

Original Article

New dimensions of the physical education teacher's personality in the context of the democratization of our society

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Abstract

The major changes occurred in the contemporary society during the last 20 years have led, more than ever, to a need for more flexibility in terms of the educational approach for training new skills and abilities, which calls for an adaptation of the personality of the physical education teacher to the demands of a society characterized by dynamism.

A non-authentic personality is defined by a lack of educational values, or by the promotion of certain particular values, for which such a non-authentic personality would fight as if they had a universal significance. Getting out of this shady zone can be achieved by rethinking the values of the spiritual dimension.

As Kant said: "the two human discoveries which are considered to be the most difficult in the great philosopher's opinion: the art of governing people and the one of educating them", have not revealed their secrets completely either to theoreticians or to practitioners. Since the teacher's role is to lead his students to knowledge and his daily actions imply making decisions, he can be regarded as a leader. So, an adequate development of a managerial outlook on the pedagogical style is necessary.

Key-words: personality, teacher, leadership, physical education, style, democracy.

Introduction.

The issue of the teacher's personality and of the teaching style has been delineated as part of the specialists' concerns during the second half of the 20th century, under the double impact of the results obtained in leadership research on the group and corporate level and of the preoccupations concerning the evaluation of the efficiency of the didactic processes. The challenge, for the theoreticians or for the practitioners of the educational act remains the following: how can the leadership and pedagogy be integrated, as much as possible, into a unitary whole, in order to be able to examine the relationship that can exist between teacher and student in a new light? Within all the organizations, groups (a class can be considered a micro-society), a social micro-system, a person or an individual exercise a certain influence, smaller or bigger than others', and some are consequently meant to lead. The leader is not necessarily the person designated to lead by some authority or institution. His status is given by the organism itself. The educational approach in essence remains the same, but its constitutive elements can vary in quantity, quality, and availability, essentially modifying relationships and giving each situation a unique character. So, the leader becomes a viable counterbalance for the educational technician that the teacher used to represent. The teacher does not make decisions only based on the level of the contents, but also based on the level of determination of the presentation sequences, on the type of training categories made available for the students ("individualized" decisions), on the students' level, the parents' level or the community level.

Problem Formulation

The training of the teaching staff has been approached from several perspectives: the functionalist perspective, based on the demands related to the change in the educator's functions in the society (G. Brown, G. Dickson, R. Saxe), the technological perspective on the training, based on the use of modern technological means in the training process (M. Linard, I. Prax), the perspective based on the relationship between research and training (G. de Landsheere, G. Mialaret), and the perspective centered on the notion of training situation (G. Ferry). From the perspective of the democratization of our society, the physical education teacher's pedagogical style can only be an innovative, communicative, balanced, responsible style. It has been noticed that balance and measure, responsibility, democratization of the inter-human relations, open and honest communication are values promoted by the new society. As education is a process taking place in the long run, in its diachronic evolution it involves change, the need to adapt to the demands of the society in which it operates and which it addresses through its products. The idea that the professional training acquired by a physical education teacher is defining for him represents a reality, yet it does not exclude the need for his continual improvement, in relation to

the new demands deriving from the complex problems of the contemporary world. The reconstruction and the rebalancing of the personality features, the continual improvement of the professional style appear when the teachers have already acquired a certain experience as trainers and participate in an active and conscious way to their continual training, so being able to display an adequate (adapted) behavior, namely a reasonable behavior, partially attenuating the shock of the future.

Types of teachers

According to Ch. Caselmann, teachers can be divided into: philosophically biased knowledge-oriented (paying attention to the object of study), methodologically-scientifically biased knowledge-oriented (oriented strictly towards teaching), individually-psychologically biased student-oriented (endeavoring to understand the pupil's/student's personality), generally psychologically biased student-oriented (his interventions are rather rational than emotional) [10]. Other typologies resume in other words the three styles of K. Lewin, R. Lippit and R.K. White. So, M. Marchand [12] highlights three types of teachers: amorphous, selfish, indifferent; egocentric and the type oriented towards an intellectual and affective exchange with the educated person.

For E. Spranger, the six types of values do not generate real human types, but are just "comprehensibility schemes" through which one can get to understand more easily the way how a person gets more or less close to these directions-values. So, we can remark the six ideal types [6]: theoretical type (his main and fundamental goal is the discovery of the truth); economic type (interested in what is useful); aesthetic type (his supreme value are form and harmony); social type (his supreme value is love for people); political type (interested first of all in power); religious type (manifests a special interest in unity as supreme value).

