

THE TEACHING AND THE ROMANIAN SCHOOL, TODAY

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Abstract: The idea that our society is in a crisis with multiple elements - sociological, political, economic, axiological - has a common place in public discourse. For those interested by the phenomenon of education, teachers, students, pupils, parents, first of all, it is important to answer to the question: Is education in a crisis? Clearly, we should not made very complex researches to answer affirmatively to this question. Such an analytical approach generates a new question: Is a beneficial crisis for education? On this second question, an affirmative answer can raise objections, especially about the effects of a crisis of education on the formation of its beneficiaries. However, in a society in crisis, the education is suffering and its recovery involves an extremely complex approach, in which the main mission of the science of education is to build a new teaching. This study aims to present a series of elements of context and some problems-solving to support the redefinition of teaching in the new stage.

Keywords: the science of education, teaching, education, society, crisis.

1. Teaching and its place in education process

Where do we start from?

If history of education holds the most of the moments about the history of its reforms, aspect supported by the fact that - spontaneously or intentionally - the main issues with a high degree of novelty that appear periodically in the structure of education systems generate a lot of changes, the theories that are applied to the new paradigm action on a similar route and in a necessary way (C. Bîrzea, 1976, p. 14). The current period is often considered one of the major changes and to detail the analyses of issues that would justify the phrase under discussion here, involves interventions and innovations designed to generate changes in all subsystems of education. Therefore it is necessary to analysis the coordinates of educational action: the beginning of the educational process, its duration, the educational levels and the

modalities of evaluation or of switching over a higher level, making education relevant to young people and adults, the age limits in formal education, the continuing education coordinates.

Not on the background there are in this context of analysis, issues such as: curriculum development documents, redefining and harmonizing the role of the relevant elements in the educational process. Considering as a necessary aspect for the present study the fact that the Romanian education still looks for a suitable course of treatment after radical political change now more than two decades, and that the society has a dynamic fast growing and in this way it determines the need for bringing up again, at more and more limited intervals, a set of issues that can not omitted the issue of educational activities from and outside the classroom, we realize that we confront with a complex situation and the teaching is a key factor in its solve.

What is meant by the term *teaching*? The term teaching is present in all current major dictionaries, with different meanings. Even if the etymology of this word is the Greek word *didasko* (to learn the other) – the entry into the Romanian language was made using the French word *didactique*:

I. Teaching the didactic,-e, adj., sf 1. Adj. By or for education, relative to education. ♦ It is meant to instruct. Didactic literature ♦ (Peior.) unproductive, dry. 2. sf Part of pedagogy that deals with principles and methods of teaching materials for education and education organization (Explanatory Dictionary of Romanian Language, second edition, 1998).

II. TEACHING 1) belonging to teaching, personal teaching. Literature. Principle. 2) Elements which are involved in education, employed in the training and in the education. Teaching staff; Teacher 3) person who assumes the right to teach, to give lessons, considering himself a mentor. 4) Fig. (About writing) which lacks originality, non-original (New explanatory dictionary of Romanian language, 2002).

III. Teaching I. adj. of and on education ◊ for training. ♦ ~ literature = a genre of literature which aims to instruct, to inform, to educate moral. ◊ (peior.) unproductive, dry. II. sf pedagogical subject that studies the principles and methods of education (Great dictionary of neologisms, 2000). IV. TEACHING adj. 1. v. academic. 2. v. pedagogical (Dictionary of Synonyms, 2002)

(<http://dexonline.ro/definitie/didactica>).

From the definitions previous presented, we can easily see that there isn't a common viewpoint of the meaning of this word, the philological analysis proposing a series of approaching that insists on identifying *the teaching* with *the educational instruction* and with *the educational training*.

Pedagogy dictionaries show a broad problematic issue in relation to *teaching* term. This term was considered a "teaching discipline", and today is understood as a part of general pedagogy, whose object of study is formal educational. In previous decades, the teaching's aim was exclusively the organization and the training of school education. This aim belongs today to Educational Management:

"The teaching study the process of education as a process of knowledge and training; teaching principles [...], teaching content, teaching methods, forms of organization of educational process, teaching technology, the relation teacher-student and the teacher' role in the education, school architecture" (Dictionary of Pedagogy, 1979, p. 129).

