

THE EPOCHAL PERSONALITY OF THE TEACHER

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„The future is not a gift, it is an achievement“
(Lauder, 1944)

All well-intentioned efforts to collect cumulative (political, economic, cultural) and even the entire maximum engagement of science cannot simply transform and take us into the world of values, if the generations that are nurtured and educated remain on the periphery of events, if in their preparation for the time in which they live they do not adopt the philosophy and methodology of education, and the culture of excellence that will be continually built. This actually involves profound transformations and substantial changes aimed at creating a new system of teacher education - teachers who will constantly stimulate inexhaustible opportunities for children, who will motivate and teach them to learn to think and reflect, to act and solve problems and challenges imposed by the time and civilization in which we live.

Man is a social being and his human existence can be realized only together with other people. Outside the human community a child cannot develop into a human being.

The world we live in today is a global, integrated world. All parts are completely dependent on one another and each part determines the fate of others. According to the predictions of the end of the 21st century, only 5-10% of the world population will be able to meet the needs of all humanity with their work. This means that about 90% of the citizens of the world will be without work or will be doing what they love. Only those who adapt will survive, and those who realize that integration, interconnection, mutual guarantees, concessions, togetherness and unity are the call of nature. And, as usual, this will fall on the backs of teachers, educational policies, and the entire educational system.

Therefore the time has come to build strategies to teach children about lifelong learning, enjoyment in learning and how to use leisure time; how to learn about healthy and happy use of leisure time, which in turn will productively create good works necessary for everyone.

Based on the process of globalization, the trends in pedagogy and educational practice in the 21st century can be extrapolated. The priorities are: 1) from pedagogy of teaching towards pedagogy of learning, 2) from pedagogical separatism and didacticism toward an integrated pedagogy, 3) from orientation into the past to orientation towards the present and future (**Suzić, N.** 2005).

Today's generations are different. We still do not know the characteristics of the new world and it seems to us that children are strange and unusual. They actually seem strange to us because they are born with the sprouts of the future social world situation - global and integrated, appropriate to the today's call of nature. With its external and internal pressure it is forcing us to accept a new form of relationship between us, for which we now do not have a great desire.

Upbringing and education are invaluable factors for both personality development (individual) and the development of society as a whole. They have always played an important role in the life of a society and of a man. Their importance is being particularly highlighted today because the knowledge, skills and abilities are the keys to solving many important problems of existential nature for both man and society¹.

Today we live in a world that is increasingly connected in direct communication, man with man, institution with institution, and supply with demand. The Internet and the virtual world confirm this. Religious belief, national nostalgia and heroes play a minor role and are increasingly less significant in such communication. For people today it is more important to understand, to communicate in the same language in their area of interest than to demonstrate their national or religious identity. These new needs and new knowledge will require a different pedagogy which will have to be much more effective. It will cause a need for standardization of educational systems in wide geographic areas, for global education standards, and for universalization of educational institutions.

But for that to happen, educational institutions need to change; they have to win over the children, pupils, and students, and this cannot be done with current traditional teaching methods, didactics and methodology, but with a modern integrated pedagogy that will effectively balance teaching and learning, a pedagogy aimed at current and future time, a pedagogy that offers concrete form and realization of what it says and does.

The educational process is an act of mastering cultural and civilizational trends in a particular society. In fact, this means mastering a particular system of values, moral norms, basic scientific insights, forms of artistic expression, scientific and artistic language, technology, and contents of the use of leisure time. Through the creation of a common discourse (teacher-child, student), the teacher directly influences the child's cultural development. The teacher is the representative of the culture in which a child is

¹Kamberski Kiro. (2000), Preschool and school education in the Republic of Macedonia : (development, conditions, and perspectives), Faculty of Philosophy, Institute of Pedagogy, Skopje.

being shaped into a person. "Culture shapes the mind, ensures the values by which we construct not only our worlds, but we also develop a self-concept and learn about our capabilities" (**Bruner**, according to: **Colic**, 2005).

According to Piaget, neither the study of the human intellect, nor the study of the physical world can respond to the problems of epistemology. Only the study of intellect in its relation to the world can do this, because the sources of knowledge are neither in the human nature nor in the physical world; their root is in the activities (actions) that a child performs on objects, in his/her individual practical actions on physical objects. The learning process is not a simple accumulation of knowledge, but "an active reconstruction of thoughts." Piaget expresses this strongly: "To understand simply means to discover or reconstruct by rediscovering" (**Piaget**, 1972).

