

LINGUISTIC AND PEDAGOGICAL NOTIFICATIONS ON DIDACTIC DESIGN

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Abstract: *Changing the framework objectives and benchmarks to competences in the school curriculum shows a new educational philosophy, which recognizes, among others, that one cannot anticipate precisely what kind of knowledge and skills the student should have at the finish of education, the instruction's purposes being redefined according to the tremendous changes of the society. The trainees' needs (disregarding their age) change rapidly also, especially because the school has to educate in order to ensure the graduates' insertion into a society that one doesn't know what directions is developing in. The need of rethinking the pedagogy correlates to the need of building a structured and coherent theoretical frame that is able to ensure the tools for an efficient and stimulative didactic activity. The aim of this paper is to propose some notifications on the traditional didactic design that could help the future teachers to assume the new dimensions of the third millennium education. The notifications, though general, will use examples from new Romanian language and literature curriculum, primary and secondary.*

Keywords: *skills; objectives; design; adaptation; operationalization;*

1. The Skills

The structure of the didactic approach according to the competences that the students develop in school gave rise to some controversy in the public space, in the context in which the Romanian society was accustomed to the definition of the notion as "someone's ability to pronounce on something, on the basis of a deep knowledge of issue in question "(DEX). In this context, the design of the didactic act on such a dimension can be absurd, for it is assumed that the student has little capacity to pronounce on a thing, in the context of a limited knowledge. On the other hand, in the context of new technologies, the democratization of access to information, favoured by electronic resources, the easy access to information sources (one click away) can raise the issue even in the light of the dictionary definition. However, European Union documents define competence differently, closer to the terms of Chomsky's linguistics (competency refers to the ideal speaker, performance is the way in which he puts into practice his competence): "Key competences are a transferable and multifunctional package of knowledge, skills and attitudes that all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, for social inclusion and professional insertion. These must be developed until the end of compulsory education and must act as a foundation for further learning as part of lifelong learning." This quotation is about key competences, but the definition is also applicable in the context of general competencies or specific competencies as a dimension of their materialization in the curriculum. By customizing, the competence is a student's ability, ability to achieve an action or product, to solve a problem, using certain knowledge, skills, and skills acquired through teaching-learning. General competences describe complex capacities that can be formed in relatively long periods of time through the contribution of various educational factors that can even act from the informal environment. Specific competencies are basically staging in the development of general competencies that can be monitored, evaluated and optimized both from a (trans) disciplinary perspective and from a temporal perspective, being associated in the school curricula with shorter time units.

For example, in the Romanian language and literature programs, one of the general competencies is to understand the written text: it is defined as understanding a variety of written messages in known communication contexts (CP - II), Receiving written messages in various communication contexts (III-IV) Writing texts of various types (V-VIII). When detailed within specific competencies, they reveal their nature.

Example for „to understand the written text” – general competence in the Romanian language and literature program (sequence)

CP – II	III-IV	V-VIII
CP: Recognizing common words from the near universe, written in large and small print 3.2. Identifying the meaning of an image that presents happenings, phenomena, familiar events 3.3. Identify the meaning of symbols that transmit immediate messages from the familiar universe	3.1. Extracting detailed information from informative or literary texts 3.2. Formulating an emotional response to the literary text read 3.3. Making an opinion on a story/the characters in the story	V: 2.1. Identifying important information from literary and non-literary texts, continuous, discontinuous and multimodal 2.2. Identifying the theme and the main and secondary ideas from various texts 2.3. Formulating a personal response and / or a creative response to texts of different types, with familiar themes

Specific competencies associate a range of skills to achieve a general competence: identification of explicitly transmitted information, making inferences to understand the text, synthesizing, in a personal response, the meaning of the read and understood text. The skills related to the work on the text are duplicated by the suggestion of some elements of the language (primary cycle), attitudes (the preoccupation for reading / understanding of texts, in the primary and the gymnasium cycle), the assessment of their reading performance (gymnasium cycle). The lectoral competence will thus involve for the students to identify the information, make connections, formulate personal responses as a consequence of the text comprehension and preoccupation for reading/ understanding the text. Significantly, from the primary to the gymnasium, lectoral competence evolves from message to text, which means that in the small classes the major concern is the understanding of the content of a text, while in the middle school the understanding is tied by observing the structure of the text. From the study of the Romanian language and literature curriculum, one can observe that the first competence grows gradually from the recognition of usual words, in the first column, to the discovery of detailed information, in the second, respectively to the identifying of important information in a text (3.1); 3.2 and 3.3. in the first column correspond to 3.4. in the second and to 2.1 or 2.2. in the third. The examples may continue, but as the table shows, the competences are connected one to each other, in order to enhance students’ reading – comprehending capabilities.