Another analysis of the *teaching* term - proposed by Sorin Cristea - surprises that it is *"an important pedagogical science which defines and examines the main pedagogical principles, epistemic stabilized at a theory of learning which is a part of the theory about education: educational process, teaching objectives, teaching content, teaching methodology, teaching evaluation, teaching design"* (S. Cristea, 2000, p. 98). The same author considers that the general teaching is, together with education theory, a true epistemic core of "science education", enabled to the general pedagogy level and it can be defined as the theory of the training or learning process. Professor Sorin Cristea believes that teaching general education refers to the principles, aims, content, methodology, pedagogical evaluation of the educational process, teaching pedagogical design.

The status of general teaching as the theory of the training is justified by concern for defining the basic concepts of the educational process. The regulatory role of this subject is valued through specific researches, teaching applications and extensions that the teaching knows through each subject, openings which ensure the passing from the general to applied teaching.

2. From the Magna teaching to the Modern teaching

The *teaching* term belongs to Greek culture, which meant learning and instruction. Gradually, the meaning of this word has enriched and it is more linked by the generalization of a more ample set of ideas and results from the field of organizing and of proceeding the educational process; its relation with the term *pedagogy* has also known distinct stages. For JA Comenius, *teaching* meant "the universal art of teaching all things all people" and its main teaching ideas were exposed in *Didactica Magna* published in 1632 in Czech and in 1657 in Latin, which "*represents the fundamental work of Comenius and includes his pedagogical theory and his education system*" (M. Ionescu, 2003, p. 5).

The great Czech author does not delimit the scope and content of didactics, in which he admits all that have been related to education and training. It is the period in which the two terms, *pedagogy* and *teaching*, were extremely difficult to be delimited.

This work may be considered the point where the theory of education detached from the philosophy and literature with the aim to gain independence. In this way, "*a genuine educational system is set up and it is exposed in a work dedicated exclusively to education*" (I.Gh. Stanciu, 1997, p. 35). In the content of this work, educational theorists have identified two types of pedagogical rationality: "*a) a normative rationality with the aim to promote some values such as intentions for action, depending on their power and which generate an actuated unit, which Comenius gives them a vast space (as well as in other works): the health, the harmony, the wisdom, the mastery self, the erudition, the piety, the honesty, the respect, the discipline, the temperance, the prudence, the fortitude, the justice; b) a procedural rationality aimed actionably possibilities in terms of utility that they produce, the benefits that govern them to satisfy some cultural or psychological necessities or interests identified for educational action*" (M. Călin, 1996, p.61).

Comenius proposed a public education system and appropriate methods of education of people, a good reason to apply his concepts and he grounded "*the organization of the education system based on classes and lessons*" (M. Ionescu, 2003, p. 182); this system has established itself as a form of organization developed in school education. In this way, it is concerned a more efficient education for all children and the foundations of modern pedagogy and the social dimension of educational system are set up. The education loses its special character and it becomes a mass phenomenon and the main factor for regeneration

and social development. Comenius believed that the education system can be improved as to resemble it with a clock and with a mechanism in which everything takes place very precisely. Clearly, Comenius attempted to give pedagogy a scientific character; therefore, within the pedagogy of his time, he established the links between theory, methods and purpose of education (D. Opreș, 2010, p. 260). It comes out that the development of education after the Reform establishes the need for different theorizing of regarding the educational philosophy and the remodeling of the teaching components according to them.

An important step in establishing a different approach for the two key terms of educational theory and practice was marked by the works of JF Herbart. He limited *teaching* by *pedagogy* and he considered the teaching as part of pedagogy, in a structure that is preserved until today. Herbart insists that education is not possible without instruction, so that he was concerned with the assimilation of knowledge and he considered having an equally important the teaching and the psychological aspects involved in teaching and learning. His great fame has made the psychological concepts related to learning and the new approaches of teaching to become the new paradigm of school practitioners for almost a century, and the teaching to acquire the status of clearly defined area (I. Nicola, 1996, p. 333).

