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ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND DIDACTICAL EVALUATION OF THE

IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW NINE-YEAR SCHOOL IN THE

CONTEXT OF SLOVENE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The development of school towards a paradigm — partial or holistic, transmissive or transformational, automatic or holistic — depends on the answer to a basic anthropological question, i. e. whether school educates a divided or integrative individual and human personality. The question is whether this open, limited and mortal person can be holistic. To a holistic person just a holistic education suits. Our aim is to determine whether the curricular reform, completed in 1999, put forward a thorough anthropological transformation from a divided to a uniform person reflected in the relation between the existent eight-year and the evolving nine-year school.

By comparing the learning, teaching and thinking styles in the eight- and nine-year school (on a small random selection of 3 nine-year and 3 eight-year schools), we have tried to establish whether the characteristics of the transmissive school model have already changed in some respect and in which terms they are supposed to change in order to make the teaching and learning human being – homo educator and homo educans – more uniform.

In transformation school, teaching styles denote learning in the broadest sense. This means the use of such flexible styles of teaching, thinking and learning that entail many layers of existence and not just one, e.g. the rational or the empirical. At the outset we observed didactical performance and/or improvement in teaching one scientific and one social subject and one language at the six chosen schools. We have based our findings on interpretation of the empirical research instruments, e.g. questionnaires and interviews for teachers and students.

Most of the Slovene primary schools are still of the eight-year. The curricular reform has not yet gained ground. Therefore, no unambiguous answer can be given to the above mentioned question. However, it is encouraging to note that there are signs of

a transformation process in the eight-year school even though it is probable that the transmission model is prevailing due to the known factors.

KEY WORDS: transmissive school paradigm, transformational school paradigm, critical thinking, learning, primary school, educational anthropology

POLEMICS REGARDING STARTING POINTS OF THE REFORM OF THE SLOVENE SCHOOL – A WAY TOWARDS A CRITICAL CONCEPT OF THE EDUCATION HUMAN BEING

It was the idea of former minister of education GABER to open up the current school system for organisational and functional upgrading. This is a good starting point for discussion on the transformational school model, are the teachers' answers to the questionnaires which indicate their beliefs that they develop pupils' critical thinking sufficiently, exercise interpersonal interaction and make use of dialogues through which pupils can establish their independence and strengthen their personality. We will recognize different answers to the main question of how qualitative education is possible.

Every new school represents an educational and anthropological challenge¹. With Slovene independence, Slovene schools have become pluralistic – there is now more than one type of school (e. g. WALDORF primary school, different types of grammar schools and of other types of secondary schools) and they assume a different concept of a human being according to which side of the human being is given most prominence. The WALDORF school follows the teaching of its initiator STEINER and stresses the importance of the spiritual side of a human being; denominational grammar schools stress the religious side; classical grammar schools develop a human being as a being of languages; the new nine-year primary school brings to the fore development of pupils' critical thinking, putting pupils in less stressful situations, interdisciplinary approaches to teaching etc. (Primary School of TRNOVO, 2000). The school of JANKO GLAZER is based on the concept of W. GLASSER (1994). However, not only systemic changes lead to educational plurality but also changes in educational practice bringing about new theoretical challenges: the post-modern discussions on the human being can be seen as discussions on the spirit of the time².

The question of the relation between external control and self-control of students is springing up again. Some public schools have been still too controlled and have not had enough self-regulation and self-control, which should be necessary because of multiculturalism in society. The institutional agents of political and educational culture have been discordant and diffused. There are JANKO GLAZER primary school, working in accordance with the model of control theory of William GLASSER, a primary school comprising elements of Montessori pedagogics, the WALDORF kindergarten, primary school and also

¹ Educational and anthropological reactions to the challenge of practical teaching are numerous. Recently two publications have been issued. Proceedings lovek in kurikul (Ed. NOVAK, 2000) and Anthropological Notebooks. Year 2000, No. 1.