2. Objectives - mediator between competences and learning activities

Developing skills involves organizing learning activities that are likely to generate progress in the student’s development. Their definition is neither easy nor insignificant in the architecture of the educational approach, the competence being a general aspect of it, the learning activity being the concretisation of the competence that takes places during the

lesson. In this context, defining objectives has the role of facilitating the building of learning activities, focusing on precise and coherent work tasks. For example, with the lecturing competence highlighted above, one of the specific competencies is *Extracting detailed information from informative or literary texts (III-IV)* or *Identifying important information from literary and non-literary, continuous, discontinuous and multimodal texts (V-VIII)*. Beyond the observation that one can notice the graduality of the competence from the primary school to the gymnasium, by diversifying the typology of texts, the operationalization of the competence involves the initiation of text reading activities, explanation of unknown words, re-reading (in chain, selective etc), division into paragraphs, and the formulation of the main ideas, the idea-based replication - in other words, the use of the explanatory reading method. The learning activities are anticipated by the objectives the teacher proposes: to read the text correctly and expressively, to explain the unknown words, to divide the text into paragraphs, to formulate the main ideas, to replicate the text based on the idea plan. Objectives configure a series of learning activities where students read the text (individual, frontal), explain the unknown words (individual, frontal), divide the text into paragraphs and formulate the main ideas (individually, by group), rewrite the text individually. The didactic approach becomes so coherent, the idea that animates it is that of penetration into the text's intimacy, depending on the level of education and class.

3. Operational objectives or learning objectives

Apparently, a simple distinction in terms, the difference between operational objectives and learning objectives hides an attitude related to the act of teaching-learning-evaluation. Operational objectives, by their nature, focus more on the teacher's work, while learning objectives are configured as a student-centred approach. Even though both syntagms can be explained on the basis of a common conceptual foundation - the objectives being defined as statements or statements describing the results of time-based didactic approaches - each of them contains a substrate specificity that should prompt reflection. One of the stages of pedagogical design materializes into objectives by answering the question, "What will I do?". Although the interrogation seems to be built to focus only on the teacher's activity in the teaching process, its purpose reflects its complexity in the next stages of design, designed to complement and tune the vision of the instructive-educational actions to be carried out: will I do? ", " How will I do? "and" How will I know if I have achieved what I have proposed? ". The formulation of the objectives as an answer to the first question cannot and should not only focus on aspects that the teacher can use / control simply because the other questions force him to anticipate resources, reactions, behavioural changes and feed-back. More specifically, the analysis of the available educational resources, followed by the elaboration of the teaching-learning and evaluation strategies, extracts the teacher from his own individuality and puts him in relation with the class of students whose specific needs he has to adapt to. Under these circumstances, operational objectives, in a learner-centred approach, can only include learning directions that are demonstrable through observable and measurable behaviours. So, operability must derive from what pupils will be able to achieve as a product of learning activity, and not from general or ambiguous outcomes, described as actions with limited personalization capabilities.

4. Announcement of objectives?

In pedagogical terms, objectives are the initial elements of the approach, while competencies designate the results. In this context, announcing operational objectives at the time becomes superfluous, meaningless for the pupils. Instead, announcing the learning

activities or content units that are targeted at didactic work is designed to create a waiting horizon for students who can better control their own activity in this way. For example, in a Romanian language and literature lesson, to state objectives such as: to define the adjective, to classify the adjective, to identify the adjective, to enumerate the grammatical categories of the adjective, to analyse syntactically-morphologically different adjectives, to explain the stylistic role of the adjectives, all these can be quite abstract and boring in relation to the announcement of the actual activities in accessible terms. In a lesson of Romanian language and literature, the announcement of learning activities or content units in relation to goals is even more significant: it allows students to pursue their work, focus their interests on some of them, even draw the attention of the teacher if it happens that, in the context of digressions that literary time favours, to lose sight of one of the proposed activities.