The socio-cultural approach is based on the ideas of the socio-cultural school whose main representatives are **Vygotsky**, **Leontiev**, and **Luria**. According to them, learning and thinking are more a part of the social context than of the individual mind. Through discussions with others, exchanging ideas, arguing different positions, comparing and checking a new level of conceptual understanding is learnt. Knowledge is not a map or a mirror of reality but a product of engineering which is largely determined by the social environment, culture and history of the community in which it arises. Acquiring knowledge is a historical process of interaction between man and reality. A historical perception is not possible, because our view of the world depends on the culture and society in which we live, and on the previous knowledge that we have acquired in the course of our personal history. This applies to all aspects of cognition, perception, learning, thinking, and remembering.

Learning of concepts is not an automatic intellectual habit but a rather complex and real act of thought, which cannot simply be learned with practice but it requires the very thought of the child to rise in himself/herself, inside, on a higher level, so that the notion can be established in consciousness (**Vygotsky**).

What should be changed?

The twentieth century was not a "century of the child" or a "century of pedagogy" (**Potkonjak**, 2003, according to **Suzić, N.** 2005). Although it was announced as a new time, a new era, a period of peace and progress, the last century was none of these. First and Second World War, the wars in the Balkans, in former USSR, in the Middle East and many other regions, were the abominable wars in human history.

XX century left without any generally accepted, dominant and original pedagogical concept and movement in pedagogy, i.e. science of education, or in educational practice - which would mark this century. This thesis is confirmed by the fact that more and more countries and regions were left without an official pedagogy.

Donald Hirsch (Hirsh, 1996) speaks of the separation of the teacher education system from life. This separation appeared because of the non-adjustability of education and of teachers to follow modern trends in science and technology, track changes and change their concept of work. School remains traditional and becomes decadent as the medieval church, self-sufficient and a world of itself.

Teacher education and practice should become a priority. Theory and general education have meaning only if they serve the profession. Teaching cannot do without practice, but it cannot be reduced to practice that is in confrontation with theory. Nothing is more practical than a good theory.

The children who today attend kindergarten will retire (if people still retire then?!) in 2075. The educational system has an obligation to see what the world will look like in the next 10, 20 or 50 years and has the responsibility of preparing these generations for life in that world and time. Pedagogy needs to educate them for that time because the global strategy should anticipate cultural, social and economic development, and overall social and cultural dynamics in the future period.

Today the opinion that we cannot understand new generations, "the new kids", is increasingly prevailing, and that they have a completely different lifestyle. The problem does not lie in the children, but in the educational system and in the family (adults). Today's adults are still in the previous state, at the level when they were students, but today's children live in a different world. It is so because we are in transition from an egoistic, individualistic level among us toward an altruistic, integrated, global level where everyone should be connected with one another (**Laitman**, 2012).

Changes are fast and deep; the transmission of culture, tradition, and system of values become dynamic. Children and young people become "free" to shape their own values and their own life contents. They form "their own world of qualities." Today, the basic unit of time is constantly shortened. Computers work in nano- and picoseconds. These mega changes are reflected in the culture, i.e. its transfer into education. Social, moral and cultural values are changing. A new world and a new world view is promoted. And the world is what we perceive. If we change our traditions, views, feelings, then we change the world. Finally, the world is perceived with feelings, which means that it can look completely different.

Einstein and all the latest theories agree with the view of the world that reality is relative, the world is relative, nature is relative, place, time - everything happens in our feelings. There are no distances because they are relative, because they are measured by our feelings, and our feelings are no longer hostile to each other, but they unite or resolve differences among themselves (**Laitman**, 2012).

For students who have already developed a sense for picoseconds and nano-space, and new telecommunications and media, an educational education system which is implemented in classic school space (classroom) and traditional school time is unacceptable. It is a motionless world, incorrigible and inflexible. It is a world that is a formal living and feeling in only one capacity - egoistic, not parallel in the two capacities-egoistic and altruistic. This space is already unbearable for them, and time is unendurable and slow. Acceleration of time occurs, as well as reduction of space and we move on from feeling the physical world to feeling the virtual world. It is the call of nature for unification (**Laitman, 2012**).

Many people begin to see the world this way; young people in particular aspire towards this world and want to get into it. Today psychology decides about substantive issues of pedagogy such as learning, motivation, interactive learning, cooperative learning, decision making etc. Since the end of the last century and the beginning of this century it is clear that we cannot get response from pedagogy to the questions how to motivate students, how to learn learning etc.

