

PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONING OF LEARNING PROCESSES EFFECTIVENESS WITHIN THE GROUP OF STUDENTS

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Abstract:

The approach of collective learning processes is a key variable in effective management strategy, it is necessary to balance between the central area which characterizes the teacher and the peripheral area, which refers to adaptability. Learning strategies and styles are a permanent construct, desirable if it has positive effects in the long run, being adapted to the group and social conditions.

Key words: *learning processes, efficiency, effectiveness, strategies, management styles*

1. Theoretical and applicable premises

The complexity of learning processes management in educational groups determines their approach in order to determine efficiency and effectiveness, overcoming barriers of traditional division. Concern for optimizing learning processes occur in one form or another in all human groups, including those of education as a means of transforming their ability to determine change at individual and organizational level by processing multiple formal and informal influences that occur and can be analyzed from multiple perspectives.

Efficiency is a major problem in the opinion of specialists in ensuring the success of learning in the school organization, group of pupils, being addressed by educational sciences. Management efficiency of learning processes requires the objectives set by optimal use of educational resources and *effectiveness* lies in efficiency and adaptability to rapidly changing external requirements. A school organization / educational group becomes more effective if they obtain high academic results, performance with constant or decreasing contributions and are still able to act in a certain manner demonstrated to be effective. The concepts of individual and group learning processes efficiency and effectiveness have been joined by the term managerial performance.

Due to the evolution of educational systems theorists and especially practitioners have been increasingly interested in key aspects of educational groups' learning processes management quality and efficiency.

Principles of management group learning processes efficiency consist of ideas, norms, values that underpin and guide school practice. They may be as follows (Table 1):

Table .1. The principles of efficiency (M. Zlate, 2004)

<i>Principles</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>
<i>The principle of defining objectives</i>	Academic results, performances that give meaning to educational activity involves learning experiences which have a pre-established meaning and are directed by management strategies and styles exercised by the educator.
<i>The principle of prioritization</i>	The problem is one of consistency and balance, quality and setting absolute educational priorities, medium and low. Hierarchy, ordering and assessing all objectives is achieved in relation with their importance and urgency, focusing on the essential. Emphasis is placed on the degree of priority (prioritizing priority).
<i>The principle of setting deadlines</i>	There is also the concept of optimal period in relation to individual learning experiences, mental and biological rhythms, in the sense that it depends on the way of life and education. Reaching educational goals before the deadline is the best measure of the efficiency of the teaching process and implicitly of learning styles thus avoiding the formula - urgent. Stimulatory term value is demonstrated by the completion of learning tasks, which are classified according to their degree: realistic, clear, positive, inevitable, self-imposed, long.
<i>The principle of time management</i>	It refers to organizing our activity in relation to time.
<i>The principle of synergy</i>	It entails acting together, as one, simultaneously to achieve set goals, involving several educational agents, even of different

natures.

The relationship between certain factors and characteristics distinctive to the personality of each teacher and external factors allowed the development of work-related paradigms regarding educator-manager's activity:

- ideographic: centred on the unique personal characteristics of the teacher;
- nomothetic: centred on pedagogical normative and the demands of the immediate institutional and remote social community context;
- ideothetic: mixed, inclusive.

2. The issues and objectives of the investigative process

Pedagogical research approaches have always been in accordance with the efficiency of individual and collective learning processes, to improve the problematic issues and their implications for organizational development. Field investigation was the state of knowledge and application by educators of approach strategies towards learning, towards their efficiency and effectiveness. Identification and critical, constructive analysis of the concrete ways of management approach of learning is a fundamental component of the study entitled: *Impact of management strategies of learning in personal and organizational development*.

The purpose of the investigation is to paint a true picture of the efficiency of the learning practices and processes involved in secondary and university educational institutions, selected in the sample. Therefore:

O.1. Highlighting educators' opinions regarding concrete mechanisms of intercommunication and interrelation involved in the effective management of learning processes in the group of students.
O.2. Identification by educators of teaching styles and strategies used to prevent and improve learning difficulties at individual and group level.

