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EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS IN POSTMODERN CULTURE

Through the centuries and in his civilization ‘existence’, Man has gone through a considerable metamorphosis whose today’s picture seems to be most progressive and that in all aspects of Man’s cultural existence. Each transformation has been conditioned by strong educational efforts made by societies for their own development. In European countries, the realization of the assumed educational policy was distinguished by the aspiration towards a higher importance of knowledge and education of the individual. Egalitarianism and universality of education commenced not only to constitute one of main civil rights in the 20th century, but at the same time they also started becoming a message for the present time. Those rights have been reflected in the postulates listed in the most significant educational documents worldwide, viz. reports on the state of education. Those documents determine the criteria for the education of young people in conjunction with the tasks of educational establishments in relation to personal development. They entail harmonious actions from a large number of formal and non-formal educational circles responsible for the formation of genuine humanity. In the leading Report for the 21st century education-Learning : the treasure within, compiled by an international panel of experts presided over by J. Delors [1], there are outlined the four pillars of personal development framework : to learn in order to know; to learn in order to act; to learn in order to live together and to learn in order to ‘be’, and they seem to constitute the credo of the whole of educational actions in Europe. Those actions are assumed to enable a multidimensional development of an individual—from cognitive development aimed at creating a thinking person, development of activities which determined one’s becoming a homo creator, through social development which is significant for today’s globalization trends in European countries, and eventually-to the spiritual and transcendent development in order to complement the hominization process. The postulates from the Report seem to advocate the need of abandoning the education of reconstructive, reactive, adaptive individuals who live only within the dimensions of their homelands. The primacy of technologies is noticeable, which means the necessity of building open societies, with a large measure of community nature and the entirety of cultural transformations, incl. flows of information on what is going on worldwide, with a simultaneous attempt to make references to that information and with a possibility of multiaspect reactions. A ubiquitous culture of postmodernism, typical of the 21st century, the so-called prefigurative culture as M. Mead labeled it, is aimed at transferring information, which is reflected in the construction of the information society that—according to J. Morbitzer—is ‘a society permeated with technology as never before, and most dependent on it’ [2]. This society begins to be predominated by young people who become authors not only of technical thoughts, but also of new forms of social life that have come to exist basing upon those thoughts and their wide implementation. At the same time noticeable is also the phenomenon of departing from human

values and approaching the technopolization of life, viz. “the primacy of technology over culture” [3]. In the European culture prominent becomes the picture of a technocrat who is unquestioningly fascinated by the technological progress and attributes to it the primary role in forming human life. In the educational world more and more important becomes the role of a well-educated person with artificially generated communicative predispositions, which enable us to enter into interpersonal relations, indispensable for any activity of an individual. Educational behaviors as a whole may seem to orient a young person towards the obligatory perspective of professional life as if the needs of a man as a personal *indivudum* were forgotten. In the process of education appear more and more calculations and manipulations which result from a new life style and considerable effects of popular culture, with a particular stress laid on instant culture. Perceptible is not only a ‘must have’-oriented preparation for life, but also omnipresent consumptionism and the so-called ‘rat race’. The formation of the personality of an individual in the context of assuming certain social roles will entail learning behaviors and attitudes necessary for one’s existence which nowadays are distinguished by the lack of emotional involvement and deeper spiritual experience. A person can be measured by their relation towards material goods, needs of consumption and glorification of freedom, which is expressed in the negation of standards and timeless values referred to in all spheres of human life. Personality models and authorities become noticed not only in the world of the mass media and through the values diffused by them [4] which often remain unconfirmed in the world of axiology and ontology of the so-called old-fashioned societies, viz. adults who have connections with the 20th century and with the then advocated educational methods based upon modeling and imitation of authorities, prizes and penalties, which constituted once a constant and practically verifiable element of classical pedagogy. Meanwhile, the “most promoted should be the **to be-oriented** attitude which means overcoming narcissism, the sense of freedom in establishing bonds and loving life. Persons formed this way are less socially dangerous and endowed with a chance of having good relationships, establishing happy families and living their lives in a satisfactory way” [5]. The molding of such attitudes is the main assignment in didactic and educational environments, led by the family and the school. In both the environments aforesaid, the sign of the present time becomes perceptible as well—viz. technocracy and esteem for the human technical thought, which may sometimes mean a hazard to the regular course of the didactic and educational process. In particular, in the family environment a redefinition of the world of humane values in favor of the world of objects must give cause for concern. Since time immemorial the family has been preparing a person for being adult. It used to be the centre of primary socialization in which an individual acquired all social patterns, and only there could be attained full emotional development and the shaping of moral fiber accompanied with the construction of an ‘axiological ladder’. The family has always laid foundations for life orientations and enabled a person to collect the knowledge of sense of their own life conceived as ‘a need of an adult consisting in making their own, abstract life concept in which the person said may find positive fulfillment until their last day, which, in turn, will enable the development of their personality and to make a good use of their potential going beyond the very existence of Man” [6].