² For the interdisciplinary concept of the post-modern human being, see SUPEK (1996) and for the philosophical concept see RUS (2000).

a first grade of the WALDORF grammar school. There are also many types of grammar school: general, classic, technical, art grammar school and a grammar school with concession (PLEVNIK, 1998). Striving for quality and pluralism of culture and different kinds of schools without bureaucratic security is just as important as differentiation between public and private alternative schools. Differentiation of educational culture is thus reflected.

An analogical situation is found in pedagogy. Spiritual pedagogy prioritises wisdom i. e. educational knowledge that can help us by personal and spiritual growth. Pragmatic pedagogy prioritises knowledge that equips us for successful social functioning, reform pedagogy gives priority to experience over cognition and social critical pedagogy discovers the double nature of knowledge, which on the other hand leads to control over our behaviour and on the other hand prepares us for emancipation (ERMANC, 2000). In response to public opinion, the Slovenian liberal school policy has introduced the pragmatic concept of assessment which is based on the partial knowledge.

In the recent past, the concept of the uniform, socialistic and self-managing school made the process of nationalisation possible, entailing the leading role of the League of Communists and a uniform educational purpose of the all-round personality. In the last decade, the liberal-democratic and laic bases of the pluralistic primary school provide for an open anthropological concept which is not uniform in content, instead it develops just particular segments. There are many reasons why only one explicit concept of (primary) school is no longer possible: (1) there is no uniform concept of a human being, (2) there are more anthropological and educational concepts than could be put into educational practice (WULF, 1994, SCAGLIOSO, 1998), (3) the school is a complex institution in an ever more complex society (ŠTRAJN, 1998), (4) there is no monopolistic ideology. Private schools opt for one of the many educational and anthropological concepts as their foundation. The centralised public school – state - dependent – does not accept any of the concepts as the state does not set any educational objectives within their scope. The way to a new educational concept of a particular public school is the way to their autonomy. This is a long and bumpy road.

In the last decade the Slovene school has turned from a school of education/upbringing to school of knowledge (MARENTIČ POŽARNIK, 1998). As the concepts of transmission (in the sense of teaching), acquisition (in the sense of learning) and assessment of knowledge were differentiated, the shift does not in itself mean a shift of the school paradigm³ from transmissive to transformational, from autocratic to democratic, from mainly reproductive to innovative, from programme-centred to ecological, from a strictly rational school of specialised argumentation to a school where not only scientific literacy but also emotional literacy is considered, and from a school as an inert institution to a dynamic school. Although this shift cannot be seen at some schools, and can hardly be seen at the others, educational anthropology⁴ has still to identify these movements, assign them some reason and has to find an answer as to what a transition to the transformational, holistic

³ In the philosophy of science, T. Kuhn was the first to question the suitability of a paradigm. He assigned various meanings to a paradigm. Theoreticians of the '80s marked a divide between the old scientific paradigm - also referred to as Cartesian, mechanical, Newtonian - and the new one which is evolutionary, self-organisational, organic, holistic, new and organisational. In connection with this, transition from the transmissive school paradigm (pattern, model) to the transformational is mentioned.

⁴ - Some papers in the proceedings lovek in kurikul aim at analysing the differences between the human beings as they were designed and as they are. A similar situation is found in physical anthropology. There exist more archeological discoveries than this science can adequately recognise with its theory (CREMO; THOMPSON, 1996).

paradigm means at the turn of the century coinciding with the transition from the industrial to the informational society.

The contemporary Slovene public school is not a school for work and further education (with the exception of professional and vocational schools) but it is a school where knowledge is prevalent. Gradually, differentiation of knowledge is gaining ground, bringing about the new culture of assessing and evaluation; however, this knowledge still does not incorporate wisdom. Even the subjects such as ethics and society, religion and ethics could not fill this gap; however, the subject of civic education in the last but one grade both of primary school and the civic culture in the last grade put forward a human being as a political being and an active and well-read citizen of the Republic of Slovenia. The optional subjects learning to be in the last triad of the primary school, and learning to learn in the grammar school, considering Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (Council of Europe, 2001), research camps, research projects and project work have given more prominence to the human being as a learning being (Latin homo educans). At the same time, development of learning differentiates between the teaching styles of homo educator.