Main trends that marked the teaching in the first part of the 20th century focused on four areas: *active school*, *school work*, *experimental pedagogy*, *free education*. Integrated in the great direction of the new education, *the active school* supported the pedagogical utilization of the students' abilities for activity and personal effort, concern implemented by new methods used in physical education, intellectual and moral development to ensure the conditions of the child' development. *Active School* focused on the principle for own activity, the principle of practical work, the principle of intuition, principle of respect for student individuality. It has developed on three main directions: *intellectualist orientation*, which emphasized the activation intellectual, *the school work* - , which emphasized the introduction of individual work in teaching, and then it developed as a new pedagogic current, the integral orientation that was interwoven the intellectual activities with practical activities and moral and civic education.

The experimental pedagogy is the current that utilizes elements and models of natural science and of social sciences, particularly the experimental method on educational field. *Free education* encouraged

the development of individuality of the child and educational models that do not stop the individuality and hereditary field of the future adult (M. Ionescu, 2001, pp. 26-27).

3. General teaching and the stages of its development in Romania

It is accepted today that the subject of the teaching is the process of education. *"As part of the educational reality, the process of education belongs also to the other sciences. [...] It is necessary to delimit the viewpoint from which it is studied by teaching. The differences of the terms and its tackling by the literature are rooted here."* (I. Nicola, 1996, p. 334). There are delimited analyses that assign to the teaching the intellectual education and the instruction just as for other analyses the teaching or some parts of the learning. For a comprehensive understanding of the educational process, the task of didactics is the relation between teaching and learning, the educational intervention and the possible ways of student's answers, for a much better harmonization of their own.

The role of teaching is to ensure the conditions for the elements of educational process - separately and in an appropriate internal mechanism - to contribute to achieving the aims of teaching.

As a result, any component of the educational process may be in the focus of teaching *"only if it is placed on the relation's field between the two poles, because only in this way, it is possible the capture of the relation between the teacher and students with the aim to ensure a balance between them"* (Ibid).

Clearly, the general teaching provides the main analyses for the educational process but the concrete way in which practitioners are available to value and to develop the theorizing in their current activity is dependent by the knowledge and the compliance with a set of features of learning content specific of a particular area of knowledge. The step is required by the particularity of the learning and personal development of students in a particular sphere of science, and by the needing for utilization in the personal content of the valuable parts of specific formative subjects. The relation of cooperation between general teaching and the teachings of school subjects proves a *bi-univocal* one; the general concepts are not only taken over and used in the school subjects, but also they are enriched or some theoretical aspects are

redefined partially, through the results of educational practice and the researches carried out under these areas.

The modern teaching is concerned with concrete ways in which the student is placed authentically in the focus of teaching field, to become a partner in their own training. Also, the teacher has the mission "*to organize <the education field>. This mission means to design, to lead and to direct the multiple activities in school and partly outside of it, with the aim to train and to conduct the students' intelligence*" (M. Ionescu, I. Radu, 2001, p. 33). Although highly circulated in recent years, the changing role of the learner and the placing him in the heart of his teaching was the subject of the reflection and of educational researchers during the communist period.

In contrast to current reform in the field of teaching, generated by the different expectations of the society, and especially the economic environment, the interest of Romanian pedagogy – from the period of relative liberalization of the communist regime - was attributed to the need to promote the activism in our country through what was called **active school**. Although it was recognized as a broader concern in finding solutions to specific problems of the school, the interest was focused mainly toward "*to put the student in a position to be a greater creator of his own personality (idea) more valuable and effective than traditional image of the student as a <consummator> as a object of education and a container in which it has to put the science. From here numerous formulas has appeared and contemporary pedagogy operates with them: self-development, self-instruction, self-education, self-direction, self-determination, etc... and they are trying to ground them with new dates from psycho-socio-educational field or at least bio-psycho-social field*" (A. Dancsuly, D. Salade, in *Education and Contemporaneity*, 1972, p. 7).

Even if the model described above seems a slightly archaic for international educational context and developed as a result of constraints caused by the political orientation of the time, we should also noted that the expectations of the society and of the people contributed to mention the pedagogical theory and practice in these frameworks. Clearly, a range of teaching models used in developed capitalist countries could not be applied because the differences in the social and psychological characteristics of the individual structure in our country were different from the Western (generated or supported by the economic capitalist and culture U.S. environment, especially). It is extremely difficult in the current period, more than two decades after

the collapse of the communist regime, to seek answer to the question: *Would the authentic pedagogy activities be hastened the falling of the totalitarian system?* A partial affirmative answer is supported by the marginalization of pedagogy in the '80 years of last century and the returning to strategies more "classic" in the same time with the approaching of the moment of regime change.

