Arguments in favour of a
competence-based pedagogy

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Abstract: New challenges point to a school undergoing a significant change in its attempt to pass on from a traditional pedagogy to a competence-based pedagogy; passing from uni-form to re-form, the teacher and the pre-school teacher, in a word the educator is challenged not only by a sophisticated terminology but also by developing a modern exercise, a practical and more efficient pedagogy. The scientific offer within school curricula demands from the teacher original itineraries, new tracks: from curriculum to evaluation, from teaching to learning, from knowledge to abilities. Placed at the interference between technology and methodology, the teacher is stimulated to assume educational projects of conception, actual action, professional competence, to promote dialogue-type methods, favouring the process of guidance and negotiation.
Key words: education, competence, teaching, learning, methods

1. Education, key factor of social evolution

The training and education of young generations were, are and will always be the key factor that generates progress in all areas of human activity. This explains the assumption that education is an important factor of economic development. So, this is an axiom and it

has been proven by practice in several countries, despite the lack of rich natural resources. Training, as process of revaluating the human resources allows the transfer of these resources to a human capital, decisive in the economic activity.[1] This is the reason why the economic cycle depends on the way this process takes place and on the quality of training and education. This economic cycle can be of medium and even long length. We can mention miracles, like the progress of Japan after World War II that, from an isolated and fully destroyed country, turned into the second important economic power of the world. We can bring lots of examples similar to this one, but we would like to mention that if training and education are correctly appreciated and properly handled by the society, progress and prosperity are guaranteed. There also results another conclusion, namely that training and education should be privileged policies of the state which, in its turn,should be oriented in the economic cycles and should influence, through training, the national economic cycles or, as stated by the conditions of globalization, "local economic cycles".

2. Contemporary meanings of pedagogy

One of the already launched challenges by the contemporary society is the necessity to rethink school and formal education as well as non-formal and informal education in their various forms of articulation. The school system, as subsystem of the macro-system, contributes through its educational offer to structuring the line of (self) training and (self) development of the individual personality, preparing him/her to become a demanding beneficiary of lifelong learning. Pedagogy is one of the sciences that study education, "it deals with what is, what should be and what is done in the field of education" (Planchard, apud. Văideanu)[2]. The 3rd millennium comes with its own demands regarding pedagogy, demands that have no connection to circumstantial measures but to the whole development of the society, an expanding society where old patterns are subject to a desirable restructuring of values[3]. Traditional pedagogy of Comenian type has become inappropriate, being replaced by modern pedagogy, where innovative didactic strategies, based on new technologies, replace traditional approaches in the field of education. The evolution of pedagogy took place gradually, incorporating active pedagogy, experimental pedagogy, and interactive pedagogy culminating with competence-based

pedagogy. If traditional pedagogy was past- oriented and the approached strategies were of an expositional type, where the teacher was an all knowledgeable master and the student was an obeying object, incorporative of encyclopaedic knowledge, the competence-based pedagogy perfectly identifies itself with the demands of a developing society. The accelerated development is visible in all fields of the society with globalization tendencies "contemporary school functioning in an open area being well defined by the paradigm of modernity"[4]. When analysing by comparison traditional and competence-based pedagogy, we can distinguish between the following:

TRADITIONAL PEDAGOGY	COMPETENCE-BASED PEDAGOGY
Educators are transmitters of knowledge that means power and pedagogic relations are based on the teacher's authority and on the domination upon pupils of the one that is considered as unique and genuine source of knowledge	*Educators* are facilitators of knowledge and participate in the construction of knowledge focusing on its utility and the educator-educated relationship is based on mutual support, on constructive dialogue and cooperation
The curriculum comprises a mono-disciplinary structure of study disciplines	Favouring the transdisciplinary and pluridisciplinary connections and approaches
Stresses and overvalues the informative function of training as related to the formative-educational function	The stress falls on the formative aspect, on the development of cognitive processes, important being the way the pupil/student uses what he has learnt not how much information he has acquired
In the didactic approach the *teacher* decides how, how much and why he transmits knowledge and the *initiative and autonomy* of the student are reduced	Assigns new dimensions to the teacher-student relationship stressing the importance of dialogue, of negotiation processes, favouring autonomous learning.