5. Managing or coordinating / facilitating learning

Traditional education was conducive and lacking of flexibility, the educational ideal being detached from the Enlightenment, where the encyclopedicism was the main feature. Students received a sum of knowledge they reproduced, often without applying, analysing, evaluating, arguing etc. The culture (and the culture of a specific scientific domain) was favoured at the expense of innovation, creativity, dimensions that were difficult to quantify and manage. However, in the context of pupil-centred teaching, in the curriculum vision of learning, through the acquisition of skills, the control of learning is no longer relevant. From a star, memorization has become ashes, deductive learning, previously privileged, gradually leaves room for discovery, experience and experimentation. That is why the teacher can no longer be the conductor of the orchestra, but his role becomes more interesting and challenging at the same time, only now fulfilling his vocation as a modelling destiny person. Thus, if the traditional didactic project proposes the direction/control of learning as a vision of the didactic act, the current context calls for another approach - coordination or learning facilitation. From the master, the teacher becomes a counsellor, supporter, the coordinating act is putting him in the position of training manager, the facilitator approach - in the one of a counsellor. Moreover, in the present society, the teacher can no longer be associated with the unique holder of information and scientific truth, as long as the sources of information multiply and propagate continuously among the pupils. As a result of technological evolution, they develop a certain type of pragmatism early: they are concerned rather with a fragmentary and spontaneous absorption of the necessary reality than with the profound, causal, scientific reality analysis. In this context, the good teacher is not the one who rejects, by didactic means, the predispositions of the "pupils of today" but the one who adapts, empathizes and uses the evolutionary elements for didactic purposes. As a result of technology, the development of the visual-practical learning style should not be perceived as an impediment to the epistemic concepts, but as an opportunity to include them in the practical experience of the students. Therefore, the role of facilitator of learning that the current teacher must assume lies in the ability of content flexibility so that pupils feel valued by infusing their personal experience into the learning process. It has been proved in practice that communication-based, exploratory and discovery-based teaching strategies can provide the activities of the school with the dynamism that "postmodern" students need. Moreover, facilitating learning by methods involving students in the educational act is able to stimulate an optimal self-esteem and meet the personal needs of knowledge and training. All these elements do not totally elude the guiding direction of personal evolution during childhood and adolescence - formal education is essentially an organized and guided action according to pedagogical objectives - but it must be flexible, personalized, integrated into the learning monitoring activity. In terms of designing the lesson, the "learning direction" stage no longer justifies its existence as long

as learning takes place from the beginning of unit, by integrating the experience already acquired by students into new content and by capitalizing, in all stages, of the information gathered from adjacent / complementary sources.

Changing the terms therefore involves a change of attitude and perspective: for example, the study of a fairy tale was supposed to involve students in learning the structure of fairy tales, text typology, motifs and meanings, epistemas being associated with the discovery of a truth beyond the reader. The new vision primarily proposes contact with the text, the discovery of meanings, and the building of meaning. Therefore, the pupil will be in a position to observe recurrences, specific features, structures, narrative voices etc., the purpose being not to know content (except to the situation in that they are necessary for the understanding of fairy tales), the use of these recurrences, voices, structures for understanding the world of text, and building meaning. In other words, the content that previously occupied the central place in training is now becoming a tool for lectoral competence development. With their help, the student builds the world of the text, as he discovers in an investigative approach that allows experimentation, association with his life experience and not only allows access to the text and its universe, but also to the world the text came from.

6. Retention and transfer, retention, or transfer?

Retaining and transfer are two different components of the didactic approach: the first aims the enhancing the knowledge in the context of a learning-based education, the second involves the application of the new content within new contexts during the lesson. From the point of view of competence training, the second component is fundamental. This does not imply that we can build skills without having enough content, but it also does not allow the instructional - educational approach to be limited to them, the sequence involving the transfer of knowledge to new contexts, just as school education is transferred in a social context.

Conclusions: traditional didactic project – openings

The traditional didactic design is detailed and can be thought as being rigid. Instead, its sequential development draws it as a suitable tool in training young teachers, involving the class management as well as the management of the contents and that of the methods. As the organizational moment reminds to the young teacher that the preparing for the lesson means handling the context of the learning, the other stages admit innovations and experiments, all of them in order to adapt the didactic act to the specific students and their needs.

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