E. Fromm's typology [13] relies on social-economic criteria: the productive type (represents the individuals who realize a natural communion with the world, by means of work, reason and affection); the non-productive type (characterizes a society in full process of alienation). Studying the way of reaction and the individual's adaptation to the social environment, W.I. Thomas [13] analyzed the following human ways (types) of being: Bohemian (the human type that does not find his grounds and criteria in himself, lacking inner stability; oriented towards the outside, he is permanently submitted to the environmental fluctuations), the philistine (he is oriented towards the outside, yet, unlike the Bohemian, he gets fanatically attached to traditions, these being able to finally represent the very organization scheme of his life), the creator (is the one managing to find in himself enough forces and stable balance needed in order to make up an active framework of action, favorable to the development of personality).

For D. Ausubel and F. Robinson, three behavioral structures have relevance concerning the didactic activity: structure A – affection, understanding and friendship; structure B - responsibility, methodical spirit and systematic actions and structure C – power of stimulation, imagination and enthusiasm [14]. From the viewpoint of the adaptation to the environment, the sociologist R.K. Merton [13], envisioned the following classification of the personality types: conformist type (which reacts according to models already consecrated by tradition and belongs to an established, consolidated and culturally crystallized tradition); innovative type (which manifests itself through preference for any means with the goal of attaining a double purpose: richness and power); evasive type (which defines the attitudinal condition of certain individuals for whom the pressure of social norms, purposes and conventions becomes unbearable); rebel type (which is specific for the individuals refusing both the purposes and the means of the existing society, their slogan being revolt and the option for a new social and axiological system).

Regardless of the typology we may approach, the interesting aspect is related to authenticity. A non-authentic personality is defined by a lack of educational values, or by the promotion of certain particular values, for which such a personality fights as if they had a universal significance. Getting out of this shady zone can be achieved by rethinking the values of the spiritual dimension. So, in order to be authentic, the teacher should reevaluate his spiritual landmarks. E. Cioran states that we cannot talk about humanism in the contemporary culture, as it bears all the features of a human disintegration, of an inner disintegration. Although being a "contradictory being, insufficient and agitated, with finite possibilities, disintegrated from the cosmos, struggling between naivety and awareness, incapable of universality" [15], man avails himself of the capacity of knowledge, growth, accomplishment, given by the spiritual dimension of his personality. Asking himself why our philosophers are so sterile, the philosopher brings up the absence of the inner unrest, of the curiosity "that makes you read equally joyfully a book of philosophy, art or science" [15]. If you want the outer disorder to disappear, first you need to put order in your inner being, as the above-mentioned philosopher rightly stated. Without removing the inner entropy, which measures the inner disorder, the world that surrounds us will be forever a chaos. We consider that extremely important is the calling for the didactic profession: "If the spirit appears there where the flame of life palpitates, for man this is not just an opportunity for pure problematics, but also a return towards the sense of his concrete being" [17]. The spiritual dimension supposes the need for the teacher to have a pro-social behavior. This type of behavior, specifically human, is "characterized by the orientation towards social values" [18]. The two conditions that are necessary and sufficient for identifying pro-

social behaviors are: the intention to help other persons and free will, giving one's help outside the professional obligations.

The educational approach from a curricular perspective

In the context of the educational reform, anywhere in the world, the strategic approaches, however coherent and well thought they may be, encounter, while put into practice, a series of constraints, and record a series of distortions. During the 16th century, in England, the educational policy referred to the contents of the studies, encompassed and systematized in documents called curricula.

During the Greek antiquity, Plato conceived the world of ideas as origin of all beings and values. Platonism identifies value with the absolute; we relate ourselves to value for the very reason that we can never reach it. According to Plato, education is the "art of turning around" the human being bearing the chains of ignorance towards the "brightness of the fire" from outside the cave, towards the empire of the absolute values.

The Romans had a practical spirit, the pragmatism and the concern for educating the citizen being features of the Roman education and school. Cicero knew that we choose, we can and we must choose between values, between good and bad, between virtue and vice, between honesty and dishonesty. Seneca philosophized in an area of culture, promoting the idea of equality and humanism. During a time of moral crisis, when values were turned upside down and ideals lost, in an epoch of general demoralization, A. Persius Flaccus assumed the role of physician of his epoch, his work being one of moral reconstruction.

In Christianity, we can seize several supreme values, with pedagogical consequences: the attainment of perfection, which concerns both the body and especially the inner life, the axis of what we now call moral personality; activism, namely the inner fight to acquire the supreme good, inner freedom, which cannot be affected by any determination; equality and fraternal love (Jesus preached everywhere tolerance and the forgiveness of our fellows, including of our enemies); valorization of the child, as he is the prototype of life.