Today’s family is considerably different from the typical mold commonly known and from its definition in social sciences. Although the family still remains an independent social unit, it is still subject to a considerable pressure exerted by culture, and it loses its individual nature resulting from blood ties and cultural traditions of their forbears. The family life style and the desired educational attitude of the parents are influenced by the generally conceived mass media and the message of hyperreality previously not confirmed in real life. Family relations are mapped and adapted to the modern life models of stars and showbiz people for whom the cult of success and the presence in the media world means ‘to be or not to be’ in view of social existence and individual’s existence. A life without reflections, living a while, a life which entails struggling with competitors, a variability of tastes of spectators and an incessant fight to survive, although the youth passes, one has no satisfaction from their own professional achievements, and he/she is aware of a defeat and absurd

existence deprived of any support and resources from their family or other unselfish, loved ones. For that social group family traditions assume some importance during church holidays and in certain circumstances that need a special aura which can be secured only through the closeness to another people, guaranteed by family ties and reciprocal feelings. An increasing egoism among people jeopardizes their identity and is a symptom of the present days in the related literature on the subject shown as ‘the society of lonely crowd’ [7]; instead, ‘the spiritual pauperization tend towards the heroization of mediocrity which assumes a cult of trash and deprives people not only of imagination, but also of the skill of critical thinking, and leads them towards the destruction of personality, which has been diagnosed by H. Marcuse’ [8].

In the global reality, human capital becomes as important as material capital, which does not put the contemporary world of values on a pedestal. And what is more, such a hierarchization is caused by today’s elites responsible for innovative paths of education for an individual within the system of formal and permanent/ comprehensive life learning.

In the traditional approach, school education used to constitute the pivot of cognitive development of Man. As a centre of reliable knowledge, based upon the positivist paradigm, it enables an individual and societies to reach subsequent steps of knowledge of the world, viz. episteme and doxe.

The postmodernist age is distinguished by an active school with subjective paradigm of education [9], aimed at a pupil/ student of average intellectual skills, who-in the course of educational process–will become a partner of their teacher and an aware participant in the performance of intentional didactic and educational activities then transformed into his/her ‘prime mover’ and sense of self-esteem. The learning process is to enable the individual to become acquainted with the world and themselves, whereas the education combined with reaching subsequent stages is to assume the dimension of autotelic value which constitutes the foundation for creating the society of knowledge. Instead, the school is perceived as a place of educational compulsion. Learning starts becoming a school duty imposed upon the individual by legal acts, which often triggers social maladjustment and starts the individual’s marginalization [10]. Negative phenomena, pathology and the entirety of asocial behaviors that accompany the educational process must make one wonder and cause consternation. The awareness of the need of education as a kind of investment in oneself is of importance among today’s societies. The postmodernist man is a person who can think, is creative, self-controlling, taking responsibility for himself/herself, pragmatic. Also the 21st century school is pervaded with modernity which should facility self-fulfillment and spur one on to self-education. Today’s didactics (in the light of literature on the subject) [11] is rich in modern and innovative methodologies; multilateral learning can enable full development of personality, and it takes into account the individualization in the educational process. Didactic aids constitute a very good support not only for the teacher activities, but also for a pupil/ student. Omnipresent multimedia lay solid foundations for the fascination of learning and experiencing knowledge according to the possibilities and needs of the learning person [12]. Advantages that result from the application of multimedia aids in the educational process are undeniable, “since 87% of information reaches our brains through our eyes, 9% through our ears and 4% through other senses” [13]. That knowledge is of particular importance for the performance of didactic assignments of today’s digital age school, which, based upon the modern theory of connectivism [14], should develop in pupils/ students the skill of learning in such a way that they will be able to make use thereof for their whole life in conformity with the effective educational formula of the EU countries, viz. lifelong learning.