	The pupil/student permanently interferes in the decisions regarding what s/he wants learn, how s/he will use the acquired information and what the evaluation procedures will be
The focus on *the instrumental dimension of the teaching process* brings about the risk of rigidity, of routine and extreme rationalizing from the teacher's side	*The structural dimension of the teaching process* is revised in what concerns the adjustment of pedagogical resources engaged in increasing the quality of didactic activity. It promotes close collaborations of the school to the educational community.
The lesson is planned as a succession of standardized moments, as a result of the determinative-mechanical perspective between objectives and created learning situations	The lesson is a dynamic process that folds according to the pupils` particularity, needs, preferences and endurance. It encourages pupils to take part in constructing it.
Culture becomes a study object that students have to learn about but in the meantime it can be an obstacle to learning. Students coming from different cultures must be prepared and familiarized with the culture promoted in school.	*Cultures* are respected not only because they have an equal value but also because they are equally important realities, pupils/students belonging to cultural minorities are stimulated to keep their values, fighting towards the phenomenon of acculturation.
Traditional school educated youth in the spirit of universal *values.* Teachers help students understand and support them. Important values are reason and progress.	Education supports students in building their own *values* that are useful in the context of their own culture and not universal truths.

	Important values are tolerance, fight for diversity and freedom, promoting creativity. Competence-based pedagogy admits the existence of perspective, ideas and concept differences, materialized in various ways of seeing, feeling and living.
School prepares students to master one or several fields, developing their self esteem and helping them to discover themselves (using objective intelligence tests)	Schools considers that self-esteem is a precondition of learning and education helps pupils to build their identities rather than discover them
Teaching-learning is usually carried on in the classroom. The teacher dominates, controls and classifies the pupils.	The activities have different locations; learning is carried on not only in the classroom but also in the community. Teaching involves creating a synergy between information that has come on formal ways and the one from informal and nonformal sources, intermingling learning experiences with trips, museum, visits, and welcoming guests in the classroom, watching movies. The returning of the students towards people by promoting investigations, dialogues. Control is left aside stress being laid upon the process. The teacher is an animator, moderator.
The evaluation is standardized. There are used multiple choice tests. The teacher is in charge with the way how, when, of what pupils are evaluated.	In evaluation the negotiation processes that involve decisional co-work between pupil/student and teacher are favoured. The group work and the real effects of formation are evaluated together.

Competence-based pedagogy is the piece that perfectly matches in the puzzle of the 3rd millennium society. It is an interactive pedagogy, based on expository-activating strategies, on cooperative strategies, on experimental and integrative strategies. Modern pedagogy is in a permanent search for optimal models of integrating theoretical practice with practical practice, of holistic, uninterrupted approach true to the objective reality of every day life. Learning experiences are selected and implemented by an optimal curriculum so as to reach a three-dimensional approach: competence-based education, positive interpersonal relations horizontally oriented and preparation for real life. The future belongs to a school of innovation, where learning structures contain formal, non-formal and actively informal aspects throughout life, including self-education.

3. The evolution of the concept of education

Accompanying the evolution of an extremely complex reality, the concept of education has an interesting history from the perspective of its approaches. Anthropologists consider that education is the process by means of which humans are humanised, a process of transmitting cultural values as well as social relating. Sociologists consider education one of the social mechanisms meant to perpetuate it by transmitting from one generation to another knowledge, skills, behaviours, etc. The axiological perspective explains education by relating it to the role of values in the paideutic process. Systemically we can notice that education is an ensemble of interdependent components (agents-subject/object, goals, values, forms, methods and means, norms, conditions-external and internal, etc), a social subsystem with particular functionality. From a logical perspective, education is an action of influencing interpersonal relations within the society. In philosophical/praxiologic perspective, education is accepted as a more or less conscious action, having an aim, undergoing in certain conditions, using certain means, ending with the fulfilment of certain human needs. Psychologically, education is defined as the process of forming a human being as personality on a cognitive, affective-motivational, volitional, attitude level. It represents a social phenomenon of development, formation, constitution of human beings as subjects of the action, knowledge and values by means of communication and practice, by shaping their behaviour and integrating

them in activities and social relations. In a general pedagogic approach, education is an ensemble of actions deliberately carried on in a society, with the aim of transmitting and forming new generations, a work and life experience, knowledge, skills, behaviours and values accumulated by the humanity up to that point. Education can be regarded as a complex social activity that is carried on by an endless chain of actions performed in a conscious, systematic and organized manner; in every moment a subject-individual or collective takes action upon an object – individual or collective with the purpose of transforming the latter in an active and creative personality suitable to both present and perspective historical-social conditions and to his individual biopsychic potential.

Contemporary education has as its main purpose the integral, full and harmonious development of autonomous and creative personality[5]. From this perspective contemporary pedagogy imposes a cross disciplinary education. The educational process can be approached structurally allowing us to determine its components and their functionality.