J.A. Comenius' pedagogical democratism results from the fact that he proposed the creation of schools for everybody – both for the poor and for the rich, both for the leaders and for the subjects, both for men and for girls; everybody can learn everything. Much esteemed in this author's conception were the cardinal virtues: wisdom, balance, courage and justice.

During the Renaissance, the idea of a harmonious development reappears, expressed in the concern for the body, for health, but also for the intellect and moral development. The aim of the humanist education was to develop man to the maximum: a titan man, a "uomo virtuoso", a man capable in all the directions, namely a "uomo universale", "magister in diversis artibus". It is stated that the humanism specific for the Renaissance would not represent a progress in culture, but a crisis of the medieval spirituality during its twilight time.

In the first half of the 19th century, J.H. Pestalozzi pleaded for a pedagogy of freedom: any obstacle in the way of liberty creates in the child's heart aversion against the author of this obstacle. Experience shows that most children that have been restrained will make up for their restraint through playfulness. His social conception was that man should be lifted through culture.

The humanist ideas on education were landmarks in the construction of the pedagogic conception of the representatives of the new education (Dewey J., Montessori M., Claparede E., Decroly O.). The new education aimed to reorient the pedagogical theory from a school centered on the educator (magistro-centrism) to a school centered on the child's needs and interests (pedo-centrism).

On the Waldorf pedagogy, it has been said that it is equivalent to the pedagogy of development, as it guides itself according to the principle: bring the right content at the right age, in the right way (it is against setting the learning task before the developmental task) [28].

The educational reforms of England and France are considered departure points in the projects formulated by international organisms or diverse research groups. The way in which the English reform of 1988-1992 managed, on the one hand, to rebalance the contents by revalorizing the ones that have to do with the humanistic and artistic dimension of culture and, on the other hand, by providing an opening towards the contents related to the new electronics and informatics technologies, might be a good example as well for the Romanian curricular reform. In France as well, from an actually curricular aspect, we are dealing with the same re-situation of forgotten contents and consequently the new educations might fill the gap present today in the pupils' and students' education.

Demands for the adaptation of the physical education teacher's personality in a democratic society

The Greeks invented the (political) democracy in which all the citizens of the polis took part in the debates that concerned them (the slaves did not participate, yet they were considered citizens). Later on, Rousseau created the theory of the popular sovereignty: each citizen of a country is the titleholder of a share of power which, by contract, he puts in common with all the others, under the protection and the leadership of a general will (manifested through universal vote and respecting the majority rule). Lincoln defined democracy as being the governing of the people by the people, for the people. Democracy represents a style inherent to the society, which can be defined as an ethos and a way of living. As principle of educational policy aiming to equalize the

chances to obtain school / academic success, in the conditions of a high-quality training, the democratization of education supposes the system's availability to answer certain vital needs for the postmodern society, which involves as well a change of perception in the direction of the formation of the teacher's personality, starting from the ways he can use in order to create and develop the personality of the one he educates. In this context, the democratization and the humanization of the training cannot be achieved without the differentiation of the instructive-educative strategies in agreement to the psychological particularities of the people concerned by the educational process [5]. The education for democracy highlights the fact that the democratic values are absolutely necessary in order to exert human rights and man's fundamental freedoms. This supposes the access to a specific culture, consisting in a set of beliefs, attitudes, values and norms meant to support the participation to the improvement of the quality of life. As long as the purposes and the goals of instruction are imposed from outside the school (continuing to neglect the importance of the human factor in pedagogy) the declarations of democratization and humanization, and student-centeredness remain unattainable wishes. The problems characterizing today's preoccupations of our society – environmental pollution, increased criminality, terrorism and violence, corruption, poverty, drug consumption, the existence of illiteracy justify us to consider that man has invented all kind of ideals and concepts to argument his anti-human behavior. Under these circumstances, we need to reconsider the model of the personality of the physical education teacher from the perspective of its spiritual dimension as well. This means that the democratization of education supposes and imposes a professional model in agreement with the Truth, with Goodness, Beauty, Justice, Liberty. Among the positive transformations that occurred after December 1989 in the Romanian society, there is as well the possibility for the individual to think, speak and act freely, relating himself to the fundamental values, which allow an education in the spirit of cultural pluralism, the intercultural ethics allowing the formation for a harmonious life in the multicultural societies. This supposes the need to reshape the values of the educational ideal of the modern times, so as to correspond to the needs of interculturality and to the needs of an axiological education. Any professionalization model resounds with the social changes inside and outside school, and the reform of the training of the teaching staff in general and especially of those in the domain we approached in particular, is a universal phenomenon, crossing all the educational systems and becoming a priority if the educational policies. Value democratization, axiological competence do not reside only in the capacity of a correct discrimination among values, but supposes the operative introduction of value-related grids and landmarks from whose perspective the different cultural products should be reported and interpreted. The promotion of the axiological autonomy assures the individual and collective spiritual freedom. [6]. A man without a right axiological conscience is consequently a great danger, because the lack of sense of his life conveys a lack of sense to the others. To determine the sense of life is to indicate the supreme values man should aspire to. A correctly understood freedom supposes an inner hierarchy of values, a determination according to every one's calling, a certain discipline. From the perspective of the creation of values, the teacher's personality can be seen from the outside from a threefold perspective: openness towards the outside, receptiveness to everything that surrounds us; internal processing of the data obtained; final realization, the expression, the production of his personality in relation to the demands of social development [11]. It is necessary for the educator to become a model. That is why we consider it necessary for the teacher to adhere to authentic values, to convey knowledge and to train from their perspective, to continually improve himself and to create starting from them.

