

SOME VIEWS ON THE EDUCATION OF THE TEACHER OF THE FUTURE

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Abstract

In the paper the authors present some views on the education of the teacher of the future. They emphasize that the problem doesn't lie with school pluralism and alternative education, but with the fact that the focus of the discussion must be switched to the starting point – *the teacher*.

Besides classical education and training *the teacher of the future* will need new competencies, ways of acting and personal characteristics of the modern teacher in order to meet modern challenges. He will be characterized by the openness of experience, the flexibility of ideas and dedication to the principle of giving/receiving.

Key words: *education, the teacher of the future, training, the teaching profession, ability, the openness of experience, the flexibility of ideas, the principle of giving/receiving*

Within the framework of new educational policies and reforms the search for new forms and methods in the education of teachers on macro and micro level has taken ground in the world today. The pluralism of ideas, which are applied and produced in developed countries as well as in developing and underdeveloped countries has been present. This pluralism of ideas has also been applied in a similar way with some or without any difficulty in transitional countries. In contrast to the beginning of the last century when teaching systems and project-methods were widely applied, at the end of the last century and at the beginning of this century *alternative schools* were the dominant topic of many discussions as being founded on new pedagogical ideas and thoughts or being a result of the creative activities of the participants in the educational process. *Brainstorming* has significantly contributed to the affirmation of the alternative school. This technique represents an escape into another extreme, somehow milder, from the one the public schools and the usual, formal education of teachers and pupils belong to.

However, it is necessary to point out that the problem doesn't lie with school pluralism and educational alternatives but with the fact that the focus of discussion must

be switched from the starting to the ending point of the whole issue. The starting point is the **teacher**. It means teacher in the whole complexity of this term, which leads to the important and always actual issue of his education and training. In this process the focus is not on *knowledge* but on the *phenomenon of the teacher*. It means that we have to *study the teaching profession* in order to enable him to meet the requirements of teaching and learning which will imply the style of life and work in the future. In this way two important qualities would be provided for: first, the teacher would be trained for real needs and second, he would be able to direct his own activity towards every pupil in the group. The teacher educated in such a way would be able to meet all challenges of knowledge as merchandise, professionalization of the vocation, research, heuristic and humanistic teaching and learning. He will be a *reflective practitioner* with a necessary pedagogical and psychological and didactical and methodological and professional background able to reveal and find his way in expected and unexpected problem situations. In order to achieve this, the education of teachers shouldn't be regarded as a purely pedagogical and psychological and didactical and methodological issue, but rather as a philosophical and sociological issue of the contemporary world and contemporaneity in this world. We have to bear in mind that over the long term, no other profession has such an important and significant consequences for the future of the society (Lesourne, 1993).

We are witnesses and participants of the creation and development of a *new society*, the society open to the world of changes with its multicultural and multiprofessional groups and multiethnic communities. The world unity of the economic exchange is at the door as well as the common strive towards strategic policy and its implementation (the European Union). There are common educational programmes and projects already existing (Euromet, Domitel, Coast and Service, Elektra, Comett, Force, etc.) or coming underway. Information, media and pluralistic society have been developing. Traditional, single-educational schools have been transformed into alternative, multi-educational schools.

The flow of people, information, knowledge and merchandise is faster and faster, which leads to the rise of new professions requiring high information competence, communicativeness, originality and entrepreneurship. It is not a matter of the supplement to the intellectual abilities any more, as this was the case with traditional education, but a trait that will make them diligent and productive (Lesourne, 1993).

Considerable attention is given to the question *What knowledge should a teacher have?*; it is a question exercising various scientists' and experts' minds. Everybody agrees that the role of the teacher should be radically changed. It will no longer be *a person who knows how to teach* but rather a polyvalent expert whose activities will be primarily directed towards diagnosing difficulties of the subject he works with and who will be trained to know and be able to approach the problems in their entirety. It requires new, more quality ways of work, more quality teaching full of research and creative activities (Glasser, 1990).

Besides general knowledge, culture and standard pedagogical competencies, the teacher of the future will need new skills, ways of working and personal characteristics of the modern teacher in order to meet contemporary challenges of his profession. The

openness of experience, the flexibility of ideas and dedication to the principle of giving/receiving.

