By taking a look at the events within the philosophy of science, we can distinguish between different periods or so-called streams of scientific approaches to the issues of understanding nature, the man and the world. Thus the first half of the 20th century marks the dominance of the positivist approach, while in the second half of the 20th century, the positivist orientation took on a post-positivist approach, which serves as a critique of positivism and the aspiration to establish a new approach in the theory of science (Palekčić, 1990). In this sense scientists discuss the epistemological foundations of the "new image" of science are discussed. The positivist image of science emerged and developed within the philosophy of logical positivism. According to the representatives of this aspect of science (Hempel, 2001), the task of the theory of science is to deal with the logical structure of the system of scientific knowledge in order to establish the criteria and norms that govern the empirical science. Therefore, the philosophy of science is presented as a normative discipline that does not deal with any specific scientific theories, but with the logical reconstruction of the processes that appear in the processes of achieving safe empirical knowledge. There is a unique scientific method for all fields of scientific knowledge: the uniform methodology for all natural and social sciences. Thus, positivism attempted to impose a paradigm of physics on the social sciences. Just like positivism, characterized by a historical approach to the theory of science problem and postpositive problems of the theory of science, it also comes from a historical perspective (Palekčić, 1990). In this sense, Kuhn (1962, qtd. in Donmoyer, 2006) claims that science does not develop through the accumulation of knowledge.

According to Kuhn's theory of science, there is "normal science", that is, a period dominated by a paradigm. It is, in fact, a period of accumulating knowledge in the development of science within the ruling paradigm. A question arises, "How does science come up with new paradigms?" (Kuhn, 1962, 87). When anomalies (findings that cannot be explained by the ruling paradigm) occur, they will lead to a scientific crisis. Their clarification implies a scientific revolution. This is a period of the "unusual science" (Kuhn, 1962, 90). Therefore, a new paradigm emerges from the scientific revolution, and the new one suppresses the old one and the outdated understandings, facts, and theories that are subject to new analyses, redefinition, or even total abandonment (Palekčić 1990).

Leading up to the onset of the scientific crisis in the social sciences, a group was formed in London in 1977 for a new research paradigm, the aim of which was, inter alia, to jointly pursue research avenues in the social sciences and humanities. During this period,

two research paradigms were developed, one of which was an orthodox traditional research paradigm, while on the other hand, a new research paradigm was formed (Palekčić 1990).

There is a new research paradigm whose alternative name is objective - subjective (Ristić, 2006, 13). This paradigm was conceived as a synthesis of naive research and orthodox research, from which the alternative name was introduced. Although at first glance seemingly contradictory, the new paradigm is not in complete antagonistic relation to the traditional paradigm, because the new paradigm adopts most of the standpoints and demands from the traditional one. A brief summary of these properties is as follows:

1. The adopted model of the person within the traditional paradigm implies that people are detached from their natural-social context, that as individuals they can be included in the research plan, manipulated and returned to their place. Instead, the new paradigm advocates the study of the person as a whole in its natural context with which they also form a whole;

2. the positivistic beliefs (characteristic of the traditional paradigm) that people are fit for a set of variables that are subject to an operational definition and are equivalent in different individuals and different situations, the new paradigm is completely unacceptable;

3. Reductionist observation of variables, instead of individuals, leads to the fragmentation of what is being studied and departure from the deep understanding and knowledge of individuals, groups, and society as a whole, as a result of the new research paradigm;

4. The orthodox paradigm is with every right disturbed by giving too much relevance to exact measurement. These studies produce results that are numerically accurate, but untrue, while other results, although not numerical in nature, are closer to the truth;

5. traditional research aims at obtaining "pure" information, according to which researchers attempt to eliminate real life, but fail to do so;

6. Researchers who stick to the old method of research are constantly looking for bigger and better instruments and bigger and better forms that will only turn researches into a grand business and obviously put them into service for those who can pay large sums of money;

7. A new research paradigm, unlike the traditional one, is shaped by the strong influence of humanistic psychology, which points to the observation of persons as a single entity and as active, intentional, creative personalities;

8. The new research paradigm has its roots in existentialism. Therefore, one cannot be seen as a thing. Unlike watching things, one is, among other things, active, free, and creative. Humans are different from things and aware that they are different from them and aware of their attitude towards the animate and inanimate world that surrounds them (Ristić, 2006, 43).