Why?

There are two reasons for this. First, education is increasingly closing into the narrow area of teaching didacticism, staying within the concept of teaching while ignoring the concept of learning pedagogy. The second reason is this new time, a time of civilization that learns continuously, when both old and young people learn, when children in school need to learn how to learn, not only to remember and reproduce knowledge.

Furthermore, pedagogy still wants to be defined as a "pure" science, a science in itself, a science that does not depend much on the related disciplines, especially not on psychology. The fractious European pedagogy in the 20th century in its performance had didactics and teaching methods, and it used methodology for measuring results. But now we need a pedagogy that will, beside theory or objectives, offer models for the realization of these theories and goals, as well as instruments for measuring results. Integrated pedagogy should resolve these traditions and develop new strategies of teaching and learning, independent work, self-learning. A pedagogy textbook model should offer: theory → performance form → measuring of results. This is so because the theory and its application should be in one place, and measuring of results and achievements should be direct because it is necessary to intervene immediately if educational outcomes are not desirable or optimal.

The epochal personality of the teacher

Each epoch understood, raised and educated teachers. Today old and new conceptions of teacher education intersect and mutually oppose, and it is therefore necessary to recognize the challenges of teacher education and thereby notice the

structure of a modern teacher which is in the function of the entire human creation expressed in the epochal personality² and structure of the educational process.

The teacher is found in these coordinates as a general mediator and the road sign of the new man. The man becomes wise and spiritually mature, due to the educational process. He needs another man to become a man, as is nicely demonstrated by the example of the spiritual birth in the dialogue "Feast" by Plato. A teacher is primarily a personality, on whom depends the formation of future persons, and therefore it cannot be done by someone who has not built a structure of an epochal personality.

Teacher education is the key issue of every country. The quality of the educational staff and the quality of education directly affect the educational attainment level of each individual.

To a certain age Einstein was considered an unsuccessful student and he was not very notable. But when the geometry teacher found a way to explain the material to him, suddenly something "flashed" and he began to perceive the world differently. He lacked the necessary view of the world, which he received from the teacher.

Pedagogy makes sense only when it is generally obligatory, which means that it depends on and is connected and integrated into the pure theoretical sciences such as philosophy, ethics and aesthetics. Pedagogy must not have scientificity as its imperative; its function is primarily educational. Education acquires a new content and meaning by refusing to be reduced to only gaining knowledge of one or more areas. It has an anthropological, ethical and a deeply spiritual sense. All reforms that did not respect this principle failed. Therefore the key to success is the teacher (man/woman) and his/her meeting with the student.

The most common terms that expressed and still express the essence of a teacher's personality are - self-awareness, proprium, self-control, integration, self-determination and self-regulation. Therefore, the opinion that a person is the epochal measure of freedom and nature as the highest human ideal is becoming increasingly common. Given the fact that a person does not exist only in theory, but also represents the highest possible degree of realization of the freedom of an epoch, and that it is the most frequent type of a society's personality, theorists call it the epochal or the basic personality.

An epochal personality is characterized by a harmonious relation of three important spheres of human relations: *(1) a relation with the world as a whole; (2) a relation with other people and (3) relations towards themselves.*

A person who has not built the structure of an epochal personality cannot be a teacher because he/she is a person who in itself should contain specific pedagogical qualities, beside general human personality traits, as a superstructure of a basic personality.

²Kujundzic Nedeljko, (1978). Epochal personality and educator, Symposium, Sombor 1978. Proceedings of the scientific symposium, Contemporary concepts and perspectives of teacher training. Pedagogical Bureau of Vojvodina.

The high pedagogical level of a teacher can only be achieved through education during the studies on teachers' colleges. Individual characteristics (dimensions, factors) of a personality, or the psycho-structure of a personality of a teacher, are also very important for the overall function of the teacher in general.

It is difficult to determine in practice what personality traits or dimensions will be more or less important in determining the functions. But that does not mean that according to different criteria of children, students, parents, teachers, pedagogues, psychologists, social workers, and especially of deontology³ (the science dealing with the character of a teacher, or of a nursery school teacher), it is not possible to prefer some traits determined by the majority of those dealing with the problems of shaping teachers.

The sentimental relationship of the teacher with children and the world in which we live, which is the most prominent humanist feature, is among the most important components in the education of young people. Without the love for children and nature and a strong motivation for their successful education, the process of education is not possible.

