

## SPECIFICS OF MANAGING THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

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*Abstract* The last decade witnessed a great number of foreign terms entering our speaking area and becoming so familiar that people have gotten used to see them often, although sometimes they do not really understand their meaning. More often than not, these terms, especially among the general population, are treated as something mystical and incomprehensible so it is assumed that their exclusive use is reserved for a certain category of people who are more educated. In addition, despite the unsolved issues about these terms, they are used in everyday communication where people mutually communicate but mean different things using the same term. This leads to the conclusion that it is more than necessary that these terms, along with their popularization, get adequate explication that will break down barriers to meaningful and unambiguous use of foreign origin terms whose usage has already become part of everyday life. One of the frequently encountered and exploited terms in pedagogical literature certainly is the term "management" that can be found here associated with or followed by many other terms. Because of this it is necessary to clarify its use together or alongside the most commonly used terms and expressions. However, it would be most justified to clarify its most general determination and the very term "**management**". The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary offers different meanings of the term "management": the act or skill of controlling and making decisions about a business, department, sports team, etc.; the people who make decisions about a business, department, sports team, etc.; the act or process of deciding how to use something.<sup>1</sup> There are also other explanations of the term "management" such as: the process of managing or being managed; or the action or activity of management. These are some of the explanations of the term which have a direct connection or can be used in the pedagogical context. I. Adizes however, citing the impossibility of a literal translation of the term management in some languages where in such cases the terms leadership or administration are used, offers some synonyms for explaining the meaning of the term "management" such as decision making, operation, planning, controlling, organizing, achieving goals, guidance, motivation, achievement.<sup>2</sup> It can be said that all these terms are fully transferable and recognized in the pedagogical field as something happening in immediate practice but regularly as two-sided process in which both actors appear as equal partners. For the term "management" the definition that it is a judicious use of means to accomplish an end or a complexity of functions can also be found. If we analyze the importance of each of these in the pedagogical field, we will see that it is quite acceptable to interpret this term in several ways because all of this happens and takes place within the pedagogical practice. It has both organization and challenge, striving to achieve success, to establish control or to control something, to direct something to a particular goal, to decide, to operate, plan, etc.

*- The term management on educational ground*

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This term has really become naturalized on pedagogical ground also, so the term will often be encountered in pedagogical literature in the Macedonian speaking area. This is due to the fact that one aspect of pedagogical developments has lately become particularly attractive for research, but this does not exhaust all the possibilities for its use in a pedagogical context. If upbringing as a basic pedagogical idea is treated and considered as a system, phenomena and process, then up to now the issue of managing the system, or what this management of the system means concerning the system of education, has been explored, while very rarely the issue of clarifying what managing of the process of education which runs and develops in a particular system of education means. Thus the process of education occurs through, by and in a specified system which in turn implies a need for certain management. The attempt to define the term "system" in general is the initial step in clarifying one aspect of the term management in education: **"an organization can be treated as a social system that represents the unity of interconnected elements, and it contains many features of a natural or a mechanical system."**<sup>3</sup>

Radovan Rihta follows defines the term system in the following manner: "as well as many other terms the term system originates from the ancient Greek language and means something consisting of something, a composition, a whole according to some general view of order and a variety of things or knowledge, a composed whole, a set of specific parts."<sup>4</sup>

In fact, in our country pedagogical thought mainly focuses on the problem of managing upbringing treated as part of the social system, a separate system that requires specific management, but at the same time is subject to the application of the general principles of management. Given that upbringing is a complex system consisting of its subsystems, management between them and managing each subsystem separately is necessary. Because of all this research pertaining to the study of many aspects that touch these issues are often encountered in our pedagogical theory and practice, thus trying to gain a permanent commitment pursued by all those interested in achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness of the system. Considering that the successful implementation of the process of managing the educational system will affect the improvement of all parameters of the process of education in the right proportion, management of the system takes the central place and occupies the interest of pedagogical professionals.

When thus treated and approached, the term management in educational context refers to a number of activities or conditions and processes that should and must be managed. Often each must be subjected to the process of managing individually, but also frequently more of them are managed simultaneously. This refers to the management of finance, personnel, organizational set-up, as well as what is called change and what is the main feature of the education system which it continuously monitors and without which this system could not be imagined. In this context very important aspects that are subject to

elaborations are aspects of managing an educational institution, managerial roles and functions of individual staff and structures in them, communication between participants in the educational process as a determinant for successful management of the system, and organizations that comprise it. Significant attention is paid to project management, management of human resources, etc. These are very important issues that rightfully deserve more attention and they will still have their relevance in future. But there are some other aspects of the overall educational work that are unjustifiably left behind, a practice that must not continue and be tolerated any more.

