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pp.163-172

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Axiological Dimension of Exercising Professional Roles by the Teaching Staff According to the Pedagogue George Văideanu

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Abstract

The training of trainers constitutes a challenging theoretical and applicative approach which has caused relevant reflection in all times and important cultural areas throughout the world. This study synthesises a whole range of aspects on the issue of exercising roles by the teaching staff as having been structured by the pedagogue George Vaideanu (1924-2014), a professor of the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iasi between 1964 and 1996. This study predominantly deals with axiological dimension of exercising professional roles; it points out the presence of interest in the training of trainers in pedagogy and it emphasises references in Professor George Vaideanu’s vision on the characteristics of the axiological dimension of teaching. While stating the special importance of the spiritual and cultural values to educational act and while observing the force that education owns to model people mentalities on a planetary level, George Vaideanu considers that, in future, the whole acting range of training of trainers will more and more obviously turn into a strategic approach endowed with a decisive value for axiological and existential meaning of humanity.

Keywords

Training of trainers, professionalization, values.

Prolegomenon

Training of specialised staff to perform educational roles on an institutional level represents a major topic of reflection on training of human personality. The idea having been widely spread by pedagogical writings between the 50s and the 60s – “it is not about professors who are exceptional human beings, but it is about their exceptional mission” – constitutes a message which worth being revalued, George Vaideanu claims in the context of the 90s, but especially from the perspective of future

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novelties (Vaideanu, 1988, p. 271). Before the issue of education be thematically atomised (currently reflected by the comprehensive image of branches or areas of the educational sciences and pedagogical sciences respectively - cf. Debesse, Mialaret, 1969; Mialaret, 1985; Garrido, 1995; Negreţ-Dobridor, 2005), the subject addresses the issue of the person who accomplishes the training act has more and more clearly come into view with centuries, although it was related to interventions which have not always explicitly or implicitly aimed at it. Being coined by different linguistic formulas (didactic tutor/ Clement of Alexandria, teacher or school apostle and not Christian apostle, instructor / school teacher, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, minister/ Herbart, educator/ educator of educator, trainer/ trainer of trainers, professor and so on), the teaching staff and its activity have been assimilated to a major investigating areal centred on a sum of issues of exceptional complexity: selection mechanisms of the persons who are willing to teach, desirable characteristics of the institutions proving for teaching training programme, and for training of trainers involved in professionalization of the teaching staff, specific feature of the approach on the training of trainers (communication of contents, assessment of activities and products), learning outcomes whom professors should make proof of, intervention categories for professional improvement, lifelong learning of the teaching staff, meaning and conditions of improvement of social prestige, moral and material statute of teaching, etc.

Professor George Vaideanu's Idea on Exercising Teaching as a Profession –A Romanian Referential Contribution

Name of the pedagogue George Văideanu of Iasi (1924-2014), professor of the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iasi is associated, within the Romanian and International area, to an extremely comprehensive research question: aesthetic culture and education, intellectual education, curriculum theory, theory of pedagogical contents, theory of educational finalities, issue of technology in education, educational policies on a global level, pedagogical research, training of trainers, a.s.o.

Training of trainers represents a challenging topic to any person interested in educational act, but to the pedagogue George Vaideanu, constant approaching of different aspects circumscribed to our theme (in articles, studies, books or national and international reports) proves that, beyond any privileged importance of education proper, the issue of

specialised training for formative activity owns a particular existential value to people, human groups and humanity as a whole as well. Neither of the aspects having been approached by Professor George Vaideanu lacks connection to the question of exercising specific roles by teachers. Therefore, whenever the issue of aesthetic culture in schools and aesthetic education is brought into debate, there is also an emphasis on those aspects to be rethought, re-contextualised while approaching initial and lifelong training of the teaching staff: issues related to initial training of teachers to be through the system of activities of the teaching traineeship with a view to proper accomplishment of aesthetic training; the issue of lifelong training and substantiation of decision-making while structuring working methods (preponderantly) oriented towards past (conservatory attitudes) or present, respectively future (open, flexible attitudes); the issue of emotional commitment which professors are required to take in order to give an authentic and complete content to aesthetic education (especially when reporting to characteristics of children, trained young people). Likewise, in the context of analysis of the impact of technology on educational mechanisms, Professor George Vaideanu undoubtedly specifies the idea that beyond the whole tools given by the formula *technology of the learning process* (didactic movie, television and audio-video tapes), it should be understood as a paradigm, as a view on the educational – training process, but also as an “attitude of trainers to their own activity” (Vaideanu, 1988, p. 201).

