

PORTRAIT OF AN EMINENT CONTEMPORARY PEDAGOGUE: FLOREA VOICULESCU

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Abstract: *The text is the presentation of an eminent pedagogue and professor, a personality striving for knowledge and gifted with the spirit of well done things. After a short presentation of his biographical data, we have pointed out his pedagogical beliefs and opinions, his original vision on educational philosophy based on the analysis of his most important writings in the field of pedagogy.*

Keywords: *Florea Voiculescu, education in market economy, time management.*



FLOREA VOICULESCU (born August 11th, 1949, Făget, Prahova County) professor at "1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba-Iulia is concerned about management issues in education, institutional reformation as well as appropriate management of educational resources used to increase the efficiency of educational systems. Bachelor of Pedagogy from the University of Bucharest (1975) he holds a PhD in Educational Sciences from "Babeş - Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca since 1994. He was teacher at a Pedagogical High school, becoming latter one of the founding members of "1 Decembrie 1918"

University of Alba Iulia. He has been teaching at this university since 1993 and he holds the title of full professor since 2000. He is a dynamic presence in the national and Alba Iulia academic background, being for a while the vice rector of the university and also the head of the Department for Teacher Training (in our message exchange I have asked him the permission to publish his great and at the same time sad introspection about our generation: "I believe now that unfortunately for us and a part of our generation, change has come late, maybe too late (I'm referring to the changes occurred after 1989 with their good and bad sides). When I say "us" I am referring to those who were not university professors in 1989 and who have founded the universities we work in. We had to compress time and achieve many things in a short span of time (PhD, lecturer, associate professor, full professor, studies, books etc.) facts that other generations (either older or

younger than us) could accomplish in 10 - 20 years. We didn't have the time to write fundamental works. We had to become mentors without experiencing the benefits of being mentored in traditional universities. We had to be mature at youth and young at maturity. The word "us" explains why we get along so well, why envy and selfishness are absent from our professional and personal bonds, why we can have divergent opinions but not adversities, why we share competition and not confrontation").

He wrote: "*Development of educational objectives. Theory, research, applications*" (1995), "*Methodological guide of statistics for pedagogy and psychology*" (2000), "*Time management. A Psychopedagogic Approach*" (colab, 2004), "*Resources-need analysis and strategic management in education*" (2004), "*Didactics of economic sciences– methodological guide with applied contents*" (2006), "*Measurement in education sciences*" (colab., 2007), "*Handbook of contemporary pedagogy*" (2005), "*Education in market economy*" (2008), as well as a coherent series of studies on controversial issues in contemporary pedagogy and didactics.

A constant idea of his writings is the search for a model of identifying needs in education; in this direction, Florea Voiculescu advances a coherent strategy of reconsidering the relationship between **demand** and **offer** in a properly functioning **market education**. F. Voiculescu's concerns shape a new concept, ignored by the current pedagogic thinking, yet significant for an increased teaching efficiency and for the efficiency of the educational system: the functioning and organization of education in a market economy after its rules. He refers to "*pedagogical connections to the economy*", because these two realities obviously intercross: "*the pedagogic and economic dimension act as if they were part of two different areas*", but "education costs", and ensuring quality education entails "quality funding". To solve the directly proportional report between quality and costs in education, the author himself guides us towards an open dilemma: "*morality versus mercantilism*". The author states that it is encouraging the fact that the "*need for education and the demand for studies*" have increased in our society, but discouraging is that mercantilism of certain institutions generated "*qualitative degradation of the educational process*", as well as "*an axiological decay of education*". The pedagogue F. Voiculescu develops a thorough theory on this topic. The theory debates on overcoming the deceiving from education and on the responsible promotion of "*educational services market*". Financing school education and educational institutions is not just a national priority but a necessity. Decent future for society and its individuals requires funds. The issue of "*education in economy market*" is related to educational policies. It is a reality of modern and present society but it remains hidden under ideological beliefs such as the statement "*constant crisis in education*".