O.3. Establishing correspondence between initial pedagogical training and needs, interests of continuous training in the field of learning processes management.

O.4. Identification of viable solutions for the development of transversal competences both among educators and students to facilitate learning.

3. Methodology of the report study

While conducting the report study methods and tools were used for collecting data, both qualitative (interviews and focus groups) and quantitative (questionnaires), enabling us to collect data and current

information, revealing educators' personal opinions, their educational needs, interests, motivations, desires and aspirations in relation to the quality of approach strategies addressed to individual and organizational learning.

Using a focus group during this investigative approach has led to a number of advantages:

- it facilitated understanding the differences in perspective between different categories of teachers or groups within some events that do not occur naturally;
- participants were given the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process, working with the researcher, which is stimulating;
- each participant had the opportunity to respond, react to answer others, which led to the recording of data and information not relevant to the individual interview;
- open responses facilitated obtaining information and details expressed in their 'own words' by educators participating in the interview, thus identifying subtle nuances and complex meanings, determining significant correlations between data.

Therefore we have organized several focus group interviews, involving the following subjects:

- teachers in secondary education in urban and rural areas, subjects with the same level of authority and power;
- university teachers.

The sample of subjects for the focus group consisted of practicing teachers in secondary schools and universities in Arad, Caras-Severin and Timis. The sample of subjects was established according to the principle of random selection (table 2):

- 53 teachers (with management / non-management positions) that are operating in secondary schools, secondary and high school level. Structurally we notice the presence of 36 females and 17 males, aged 25-56 years with (group I / III group);
- 47 university professors - with management (group II) and non-management (group IV) positions. Structurally, we selected 27 females and 20 males aged between 34-62 years;
- 45 primary and pre-school teachers, undergraduates 37 females and 8 males, aged 23-35 years.

Table 2. Subject pool for the focus group

<i>Category</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Group structure</i>
<i>Staff</i>	<i>Teaching staff in a management position</i>	Secondary education	Group I: 29 persons (manager, assistant manager, educational advisers, quality control)
		University education	Group II: 25 persons (deans, heads of department)
	<i>Teaching staff in a non-management position</i>	Secondary education	Group III: 24 persons (professors with different specializations)
		University education	Group IV: 22 persons (professors, associate professors, lecturers)
			<i>Total: 100 persons</i>
<i>Teaching staff postgraduates</i>		Primary education and pre-school	Group : 45 persons (graduates)

Table 3. Subject pool structure based on staff category

Subject pool	Staff category		Total
	<i>Teaching staff in a management position</i>	<i>Teaching staff in a non-management position</i>	
<i>Number of subjects</i>	54	91	145
<i>Percentage</i>	37,24%	62,76%	100%

Table nr.4. Subject pool structure based on the level of professional development

Subject pool	Level of professional development				Total
	<i>Beginner</i>	<i>Tenure</i>	<i>Second degree</i>	<i>First degree/PHD</i>	
<i>Number of subjects</i>	21	24	53	47	145
<i>Percentage</i>	14,48%	16,55%	36,55%	32,42%	100%

4. Qualitative analysis of educators' opinions regarding the efficiency of learning processes

Questions addressed to educators participating in focus groups in various schools have tried to capture their views in relation to the quality of approach strategies and styles commonly used in school regarding learning. The emphasis was placed on highlighting design, implementation and evaluation mechanisms of individual and collective learning processes, of the criteria on which subjects assessed the effectiveness of approaches to learning management.

Concerns and current guidelines for teachers to optimize the learning process are generated by various causes, of which we mention the following:

- development of complex criteria for evaluation and assuring the quality of learning processes at students group level;
- monitoring and ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of learning management and difficulty improvement strategies implicitly;
- the necessity to address design, management, coordination, monitoring and evaluation strategies of learning processes from a psycho - pedagogical perspective, from personal to organizational efficiency, from the singular to the systemic.