In order to achieve these demands we need a new world of ideas, new set of rules, procedures, ways and methods in the education of teachers. All present shortcomings of the traditional teaching are a consequence of bad preparation and inadequate education of teachers regarding the professional and pedagogical and psychological as well as didactical and methodological aspects. Many teachers who were ready for transferring/giving the knowledge were not prepared enough for a demanding and responsible role of the instructor and leader of the young people in groups: some of them because their own life was too burdened with a series of problems so that they were not able to approach openly the life of their pupils; others because they excessively considered themselves teachers in the classical sense in order to come to terms with their pupils and third ones because they couldn't "stay on the path" although they tried with all their hearts, will and positive intentions (Lesourne, 1993).

The education of *the teacher of the future* in the formal educational system should be regarded on the horizons of the *learning society*. However, it should be mentioned that there is no model of the teacher education that would be applicable and acceptable for all the countries. Every country will start from their own demographic structures, their own needs and perspectives in the fields of primary, secondary and tertiary activities.

Starting from positive and solutions of quality achieved through the research of education and upon them based education of teachers, all these positivities and good solutions should be incorporated into new educational models and systems that will be developed upon these postulates and that will enable and ensure the inclusion of every country into the European and world integrations.

Discovering original and effective models and systems of the education of *the teacher of the future* has been conditioned by the influence of the world of information and information technologies and the imminent need to create the profile of the teacher with *new competencies*, who will be able to meet challenges of the future and who will be trained to come to terms with the requirements of the new and demanding society of the *futuristic thinking*. The aims of the futuristic thinking concern the prediction and verification of the future events, avoidance and reduction of failure, augmentation of success, fear from future reduction, selection of the best way of operating in concordance with the circumstances, prevention of the waste of energy etc.

The present-day teaching according to its structure, organization and performance is not in accordance with technological achievements, it is ineffective and expensive. Information technologies have brought to sudden change so that the traditional teacher, with his blackboard and chalk, has been left behind for historical study and research. Multimedia libraries, world data bases, virtual colleges, e-mail and the Internet enable the access to almost all information on the planet Earth.

It is highly probable that in the imminent future permanent employment will no longer exist in the field of education as well as in every other field.

It will come to the combination of general education, final specialization and interdisciplinary creativity. Individuals will be invited to understand complex situations that will be changed in unpredictable ways. They will have to tackle a number of fragmented and impartial information, they will have to be open to different explanations and partial analysis. Every individual will be demanded wider basic knowledge so that he may come to terms with demanding modifications of the economic and labour markets. Individuals will have to learn to think in a more systematic way and act as users and citizens, as individuals and members of a group.

The education of *the teacher of the future* will have to go hand in hand with the advancement of interdisciplinary economy as well as new technologies and technological solutions. The current structure of the institutions in charge of the education of teachers must be modified in order to meet these and numerous other requirements. These institutions are too rigid for the education of citizens or workers for permanent employment. Although some institutions or individuals/teachers experiment with new approaches and models, these attempts remain too isolated. Therefore a bigger flexibility is much needed in order to come to terms with bigger and different demands.

The reform of the education of teachers – *the teacher of the future* – is one of the important guidelines of the futuristic teaching and learning. Some guidelines have already been laid down, which besides the interpretation and application of the teaching programmes, from the teacher require the elaboration of the teaching programmes concerning the systematic monitoring of the basic disciplines; the selection of the most appropriate pedagogical and psychological as well as didactical and methodological options of a particular situation; the creation of the educational programme and projects for their school; identifying educational needs of their pupils and the organization of the adequate teaching; group work monitoring and their participation in research and their cooperation with the groups of other teachers; information and mass media observation and the preparation of pupils for a critical valorisation of available information and their proper use; cooperation with parents and community; paying attention to the polyvalent source of information; promoting health culture; organizer of the community and cultural events in that community and wider and promoter of positive values of any kind.

Institutions in charge of the education of teachers as well as teaching programmes on the basis of which this education is carried out are subject to criticism in the whole world. The existing education of teachers is not good, it is not effective and adequate, it doesn't suit current and even to a lesser degree future requirements. "The issue of the teacher and especially the education of the teachers, appears as one of the most critical challenges of the contemporary educational development." (Torres, 1997, 58) The model which is used today for the education of teachers is obsolete; these are conventional models of the transmission school. "The transmission school – which confuses teaching and information with knowledge – is still popular in institutions, programmes, seminars and handbooks used to train thousands of teachers all over the world" (Torres, 1997, 59).