4. The teaching and the reform in Romania, today

Teaching aims explicitly today for the modernization through a better use of educational researches' results and a better connection to the demands of society. Social context is new because a great number of people are interested in the educational process - people were limited to find results until recently. Actually, the education, which has long ceased to be the exclusive responsibility of educators, represents today an area of interest for the press or for the public. It is obvious the episode during the session of the baccalaureate examination from June-July 2011, when a journalist (CTP) from an important newspaper tried to solve the mathematics topics, to show his colleagues that they had a low degree of difficulty and the five mark has been very accessible to candidates.

The directions of reflection and of action belonging to modern teaching from Romania are based on the exploitation of psychology' results and on the experimental research, which are supported partly by methods and tools provided by psychology. This is the reason to include in the educational process the developing methods of critical spirit of American psychology, after '99 year. Clearly, the new concern of the last century continues to add to the explanatory side a normative level, and to give a similar course to the educational process. The tasks of general teaching, knowledge function and praxiological function open the prospects for development of special teaching and they contribute to a better indication of how the dialogue from the interior of the teaching: general - special (particular) can support the development of general and special teaching. Using the knowledge, teaching assumes the school training for which it formulates and periodically reformulates the legitimacy to achieve the educational aims. The praxiological function shows that teaching occurs in educational activities with the aim to clarify its role and to harmonize the relations between the parts of the educational process (M. Ionescu, in M. Ionescu, I. Radu, 2001, p.25).

The necessity of change in current teaching is felt more acutely, especially after the political and economic approaching of Romania to

the capitalist countries. The general context of current world leads undoubtedly to a more accelerated smoothing of education system as a premise for a better and a faster adaptation of young graduates in the labor market. And because the issue concerns especially the most developed countries, we are faced with pressures aimed to bring about major changes in school life and in teaching, too and some new directions have already been stated by the New Education Law.

The first problem is related to the use of the word *reform*. Almost four decades ago, an analysis of education's changes from different countries proposed a definition that reform was considered "*the effect of <some connected blasts> whose results brings the losing of synchronized character between the demand for education done by the masses and by the economy to the education systems, on the one hand and, on the other hand, the offer of education that school systems are able to provide to these numerous and demanding applicants*" (C. Bîrzea, 1976, p. 18). Undoubtedly, the most of the elements of a genuine reform, as they are described in the text cited above, continue to be valid in the current school realities from Romania, indicating that there are pressures from outside Romania now, officially by requests for connection to Community policies after EU accession, but due to large population movements in the last decade, to and from the West.

Another notable feature is linked to the concomitance of educational reforms. Although for the present analysis we are interested mainly by the teaching's reform, the aspects of concomitance of the reforms reported by the work of distinguished and cited above author, are significant in the light of new theoretical and practical education about the process. There may not retain the attention the observation that the efforts to reform the education have, at least in Europe, many similar and simultaneous elements facilitated by the common set of motivations and strategies from which it carries. However, it is necessarily to identify the proper elements even if is necessary to show a creative and dynamic traditionalism; otherwise it will come again in a position to repeat the negative experiences of countries that have tried to take by simply translating foreign systems heavily on social realities, in full motion, in those countries. Researches from this field talk about the situations in which educational policies from some countries were forced to build a new way with the aim to identify the innovations needed for renewal, in the same time with the identifying of the means which they are already integrated into the system (M. Malita, in C. Bîrzea, 1976, p. 12).

Conclusions

Two conclusions can be drawn, essential for any analysis that aims to contribute to the renewal of didactics: (1) teaching aims to provide the necessary elements of an assembly educational process in accordance with society's expectations teachers, but the ability to achieve this desideratum becomes operational if it requests and uses efficient the results of practical activities and of the researches conducted at the special teaching; (2) it is necessary a careful analysis of the features belonging in Romania to the elements involved in the design and development of education, compared with European models and expectations of society, so the structures - supported by viable models, including cultural aspect, which requires different weights reporting from the subjects of the school curriculum - have the necessary role of key factors in the new structure of the teaching process.

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