In his far reaching writings or his smaller-sized ones, in his taking up position on it in his early career, during his career or at the end of it, in his full scientific and human maturity, George Vaideanu trenchantly expresses his appreciation to cultural and spiritual (scientific, technical / technological, philosophical, moral, aesthetic, etc.) values and claims their importance within the field of education. In this perimeter, values are being referred to in multiple stances (Stan, 2015, pp. 11-12): values-finalities, goals of education, values-contents of training, in general, and essential message in the approach on training of trainers, in particular, values-contexts of achieving human personality modelling and values-conditions of effective exercising of professional roles by the teaching staff.

In our study we make reference to value with the meaning having been granted by Kluckhohn (apud. Pop, 2002, p. 103), respectively the vision, the implicit or explicit idea on “what is being desirable” to occur in relation to purposes of an action, ways and means required by the development of the action. Having also in view the specific state of pedagogical values which “represent those axiological structures involved

on the level of (macrostructural – microstructural) finalities and strategies (principles-methods) of education, having been determined within the context of the relationships of currentteological determination which exist between social system – educational system – educational process” (Cristea, 2000, p. 375). Moreover, in our analysis, we also consubstantially integrate the idea of *value orientation* since whenever a value is declaratively accepted by a person, the substantiation of the value becomes essential to our behaviour to nature /environment and to people, in inter human relationships(apud. Pop, 2002, p. 103), either on a real level, or potential level, as an imperative.

Major Tendencies in Exercising Professional Roles by the Teaching Staff after 1990

Future and education for future.Concretisation of teachers’ roles in formative interaction with children and young people is constantly associated, in Professor George Vaideanu’s writings, to the dimension of desirability. Based on socio-cultural determinations, on motivations of economic becoming, on dynamics of psychic life of people within contexts facing multiple and alert novelty, but also based on some complex pedagogical reasoning, the configuration of *what is desirable* opens assured perspectives towards assertion of an aggregate amount of message with axiological dimension. If desirable engages unavoidable reference to future, the pedagogue of Iasi accomplishes more than other analysts of the educational phenomenon, an extremely consistent reflection on the temporal dimension of future in connection to the work of the teaching staff.

Since the educator (wherever he is) is encouraged to be as much as possible attentive to tendencies of world evolution, of humankind becoming, the pedagogical theory is being enriched by the imperative of professors’ involvement in approaches on *education for future*. This new dimension of training requires that trainers should be aware that they themselves could be both the sources of such an educational support, and the origin of its being neglected or occulted; “probably, Vaideanu claims, it is not the knowledge of the future that blocks the education for future, but it is excesses, and especially excesses of the history teachers, literature teachers and philosophy teachers, who, (...) who would rather stumble themselves in more or less picturesque details, sayings and events, than raise themselves to the level of significances and interpretations” (Vaideanu, 1988, p. 186). While preparing children and young people for

the future (a fact unanimously and permanently accepted), the teacher of the 90s is invited to study thoroughly *characteristics of the future marked by extremely quick and profound changes in knowledge*, in general, in science /scientific research, technology /information technology, etc., in particular. Not only should each change harmoniously be understood and assimilated to normal and balanced way of life of people, but also the overall phenomenon of multiple (scientific, technical economic, social, cultural, etc.) changes having occurred on planetary level. Furthermore, George Vaideanu would draw the attention that one should not leave aside the fact that aforementioned changes concomitantly encompasses spiritual and moral and intellectual metamorphoses whose meanings and contents would be transmitted to children and young people “*provided that they should be well understood and applied by educators and educational researchers*”. From these reasons, the pedagogue explains, in all projects of educational reforms in the world, training of the teaching staff and activity of scientific research of education are being treated as “*fundamental levers to renew education and assure for its relevance*” (Vaideanu, 1988, p. 269). Due to their ability to assure cultural and educative autonomy for each nation and due to their multiplying effect the two states of social activity acquire an indubitable value on a community level.