It is stated in this paper that reification is one of the important characteristics of the traditional paradigm. Etymology of the term "reification" is Latin, and it represents doing. The concept of reification (creation, definition, objectification) has two overlapping meanings. The first meaning represents the process of transforming nature into desired objects through work. The second meaning marks a state in which people do not recognize their product (physical objects and social relationships) as their own, but rather as an independent, objective and necessary being. An artist creating out of intrinsic motives towards creativity is an example of the second meaning of reification.

In free translation reification denotes a decision-making process, while in a more narrow, pedagogical sense, it represents confusion which is created when, for example, a person recognizes abstract beliefs or hypothetical constructs as real events. Reification assumes that nouns expressing abstract theoretical terms, such as anxiety and neurosis, denote existing and specific entities (Ristić, 2006).

After a brief survey of characteristics of orthodox and new research paradigms, the penultimate characteristic of the new paradigm will be further clarified. Furthermore, two different types of interaction with research participants will be discussed (Ristić, 2006). The first type of interaction refers to the direct contribution of formulating statements which describe them or are based on their content. This type of interactive relationship between researchers and research participants is characteristic for the traditional paradigm. Namely, such research implies that the researcher instructs the participant, who then proceeds from the previously formulated hypothesis and the entire research. The second type of interaction between the researcher and the participant allows the participant to directly contribute in constructing the hypothesis, which is not characteristic for the first type of interactive relationship. In the second type of interaction, the participant informs himself about all phases of the research and is expected to express and explain his agreement or disagreement with certain phases of the research or the research in its entirety.

As it was previously mentioned in this paper, a new study of paradigm relies on the Habermas category of "emancipatory cognitive interest" (Habermas, 1972, 77). According to one of the founders of the so-called Frankfurt School and Critical Pedagogy, Jürgen Habermas, the theory of "cognitive interest" belongs to a group of empirical and analytical sciences that integrate technical cognitive interests. Historical hermeneutical sciences include practical insights of interests. Critically oriented sciences, on the other hand, include emancipatory cognitive interests.

Concerning empirical and analytical sciences, its reference frame sets the meaning of possible statements, establishes the rules or criteria needed to construct a theory and its critical verification (Ristić, 2006; Brašanac, 2008). Theories include hypothetical-deductive relationship of evidence that allow us to conclude hypotheses with empirical content. Product achieved through empirical and analytical science is predictable. Thus, these theories reveal reality as a subject of constitutive interests in possible intensifying of actions which are generated by feedback. In fact, this category of knowledge increases our power of technical control.

The second in this series of sciences is historical-hermeneutical science in which knowledge is acquired through a different methodological framework. For this reason, we claim that this is a completely different methodological framework, since theories in this science are not constructed deductively (Ristić, 2006).Access to facts is provided through understanding of the meaning, and not through observation.

Therefore, hermeneutical knowledge is always mediated by reflection, which is a result of interpretation of the inclusive situation. The world of traditional meaning is revealed to the interpreter only to the extent of his comprehension, with the interpreter establishing communication between the two worlds (the existing world and the world the interpreter). Habermas (1987) calls this category of knowledge psychic cognitive interest, since unlike technical cognitive interest, interpretations here allow us to direct action within the tradition, that is, within the existing theory.

Critical social science belongs to the above-mentioned sciences that make up the category of "emancipatory cognitive interest". Its role is to overcome the goal of systematic social work sciences, such as economics, sociology and politics. A methodological framework for determining the meaning of the validity of critical statements is established by the concept of self-reflection that relieves the subject of dependence on hypostatizing.