The modern didactics imposes new duties on the teacher, too; the teacher performs the education al process and ceases to be perceived as omniscient specialist in a branch of knowledge. Instead, he/she will become a competent guide in the world of knowledge and information not only in a selected branch, but also in the entire reality. In the opinion of B. Kędzierska, “today’s teacher should be an emancipative authority to his/her pupils/ students, basing upon the reliability of his/her

competence” [15], which, in turn, will change the hitherto concept of the teachers’ profession. The teacher will continue to teach and to educate, and the pupil/ student will continue to learn and to be reared under the influence of the entirety of teacher activities which, according to H. Kwiatkowska, should be noted for two types of proficiency, viz. technical proficiency, the so-called instrumental, as reflected in technical competence in which of importance are the knowledge of didactic procedure and efficiency of actions. They constitute cognitive arguments of the teachers’ profession and contribute thus to the student’s/ pupil’s cognitive development. The other type of teacher proficiency can be connected with existential reasons to accompany the intentional educational process. They seem to be the indispensable attributes of teacher competence/professionalism, reflected into the humanistic orientation of this profession, and to become a guarantor of correct interpersonal relations between the teacher and the pupil/ student [16]. Therefore, “those attributes are linked with practice-moral competence that precedes technical competence [...]. All objectives, methods or means—before used by the teacher—must be accepted in view of practice and morality. So that the teacher may apply them, he/she has to make them legally valid on his/her own account. Each teacher has to invoke practico-moral knowledge and answer the question : what to do in order that objectives, methods and means should not become in my hands a tool for manipulating and enslaving people? Can I use them in a specific educational situation, and how should I do it” [17]. For Christopher Day (as B. Śliwerski reports it) today’s teacher must still be passionate about their profession, and their attitude and involvement will confirm the importance of knowledge in human life; as Day has it— “one of the main tasks of all teachers is instilling into their pupils/ students the propensity for lifelong learning. So, they will have to determine their own involvement and enthusiasm about such a learning” [18].

The teacher is a person who must bear testimony to this hard profession with their identity. At the time of postmodernist culture and man-technology competition, it seems indispensable that the learning subject must be appropriately guided. Opposing the art of learning is insufficient for today’s customer of education. In the educational process, one must always provide proper conditions for the reception of knowledge of the world and in consequence, they will become somewhat of education manager who is trustworthy due to their personal attributes, like innovation, creativity, sense of self-esteem, reflexiveness, intellectual courage and esteem for the scientific truth. Parallely, one has to be aware that their own work on themselves may end either in a success or in a defeat, especially in view of economy. Education has to regard the dynamics of life and the entirety of social transformations. The contents promoted in educational syllabuses are still burdened with encyclopedism, which will not help today’s teacher stimulate the pupil/ student intellectually. The volume of knowledge and its increase make it harder to persuade one to experience their learning in a conscientious way. As in the life practice of a student/ pupil the contents learned become outdated, this means another impediment in the work of the teacher whom the pupil/ student has to meet every day. The job market which nowadays determines clear-cut professional requirements of employers does not correlate with the competence the school can offer to the pupil/ student. The educational policy realized in the EU countries seems not to keep abreast of expectations and social transformations, which can be corroborated by increasing unemployment and today’s economic crisis in the community countries. As E. Matuska “has it, in a large number of publications on socio-economy, the main problem encountered in all EU countries is a misadjusted structure of job supply and demand for the lines of education offered on the educational market and chosen by young people to study” [19]. Especially, this problem regards technical education which becomes the resultant of education on the preceding stages and is related to exact sciences which entail not specific skills of learners, but rather the use of teaching methodology to trigger the student’s/pupil’s activity and creative thinking. The hitherto dominance of transmission learning [20] is not fully replaced with activating teaching which requires a change in the mentality and attitude towards the educational process on the part of both teachers and pupils/ students. This is a long term objective witnessed by all of us who are participants in the society of knowledge.

Nowadays, we are at the beginning of this innovation, and the absence of standards causes the educational reality to be burdened with problems which need solving at least through analyses of empirical materials from many investigations into learning and teaching.