The Future and the New Roles of the Teachers. Correlation between two variables – education and future –in the explanatory paradigm of Professor George Vaideanu generates a comprehensive situation with a genuine aspect; on the one hand, the future of (humankind/ children and young people) is that which requires a certain profile of the trainers and, on the other hand, the same temporal reference determines a mechanism, a system of procedures which is being determined by initial and lifelong training of trainers and by its reference to values. Under these circumstances, education of educators should be seen as an intervention whose rhythm is even more dynamic than the renewal of the modelling process of children and young people personality. Therefore educators of educators should assume roles of an overwhelming complexity and this motivates request for their pedagogical training (on university or post-university levels, lifelong /continuous learning) and for their taking full responsibility of self-education, auto-didacticism (Vaideanu, 1988, p. 270); “*there is no training prospective for future educators without or outside the (more comprehensive) educational prospective. Answers to how should educators of the school of tomorrow be trained ?*, the professor of Iasi would conclude, derives directly from the characteristics of the teaching structures, contents and technologies in relation to education or educated

in the decade to come” (Vaideanu, 1988, p. 271). While reconfiguring professional competencies of the teachers in pre-higher education, universities and university staff are the agents who are being applied for to maximal levels; there is a very strong connection, Vaideanu claims, between the pedagogical quality of the university staff and pedagogical and social effectiveness of the teaching – learning processes (Vaideanu, 1986, pp. 2-3; Văideanu, 1982, p. 614).

Moreover, while selectively revalued the conclusions to a comparative study of the OECD in the 80s (apud. Vaideanu, 1983, p. 113), professor Vaideanu would place at the disposal of the teaching staff of Romania (a few years later, in 1988) an amount of requirements for the school educator of the 2000s and the decades following it (Vaideanu, 1988, p. 274):

- Increased attention to affective development of students.
- To get habilitation for being able to diagnose learning difficulties of students and be open to specialised teamworking on identified cases.
- To be able to adapt oneself to activity modes in order to provide for support to each and every student and to the whole class along the learning process.
- To be able to properly determine educational goals specific to each school and to concerned working level. To practice working within team of teachers (design, accomplishment and assessment of activity).
- To be able to support cooperation /partnership with parents, local communities and authorities and representatives of the cultural institutions.
- To be able to have a constant dialogue with his own students in order to “help them to participate to the process of their training proper, while understanding pedagogical meaning of the used methods”.
- To be able to objective self-assessment of activity (methods having been used, materialised outcomes, designed solutions).

Whereas future brings to the life of people, groups and humanity quantitative and qualitative novelties as a whole and unique to historical becoming of the planet, then all that is worth being followed by each and every teaching staff in their *own career* should reflect genuine elements offered by the future. Professor Vaideanu anticipates that professors will

be more and more interested in easy and prompt access to information, in effectiveness of communication, and understanding of the environment, but also in lucid decoding of configured events by spiritual key. This latter component also includes accomplishment of forecasting /prediction, as well as identification and classification of values, understanding of the man and society (while making references to developing professions, self-education, working, man survival and perspectives of humanity) and eventually obtain personal skills. For example, in the particular case of intellectual education of young people, the pedagogue of the university of Iasi claims that it “will always and largely depend on professors’ ability to work not only as good specialists, but also as pedagogues of specialisations, while registering their efforts to the perspective of the educational ideal” (Vaideanu, coord., 1971, p. 9). Even integration proper of some types/categories of contents, belonging to either science, or arts to the offer for children and young people should be adjusted by their axiological analysis; the process will help educator to avoid facile solutions, exaggerations and single-sidedness (Vaideanu, coord., 1971, p. 8). The whole range of modernising approaches on intellectual education should be placed, as the pedagogue of Iasi would claim it, both under the sign of the aesthetic and pedagogical (Vaideanu, coord., 1971, pp. 206-223).