Self-reflection is determined by emancipatory cognitive interest, which is a common denominator of both philosophy and critical science (Ristic, 2006). This is an analysis that liberates a person from the power of other people, but also from the power that he or she does not understand (Freire, 1978; Mclaren, 2009; Giroux, 2013).

Critical pedagogy is a significant factor of powerful education. The reason for this is found in its elementary postulates. Dialectical approach, development of dialogue, emancipation, discourse and critique of theory and practice offer the possibility of increasing the strength and power of the education process. Knowledge is gained through discourse dialogue with constant review of theory and practice in which it is possible to combine theory with practice. Through this research approach towards theory and practice, the student can understand and comprehend the connection and relationship between knowledge gained in school (theory) and everyday knowledge (practice).

Using the critical perspective, the power of upbringing and education increases significantly as it is realized through four basic elements that create critical pedagogy. Application of contemporary and critical paradigm of research of theory and practice refers to:

1. explanation;
2. criticism;
3. guidance i
4. imagination (Elias etal., 1997, 178).

The explanation serves as a way of describing existing theory and practice. This, by exploring teaching practice and its reality, indicates the coherence of theory and practice. This way, the genesis of the problem in which students can mature is observed and clarified, and

they are able to identify and adopt new intellectual and behavioral patterns. Applying critical discourse increases the strength of upbringing and education by introducing students to the logic of scientific thinking and comprehension. The product of such research approach is general knowledge which connects theory and practice. Sublimation of theoretical and practical knowledge leads to harmony of students' knowledge and behavior, which directly affects the general goal of education (development and formation of general and versatile personality of students) (Opšte osnove predškolskog programa, 2006; Zakon o osnovnom obrazovanju i vaspitanju, 2019).

Moreover, the element of critical research paradigm which points to the link between theory and practice is criticism. This element of the contemporary research approach introduces necessary elements of critical pedagogy such as stimulation, emancipation, and discourse. What these previously mentioned elements share is rethinking, cognitive dissonance, and intensifying intellectual growth and development. Encouragement should create a lucrative environment for learning and cooperation in the process of education. In this context, encouragement directs students into seeking and finding new cognitive patterns that contribute to the formation of appropriate intellectual structures.

In addition to encouraging the use of new educational forms of work in the educational process, student emancipation is achieved. This element of the critical research paradigm is related to knowledge, awareness and behavior of students.

Knowledge of the critical research paradigm is treated as the result of emancipation. The difference from the usual definition of knowledge as an accumulation of facts and generalizations, which the subject has adopted and permanently retained in his consciousness, is that this knowledge (the result of emancipation) is not antagonistic to the consciousness and behavior of students (Vučić, 2007; Đurović, 2012). It includes not only memorizing facts and generalizations, but also applies them to everyday situations (Gergen, 1985). Knowledge in that context implies a constant re-examination of attitudes, values, levels of awareness of someone or something that influences the formation of behavior patterns (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Tadić, 2014). Combined knowledge, awareness and behavior contribute to the construction and reconceptualization of new functional knowledge (Gergen, 1985).

The connection of knowledge with awareness and behavior of students further enhances the strength and power of education. Critique of institutionalized education is an opportunity to plan educational development, but also an opportunity to reconsider the flexibility and openness of the society. Education becomes an important elementin the advancement of society through students, future decision-makers who are being prepared for the upcoming changes, constant learning and self-education.

Good organization and focus on the subject and issue of research in theory and practice of education and focus on drawbacks or benefits of education aim to remove drawbacks, as well as to maintain and improve education. (Elias et al.,1997). The improvement depends on the efficiency and effectiveness of knowledge, the quality of which depends on the power of education.

If the paradigm of critical research has no focus, there is no opportunity for students to learn certain educational strategies and incorporate values that are important for further life and work.