When referring to formal, institutionalised education from a system point of view it is easy to notice that all its components are interdependent and obviously use a certain hierarchy, containing: education agents (the subject and object of education – trainer and trainee, distinctive human individualities or groups);
- educational finalities (are intentions of different degrees of generality, complexity, etc, desirable educational presuppositions);
- educational conditions (numerous, complex, varied, taking action convergent or divergent in connection with the finalities, direct or indirect they can be of genetic, psychological, ambient nature possessing various degrees of controllability)
- space-temporality- time (temporal horizon);
- educational results (are performances that fulfil more or less the finalities; usually they are behavioural acts with certain objectives; we do not elude the existence of educational nature effects that do not exteriorise or not even bring about cause awareness);
- educational contents (curriculum elements that include in a general and wider meaning, the information, the substance of educational messages)
- educational methods and resources (are the instrumental-operational dimension of education; are the ways the trainer tries to influence the trainee in order to reach the pre-established finalities);

- elements of relational nature (of feedback, evaluation type but also of the type interpersonal relations between agents);
- educational situation (as definite context, individualization of co-relations between other components).

We want to underline that all these structural components are joined in an educational system relevant for school activities generically defined as: educational process, didactic process, instructive-educational process, curricular process. The systemic approach of the educational process can be prefigured in components such as: an entry flux that contains human resources, material and financial resources and the didactic process involves a series of actions, such as teaching, learning, evaluation; components of education: finalities (objectives), curriculum (learning experiences and educational methods and resources. The exit flux includes human resources gifted with general and special competences and skills.

4. Education and the global problematics of the contemporary world

What we call today "the global problematic of contemporary world" is an ensemble of macro structural interdependent processes finding themselves in a crisis, which are characterized by "universality, globality, complexity and priority character". The global problem of humanity generates crisis and education is a solution. School, as social pillar, can formulate adapted answers by intensifying competence-based education, by integrating " new educations"-education for peace and collaboration, ecologic education, education for participation and democracy, demographic education, education for change and development, education for technology and progress, education for communication and mass-media, modern sanitary education, economic and household education, education for leisure, education for human rights, intercultural education. It is an "open list" with the fields of contemporary education modifiable according to the evolutions of global problematic of contemporary world. Education should be viewed as both technology and art, as process of cultural-humanistic nature. It is not only about the necessity of introducing new contents in the training-educating programmes but it is also about fundamentally modifying, first of all, the conceptions about education[6]. A possible evolution of education would focus on exploring the capacity of holistic knowledge

of the brain (ration, feelings and will) on transpersonal dimension (sustained by the "informative" characteristics of right cerebral hemisphere). It is an orientation towards self-education viewed as procesuality of equality type, anti-hierarchical, anti-authoritarian, relatively flexible, individual centred, based on mutual learning and inter-relating. Preparing the man for change, for the future implies an approach from cross-disciplinary educational perspective, where learning experiences involve the whole human being but also the interpersonal relations, by formulating goals of the following type: „learning to learn", "learning to live", "learning to think freely and critically", "learning to love the world and make it more human", "learning to fulfil yourself in/by creative work", or "look further", "look wider, more comprehensive", "deeply analyse", "take risks", "know to collaborate", "know to adapt", "know to cultivate yourself"[7].

These features of competence-based pedagogy could be materialised in the didactic activity by:

- creating methodological alternatives;

stimulating learning by cooperation and the usage of interactive group methods insisting on progressive construction of knowledge and abilities not only through personal activities but also by social interactions between pupils, pupils and teachers, pupils and community

- the stress is laid more on the pupil as building agent of his/her own learning than on the teacher as knowledge provider;

- developing the autonomy of the trainee in education and co-leading the class-group

- creating and maintaining the pleasure of learning discovering and applying by training intrinsic motivation as opposed to giving rewards or punishments (avoiding "learning for grade")

- innovating evaluation strategies and promoting evaluation through dialogue (see chapter 7);

- revaluating the optional segment and accomplishing "explicit differences of learning paths by delivering differential values accompanied by differentiating and particularization strategies (through methods, ways of learning, teaching, evaluating, etc)" [8], approaching a text, a certain problem from different and varied perspectives;

- encouraging alternative visions and culture-specific interpretations, along with showing respect towards the diversity of personalities and cultures;

- negotiating the roles and rules of "didactic game";

