

UDC: 37.091.59:005.53

(Review paper)

COMPARISON OF STUDENT'S POSITION AT SCHOOL IN THE PAST AND NOWADAYS

Salija Bangoi¹,

Emilija Petrova Gjorgjeva² Ph.D

²Faculty of Educational Sciences, Goce Delcev University – Stip, Republic of Macedonia,
emilija.petrova@ugd.edu.mk

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to verify the position of students in elementary and lower secondary. Through this research we want to gain insight into students' involvement in making decisions in school as well as to find out what is the relation between students and teachers, the relationship between teachers themselves and what is the safety of students in school.

The research was carried out in six primary and lower secondary schools where 120 students were involved from the sixth to the ninth grade. The choice of students is random both for the success they gain and for the class they attend. As we have stated, school is a place where all active subjects need to create good relationships for the purpose of better results. The student should be allowed to socialize, to participate freely and responsibly in the school work. Therefore, the student will gain experience and will benefit the school, the community to which it belongs and the whole society. The school management and teachers are the most responsible for the good position of students in school.

By their approach, with understanding and engagement, they can influence the creation of a climate in a school that will develop co-operation, respect, tolerance and responsibility. Depending on how much we allow students to get involved in making decisions and other school activities inasmuch we will have so much better interpersonal relationships and better functioning of the school. The parents are slightly interested and they are an important factor for all the events which come to pass both inside and outside the school. All of this is largely influenced by the parents' bad opinion about school, low employment of parents, poor teachers' salaries that are not maximally dedicated to the school and also the environment in which students spend time after school.

Key words: school, the student's position in school, participation, decision-making

Introduction

The teacher's partner in the educational process and the most important worker is the student. In order to have a better functioning school system, students need to be constantly encouraged and they need to be enabled to actively participate in school activities regardless of the type of the activity. We must pay a lot of attention to the relation between a teacher and a student, and the teacher should have a dominant role toward the student and in all the segments of the school system. Students have very little freedom in relation to planning, deciding and even sharing an opinion at the school.

Since the Convention on the rights of the child was adopted in 1989, the rights of children are in the focus of much research, and they are also part of many attempts to influence all the responsible parts so that these rights are respected. This means that the children must be part of decision making and they must be active participants at school. Children should be treated as active beings, competitive partners and be included in their personal education. They must take responsibility for their own behaviour, their success or failure.

All social groups that participate in the school system, which are teachers and parents, need to aim toward the same aim by collaborating without any prejudices, appreciating each person and by being responsible for their own work. This will result in a quick and simple way to the mutual aim. Facts show that students often show disinterest about school activities, but the belief that domination of the teacher and teacher's lack of concern for the feelings of the student are the main causes for this are not true. Often students feel unprotected, bullied and punished at school. There is peer violence in the school property and outside of it. The lack of participation of students in everyday life, these violent events happen daily. If we want to create schools without any violence and schools that are equal for all regardless of the differences that we have, we should change our habits and influence others to do so as well by setting a positive example. The support of the teacher's authority can contribute greatly toward a better functioning school. "Be on the side of the child, in the pupils place, which is the place for a mutual learning and a place to complement each other" (Milić i Marojević, 2014, 129). Every time when we include a student in some work or activity at the school, it can have solely a positive connotation and it is a possibility to avoid negative events that are often present in contemporary schools. The student needs more space and freedom to act, which is very low. Innovations are often incorporated at contemporary schools and by following this process we should include the students at the school system in the same way. Consequently, the position of the student at the school will gradually improve.

Every part of a school has gone through some change from the establishment of schools to the schools that we know today. From the personnel, through the curriculum to the way of organization it has all developed. Since students have become considered as a separate category, schools emerged regardless of who the educators were or the type of place where educating was done. In the old eastern peoples, the individual had no worth, but it got his/her position in accordance to tradition or personal property or the cast he/she belonged to. On the other hand, in Sparta and Athens the upbringing of children was physical and war-like. "In order to have resilient young men, they were taught to adjust to the cold, thirstiness and pain"

(M.Zaninović, 1988, 20). As M. Zaninović says, the schools in Athens allowed physical violence, which is confirmed by the following proverb “Be a diligent boy so you don’t get beaten”. The situation was similar in old Rome, where children were prepared as future farmers and soldiers without their willingness. They were chosen for their strength and abilities. School started to establish as an important social institution throughout the new century, when the number of students have greatly increased. Although the number of students increased, their status and reputation weren’t very high during the XVI and XVII centuries. The position of pupils and students becomes better during the XIX, when in France they are called “little citizens” and in England “young gentlemen”. Also, the aspect of upbringing appears at schools during this period. You get the impression that until the new century the students that attended public schools were all boys. Girls’ upbringing and education was conducted either at home or in monasteries.

The high mortality rates and moral simplicity has led to the start of machine production, and then started the demand for children force due to the lower payment for their work. Because of this, in the XIX century England was the first to pass laws to restrict the work times and to ban children younger than eight to work. In the next period all the measures that were taken as a protection for the inappropriate physical work of the children and that opens the possibility to realize the school work i.e. to systematically educate the children at that period. Trnavac points out that: A child – a student has his own social, legal and pedagogical status. Although all three have some conditions, we will focus on the pedagogical status that shows the student’s position at the school. The phrases “the student as an object” and “the student as the subject” show us the two extreme ends on how the students are treated. The student as a subject is related to many pedagogues who criticize the schools in which the teacher is shown as an authority and the only source of information, where students had to learn everything by heart and later repeat it exactly as it was heard. It is clear that “the student is in a subordinate position and a passive approach toward the teacher and the elders” (Trnavac, 2005, 74). Herein derive the children’s passivity which encompasses the laziness, the inability and the disinterest that were all met by inappropriate punishments. These punishments didn’t lead to positive changes, but the contrary i.e. a greater passivity in students and disobedience.