Which and what kind of features will be built into the structure of the epochal figure can be discovered by analyzing the specifics of the educational process. As an expressively process containing substructures in its basic structure (Homo Idealis, Homo Educandus, Homo Educator and Homo Organisationis) – education obliges the teacher to continually improve and further develop some character traits.

First, a teacher must be well familiarized with the structure “Homo Idealis” as an objective towards which he/she will direct the children’s development.

“Homo Educandus” is a structure that will enable the teacher to decide “what”, “when”, and “at which” level of development to influence with a certain pedagogical act. This structure will also enable him/her to creatively change the conditions having in mind the specific needs of individual students and their personal structures.

The third substructure of the educational process – “Homo Educator”– is most important for teachers, because without good knowledge of the laws of modern pedagogical communication it is impossible to establish an educational dialogue with children.

The fourth substructure – “Homo Organisationis” – dialectically realizes the previous three substructures. In fact, this is the substructure in which the transformation of an individuum into a personality is realized.

The development of competencies falls into the paradigm of education which is primarily directed towards pupils/students. With this the role of the student in focus is emphasized, as well as the changing role of the teacher.

³**Deontology** (Greek **deon**, *what should be* and **logos**, *word, speech*) is a science dealing with the duties, with what we should do (deontology of the profession teacher, lawyer, doctor, etc.).

When a teacher is aware of “*what he/she is doing*”, “*how he/she is working*”, and “*how responsible*” he/she is for that work, then he/she makes the first step on the way to a qualitative educational activity.

In order to establish the basic objectives of an educational system, and with it during discovering the way to their realization in practice, we require the help of the **competent approach**.

The terms: *competencies, capacity, ability and skill*, overlap to a certain extent and have similar meanings. They all refer to the personality and to what it is capable of achieving.

The term “*ability*” comes from the Latin word “*habilis*” and it means “*capable of managing with ease*”; hence we also have “*habilitas*” which is translated as “*talent, ability, readiness or skill*”.

The term “*skill*” means to be able or to be skilled. It is often used in plural, “*skills*”, and has a more restrictive meaning than the meaning of the term *competencies*.

Competencies include *knowledge* and *understanding* (theoretical knowledge of a certain pedagogical area, a capacity to know and to understand), *knowledge of how to act* (practical application of knowledge in certain situations), *knowledge of how to survive* (values as an integral element). So, *competencies* represent a combination of attributes (in relation to knowledge and its application, attitudes, skills, and responsibilities) with which we describe the level at which an individual can apply them.

According to the author of the **Key competencies**⁴, (Perreraud, 2002. Eurydice), *competencies* are defined as “*enabling individuals for mobilization, using and integration of the acquired knowledge in complex, different and unpredictable situations*”. Likewise, according to **Perreraud**, *competency* represents “*the ability to effectively function in numerous situations that is based on the acquired knowledge, but is still not restricted to that knowledge*.”⁵

However, teacher’s values are something that cannot be measured but can be felt because all well-meaning efforts to collect them cumulatively (political, economic, and cultural), and even the whole maximum engagement of science, cannot simply transform us and take us into the world of values if generations that are being educated stay on the outskirts of events, if, in their preparation for the time they live in, they do not accept the philosophy and methodology of education, and culture of quality being built in continuity. And this in turn means profound transformations and essential changes directed towards the creation of a new system of teacher education. Teachers who permanently stimulate children’s endless abilities, those who will motivate them and teach them to learn, think

⁴www.dgicd.min-edu.pt/.../comisseurop_key_compet_empreend.pdf
Key Competencies (2002). Survey 5. Brussels: Eurydice, European Unit.

⁵eacea.ec.europa.eu/resources/.../004_bibliography_031EN.pdf -

and reflect, to act and solve problems and challenges imposed by the time and civilization we live in.

SUMMARY

All well-intentioned efforts to collect cumulative (political, economic, cultural) and even the entire maximum engagement of science cannot simply transform and take us into the world of values, if the generations that are nurtured and educated remain on the periphery of events, if in their preparation for the time in which they live they do not adopt the philosophy and methodology of education, and the culture of excellence that will be continually built. This actually involves profound transformations and substantial changes aimed at creating a new system of teacher education - teachers who will constantly stimulate inexhaustible opportunities for children, who will motivate and teach them to learn to think and reflect, to act and solve problems and challenges imposed by the time and civilization in which we live.

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