In the educational process, like in any kind of human activity, the problem is that “people do with pleasure they have to do; they do what they have to do not only for having been told to do it; they have a liking for what they do, and therefore, they may considerably improve their work and show generosity with their dedication to that work” [21]. This profound philosophical thought of professor Tadeusz Kotarbiński seems to constitute the punchline for the deliberations on educational problems of postmodernist culture. In the 21st century education one should redefine the duty of an individual’s learning to a conscious aspiration to their own development, and therefore, to secure them a reflexive awareness of themselves and any and all actions. The path to success can be the school desired by J. Bruner, viz. noted for school culture and culture of learning’ and accompanied with the skill of education on how to live in the modern society [22]. In the society of future in which we have to live every day as individuals entangled in playing a large number of social roles, for whom knowledge becomes their status quo.

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EWOLUCJA RÓL I ZADAŃ POLSKICH NAUCZYCIELI

Przemiany społeczne narzucają określone wymagania szkole i nauczycielowi, wpływają na modyfikację celów, zadań, treści, metod kształcenia i wychowania. Stawia to nauczyciela w nowej i wciąż zmieniającej się sytuacji oraz wpływa na warunki i treści jego pracy. Istniejąca współzależność między postępem społecznym a rozwojem oświaty, które decyduje o konieczności i ciągłości modernizacji systemu edukacji (K. Duraj-Nowakowa, 2000; S. Krawcewicz, 1987; T. Lewowicki, 1997).

Zmieniająca się funkcja oświaty na tle przemian zachodzących w pracy nauczyciela klas młodszych wobec którego rosną i zwiększają się wymagania. Musi on doskonale orientować się w nowych zdobyczach nauki i możliwościach jej praktycznego zastosowania, w wymaganiach różnych rodzajów działalności produkcyjnej człowieka, w niezbędnych umiejętnościach zawodowych. W pracy nauczyciela konieczna jest znajomość konkretnych potrzeb środowiska, w którym pracuje on oraz możliwość kształtowania, rozwijania i zaspokajania tych potrzeb (T. Lewowicki, 1997; M. Szymański, 1996; Z. Kwieciński, 1992).

Przemiany dokonujące się w procesie produkcyjnym do wysokiej rangi podnoszą funkcje szkoły i rolę nauczyciela w kształtowaniu postaw ludzi, ich stosunku do pracy, umiejętności współdziałania w zespole, dyscypliny, sumienności i obowiązkowości (Z. Kwieciński, 1992).

Istotnym czynnikiem modyfikującym rolę społeczną szkoły i nauczyciela jest również szybki przyrost wiedzy naukowej oraz konieczność coraz szerszego wdrażania osiągnięć nauki do praktycznej działalności człowieka (K. Duraj-Nowakowa, 2000a). W związku z tym w nowym świetle ukazują się takie zagadnienia, jak wymagania stawiane nauczycielowi, jego kwalifikacje zawodowe, poziom i zasób wiedzy naukowej koniecznej do nauczania szkolnego, zdobywania umiejętności z zakresu naukowej organizacji pracy, co wymaga od niego nie tylko gruntownego przygotowania do pracy pedagogicznej, lecz także ciągłego podnoszenia kwalifikacji w drodze doskonalenia zawodowego i samokształcenia (K. Duraj-Nowakowa, 2000). Oczywiście i powszechny staje dziś pogląd, że każdy nauczyciel bez względu na to, na jakim szczeblu kształcenia szkolnego pracuje, powinien mieć wykształcenie wyższe (M. Szymański, 1996).

Postęp pedagogiczny w szkolnictwie zależy od wielu warunków, ale jego realizatorem i twórcą jest nauczyciel, w tym kl. I-III. Często inicjatorem i organizatorem są też instytucje centralne zarządzające całym systemem. Struktura organizacyjna edukacji przyjmuje postać stożka, na wierzchołku którego znajduje się Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej. Ogniwami pośrednimi są władze wojewódzkie, miejskie, gminne, dzielnicowe a w tym organy samorządowe. Ta struktura zawiera w sobie wiele zalet jak i wad dla realizacji pracy dydaktyczno-wychowawczej nauczyciela. Cechą charakterystyczną tej struktury jest szeroko rozbudowana sieć zależności instytucjonalnej i personalnej, które przyjmują postać konfiguracji horyzontalnej i wertykalnej (K. Duraj-Nowakowa, 2000b). Zależności pionowe odgrywają istotną rolę w dyfuzji utworzonych innowacji (R. Schulz,