EXCELLING THE TRANSMISSIVE SCHOOL PARADIGM

The school paradigm is defined by (lack of) autonomy of participants in education and of school in relation to the politics. Only an autonomous school can become a central institution of the society but decentred from the school policy. The Slovene school is centralised; however this does not make it a monopolistic and ideological state apparatus as long as the state gives up ideology. However, the school is still under the influence of the liberal ideology (PEDIČEK, 1998). It can also be characterised by lack of time for subjectiveness and subjective knowledge which leads to pupils' lack of internal motivation.

PEDIČEK (1992, 1994, 1998) laid the foundations for educational anthropology a discipline offering an answer to the essential questions of the changing school paradigm from mechanical to holistic. As the Slovene liberal school did not make this shift with the attainment of the attainment of Slovene independence. PEDIČEK. like SVETINA, (1992) addressed critical remarks to it with reference to the spiritual dimension of a human being. Unlike PEDIČEK, SVETINA stressed the importance of competitiveness of the Slovene school regarding the position it takes between the eastern and western culture. PEDIČEK also stressed the significance of the educational, organisational, political and systemic dimensions of school. SVETINA limited himself just to the structural layers of a human being, ranging from biological, psychological, social or cultural to spiritual, whereas PEDIČEK also considered the phase-development of a human being, going from birth to death. Thus both of them have opened up a way to specification of lifelong learning according to special periods of life.

It is yet to become clear which model of spiritual culture our schools will take as a paradigm for its development. SVETINA (1992) wanted to integrate our schools in an international flow of Eastern and Western cultures. Realisation of SVETINA's model in school is questionable because it is not acceptable for each type of state and private school.

SVETINA'S and WALTERS' (WALTERS, 1990) vision of the upbringing for human life have included also preventive action based on old wisdom. Despite its pru-

dence, the wisdom does not belong essentially to our public school system. The teaching of the nature of inner man is lacking in the primary and secondary school. The students get a little information about it from the teacher of psychology, the Slovene language and sometimes in some other class. So the subject of philosophy exists only in the fourth class of grammar school. In the coming years two new facultative subjects will be introduced into school: the subject of religion and ethics into primary school and culture and ethics into secondary school.

The aim of school is to teach students how they can control the external material world, because if they can control the inner psychological world, they can also control the external one. Therefore the right education is self-education with the utensil of maturity (WALTERS, 1990). Our civilisation and culture intend to control the external world, but the upbringing for the future should insist on the control of our subjective world and prove that we can regulate ourselves.

Educational anthropology is an experiment in the interdisciplinary synthesis of all sciences which are occupied with educational questions. It is less developed in our country than in the Central and Western European Counties.

The policy has to regulate education in the sense which foresees developmental degrees and the flexible adaptation to anticipated cultural needs of the future. School administration does not try to introduce SVETINA'S, WALTERS' or GLASSER'S model of the good school because of its pragmatic policies.

The Educational anthropology maintains that the development of education is associated with the development of an individual human personality and with social development. The main problem in this development is the issue of its many-sidedness and, related to it, of its sustainability. Today, a hypothesis that is becoming upheld is that human development will be less sustainable and future-oriented the more human education becomes one-sided, and therefore the development of all human layers or dimensions will be neglected. The holistic paradigm should enable enforcement of sustainable development and quality of life. On the one hand, a human being, designed to be holistic, can organise the educational process holistically, on the other, the critical analysis of the results of learning and learning efficiency indicates that this objective has only partly reached. We can establish that the current curricular reform has not sufficiently set the development of pupils' and teachers' many-sided and various dimensions of a human being and partner. but the same could be asserted also for any other reform because the holism is a utopia – it makes sense to try to achieve it but due to the difference between the possible and the reality, it can never be completed. Due to the different and conflicting interests of education, the post-modern education is by no means a less perfect project than was the (pre-)modern education.