This aspect of the critical research paradigm assumes the development of new educational methods that will have a beneficial effect on strengthening the power of upbringing (Elias et al., 1997).Such environment requires a focus on research, testing, applying and changing the way in which the education process is organized and realized. The main goal of orientation is the permanent variation of variables (educational technology and educational teaching methods) which lead to a revolution in education. This results in the advancement of education that goes beyond all diversity and inequality (McLaren, 2009).

The focus on further creating forms an imagination that provides plenty, especially when it comes to the perspective of education. It is an investment in future education, recognizing their potentials and resources. Although it is basically an imagination, it provides a realistic projection of institutionalized education. This is an opportunity to envision and anticipate possible additions and changes to the learning and teaching process, while expanding the roles and responsibilities of the participants of the educational process (Elias et al., 1997).

Integrating all four elements of the critical research paradigm into education contributes to the innovation and joy of learning and teaching through acquisition of lasting and useful knowledge.

CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL THEORY

The creation of critical theory or critical theory of society originated in 1933. Originally formed within the Frankfurt Circle, it brought together eminent philosophers, sociologists, psychologists and educators (M. Horkheimer, T. Adorno, E. Fromm, W. Dilthey, J. Derrida, J. Lyotard). With the onset of World War II, the work of critical pedagogy and the Frankfurt Circle transfers to the United States, where it remains to this day, connecting different types of experts. Some of the representatives of contemporary critical pedagogy are J. Habermas, P. Freire, H. Giroux, P. McLaren, J. Kincheloe, J. Suoranta, D. Macedo, and A. Darder.

Max Horkheimer is thought to be the founder of the aforementioned school. In 1930, Horkheimer became a full professor at the Department of Philosophy in Frankfurt, where he was the director of the Institute for Social Research. One of the activities of the Institute was aimed at publishing Archives for the History of Socialism and the Labor Movement. Horkheimer brings together associates of various profiles (philosophers, economists, historians, sociologists, educators, psychologists) in order to critically examine and advance the comprehensive critical theory of society. They tried to create a theory that focuses on the science of modern society, which would at the same time serve as a critique of the society.

When critical pedagogy and the "crisis of science" emerged, the conflict between the prevailing research paradigms followed. At the same time, representatives of this pedagogical movement have noted the conflict between positivism and the current paradigm of research. The dominance of positivism, which intended to transform the methodology of natural sciences into the methodology of social sciences, occurred. The situation proceeds to be solved by searching a new, effective research paradigm that will bridge the gap between paradigms and pedagogical directions. Consequently, a new paradigm sets a completely fresh pedagogical direction – critical pedagogy (Vujisić-Živković, 2004; Pešić, 2006; Brašanac, 2008; McLaren, 2009).

Following the establishment of a new pedagogical paradigm, World War II, and the relocation of Frankfurt Circle to the US, the second stage of development of critical pedagogy occurs. In addition to the change of physical location of work, the approach to the study of critical pedagogy changes as well. One of the most prominent representatives of contemporary critical pedagogy is Jürgen Habermas, who, like many others, criticizes Marx's dialectical materialism.F or members of the Frankfurt School, this meant that macro-science was connected to the European rationalist-enlightenment tradition, as well as with classical German philosophy. The phenomenon of alienation and revival in contemporary civil society should be observed from the Marxian perspective of the assumptions contained in his work Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts (Vranicki, 1983). For the members of the Frankfurt School the fundamental philosophical and scientific task is to restructure and renew Marxian theory. A new platform has been found which fits the critique of modern civil society and its ideology. In order to execute a critical analysis and achieve complete understanding of the organization of modern society, supporters of critical pedagogy advise engagement of the mind, which enables progressive overcoming of the existing stateof society. Initially, representatives of critical theory remain convinced that the world can change according to the principles of the mind.