Problem Solution

The contemporary reality proves that the school's role has not diminished; on the contrary, it has become increasingly complex, restating the idea according to which we need a dynamic formative education, centered on authentic values. In the actual society, characterized by economic, political and cultural mobility, the new educational order cannot be conceived without the vanguard of the theoretical pedagogical trend and of the educational praxis. The social status of the physical education teacher, in the circumstances of the actual society placed under the pressure of globalization, ecological danger, leisure time increase as well as the increase in the demands concerning the spending of this leisure time, is more and more complex. This thing obliges the teacher to revise the main principles of his educative approach from the perspective of the formative character and so to act accordingly from a behavioral viewpoint. The multitude of the educational principles, methods and forms of evaluation can be summed up mainly in three aspects, namely the normative one, the one that refers to the object of study and the one concerning the subjective side. The first concerns the educational goals, the second refers to the contents of the domain and the means of realization, especially to their methodological and practical assessment, while the visualization of the subjective aspect supposes the quantitative and qualitative accumulations of the process of training and development of the human body and soul. The body and soul of the young population depends on the spirit of the period (times) they live in. This factor "time" has to be part of education, and consequently of physical education, too, through the implementation of a new conception of regarding its realization. The contemporary school can no longer avoid the interdisciplinary problematics pertaining to all the professions and all the citizens able to fulfill the social, ethical and political roles incumbent to them. It has been noticed that development cannot take place without peace, that peace cannot be authentic

without respecting the human rights and assuring the fundamental freedoms, and that, in their turn, these freedoms and rights are an illusion where misery, hunger and illiteracy reign.

The education for human rights relies on the principles laying at the basis of the “UN Charter”, on the “Universal declaration of human rights” and on the international pacts concerning human rights. So, it has to give the same importance to the economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, and to the individual and collective rights. U.N.I.C.E.F., an organism of U.N.O., has an important role in the promotion of the politics of social protection of the child, in the promotion of the child’s rights and within these rights, of the right to education. Education must encourage the attitudes of tolerance, respect and solidarity, inherent to human rights, must inform on human rights and determine an understanding and an awareness able to reinforce the universal efforts in favor of these rights.

The education for democracy and participation has acquired a special place in the curriculum of certain countries. This can be an application of the education for human rights, aiming to prepare the students for their affirmation in the organizational, relational area. The educative process should be itself democratic, based on participation and conceived in such a way as to allow the individuals and the civil society to improve the quality of their life. School needs to collaborate with other social actors within a principle admitted by everybody in the democratic societies, namely the principle according to which school takes part in the determination of the equality of chances.

The problem that emerges is whether or not the contemporary man is able to submit his behavior to the ideal of assuring a good future for the next generations and whether or not the teacher can remain uninvolved, indifferent.

Conclusion

During this period of deep changes, in an open and democratic society, continually creating and recreating new axiological codes, in which the axiological orientation of the young generation encounters numerous obstacles, the educator’s role is increasing. Will the 21st century be an axiocentric century? The option for particular values can be a good opportunity for identifying the features, the elements defining the physical education teacher in his didactic activity. The shifting of the teacher’s or the student’s interest towards the world of values is a reality that we cannot ignore in the long and difficult process of the students’ personalities’ training. The physical education teacher, as bearer of differences, is always looking for his identity and obliged to shape his personality on the basis of the demands coming out of the problematics of the society in which he lives and in which education has always had an important word to say. In relation to the optimization of the educational process from an interdisciplinary perspective, the behavior of the physical education teacher will be characterized by: interest for cooperation, assuring a stimulating climate, promoting democratic relationships, keeping a balance between exigency and indulgence, accentuating the affective domination, stimulating participation and open communication.

As the teacher is the one who mediates and personalizes each variable of the educational approach specific to this domain, he has the duty to be aware of the values that have to be promoted in society and to shape his professional style according to the demands presented above.

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