The openness and imperfection of the modern human being manifest themselves in education⁵ many external and internal factors having an influence on the school paradigm, which is consequently affected. The school paradigm is internally determined by the method of organising school management (DRUCKER, 2000), introduction of contemplation and meditation into schools, collaboration of schools (ERČULJ, TRUNK-ŠIRCA, 2000), school atmosphere, prevalence of one or another teaching and learning style, quality

⁵ For more, see ZALFC, B. (2006). Education from the anthropological point of view. In: Anthropological Notebooks. Year VI, no.1, pp. 9-19.

of communication between the participants of education (in particular, teachers and pupils); and externally, it is determined by the political and cultural environment. Education gives rise to new tendencies, to a different school management, to creating a school and class atmosphere, to flexible organisation of work, to working together of teachers (team teaching), to implementation of new teaching, learning and thinking styles. Among the changes in the relationship of school towards politics, national and local school policies should be mentioned as they support school autonomy, introduce partnership of parents in school management and organise schools in networks.

The model of the last curricular reform - which was completed in Slovenia in 1999 - provides for a well-read, educated, functional human being and for a being adapted to the capitalist system as much as possible. It has been virtually impossible to reach an overall national consensus regarding nationally-important educational objectives because the democratic educational and political cultures are not highly developed. The Educational system in Slovenia enjoys the greatest popular support among the social subsystems. Hence, the public believes in the power of education and debates at least as much as it does in the use of force. Anthropologically, this marks the beginning of giving preference to and acknowledging a learning human being (lat, homo educans) over aggressive human beings asserting themselves by the policy of power (lat. homo brutalis). This is the basis for implementing a school of rational argumentation instead of school of memorising. The new curricula provide for transfer of some rational (thinking) patterns but they do not sufficiently provide for critical confrontation with the main social problems, and therefore they do not raise an independent personality but a mass of available people (URBANCIC, 2000). Instructive subjects are making a come-back through civic education, civic culture and also through some optional contents that can be further differentiated.

The holistic model opens up room for changes because it anticipates any possible realisation. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that the current school system insufficiently implements the basis and is insufficiently in conformity with a holistic human being, the whole human tradition and hence, the holistic ethical foundations for the life of a young person in modern society, in spite of the fact that it was published in the White Paper and adopted in Izhodišča kurikularne prenove (the Outline of curricular reform) (1995).

As we know, the school system can be narrow, repressive and rigid or receptive, open and liberal in the democratic sense as it »comprises a broad range of humanistic and artistic contents« (SVETINA, 1989). In the Slovene schools, the characteristics of the transmissive (mechanical, industrial) model are predominant despite some elements of the organic and cultural model. In terms of everyday problems, the integral model would be most appropriate; according to SVETINA (1989), only those teachers in the Slovene school for the new millennium could implement it »who know how to create a real spiritual environment and encourage genuine spiritual growth« (SVETINA, 1992: 234-235). In implementing the holistic school paradigm, the focus is not on the contradictory relation with the mechanical, Newtonian, Cartesian, industrial paradigm but mainly on integrity of the old and new paradigm.

[•] For the relationship between the similarities and differences between educational and political culture see NOVAE, B. 1998. Odnos med politično in pedagoško kulturo. In. ŠTRAJN, D. (Ed.). Družbene spremembe in izobraževanje. Ljubljana. Pedagoški inštitut. pp. 115-138.

Z See TOŚ, N. et al., 2000. Vrednote v prehodu II. Slovensko javno mnenje 1990-1998. I jubljana. IDV. CJMMK.

The Slovene school has programme characteristics (of various degrees) of the transformational school paradigm, such as: (1) implementation of the integrated curriculum; (2) application of interactive communication in concentric circles: pupils and their teacher, teachers among themselves, teachers and the head-teacher, teachers and parents, school and environment; (3) consistent development of biological, psychosocial and spiritual layers; (4) inter-institutional school ties (local community, enterprises, health centres, other schools); (5) modification of thinking, learning and teaching styles.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW CULTURE OF ASSESSMENT IN THE NINE-YEAR PRIMARY SCHOOL AS AN EXAMPLE OF TRANSCENDING THE TRANSMISSIVE MODEL

Modern school is knowledge-based; therefore, it matters how pupils learn and how the knowledge acquired is assessed by teachers. Assessment comprises testing, which refers to determining knowledge, and assessment proper which refers to determining and evaluating the knowledge acquired. Assessment is an integral part of educational process and like the curriculum, it determines the content and how it can be taught and learnt in school. It could be said that it significantly affects the quality of classes (BUCIK, 2001: 41-42).