The management of learning processes in educational groups requires a specific approach, involving activities of a complex and complementary nature. Given the many pedagogical and methodological variables involved in these processes, therefore teachers participating in the focus groups have specified that certain requirements have to be met, having in mind the achievement of efficiency and effectiveness objectives:

- Reliance on scientific criteria of the whole approach of managing individual and collective learning processes.
- Knowledge of the profound pedagogical and methodological variables involved.
- Identification, selection and optimal use of human, material and methodological resources, by capitalizing on educational valences.
- Adaptation to a specific educational context and combining effectively approach strategies regarding learning.
- Permanent teacher-student-teacher interaction through the use of management styles, which assure their interactive involvement in their own training process.
- Adjusting educational process based on information obtained from formative monitoring and assessing of learning processes.

The issue of qualitative development of the learning environment and school performance in terms of effectiveness and efficiency is a constant concern for most teachers present, being correlated with how the teacher controls and manages his own resources, psychosocial and managerial skills, supporting the dynamics of interpersonal relationships. In this respect were analyzed the following types of efficiency:

- Personal;
- Interpersonal;
- Group;
- Organizational.

Five fundamental indicators are considered relevant when it comes to the efficiency of learning approach styles and strategies:

- a. Cognitive – epistemological: the importance given by the educator to information, attitudes, the management process and learning assessment;
- b. The characteristics of the communication process: clarity, organization, coherence, cognitive persuasion, nature of relationships;
- c. The degree of control of the learning process: rigorously controlled or encouraging independence on different levels;
- d. The nature of socio-affective, positive and negative behaviour: the capacity for social interaction, emotional proximity or distance, encouragement, approval or critical disapproval;
- e. Organizational dimension: head-on, group, individual activities.

From the perspective of teacher effectiveness in the group learning process three important dimensions are highlighted in relation to both the personality of the teacher as well as in conjunction with the particular educational situation. These are: socio-affectivity, creativity and the strictness of his actions. Given the significance and complexity of management approach strategies and styles of collective learning processes at an educational level, the multitude of factors that influence their exercising, the diversity of school nowadays, it is estimated that their effectiveness is determined by a variety of psycho-educational requirements arising from educational reality.

a. Psychological requirements

- To respect the age and individual characteristics of students involved in the processes of collective learning.
- To adapt learning tasks to the level of intellectual development of those involved in the educational process, supporting transition to a higher level of educational and professional development.
- To grant the training and development of the educational actors' personality, of their ability to self-educate, by themselves and through themselves.

- To stimulate intrinsic motivation to engage in new learning experiences.
- To exploit optimally the psychological resources of the educational group and of the school organization.
- To match the components specific to classroom learning processes to those of the school organization.
- b. Educational requirements*
- To structure and model the learning situations involving students, teachers, parents.
- To ensure optimal correlation between objective-content- activities of educational learning-strategies.
- To relate to educational objectives as key milestones in the process of learning process management.
- To adjust strategies and learning styles to specific social and educational context.
- To respect the norms of the educational process in the development of in-depth strategies of learning.
- To follow the internal logic of formative approach by developing skills of self-management and self-leadership in learning.
- To apply creative methods, techniques and interactive processes that will facilitate learning efficiency at individual and organizational level.
- To select and use appropriate tools for monitoring and self-evaluation of learning processes and performance.
- To ensure unity among approach styles practiced by the students approach in the context of a coherent strategy.

5. Conclusions

Regarding the focus group interview, it was structured in the sense of collecting actual and useful information about the ways in which teachers relate to new educational contexts in which they are faced with learning difficulties. Based on information exchange between participants in this type of interview, we focused on recording the opinions of educators regarding the following issues:

- meanings given to efficiency and effectiveness of learning processes;
- the extent they are aware of their learning approach mechanisms in complex and varied situations;
- how educators apply pedagogical intervention strategies and styles for preventing and improving learning difficulties;
- whether they consider that initial and continuous training facilitates learning management skills development.