On the basis of the afore mentioned it is clear that the existing model of the education of teachers is obsolete, inadequate and unfavourable in most countries, especially the poor ones and the countries in transition. It primarily has to do with their material

state, autonomy, social dignity and respect. That's why it is not difficult to understand why the teachers have been neglected in their education. "Negligence of teachers' education is a part of the overall neglect of teachers and issues linked with teaching. Unfavourable circumstances of the teaching profession influenced the formation of a specific profile of the average primary school teacher in developing countries: weak, with low or inappropriate general education; produced by the public education and invited to cooperation for the improvement or the transformation of the system; with poor professional education and limited access to books, technology and contemporary science" (Torres, 1997, 60).

The reason of such a state of matters, besides material poverty, lies in the fact that the education of teachers is not cheap and that it is a matter – at least for the time being – of an unproductive investment. Some research results deny the usual assumption that teachers' diplomas and formal qualifications are automatically linked to a better teaching and better teaching results. Better teaching results are not achieved by teachers in possession of a degree. Because in different parts of the world, the primary education programmes carried out by insufficiently qualified or paraprofessional personnel often show the same and quite often even better pupils' results than those performed by professionals, the graduate teachers. That's why the quality of the education of teachers must take into account modern educational technologies and efforts, which lead to quantitative and quality changes, information and knowledge, which again demands the creation of a *coherent model* of the undergraduate, graduate as well as the postgraduate study.

Teachers' education should be viewed from the position of the *professionalism*, pedagogical effectiveness, profitability and market value. One of the reasons of the inappropriate position of teachers results from their way of working: almost everybody works in the same way and moderate dedication, the same curriculum and teaching strategies. High quality education requires quality educational technology and quality education of teachers. From the viewpoint of education and its improvement, the education of teachers undoubtedly has a priority – educational technology is *the technology which should back up the teacher* and not vice versa.

In the forthcoming period a reply should be given to the question connected with *finding an appropriate model of educating the teacher of the future*. Only then the educated teachers will be protagonists of the required reform in all segments of the educational system. A new model should give priority to professional competence. Teachers must be educated to evaluate their work and practice.

The education of teachers should be accepted as a *strategy of its own*. If teachers take an active role in defining their needs, if they actively participate in the educational *strategy of its own*, then the best results will be obtained in their education. In this way relevant answers to significant questions will be easy to find, namely: (1) *which needs* should be taught and learned for; (2) *where, what and what with* teach and learn; (3) how to improve one's own practical work including the theoretical segment.

During their education teachers must acquire equal competences regarding general and special knowledge, that is they must be familiar with the profession as well as its pedagogical and psychological and didactical and methodological components.

Apart from cognitive components, the programme of the education of teachers must recognize emotional aspects and views as well as differentiated needs of every individual. Therefore the programme should be differentiated, accelerated and individualised. Future teachers should be provided with *relevant knowledge about future strategies of their development and creative work*. They will be required *new competencies and skills*. Therefore they will be educated for *higher methods of learning*, such methods that besides the acquisition of objective knowledge, skills and habits will make them possible to extract the *meaning* from received information on the basis of which they attempt to understand the world surrounding them and solve important problems in different social contexts. Such learning contributes to the individual's personal development, autonomy and critical attitude towards the world. (Marentič–Požarnik, 1987).

Knowledge is not a strict and closed system but the system open to changes. Modern theories of learning are very important for the *theory of the professional development*. What they have in common are questions **what** is the subject of learning (*the coherent structure of applicable knowledge*), **how** do you learn (*metalearning or the learning of learning*), **why** do you learn (*learning based upon intrinsic wishes and needs and individual dedication*) **what's the learning environment** (*social and institutional*), that is how does environment encourage or discourage learning. The teacher has to be able to identify and develop his pupils' *styles of learning*. One of the most important tasks of *the teacher of the future* is to help pupils develop more quality learning styles and strategies, through an adequate teaching and interrogating, discussions and courses on the learning strategies – *the learning of learning* (Marentič–Požarnik, 1987).

In the process of learning the individual constantly solves a dialectic tension between the activities of two dimensions of the human knowledge: (1) *the dimension of the integral, intuitive, personal, emotional, empirical comprehension of reality and analytical, objective, rational, abstract awareness* and (2) *the dimension of the external action, activities in the light of this inner reflection based upon the inspection of events in that world* (Marentič–Požarnik, 1987).