Assessment proper has various roles to perform in the school system: to distribute and select pupils, to direct teacher's work, provide information to parents on their child's achievements and provide school policy with the same data, to monitor the attaining of national standards of knowledge. However, the central function of assessment is to promote quality learning (MARENTIČ POŽARNIK, 2001; 55-56). It has to be established that in the cognitive model, the key factor of achievement in school is how pupils and teachers perceive learning circumstances. Assessment crucially intervenes between the »input characteristics« of a pupil (capabilities, motivation) and his/her school results: the teaching approach and quality of school results depend on assessment. Therefore, the quality (sustainability and applicability) of the pupil's knowledge acquired provide a basis for making conclusions regarding the quality of processes leading to the result.

One of the objectives of the reform of the obligatory school is quality learning, teaching and assessment. Consequently, the evaluation study focused on examination of the quality of the assessment process. A questionnaire on teaching styles was designed. The sample consisted of 78 teachers of a subject at primary schools, of which 37 teachers were at the eight-year primary school and 41 teachers at the nine-year school.

Assessment raises about the crucial question of the teacher's priorities in the assessment process: mere reproduction of the facts learnt or the reaction of pupils to various problem-oriented situations. The answers given by teachers of eight-year and nine-year primary schools to the questionnaires lead to the conclusion that the preference is not given to the reaction of pupils to various problem-oriented situations over the reproduction of facts learnt. Nevertheless, unlike the teachers of the eight-year schools, teachers of nine-year schools accept the challenges of a problem. A similar attitude of teachers toward the

⁸ This evaluation study of the Ministry of Education. Science and Sport of Slovenia (2000-2002) is entitled. The importance of implementing new learning, thinking and teaching styles to ease the mind of pupils in the nine-year primary school (principal investigator). B. NOVAK, co-operators. M. IVANUS GRMEK, J. KOLENC).

quality of the knowledge gained is evident from the value assigned to learning by heart and reformulation. It is important whether a teacher requires pupils to learn by heart or encourages pupils to understand the content and to reformulate it. The teachers answering the questionnaires were of the opinion that they give priority to reformulation of the contents learnt over learning by heart – in this case the teachers of eight-year school more frequently did answer that question positively than did their counterparts in the nine-year schools. Furthermore, a teachers' guiding pupils towards critical judgement is also important for the quality of learning, teaching and assessment. The teachers' answers point to a tendency to often assess attempts at independent critical judgement. This tendency occurs more frequently with the nine-year school teachers.

From the educational and anthropological aspect, the question of considering active participation of pupils in classes is relevant as far as assessment of pupils' knowledge is concerned. Many educational and didactical concepts suggest that it makes sense to involve pupils in the teaching process (development of partnership, of co-operative learning, of critical thinking, of the interest in the subject, of good atmosphere, of dialogue etc.) On the basis of teachers' answers it can be concluded that teachers in assessment quite often take into account pupils' initiatives and co-operation – teachers of nine-year schools do so more often than their counterparts in the eight-year school.

On the basis of comparison of teachers' answers of the eight-year schools and nine-year schools, it can be established that there are no statistically relevant differences between their answers. However, a tendency can be perceived with the nine-year school teachers who slightly more often than their counterparts of the eight-year school: encourage pupils to reformulate the learning contents, to try independent critical judgement and, in giving the mark, consider the pupil's participation and initiative-taking in the class.

The mentioned differences in answers given by teachers of the eight-year school and of the nine-year school cannot be explained with total certainty. The difference can depend on the personal approach of a teacher, on the teacher's positive attitude and the attitude of the school management toward introducing nine-year schools, on the atmosphere at school, on the support of professional education of teachers-colleagues, parents and headmaster, and on the influence of others factors that still have not been defined.