In the process of restructuring Marxian theory, Jürgen Habermas uses language, symbols, and logic of many social sciences, such as psychology, pedagogy, linguistics, and political science. Multidisciplinarity leads to the creation of a methodological concept of theory which becomes the subject of critical analysis and the "language of criticism." Thus, a question "When does the theory become a subject of criticism?" arises in contemporary critical pedagogy. Habermas (1987) provides an answer to the question: "(...) only when it reflects its structural relation of position and potential relation of name, that is, when the relation between theory and the empirical is clearly defined in the logic of the social science." (Habermas, 1987, 98)Supporters of critical theory, in their scholarly and philosophical work, sought to establish a unity of theory and practice (Brasanac, 2008; McLaren, 2009). According to them, theory should span beyond the practice of particular social groups or classes, but it remains powerless if it is related to the aspirations and interests of the social groups.

TRANSFORMATIVE CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

The modern education system, although undergoing significant reforms since the beginning of the new century, is still a factor that contributes to the lack of success in achieving the goal of preparing students for active participation in society.

Many authors (Trnavac, 2005; Radulović, 2016) stress several factors directly responsible for this state of education. Some of these factors are connected to two key pedagogical categories and their dominance in the educational process. A consensus that education and upbringing are equally important in organizing and functioning of educational process is to be reached. In this sense, education has the upper hand in school and education policy (Trnavac, 2005; Strategija razvoja obrazovanja u Srbiji do 2020., 2012).

It is evident that the sphere of upbringing is also significantly lost in the educational strategy, which significantly reduces efficiency of goals and outcomes of the educational process.

The process fails to develop student's personality and sense of community, mutual respect and altruism. The student cannot fully understand and identify with other students in the class.

Such educational does not shape the personality of students so that they can critically think, understand and comprehend relationships in society (Freire, 1978; Opšte osnove predškolskog programa, 2006; McLaren, 2009). The process of creating scientific concepts and facts, i.e.the process of education is insufficient and incomplete since it does not promote values, attitudes, emotions and awareness of the world that surrounds them, all of which are result of upbringing.

All of this affects the inconsistency of the sociocultural context in which the student grows with nature and society (Gergen, 1985). This disconnection between the natural and social environment of the student causes the inability to follow, interpret or understand the changes in nature and society. Consequently, the school is alienated from nature and society, and isolated as a separate entity that functions completely independent of both nature and society (Trnavac, 2005; McLaren, 2009; Slunjski, 2011).

The result of alienation is that the knowledge acquired at school is not sufficient for the students to meet the criteria for labor market, which makes their knowledge dysfunctional (Strategija razvoja obrazovanja u Srbiji, 2012; Marušić, Gutvajn and Jakšić, 2015).

In addition to the thesis about alienation of school from environment and society, there are other factors that contribute to pedagogizing of curriculum, overloading students with the educational content, as well as the impact of hidden curriculum on learning and teaching in class (Freire, 1978; Bognar, Matijević, 2005; McLaren, 2009; Vujisić-Živković, 2009). The process of pedagogizing the curriculum, according to futurologists (Bridges, 2008), is neither positive nor negative phenomenon of institutionalized education. This is because the main role of pedagogized teaching process is to socialize the school. In the process of pedagogizing,

school is seen as a social, municipal place that will, through the diversification of curriculum, solve all current social issues (Bridges, 2008). If this concept is frequently evaluated and planned, there will be no signs of anything bad in pedagogy. Introducing new subjects leads to the modernization of the school curriculum and knowledge that students gain in school. In that context, both the student and the teacher get a new perspective and insight into the problems of contemporary society. That increases relational, critical, abstract, multiperspective thinking of students, as well as their ability to work in different natural and social circumstances (McLaren, 2009; Vrcelj, Klapan, Kušić, 2009; Katinić, 2012). When it comes to teachers, that dynamic educational process incites the need for frequent refreshing and supplementing of present didactic-methodical knowledge and continuous professional development. In this context, teachers are encouraged to research and improve their pedagogical work in class with students (Habermas, 1987; McLaren, 2009; Giroux, 2013).