The system of education both as part of a complex social system, and as a complex system itself, requires a process of management or leadership to achieve a specific objective. But it is not enough for pedagogical workers, which is quite natural if we take into account that the system becomes alive and real only when it is filled with a specific content before realizing a particular goal. The content of the education system is composed of multiple processes that are constantly taking place and sometimes we get the impression that they have neither beginning nor end. By themselves they are complex, and just imagine how further things complicate when you have to manage them and be aware that many of them occur simultaneously. But what should be borne in mind at all times is that they mutually influence each other so that managing the process of education becomes really difficult and responsible work.

The process of education is going on at every moment, in every educational institution. The very term "process" means movement, progress of something in quantitative and qualitative terms. When talking about the process of upbringing we mean numerous quantitative changes occurring in, through and by means of that process. It has its starting points and final provisions as well relating to its sense of existence; it aims to enable the occurrence of quantitative and qualitative changes, therefore it must be managed in order to ensure its successful implementation. By its nature and essence, the process of upbringing takes place through defined objectives, postulates, methods, resources, and implementers of it. What is important is that all its structural components are subject to constant changes that occur because of a number of various objective and subjective reasons. To understand the necessity to successfully manage the process of upbringing its purpose and meaning of existence must be known beforehand. The purpose of its existence is to provide quantitative and qualitative changes in the person for whom this process exists – the pupil. Through the process the pupil grows in every sense of the word: in physical, emotional, aesthetic, working, social, intellectual, and moral sense. So, with mediation, the pupil matures, develops as a person with certain characteristics, abilities, skills, expectations, motives, knowledge, emotions, and behavior. The fact that it is a process in which a person is formed indicates how serious the issue of keeping this process in all its stages and aspects is. How you manage this process is especially important because it has the goal to help an individual

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grow up into a mature, competent person who will take responsibility for his/her own personal and social life likewise.

When we try to fill the content of the term "*the process of upbringing*" we think of both the process of acquiring knowledge and the parallel process of formation of human behavior. The man acquired a vast amount of knowledge throughout his life intentionally or unintentionally, and, generally, most of it is acquired through an organized process of education through institutions for its implementation. This knowledge is from many areas of human life that enable man to get to know the world and himself and many processes relating to him and the world in general. Based on them, man builds skills and capabilities which enable him for some kind of action. In this way he builds his own attitudes, beliefs and prejudices, value system, emotional and social reactions and relations.

Managing the process of upbringing means to keep in mind at all times the communication between subjects that carry the process the quality of which depends very much on the final effect of the process. It is a very important issue that should be given special attention, simply because right or wrong way of communicating directly affect both the process of acquiring knowledge and the formation of the whole person. Managing the communication process in this way slowly but surely takes its rightful place among everything else that means managing the process of upbringing.

*- Importance of managing in the classroom*

Most of the upbringing process takes place in educational institutions, which is to say at a certain place and certain time. Although modern approach to upbringing and education allows and even requires informal character of educational activities, one thing still remains unchanged since the formation of the first schools. It certainly is the conduct of those activities within a classroom that is a place where many individuals are subjected to a certain educational process that takes place in a certain order, under certain conditions, by certain means and methods and by following certain principles. In this space the real educational life goes on where two equal entities - educator and pupil take part. It is the blood vessel through which the whole blood flows carrying overall supplies and enabling the life of the whole organism called the educational system. There a multitude of pre-planned activities happen every day, but very unpredictable, unrepeatable situations happen as well; there the dominance of the two entities is most expressed, without whose functioning and existence the educational process could not be imagined. Each of these premises with their own actors and events is the educational center that is not only a simple set of such living cells. It seems that the importance of what is happening there can never be fully assessed. Because of all this more research has been done, both theoretical and action, that has tried one way or another to clarify and reveal

what actually happens there, who and how they influence the events and many other things that again and again seek shedding light and clarification.

Why is it important to talk about and explore issues of management in the classroom? There are many good and sound arguments that, taken together, can be defined as "improvement in school work." Improving school work is a regular practice that every school has whenever performing the evaluation process of the impact of its operations. It is actually giving an objective response to three questions: "Where are we now? Where would we want to be? How to reach the desired state?". In this regard we always bear in mind the goals that society on the one hand delivers to the educational system and, of course, the goals that each school places before itself. This is not to say that between them there is any disagreement, but that each school sets before itself specific targets depending on the nature of the school, for which population it is intended, but, of course, also on how much of the responsibilities it managed to realize, and what still remains to be delivered. We should also keep in mind that goals are not a static category that is not subject to change, but rather that we are dealing with things that are continually subject to change under the influence of different factors and processes of both internal and external nature. The following can be taken as a very general definition of what the goal of an educational system: "*what should educators do to devise a system of education that has never been seen anywhere in the world, a system of education that provides elite education for almost every child?*"<sup>5</sup> This general commitment includes everything that means a balance between social needs and requirements and individual needs and requirements on the other. What in this whole situation with goals changes is certainly the changing nature of what expected educational output the society expects and requires, and the relative nature of individual needs, expectations, requirements and interests that each individual has. Trying to answer these serious requirements that arrive continuously without stopping to the address of the educational system, or directly to the school system, it is in a constant process of change the meaning and ultimate goal of which is to be achieved through improving school work, realizing the set requirements and expectations. The successfully realized classroom management can certainly contribute to one of the aspects of the overall improvement in school activities. Classroom management must be successfully designed and implemented because the totality of positive effects on school work in general depends on what happens in each classroom respectively. There are a number of arguments for making efforts to improve classroom management; one of them would be the one starting from Glasser's clarification of human needs and talking about the five so-called basic needs: "*survival, love, power, fun, freedom.*"<sup>6</sup> These are the things that each member of a classroom manifests, and therefore, by mediation of classroom management, they must be met to a greater extent in each student, of course in realistically feasible limits.