The approach of collective learning processes is a key variable in effective management strategy, it is necessary to balance between the central area which characterizes the teacher and the peripheral area, which refers to adaptability. Learning strategies and styles are a permanent construct, desirable if it has positive effects in the long run, being adapted to the group and social conditions.

It is estimated that the implementation of effective strategies to address the learning processes go through two phases:

- Analysis phase: identification and selection of human, materials and methodological resources.
- Synthesis / integration phase: making an action model by combining optimally the components of a strategy.

Starting from the general requirements that an effective management strategy complies with, we propose a graphic analysis of the two phases followed in its development (Figure 2) by analogy with graphical modeling of training and self-training strategies (M. Ionescu, 2003 , pag.155):

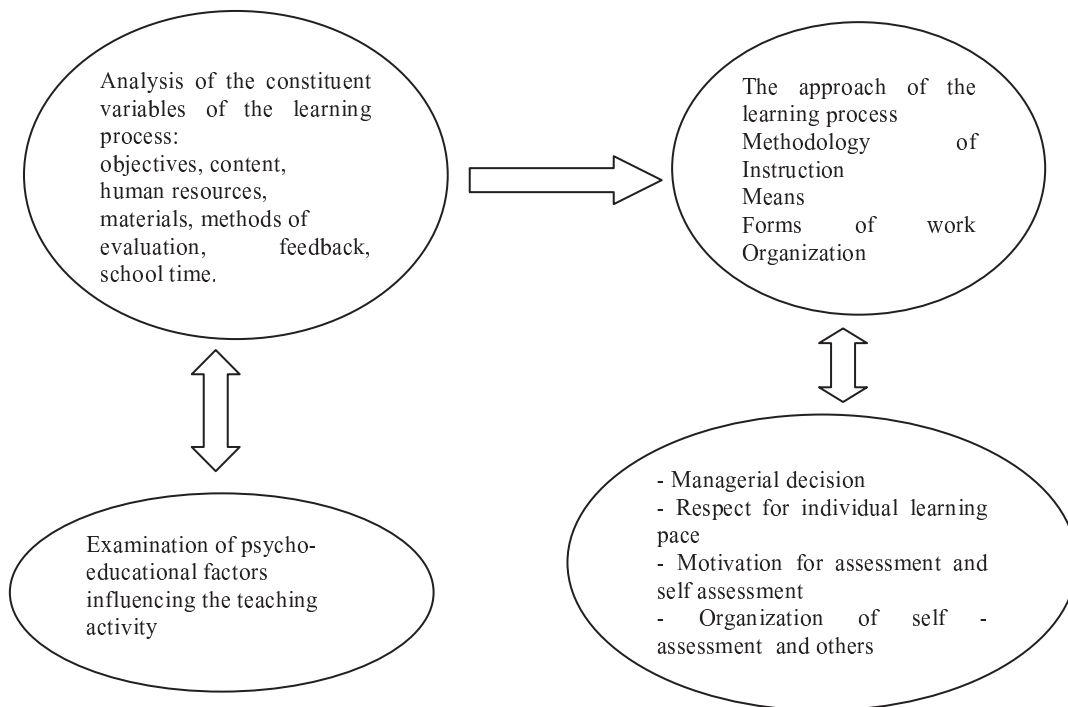


Figure 2. Graphical modelling of the two phases of design and implementation of learning approach strategies and styles.

So through personal and collective reflection, through argumentation and exchanging ideas about interplay between learning approach styles and strategies and the school organization climate, we aimed to stimulate the interest of educators to research their mechanisms of involvement and participation, training needs, the positive and negative aspects of management practices used in the process.

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