Permanent need to change something in educational reality encourages teachers to think more about the action they have undertaken or will undertake during or after it. This is an opportunity for the teacher to feel the need for a transition from a technician to a reflective practitioner (Dewey, 1910). It is important that the teacher uses instructional materials and technology carefully so that the student is not overloaded and mentally exhausted, which could contribute to depleted motivation to continue teaching and failure to fulfill individual intellectual achievement of students (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Vucic, 2007; Bognar, 2008; Tadic, 2014; Stanisavljevic Petrovic and Pavlovic, 2017). Here, it is necessary to think about the teachers to avoid the negative consequences of pedagogizing the curriculum. It is important to pay attention to the professional burnout of teachers, as well as to the problem of future participation and engagement in class (Lukić, 2011).

A school that has based its educational process on the principles of a hidden curriculum will have significant effect when it comes to organizing and implementing teaching. The hidden curriculum contributes to the reproduction of semiotic power that leads to the failure of students whom then the school doesn't provide with the ability to adapt to social circumstances and requirements of the school (Bognar, Matijević, 2005; Bognar, 2008; McLaren, 2009). The inability to understand and evaluate other factors in the educational process will, as a consequence, have the achievement of the objectives of the hidden curriculum (McLaren, 2009). Students will not be able to develop mutiperspective and pluriperspective thinking when it comes to the perception, identification, and understanding of the categories and subcategories of the main teaching matter. In that way, the field of knowledge is narrowed and the student remains at the level of observation (Dewey, 1910).

Besides identifying the factors that jeopardize the functions of contemporary school, nowadays, the power of education is an important topic. Among others, the current question is whether the school and institutionalized education are able to solve the issues of contemporary society. The power of contemporary education is not decreased in comparison to the previous era, despite the fact that schools can be substituted with some other forms of non-formal and informal education (Trnavac, 2005). The existence and application of these forms of non-formal and informal education cannot replace all those characteristics that

help us recognize formal education. Some of those characteristics reflect in the systematic, intentional, rational and process-oriented nature of formal education (Kovač Šebart i Krek, 2012; Antonijević, 2013).

Also, the survival of institutionalized education Antonia Darder (2002) sees in a frequent struggle for meaning in order to see what and of what kind relationships in our everyday life are. In this struggle, it is important to look for a critical dimension of negative impacts and meanings that change in society to raise education on the level of emancipation and ethical liberation of students. Emancipation, participation, liberation, empowerment and promotion of distributed social justice are some of the ideas that emphasize the strength and power of contemporary education.

Acknowledgement of strength and power of education is seen in the theoretical construct of the critical, transformative pedagogy of Peter McLaren. The concept of Peter McLaren's critical pedagogy refers to the inauguration of the emancipation idea, praxis, monitoring and classifying the students based on their predispositions and abilities, as well as being against the idea of institutionalized violence (racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia), overcoming symmetrical power and privilege relationships among factors in the educational process (McLaren, 2009). Besides emancipation, critical pedagogy includes ideas like equality and the establishment of what Karl Marx (1973) calls positive humanism. Positive humanism includes the spiritual emancipation of the students. The affirmative action of students' spiritual emancipation encourages students to distant themselves from material values, attitudes and materialized behaviors, after which it is intensively worked on internalizing and incorporating the aesthetic and ethical values that form the student's personality. All this contributes to a better and more detailed understanding of the environment and establishment of harmony and unity of students with their peers and the environment that surrounds them, which is very important for the survival of mankind (Fromm, 2000).

The main goal of critical pedagogy is to equally encourage the students and the teachers in the teaching process. In that case, teaching has the function of transforming knowledge, values, attitudes and scholarly views that students and teachers have about the world. Transformative teaching provides the student with a memorable experience in which permanent and functional skills that prepare them for a holistic understanding of the world are acquired (McLaren, 2009). A holistic approach to knowledge acquirement functions as an enhancement of the cognitive, moral, emotional and conative aspects of students' personality development. Encouraging these aspects of personality development establishes a dialectical relationship between theory and practice of teaching (Opšte osnove predškolskog programa, 2006; McLaren, 2009). This goes beyond fragmenting educational content and knowledge into specific scientific disciplines and holism when it comes to student's knowledge. Thereby, the students get the overall picture of the impact and complexity of relationships between different systems (social and natural) (Đurović, 2012). By making new concepts and further transforming students, it is important to take into account the knowledge with which they come to school (Kamenov, 2006; Luković, 2016).