Latest literature and contemporary pedagogues more often talk about the student as a subject in the educational system, where students’ participation grows as its development. It is necessary to obtain a position for the student so that he/she has the opportunity to act freely, energetically and responsibly in relation to their abilities, characteristics and the expectations of the society. At the end of the XIX century appeared many ideas that lead to reforms of the “old” or the reformation of the “new” schools. There wasn’t any attention paid to the abilities and the advancements of the students. “School in accordance to the child” (E. Klapared), „school without a class“ (Jena-plan and others) are some of the ideas.

Conferences, workshops and other training courses done in the beginning of the century have all been focused on the student as the centre of attention, which were attended by almost every teacher. We believe that it has been gradually accepted that the student becomes a subject in the educational process and that this is implemented in the daily teaching process. However, this fact is not the topic of our paper, and our focus is the student’s position at the school. It is essential to give the student an opportunity to participate in school activities. “The student is influenced by the teacher and the teacher’s systematic and planned teaching,

teacher's conduct, lead, support and help; but the student also obtains knowledge through independent learning and hard-work" (S. Kačapor i N. Vilotijević, 2005). How will the student's personality develop and how he/she will approach any activity at the school "depends mostly on the students themselves, but teachers and the institution where the teaching process takes place have an influence as well" (S. Bangoji, 2017). Whether it is a talented student or a special needs student, we must give them an opportunity in adequate conditions and to adjust the circumstances in order to give any individual an access to learn and a possibility for progress. There are some other differences that are noticeable among students in some schools, and those are the economic status of their family, the fact that the student comes from either a rural or an urban environment, as well as the prejudices in relation to the parents' job position. These differences can "destroy" certain students and automatically exclude them from the learning process, and they found themselves in a subordinate position. We have emphasized that the student's success depends mostly on the student, but we must give the student an opportunity to achieve success without any external obstacles.

It has to be emphasized that in our elementary schools many children with special needs are sent to other special schools, and the inclusion in education is not applied. One of the reasons is the insufficient number of teachers that are trained for inclusive teaching. In these circumstances the students with special needs are usually sent to a boarding school and they are separated from their family, which restricts them to a life in a small separate group. As it is mentioned in the book "Basic inclusion in education" (Liljana Igrić et. al, 2015), if the parents, who can be a great support in encouraging changes, are not included enough and the local community is excluded as well, we lose the support of the people on which changes depend. Changes are too isolated, weakly coordinated and herein cannot be at teacher's focus and achieve integration. The difference between the students in the past and the students in contemporary schools is the fact that children nowadays strongly believe that they have the right to be children. They do not have a problem to state their opinions and feeling, to ask questions, point out arguments and they expect to be understood. Self-consciousness is more present among children whose upbringing is in an environment free of fear from the adults that was unimaginable in the past. One of the reasons is probably the fact that some generations from the previous type of teaching have become parents, some of them continued their education and became teachers or pedagogues and they try to change the student's position at the school. Contemporary schools offer a lot to the students, but this doesn't mean that there aren't any problems. Children in Scandinavia lack "social competence" as stated by As Jesper Hul and Hele Jensen. In Germany it is talked about "discipline crisis". Many other countries have other names and versions of the problem, but they all strive toward a change in the behaviour of the children. They are aware the changing the rules, bans or punishments are not the right way in solving the problem; instead we should do a daily analysis on our own actions and behaviour, the behaviour of the pedagogues and the teachers. Teachers and pedagogues often make the mistake of blaming others for student's bad grades or behaviour, because they are unable to accept their own responsibility.

Conclusion

The relationship between the teacher and the students has undergone a great change. The strict authoritative teacher, who respected only his rights, physically punished the students and had no understanding for them has changed into a friendly teacher open to collaboration, showing respect to students and without any physical abuse nor fear. They participate in the teaching process together, they choose the teaching content, plan the activities and mutually value each other's achievements.

A very important fact is that the safety of the students at schools is improved. The more efficient work on safety, the mutual commitment in all factors related to better functioning of the school has given good results. The awareness of both teachers and students for the importance of their mutual relationship will contribute to achieve quality education and better schools in general.

References

- [1] Bangoji, S., Master rad, Priština, 2017.
- [2] Hul, J., Jensen, H., Kompetencija u pedagoškim odnosima, Eduka, Beograd, 2014.
- [3] Igrić, Lj. i saradnici, Osnove edukacijskog uključivanja, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 2015.
- [4] Jeđud, B., Car, S., Participacija djece u školi, Školski vjesnik, Časopis za pedagoška i školska pitanja, Zagreb, 2015.
- [5] Kačapor, S., Vilotijević, N., Školska i porodična pedagogija, Filozofski fakultet, Beograd, 2005.
- [6] Konvencija Ujedinjenih Nacija o pravima deteta, Save the children na Kosovu.
- [7] Lansdown, G., Promoting children's participation in democratic decision – making. UNICEF Inocenti Insight, Firenca, 2001.
- [8] Milić, S., Marojević, J., Implementacija koncepta dječijih prava u crnogorskom obrazovnom sistemu, Pedagogijska istraživanja, Podgorica, 2014.