"*Education in market economy. Between cognitive analysis and political views*" (2008) is a challenge in terms of educational policy which should be read by

anyone in charge of education. Financing education gives credit to quality of life and the health of economic institutions: *"the price of a certain quality is determined by those who pay it"*, inflaming the **"open dilemma"** between morality and mercantilism, namely *"between (impartial) cognitive analysis and (mercantile) political views"*. The author stresses out the "need for education" (regarded for a long time as a "must") through fundamental questions such as: *"What for? For whom? Why this way and not in another way? Why that much and not more or less? Why now and not later?"*⁸ These are questions that should be answered by any decision maker or financier in the field of education. The multiple question: *"Who and how sets the "need for education" so that the educational system finds solutions for social problems"?* should also be answered. The need for education, just like social needs, motivates the interaction between society and education. Needs drift from our ability to offer social (systemic) and individual satisfaction. Social failure is not about their transfer upon school nor about the educational system's involvement in their production. Therefore, *"goals based on need analysis is the primary condition of credibility, reason and success of any reform strategy in the field of education"*. The author discusses the contents of education in his classification of educational needs. He links contents to collective and personal needs: (needs of) intellectual education, professional training, social-moral education, aesthetic education, "new education" placed in divergent or competitive interaction. We have to admit that such an approach does not overcrowd the pedagogic literature; moreover the analysis need as motivational resource generates several solutions to overcome the waste of time resources and rational consumption of intellectual and motivational effort. The fulfilment of needs (no matter what needs) – calls for resources – which are always insufficient -: *"the educational institution and teachers are constantly dealing with the issue of fulfilling growing needs with limited resources which don't increase as fast as the needs"*. Human perspective is essential for the fulfilment of educational needs among other three types of resources (human, material and financial). **The teacher** "consumes" the educational act for *"effectiveness, reason and usefulness"* which is visible in children as distinctive personalities. When learning, children have a potential – a certain ability to work – with limited parameters though. Therefore, *"rational distribution of the ability to work in terms of objectives, school subjects and activity types divided on moments of the day, weeks and school year are deciding factors in an effective educational process"*. Learning activities, the framework for the children's ability to work use intellectual, motivational and behaviour-instrumental resources. The author mentions **time**⁹ as one of the most important educational resources and points out that more value should be assigned to it. He also presents models of institutional management, various analysis made to decide on the

⁸ Florea Voiculescu, *Economia de piață*, Institutul european, Iași, 2008.

⁹ Florea Voiculescu, *Managementul timpului. O abordare psihopedagogică*, Editura Risoprint, Cluj-Napoca, 2004.

situation of education. He suggests managing organizational resources by means of **transferable credits** (to measure time used for learning). In his discourse, F. Voiculescu blends pedagogic terminology with psychology, sociology and even economy and thus using a distinctive language in modern pedagogy. The following texts proves the above mentioned statement: „*increased intellectual effort made for one subject matter reduces the effort availability for other subject matters. The same situations occurs with motivational resources, when interest for one subject matter is accompanied by a reduction of motivation for other subject matters*„¹⁰. “Efficiency” is defined in terms of time management: “*an activity is more efficient, if quantitative and qualitative results are higher using reduced time consumption*”. The analysis of “educational services” (pupils in school service or school in pupils` service!?), of “goods and education market”, “use of educational goods”, “beneficiaries, clients, buyers” and many other economic factors which influence education draw our attention upon what Florea Voiculescu calls “*the economic law of pedagogy: education costs*” (chapter 4), but the lack of education costs even more. Cost analysis of educational services, of accounting costs and financing on pupil (carefully explained through a research) leads towards the identification of effects brought about by the investment in human educational capital. Economic culture and the terminology used in pedagogic performance lead towards a complex development of economic functions and the role of school in society. Florea Voiculescu`s writings and analysis focus on an essential statement addressed to decision-makers”: *don` t ask school to give you more that you give it but to give you what it does*”.

Extremely rigorous, almost mathematical F. Voiculescu has the vocation to restructure, to “place” education in structures and clearly, scientifically proven principles, guided by the economic rule of “in and out” of the educational system. He can bring arguments to support his ideas, changes theory into practical solutions, carefully select scientific arguments and use notions in a proper manner. His writings are fluid because he operates with interesting ideas, linking his personal reflections to scientific arguments. F. Voiculescu prefers isotopic aspects of pedagogy and avoids common statements because the main aspects of pedagogy find a solution in his statements. His opinions on the new manner of approaching education based on economic regulations will assign a new dimension to the development of educational policies.

¹⁰ F. Voiculescu, *Analiza resurselor-nevoi și managementul strategic în învățământ*, Editura Aramis, București, 2004, p.120.