CONCLUSION

The school of transmission with its focus on memorising, non-reflective learning and mainly rational thinking cannot comprise all four of Delors's pillars of learning. This is possible only for a school of transformation teaching of creative and critical thinking. It can be proved at several levels of the school system that the Slovene school has still belonged to the transmissive and not yet to the transformational model. Democratic educational and political cultures are not yet highly developed. The Slovene public school is still predominantly achievement-oriented. If the Slovene school should develop self-confident, tolerant, responsible, self-controlled, critically thinking, emancipated, educated and active citizens, who are not only rational but also emotional beings, then they should learn holistically.

The Cartesian school paradigm is a basis for a transmissive paradigm. It is surpassed at many levels of learning (DRYDEN, VOS, J., 2001), thinking (HENTIG, 1997), spiritual wisdom, teaching, thinking and learning styles and other didactical innovations

which contribute to a better quality of education. Nevertheless, it seems that in public schools a dual personality is predominant, meaning that homo educator and homo educans are still divided, similarly to the process of teaching at school and the process of learning at the pupil's home.

In conclusion, it could be said that implementation of the new nine-year primary school gives rise to new anthropological and educational questions. But a final answer cannot be given just yet. The primary school is to become more complex. As long as it follows the lines of transformation to a more stable democracy, and development of educational (school) and political cultures, the educational anthropology can help it by assigning theoretical reason to actual teaching; on the other hand the educational anthropology thus faces new challenges. However, if the school is static – at some segments it has to be – the educational anthropology can just reiterate the well-known standpoints.

POVZETEK

Razvoj šole v smeri parcialne ali celovite, transmisijske ali transformacijske, mehanske ali holistične paradigme je odvisen od odgovora na osnovno antropološko vprašanje, ali šola vzgoja in izobražuje razdvojeno, individualno človeško osebnost ali celovito in integrativno. Vprašanje je, ali je odprt, omejen in smrten človek lahko celovit. Celovitemu človeku ustreza le celovita edukacija. Naš namen je presoditi, ali je kurikularna reforma, ki se je končala 1999, izpostavila korenit antropološki preobrat od razdvojenega k celovitemu človeku, ki se zrcali v odnosu med še obstoječo osemletno in novo nastajajočo devetletno osnovno šolo.

S primerjavo učnih, poučevalnih in mišljenjskih stilov v osemletki in devetletki na izbranem, manjšem slučajnem vzorcu 3 devetletk in 3 osemletk smo skušali ugotoviti, ali so se značilnosti transmisijskega modela šole že v čem spremenile in v čem naj bi se, da bi človek kot homo educator in homo educandus, poučevalno in učeče se bitje lahko pojavljal celoviteje.

V transformacijski šoli bodo poučevalni stili postavljeni v vlogo učenja v najširšem smislu z uporabo takšnih fleksibilnih stilov poučevanja, mišljenja in učenja, ki vključujejo več ravni bivanja in ne le eno npr. racionalno ali empirično. Izhajali smo iz opazovanja didaktičnih izvedb oz. izboljšav pouka enega naravoslovnega, družboslovnega in jezikoslovnega predmeta na omenjenih šestih šolah, pri čemer smo se opirali na interpretacijo empiričnega raziskovalnega instrumentacija kot so ankete in intervjuji za učitelje in učence.

Večina osnovnih šol v Sloveniji je trenutno še osemletk. Kurikularna reforma se še ni prav prijela. Zato enoznačnega odgovora na zastavljeno vprašanje še nimamo. Spodbudno pa je, da je mogoče opaziti znamenja transformacijskih procesov že znotraj osemletne osnovne šole, čeprav je verjetno, da je transmisijski model zaradi znanih pogojev še prevladujoč.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: transmisijska paradigma šole, transformacijska paradigma šole, kritično mišljenje, učenje, osnovna šola, pedagoška antropologija

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