- avoiding labelling and hierarchies coming from mutual evaluation;
- activating imagination, creativity and research by telling stories, elaborating reflexive journals, examining feelings, elaborating portfolios, making projects;
- stress on analysis and improving and less on punishment and control, increasing personal responsibility.
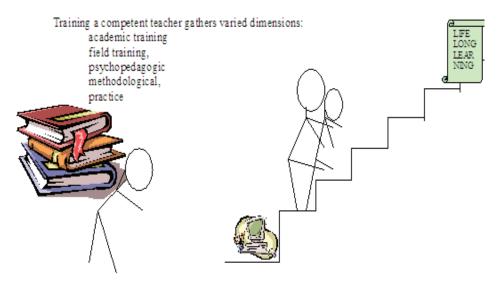
It is essential that the man is educated for self-education, to learn not only to survive, to practice lifelong learning. It can be approximated that the tendency or preoccupation for assimilating new education is increasing but the discrepancy between recommendations, reservations and studies made on international or national level and educational practice remains at a high level.

5. Pedagogic art and educators

Pedagogy contributes to training specialists for instructive-educational activity of the teaching staff and for teaching field disciplines. It is doubtless that field training in a field or another is essential, necessary but not sufficient for a teacher. Being a teacher involves, first of all, along vocation, training for a specific job that requires specific competences of psychopedagogical and methodological training[9]. Any teacher, irrespective of the subject s/he teaches should contribute with personal and subject resources to educating the trainees, to forming desirable behaviours within society[10]. Being a good specialist in a certain field is not a guarantee of pedagogic success[11]. Moreover, the field of education is due to its complexity one that does not allow improvising based on empirical knowledge. On international level within specialized organisms in education problematic is being talked about formulating a system of requirements for school educators of today and tomorrow, one that ensures training of capable teachers and that knows to train, educate, cooperate and combine resources from the perspective of interdisciplinary teaching and education. Competence is today the main criterion for being validated in a profession, irrespective of the job and the acquired position on a social level.

The ensemble of qualification components, defined as professional knowledge, abilities and necessary attitudes for a high level labour conscription are expressed by professional competence. These competences are acquired by future professionals in the career training stages but in the early years they are expected to be acquired at least in a

form that allows new acquisitions thanks to direct experience grasped while working[12]. New orientations in the theory and practice of education and in the guidance of development have deeply changed the paradigms of contemporary pedagogy.

Training a competent teacher gathers varied dimensions:
    academic training
    field training,
    psychopedagogic
    methodological,
    practice

LIFE
LONG
LEAR
NING

Traditional pedagogy   Competence-based pedagogy

Theoretical training is continuous and it is sustained by the variety of experiences and school confrontations throughout the career. As professional, the contemporary educator is defined by three types of competences:
- Personal (responsibility, capacity to deal with problems, critical thinking and creativity, capacity to initialize changes, empathy and tolerance)
- Psychopedagogical and methodological (knowing pupil psychology, personality development, elaborating learning experiences, communication with pupils, parents and other actors of the educational system, measuring learning progress)
- Field knowledge belonging to the curriculum that teachers have to change into school learning experiences.
        Being a teacher means competence and this competence requires assimilation of field knowledge and didactic experience, the main effort being oriented towards forming and affirming themselves as specialists in a certain field.

Conclusions

The teacher in the classroom does not transmit ready -made information anymore, s/he builds learning experiences, and finds him/herself in a partnership relation with his /her students, negotiating the objectives of learning but also forms and ways of evaluation.

S/he treats the classroom as a real world, analyzing its explicit and implicit rules and revaluating the real world as an inexhaustible scene of learning situations.In modern school or, better said, postmodern school[13], hierarchies resulting from evaluations are not revalued, the stress being laid on the learner's responsibility considered to be a motivational source. Individual and motivational particularities are respected and revalued, building educational alternatives. Co-work between teacher and disciple does not mean lowering the respect for the teaching staff but it underlines the necessity to rethink the relationship by considering the double meaning of the instructive-educational flux. This means that teachers have something to learn from their pupils too.

Didactic methods use personal expression, reflexive and critical attitude, autonomy of the individual but also of the group, stimulating learning by cooperation in order to bring about personal development through self-consciousness actions within small groups, "teachers and pupils working together", as opposed to practice where the all-knowing teachers tell pupils what to learn[14].

The curriculum and its theoretical and practical dimension, well settled in concrete concepts and experiences, acquire the strength to re-project the didactic activity in a global and total way. Drawing an efficient curriculum becomes a problem of pedagogic, methodological and technological instrumentation. Didactic activity incorporates a varied and flexible methodological support; the evolution of science and social practice offers school new models of designing and guiding learning experiences.

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