One of the imposing necessities in the education of *the teacher of the future* is defeating the weaknesses relating to the causes of the *dissatisfaction and failure of numerous pupils*, which is directly connected to the number and the quality of applied teaching methods. Contrary to today when the *didactic monoculture* is a rather common trend in teaching, a wide array of the application of applied methods of work will be required in the future. A special position will be occupied by *empirical, problem and creative learning*.

In traditional teaching the focus is on the *teaching material* and the acquisition of a great amount of knowledge; a modern teaching concept will promote *the reception of the subject* (pupil). Teacher emerges here for the first time as *organizer, equal partner, collaborator, coordinator, motivator, a member of the research team*. It is ensured in this way that every pupil may acquire knowledge according to *their needs, speed and tempo, styles of learning, learning place and time, learning in regard to the learning material, sociological formations in learning etc.*

The quality of education of future teachers will have to meet the following requirement as well: this implies the education for working in numerous and different al-

ternative schools. The institutional education has so far been orientated towards traditional schools in which the teaching was *single-educational*. However *pedagogical pluralism* has been spreading all over the world and in our country as well.

The reflection on the education of future teachers is an imperative in the times we live in. Traditional schooling models may not come to terms with new requirements posed by the information science and new trends in life. The whole world is in transition and search for new qualities of education as well as standards and ways of living and working.

The *teacher of the future* has to strive for those methods that are directed towards: (1) *helping* pupils in learning and growing up in accordance with their individual potentials and differences; (2) *directing* pupils towards knowledge that will provide them with experience and emotions; (3) *making arrangements with a pupil* as a partner in the educational process which makes him content and responsible in regard to assumed duties; (4) *organizing* the work as a condition of every serious work no matter how much space is left for pupils' creativity and independence; (5) *stimulating* pupils' abilities and curiosity for the sake of their "awakening" and directing towards new tasks and confidence, which will not suffocate their individuality; (6) *consulting* as a way to overcome authoritarian demanding, commanding and imposing in which the teacher dominates and the pupil is not the subject, neglecting his previous knowledge and respecting him as a colleague and active participant in the educational process; (7) *encouraging* the pupil and indicating that he can pull it off, that it is worth trying because it is a path to success and individuality and growing up into a responsible person.

The *teacher of the future* should be endowed with professional and pedagogical characteristics and qualities reflected and manifested through his function of the *educator, mediator, animator, commentator, creator, initiator, partner, collaborator, colleague and friend*.

It is very important to blend functionally and effectively the *pedagogical theory and practice*.

The pedagogical practice relates to subjects' interpersonal creative and communicative links and relations preparing themselves for the work in educational institutions with all other direct and indirect subjects and media in dynamical space and time relations on selected contents and teaching strategies, with the aim to functionally incorporate theory and practice and acquire first experiences of creative and functional skills and abilities for work and creativity in different educational structures.

Today the pedagogical practice has been performed on different levels, namely: (1) *individual attendance*: students visit school at particular periods, two weeks most often, previously receiving detailed instructions about observing the teaching process; (2) *group attendance*: students visit certain schools with their teacher of methodics and monitor the work of the teacher-mentor; (3) *student's lecture* in the presence of the teacher-mentor, the so called *individual teaching*; (4) *demonstration lesson*: student teaches on his own and his work is monitored by the teacher-mentor, the teacher of methodics and other students.

The pedagogical practice arranged in such a way is almost exclusively of *methodological nature* and students simply don't have time to attend to other school activities, which are very important for their future profession.

Some teacher colleges practise the *methodological practicums* which serve students to write their lesson plans, discuss their lessons, simulate pedagogical situations etc.

In order to bring the pedagogical practice in line with new attitudes in the education of teachers it will be necessary to change its whole organization and concept, namely: (1) define the proper ratio of theory and practice; (2) introduce students with all aspects of life and work of educational institutions; (3) practice should include all forms and activities of the educational work.

There is a number of *models* of the pedagogical practice. Let us mention just a few ones we think can best meet the new criteria in the education of the *teacher of the future*, namely: *didactical and methodical workshops, didactically and methodically shaped courses, simulations of pedagogical situations, case studies, the study of literature, the study of interpersonal relations, individual experimenting, creativity, media expression (the creation of teaching material); making of bibliographies, annotations and summaries, the storm of ideas, discussion clubs and panel discussions, camera handling, computer operating, the creation of didactic teaching films, etc.*

There are numerous possibilities to actively include students – *the teachers of the future* – in the school practice and the study of the school practice.