As it could be noticed, the teaching staff is required to own a vision on their own professional roles and it is essentially different from sociologistic approaches, centred on (predilected /exclusive) individual training for society. The person should be supported to acquire both physical harmony and grace (through sports and physical education), hygiene (through education for health), healthy/ rational health (education of consumers), behavioural self-control and self-protection, personal security (through education for personal development, for success), and ability to attend social life (through social/civic/political education), aptitude to meditate (spiritual/ religious education), ability to self-motivation and self-knowledge /self-education (Vaideanu, 1988, p. 185-186).

Future and educational finalities. According to pedagogue George Vaideanu, finalities constitute essential references to teachers in their approach to induce proper, authentic and representative meanings to acts they render materialised through interaction with the educated. Expression of the desirable having been conceived according to strict value options, finalities should be everywhere associated to issues of major and global interests, present but also valid to humanity in the future as well, such as protection of peace, observance of human rights, provision of

chances to attend personal development, social and political life, protection of health and natural environment, etc. (Vaideanu, 1988, p. 176). If, currently, attention of the trainers is directed to operational objectives (characteristic to interventions to each didactic class), the pedagogue of Iasi draws the attention that the goals themselves, no matter how appropriate to some punctual situations they might be, they should justify themselves and be motivated by the validity of their contributions to a larger, more comprehensive and perspective project. Such a project is indicated by the substance itself of the educational finalities; from this perspective, it is extremely relevant what professor Vaideanu states in the same referential writing having been mentioned before: “no matter the level of their working, educators should be endowed with required culture to be able to see where operational objectives eventually lead to during development of the teaching and extracurricular processes. Therefore, no matter how rigorous the preparation of the processes might be and no matter how many feed-backs would operate between them and their students, their work would take place to the level of some simple craftsmen” (Vaideanu, 1988, p. 178).

Since they own a great diversity (which characterises all areas of training and the whole range of the educational process), finalities addressing the person (formation of analysis, synthesis, comparative, differentiating skills and so on, as well as configuration and practice of criticism /creativity/moral autonomy requires harmonious completion by finalities related to the quality of social life (formation of democratic spirit, practice of participation to the life of their affiliated group, proof of respect towards fellows under the form of patriotism, humanism and solidarity, etc.).

Identifying the requirements of the future will be concomitant, George Vaideanu would claim, not only to reformulation of finalities of education, but also to profound transformation of its contents. They will therefore become, according to Ed. Cornish, part of a “total curriculum” (Vaideanu, 1988, p. 184). Its content should reflect the way in which it is absolutely necessary to modify professional roles of the teaching staff. Contents should be selected while having clearly in view system of the training intentionality, respectively the ideal, finalities and objectives of a certain type of formative intervention. It is very important, as professor of Iasi would draw our attention, that “renewal of contents should become a professional and moral satisfaction to educator, pupils and students and not a concern or a fear” (Vaideanu, 1999, p. 9).

Conclusions

The educational future of the school represents the fundamental ordaining reference to the structuring of the characteristics of exercising professional roles by the teaching staff; “eventually, George Vaideanu would conclude, all educational innovation alters the educational process and they get finalised according to the quality of the educators’ activity” (Văideanu, 1973, p. 78). Under these circumstances, the imperative of quality eventually becomes a fight for training and advanced training of the teaching staff. The numerous aspects of the educational process have been understood on the whole and not only in relation to the component connected to exercising of roles of the teaching staff while they have been related to their axiological dimension and that provides professor Vaideanu’s vision with the characteristics of a pedagogy of values in the proper sense of it; “this orientation in pedagogy lays a special emphasis on the importance of general values of an object, of some ideas or facts” and it aims at “promoting some higher goals, wishes and plausible intentions, superior aspirations” (Manolache, Muster, Nica, Vaideanu, 1979, p. 326).

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