In critical pedagogy, it is necessary to respect the differences of students' experiences that arise as a result of the conflicting attitudes that come from the interaction of students and teachers (Milutinović, 2016). Student experiences consist in presenting connections and relationships between concepts that need to be structured or restructured. Continuity in monitoring accumulated and internalized student experiences contribute to a better understanding and better linking of phenomena and concepts. Student knowledge is significant because of its complexity that entails the need for their critical analysis and interpretation. Analysis, interpretation, and understanding students' experiences in school and extracurricular contexts all together developed a language specific to the discourse of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1978; McLaren, 2009; Giroux, 2013). The purpose of the language of critical pedagogy is in the sub-construct of critical literacy. This type of literacy has to encourage students to reconsider every form of reality and determine the accuracy of the mentioned hypotheses and attitudes (Giroux, 2013).

Critical literacy is also a principle and tool in teaching that harmonizes theory and practice. This type of literacy requires not only knowledge of the language of critical pedagogy, but also of the language of other sciences, whose language and logic will lead students to the correct conclusions using the adequate arguments they have formed through dialectical thinking (Katinić, 2012). McLaren (2009) states that critical literacy will be successful if students have the opportunity to:

1. develop the language of criticism (Giroux, 2013, 13);
2. develop the language of opportunities (Giroux, 2013, 11);
3. create the conditions for the respect of the dialectical unity of theory and practice (Freire, 1978, 55).

Henry Giroux (2013) states that the language of criticism exists so that students can develop a vocabulary of theory and a set of analytical skills characteristic of the terminology and logic of sciences such as sociology, critical theory and cultural studies. The language of opportunities refers to the development of a better world and a better translation of theory into practice. This type of language of critical pedagogy refers to the use of a new set of analytical skills taken from the social sciences. Taking a set of analytical skills from social sciences aims to research and transform social conditions that have historically and culturally produced man's individual and collective experience (Kamenov, 2006; Giroux, 2013). Respecting the dialectical unity of theory and practice is the third step in promoting the critical literacy of students. It is important to make a distinction here between thinking and critical thinking. The former refers to the student's awareness of the social and economic conditions the student lives in. The latter refers to the questioning of positioning in society, as well as their connections and relations with the world (Freire, 1978). Freire (1978) also refers to the critical thinking as a form of existing because it connects beings that not only know but are also aware of the level of quality and quantity of their knowledge of the world.

Critical pedagogy is an idea, and that is why self-confidence and ideological basis of the concept are frequently questioned. There are obstacles in the search for the uplift and

subsequently, there is a disagreement of ideas, hypotheses, and constructs that undermine the optimal functioning of the school (McLaren, 2009). Critical pedagogy opposes the passivity and indifference when it comes to current problems that lead to the fall and destruction of the world. Hence, the concept of critical pedagogy should not be left only at the level of a theoretical construct. It becomes an inseparable part of the human being seen in senses, intellect, and emotions (McLaren, 2009).

THE IMPORTANCE OF CRITICAL THEORY FOR RESEARCH IN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

Although many pedagogical guidelines and current dominant paradigms have offered the best solution in testing the hypothesis and interpreting the results, nevertheless, each direction and paradigm was presented with merely positive characteristics, while their drawbacks were discussed much later, i.e. when a new direction and paradigmatic orientation appeared. That scenario happened to critical pedagogy even though it has been completely new in the time of its emergence. Many supporters of some other schools have tried to reduce its importance and contribution it had on the epistemological and methodological dimension of pedagogy. In the following, we will try to illustrate the importance and value of this paradigmatic orientation in the field of pedagogical research. In defense of this view of the advantage of critical theory, we recall the results of Erich Fromm (1980), who states that: "(...) it is not only the task of philosophy but also of science that deals with the issues that define authentic human nature and its historical variability...). It is necessary to reconsider "false scientific objectivity" that will not deal with moral principles and values (Fromm, 1980, 360). Therefore, the fact that most researchers who have used the critical theory for the first time had the opportunity to research the relationship between ideology and pedagogical practice should not be surprising (McLaren, 2009).

