

FROM TEACHING TO LEARNING: A NEW PARADIGM IN MODERN EDUCATION

Dear Readers,

The 4th edition of publication “Problems of Education in the 21st Century” is in front of you. The main idea of this publication, not without reason, is paradigm change in modern education. We can safely claim that the role of education in the global world is, undoubtedly, the biggest comparing with the other spheres of social life. Education dimensions have grown up greatly in almost all countries. Informal education sector has increased immensely. The most modern ICT are being implemented into education system. Perhaps we will not find any scientific conference in which the questions of ICT application in education process were not discussed.

However, it is obvious that education systems in most countries experience various difficulties. It is clearly seen in Central and Eastern European countries, in which the second decade in turn education system reforms of different level and amount are taking place. So called “Instruction Paradigm / Teaching Paradigm” has been dominating for a long time in education. In recent years the accents are being transferred to learning, to motivation of self learning. It has been realized, that it is impossible to teach if the person doesn't want to or is not able to do this himself. At present the opinion occurs that it is impossible to teach another person, it is possible only to help him to learn. From this as if directly follows the statement that the responsibility falls on the student first of all, what, how and how much he/she will learn. However, didactically it is a totally wrong approach, especially when it is applied to junior forms of comprehensive schools. The systematization, deepening, formation of general concepts can't be left for the student himself, because frequently it happens that students master the new things which are related to the old ones without their interrelations, without any system (Vaitkevičius, 1968). Ability to systematize information is one of the most important. As J.O'Connor and Mc.Dermott (2006) notice, there is a very remarkable tendency in many spheres nowadays, to solve everything „in parts“, i.e. to analyse different phenomena and situations only in separate aspects. From this point of view, transferring education aspects only into learning is not fully grounded. Each learning personality is very different, therefore different approaches should inevitably be applied in teaching process.

On the other hand, education quality in many aspects is getting worse. We can't claim that education quality is getting worse because of former mentioned paradigm change. Lithuania as a post soviet country has a many year experience when education, especially secondary, was unified. However, it is necessary to emphasize that education at that time was also better supervised. We can't say that there is no supervision nowadays. It really is. But, everlasting reforms, sometimes even opposing to each other, don't make Lithuanian education more effective. As professor G. Merkys noticed, the therapy of shock continues in Lithuania. We not only have to think about this but, of course, solve the problems arising in reality.

Speaking about Lithuania, it is obvious, that now it is very important for our state what decisions and steps, what ideas and actions in the sphere of education we will suggest and implement. 2006 PIRLS research shows that the ability to read and understand fiction and informative texts of our country 4-th formers has declined very much. 2006 PISA research states that natural science, maths literacy and general reading abilities of our 15 year-older are by statistics significantly lower than OECD countries' average result. Though Lithuania is not at the end of country list and it seems that the results are not so bad but the matter is worth of concern. The results of the research highlighted one of the most sore points of education that the preparation of our students for practical life is still poor, the main attention being further concentrated on theoretical education. Theory without practice is not the goal of today's teaching. We can discern here another meaning of the mentioned paradigm improvement – from knowledge towards the development of abilities. In the ability development process the learner himself has to take part most actively. The mission of education system is to form suitable conditions for that purpose and give all round help.

Other countries like Latvia, Estonia, Czechia, Poland and other have serious problems in education sector as well. Obviously, every country has its own traditions and context. Besides, education is a part of culture. In this case we are speaking not only about national cultures but also about common European culture. We are speaking about common European education standards. The question arises how to match national and

European aims. Any school has a challenge to create the future of the state. Education reforms have been going on for more than ten years in several countries with the purpose to achieve higher education progress and to implement the latest innovations. However, attitude to changes and innovations is not the value on its own. Changes have to be conciliated with the basic human and nation values. Modernization is a very necessary and inevitable thing, however it doesn't have to dwarf the vision of the school mission. Among permanent reforms direction and vision of the whole education purpose shouldn't be lost. This applies not only to Lithuania but to all European countries. I would like to go back once again to our mentioned paradigm change. The implementation of innovations into education doesn't have to overshadow the good side of education experience. Not everything that is modern is sensible. For example, Lithuania as well as the other countries of central Europe has a many year tradition when the priority was given to strong knowledge and to education basis in general. Lithuania hasn't lost this tradition completely and that is good. The main goals of education are: to help to form knowledge system of a learning person and give him basic social communication skills. Knowledge is not everything in person's life. Not only knowledge makes the man. However, we have to agree, that without its powerful movement in history, mankind wouldn't be as it is. The progress of humanity in many ways is conditioned by the development of knowledge, its expansion and so on. Thanks to it the greatest changes have taken place. School doesn't have the right to doom children and youth to ignorance.

It is not difficult to foresee necessary changes theoretically, to discuss about paradigm changes on a methodological level, but it is much more difficult to put these ideas into practice because of various both subjective and objective reasons. It is necessary to really perceive the mission of education and other questions of education, to analyze them from different perspectives, taking into consideration different theoretical and practical approaches. Education is not a one-day matter. The rule 'Education is in the hands of those who have power' doesn't suit here. To develop education is almost to be ready that everything what is moral in your mind will inevitably be overcome by immorality of real world (Butvilas, 2006). Education in the socioeconomical and cultural context is multiform. Therefore, we can't one-sidedly accept a statement that moving from teaching to learning is a new paradigm indeed. Its newness is limited by time, amount, content and application aspects.

This edition contains different articles. I hope that the articles included in this publication will interest the readers by their problematics, content, methodology of research and its methods, will encourage their systematic and critical thought, will make them active in scientific discussions.

References

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