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*What is really classroom management?*

In its constant quest and search for designating things with their real name pedagogical literature has not bypassed the issue of defining or determining what that term should mean. In this ongoing quest wrong choices have often been offered, which ultimately is seen as just one unsuccessful or misguided attempt to clear things up. But, in any case, in the multitude of offered definitions by various authors we can find such that equate the term directly and fully equate with the term "*discipline*", putting between an equal sign between the two terms, but a deeper analysis of each of these two terms separately opens space and opportunity to make a distinction between them and rightly so: "Classroom management is defined as the process of establishing and maintaining an environment that is favorable for learning, pathways through which behavior, movement, and interaction during class is organized and controlled by the teacher in order to facilitate learning and teaching to take place most effectively".<sup>7</sup> Probably the need to distinguish between these two terms, or maybe the need to introduce a term different from the term "discipline", occurs because this term has long had or received a negative connotation. This interpretation derives from the interpretation of the term "*discipline*" which, among other meanings, has this one also "*Punishment, criticism, bringing under control through training in a state of obedience*".<sup>8</sup> In fact, the long existence of the school system really knows exercising such discipline, i.e. application of certain measures of prohibition, restriction, indication to strict rules that must be obeyed so as to channel human behavior. Pedagogical practice also knows the application of rigorous measures, often even physical punishment, intended for all those who do not obey the anticipated rules and norms of behavior. Deepening of the negative sense of the term "discipline" continues because it is regularly interpreted as application of a particular set of measures and methods which teachers use to create in students behavior that is desirable. In this sense obedience showed by students was most appreciated, so great efforts were employed develop and nurture that obedience in students. Of course, the most commonly used methods in this were persuasion and coercion, i.e. that negative connotation of the term "discipline" had a real source in the educational everyday reality in terms of preventing unwanted behavior (and what it was is a relative thing!), and taking measures for the prevention of unwanted behavior in children. We will mention the different understandings of the term "*discipline*" again, and now we will indicate the relation of the two terms "*classroom management*" and "*discipline*" or in what kind of real relation they should be and how they should be interpreted. According to the author Slobodanka Gashich Pavishich, citing research in English language speaking countries, when the term "discipline" is used as a verb then the real difference between these two terms comes to the surface: "*'to discipline' refers to stopping bad*

*behavior, correction, punishment, or to what is done once a pupil exhibits bad behavior. In this case the term classroom management is used (managing a class) to signify the process of establishing and maintaining an environment that is conducive to learning*"<sup>9</sup> or "*'managing a class denotes the teacher's ability to manage time, space, resources and role in collaboration with students and, with their behavior, to ensure a climate that is conducive to learning.*"<sup>10</sup> This author also suggests that: "*according to contemporary understandings of discipline (three-dimensional discipline), the management of a class is included in the term discipline; it is preventive discipline.*"<sup>11</sup> This is a significant attempt to make a modern elaboration of these two terms with a special effort to clarify the newly created term "classroom management, but the author is not fully consistent, primarily because this book elaborates classroom management which involves not only preventive but also the corrective aspect of conducting classroom processes associated with pupils' behavior.

In our opinion, the second important feature that characterizes management in the classroom is that with the help of its successful design and implementation its ultimate goal can be realized: not only to provide a positive climate for learning and realization of educational tasks but the goal is far deeper and wider than that - this is a way through which the tasks of moral education, upbringing and shaping the character are realized, and the tasks of work, multicultural and intercultural education. In short, this is the way to socially build a person, to emotionally stabilize it and fill in its character; in the broadest sense, this is the formation and maturation of a future mature and socially active individual. In this we must not forget that all this is done through the process of learning the norms, values, rules, and consequences, but it also must not be forgotten that, along with learning, these things create realistic conditions for the acquisition of scientific knowledge, i.e. that the process of learning and teaching associated with particular content flows; in order for it to run successfully and efficiently certain prerequisites must be provided, environment and climate for its smooth performance.

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