Through the application of this new research paradigm, many critical pedagogues have been able to actively participate in critiques of the social strengths and relations of exploitation that have shaped the historical uniqueness of their social being. They were able to explore their being and social formation that exposed the role of capital in the classroom in everyday life and explained how racial relations double and how they are linked to patriarchy and heterosexuality. It's not about how critical theory contributed to that knowledge, but about how it certainly helped to explain some aspects of those processes and relationships and how it helped to ensure a new sociological language (Freire, 1978; McLaren, 2009; Giroux, 2013). They have already confirmed the enormous creative power of its social agencies. But, critical theory allowed them to clarify their tangible knowledge about it and to find their perceptions within a broader theoretical framework, thus creating relationships they did not have before (McLaren, 2009).

Applied to the field of education, the critical paradigm, with positivist (empirical-analytic) and interpretative (historically-hermeneutic) paradigms, through action rese-

arch tries to improve the education, evaluation, and self-evaluation of researchers, as well as the methodological questions of pedagogy (Maksimović, 2011).

In short, the subject of critically based social science studies its social practice and is thus merely its thinking. That is why the main function of pedagogy and pedagogical research is not to discover the universal laws of social life, or the interpretative understanding of the subjective meanings of factors in social situations and relationships, but to emancipate and to change the praxis. In critical theory, the relationship between theory and practice is dialectical. The practice is not a field of application and verification of "technical" solutions derived from theory (Maksimović, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Society progress depends on the impact education has on a specific society. A well-planned and effective education is becoming an absolute pedagogical category whose goal is to prepare and include an individual in a regular social process. Institutionalized education has the power to teach students to look at the world scientifically, to teach them values and attitudes based on those values, which simultaneously requires series of well-thought arguments that need to support values and attitude based on them. With its axioms, it indicates the combined research method in institutionalized education. That means that this concept combines students' overall knowledge (the one which students have when they come to school and the one they acquire in school) with attitudes and personal beliefs about someone/something in the environment and society.

Through gradually pedagogically formed discussion and the development of the dialogue in teaching, students have a chance to see school as a place for living and learning. By dealing with everyday problems by applying the principles of critical pedagogy (empowerment, achievement of distributed social justice, emancipation, discourse), it contributes to increasing students' social awareness, development of social strategies based on already existing strategies, and active thinking about ways and mechanisms of functioning of the social system.

Dialectically oriented critical pedagogy offers a broader perspective on social problems that will become a student's everyday life over time. The students are already preparing dialectically and meaningfully through educational content to present their ideas about a specific subject of learning in a socially acceptable way and with the help of scientifically sound knowledge.

Using the dialectic approach and discourse in considering the problems, **it** confronts the students with a real life situation, which, after they see it, empowers and emancipates them, or provides guidance for evaluating positive and negative usage in a particular social context. A critical attitude towards reality is needed, as well as formal education in order to increase the power and effectiveness of those processes in schools. Establishing such a

relationship to these two pedagogical dimensions leads to the improvement of the learning and teaching process. This can be achieved by a dialectical approach and current scientific and research methodology that is relevant for the constant reconsideration and reconceptualization of theoretical and practical models. That would directly mean the transformation of the existing paradigm of institutionalized education.

In this case, critical pedagogy and research of the educational reality change the mostly frontal and passive teaching, in which the student is the recipient of different educational content. In contrast, critical pedagogy enlightens and increases the strength of education through active attitude students have towards the school knowledge and its application in everyday situations. The students may question again the validity, social relevance of knowledge, and socially distributed power so that they can live and produce freely in a society in which they are an important member and factor of their progress.

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