The education of *the teacher of the future* could be approached in the way common in some countries: students finish their profession first and later those who wish to become teachers attend the study of the pedagogical and psychological and didactical and methodological education. There are cases where the focus is placed on professional subjects during the first and second years of study and it switches to the pedagogical and psychological and didactical and methodical subjects during the later course of study.

It is a matter of tradition and choice of a particular country as well as of positive tendencies, experience and achievements from other countries.

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NEKI POGLEDI NA IZOBRAZBU UČITELJA BUDUĆNOSTI

S a ž e t a k

Polazeći od činjenice da su institucije u kojima se obrazuju učitelji kao i nastavni programi po kojima se ta izobrazba provodi na meti oštih kritika, autori u radu iznose neke poglede na izobrazbu učitelja budućnosti. Pritom ističu da nije problem u školskom pluralizmu i alternativama u odgoju i obrazovanju, već u činjenici da se težište rasprave mora postaviti na polazišnu točku – *učitelja*.

Učitelju budućnosti, pored klasičnog obrazovanja i osposobljavanja na profesionalno zanimanje, bit će potrebne nove sposobnosti, načini djelovanja i osobne karakteristike modernog učitelja, kako bi mogao odgovoriti suvremenim izazovima. Ono što će karakterizirati učitelja budućnosti je otvorenost iskustva, fleksibilnost ideja i djelovanja te zalaganje za načelo davanja/dobivanja.

Učitelj budućnosti morat će biti okrenut prema onim postupcima koji su usmjereni na *pomaganje, usmjeravanje, dogovaranje, organiziranje, poticanje, savjetovanje i ohrabrivanje* učenika. Učitelja budućnosti moraju krasiti i njegove profesionalno-pedagoške osobine i kvalitete koje se ogledaju i manifestiraju kroz funkciju *odgajatelja, medijatora, animatora, komentatora, kreatora, inicijatora, partnera, suradnika, prijatelja* i sl.

U radu se, nadalje, ističe da se uz promišljanja o načinu izobrazbe učitelja budućnosti, dužna pažnja mora posvetiti funkcionalnom i učinkovitom *povezivanju pedagoške teorije i prakse*, te se ukazuje da postoji više modela pedagoške prakse.

Ključne riječi: *učitelj, nastavni programi, izobrazba, profesija učitelj, sposobnost, otvorenost iskustva, fleksibilnost ideja, pedagoška teorija, pedagoška praksa*

ALCUNI ASPETTI DELLA FORMAZIONE DEGLI INSEGNANTI PER IL FUTURO

R i a s s u n t o

Partendo dalla constatazione che le istituzioni in cui si formano gli insegnanti come pure i programmi d'insegnamento utilizzati per la loro formazione, sono il bersaglio di critiche accese, l'autore espone nel saggio alcuni aspetti della formazione de-

gli insegnanti per il futuro. Nell'esposizione mette in evidenza che il problema non sta nel pluralismo delle scuole e nelle alternative di formazione, ma il nocciolo della questione è l'insegnante.

All'insegnante del futuro, accanto alla formazione classica e all'abilitazione professionale, saranno necessarie nuove abilità, nuove modalità di agire e nuove caratteristiche personali per poter rispondere alle sfide educative contemporanee. L'insegnante del futuro sarà caratterizzato dall'apertura all'esperienza, dalla flessibilità di idee e di azione e dall'impegno per il principio di dare/avere. L'insegnante del futuro dovrà essere disponibile ad aiutare, indirizzare, prendere accordi, organizzare, stimolare, consigliare e incoraggiare gli alunni. Egli dovrebbe possedere anche caratteristiche e qualità pedagogico-professionali che si esprimano e si manifestino nelle funzioni di educatore, mediatore, animatore, commentatore, creatore, iniziatore, partner, collaboratore, amico, ecc. Nel saggio, inoltre, si mette in evidenza che un'attenzione particolare è dovuta al collegamento efficace tra teoria e pratica pedagogica, tenendo conto della varietà dei modelli didattici esistenti.

Parole chiave: *insegnante, programmi d'insegnamento, formazione, professione insegnante, abilità, apertura all'esperienza, flessibilità d'idee, teoria pedagogica, pratica pedagogica*