

Preface

TEACHING METHODOLOGIES AS PART OF THE CROATIAN SCIENTIFIC SYSTEM

In scientific literature, teaching methodology is defined as the science of teaching a subject/course. As the area of research is the educational process (teaching and other work forms) of a particular subject, it also belongs to educational sciences, according to which it enters the area of social sciences together with all the other disciplines which also primarily research education (pedagogy, didactics, educational rehabilitation, etc.). However, the fact that it studies only one aspect of education (subject teaching) is simply one side of the scientific character of teaching methodology. The other characteristic stems from the fact that each subject area teaching methodology is a relatively independent discipline since it is determined by the content of the subject and this is why teaching methodologies differ. Considering that subjects are founded in different sciences, which in the systematization of sciences belong to different areas, teaching methodology of a particular subject has to link with the science which researches that subject and its scientific area, i.e. field or branch. That is how Croatian (mother tongue) language teaching methodology is linked to *croatology* (linguistics) and the science of literature which both belong to the area of humanities. Physics teaching methodology links with physics which belongs to the area of natural sciences, and sociology teaching methodology has to link with sociology which finds its place in the area of social sciences. Therefore, on the one hand all teaching methodologies are educational sciences, while on the other hand they are related to the science of their teaching subjects which can belong to different scientific areas. Because of that, methodologies are not structured as traditional monodisciplines and cannot entirely be fitted into one traditional scientific field or area. That is what makes them interdisciplinary, i.e. they exist as a specific liaison between several, and sometimes completely heterogeneous disciplines for the purpose of teaching particular content in practice. Regardless of the fact that teaching methodologies have existed as university disciplines at Croatian universities for over half a century, until recently they were not included into the official Croatian scientific system which is affirmed by the Regulation on Scientific and Artistic Areas, Fields and Branches, and which is set by the government authority, that is the National Council for Science. Inclusion into the

Regulation is important for any science giving it legitimacy for financing scientific projects from the state budget, establishing graduate and postgraduate programs of study, autonomous advancement in the scientific profession and other status and developmental privileges. Until recently, the greatest obstacle to administrative legalization of teaching methodologies was its interdisciplinary nature. On the one hand, teaching methodology was claimed by educational sciences, i.e. pedagogy, and on the other hand by the motherboard science of the subjects of particular methodologies, leaving teaching methodology in limbo. Such a methodology *rashomon* was resolved by the new Regulation on Scientific Areas, Fields and Branches which was approved by the National Council for Science and enacted on September 22, 2009. The same was published in the Official Gazette no. 118/2009 of September 30, 2009. The Regulations introduce into the systematization of science the principle of interdisciplinarity, of which it was devoid to date. The Regulations place subject teaching methodologies as scientific branches of interdisciplinary fields in three scientific areas – natural sciences, social sciences and humanities. In other words, they are branches with the following names: methodologies of teaching natural sciences subjects, methodologies of teaching social science subjects of, and methodologies of teaching humanities subjects.

The acknowledgement and proclamation of teaching methodologies as legal scientific disciplines is a historical event which will undoubtedly enable stronger development and affirmation in the practical application of new epistemology. Although teaching methodologies traditionally belong to the pedagogical view of educational sciences which has a long tradition in European education, their system and methodological constitution are easily applied in the educology concept of educational sciences, i.e. they correspond to the curriculum theory which is being introduced into the Croatian system of education. Teaching methodology is easily incorporated into that concept as a practically applicable discipline which analyzes internal and external teaching situations. This issue of *Metodika*, which in itself strongly promotes the scientific affirmation of teaching methodologies is dedicated to that significant achievement of methodology with a scientific status.

Because of the importance of this event it is important to note that this success is due to the persistent efforts of the Academy of Educational Sciences, the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb, the editorship of the journal *Metodika* and several enthusiastic individuals who have over the years continued to present arguments to authorities regarding the inclusion of teaching methodology into officially acknowledged scientific disciplines. Some documents relating to that were printed in previous issues of the journal *Metodika*. With respect to what has been mentioned, two directly related events should be mentioned. The first event is the publication of the book *Teaching Methodology – the Science of Teaching a School Subject*, written by the author of these very lines, only a few months before the publication of the mentioned Regulations. The book provides scientifically-based arguments for the proposition to include teaching methodologies into the Croatian scientific system. What is more, that is the first book about the

epistemology of teaching methodology in Croatia which explains the scientific structure of methodology. The book was presented to the public at the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb and other locations in Croatia. The second event is the establishment of the Chair of Teaching Methodology at the Faculty of Teacher Education which includes teachers of all methodologies that are taught at the Faculty of Teacher Education, i.e. teacher education studies and preschool education studies. That is the first case in Croatia of teaching methodologies at a faculty to unite into one chair which will attend to the common characteristics and particularities of these disciplines.

In honor of all the mentioned events for teaching methodology, in this issue of *Metodika* we give the final version of the Regulation on Scientific Areas, Fields and Branches which includes teaching methodologies; information on the book presentation with speakers' presentations, and the document on the establishment of the Chair of Teaching Methodology at the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb.

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