

THE MODERN TRENDS IN TEACHER TRAINING IN THE EU

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Abstract: The basic principles in the member-countries of the EU, upon which the modern trends in teacher training are based, are the following: 1. Professionalism; 2. Alternative institutions where the training is carried out; 3. Permanent training; 4. Learning through practice; 5. Team work in the assessment of the quality or the result of the training; 6. Adjustment of the training models on the grounds of the general and school culture.

Is there anything we can say regarding the reasons why we lack teaching staff that our schools and our county need? The answer is obvious, however, the issue is not dealt with at any level. The status quo remains.

Discussion: There is a high percentage of university professors (at the teacher training faculties) who are not quality trainers.

The conditions in the institutions are bad in terms of: lack of technical tools, great number of students; lack of mentoring staff in the schools; insufficient literature that is needed for quality training, etc.

The curricula and syllabi of the faculties.

The forms and models that are used for teacher training are inadequate to the needs of the future teachers for quality instruction in the school. There is no support for permanent education.

The employed staff is resilient to changes and demonstrates aversion towards further training and improvement from a professional point of view.

The eminent teachers in the schools set new demands related to the objective conditions, but they are not given support by anyone.

Keywords: teacher training, modern trends, professionalism, team work, permanent education, curricula, syllabus

Tendencies in the modern concept of education

The modern didactic tendencies were founded on the grounds of the positive heritage of the historical development of methodology and didactics. What was good in the previous

didactic concepts (Comenius, Herbart, Dewey, etc.) is taken as the foundation upon which the modern didactics and methodology are developed. These are the essential characteristics and changes in the modern didactics:

☞ Modern didactics is based on gnoseology (theories of cognition) and the materialistic philosophy. Starting from this, instruction is seen as a cognitive process moving across the line: sensory perception – understanding and learning – practical verification of the acquired knowledge and skills. The sensory perception of reality, the intellectual processing of sensory data and the practical application pave the way of cognition. However, modern didactics also accepts the deductive way – from generalization towards individual examples. The modern didacticists completely accept the accomplishments of the cognitive process and found their didactic concepts on these grounds.

☞ The exclusion of the previous didactic concepts is rejected. Universal recipes, such as transfer of ready-made knowledge, individual solving of problems or learning by discovery, are not accepted. Each of them has its strong and weak sides. The teachers need to make a decision on the grounds of the nature of the content and the composition of the class.

☞ The role of the teachers should not be brought down to being a source of knowledge. They need to manage instruction, in which the students need to be as active and independent as possible. The instructional process is rationalized: getting maximum effects with spending as little time, energy and means as possible. The teachers and the students need to be collaborators. The objectives of the instruction can be achieved only in such collaborative and democratic climate. The objectives of the instruction do not cover only acquisition of knowledge, but also skills for its use, as well as creative thinking and further independent learning. The students need to be engaged in the planning of instruction and the form of the class. Their needs and interests need to be respected.

☞ Active learning is focused on acquiring knowledge and skills, of joining two elements, i.e. using knowledge and lifelong learning.

☞ Changes were made in the choice of content for the syllabi. The exclusion of the followers of Herbart is not accepted. They stood for firmly fixed syllabi. The model of the progressivists, who demanded that the instruction is programmed according to the needs and interests of the students, is not accepted either. Today, in most of the countries, differentiated syllabi and curricula are used. They have a shared part and an elective part, which the students choose according to their interests.

☞ Many didacticists make efforts to use the theory of information in instruction, because

instruction itself is a system of transfer of information, thus it is subject to the rules of informatics. By using this system, there is continuous feedback, which also results in control of instruction, which is rare in traditional instruction.

Principles of the modern tendencies in instruction

The basic principles in the member-countries of the EU, upon which the modern trends in teacher training are based, are the following:

- Professionalism;
- Alternative institutions where training is carried out;
- Permanent training;
- Learning through practice;
- Team work in the assessment of the quality or the result of the training;
- Adjustment of the training models on the grounds of the general and school culture.

❖ **The professionalism** covers a wide spectrum of knowledge about the profession, independence of the teacher training system, independence of the teachers in the realization of the activities in the classroom, wide reflexive professionalism, continuous intellectual engagement for achieving better results through changes, necessary general structure for all teachers, and continuous research in instruction.

❖ **Alternatives of the institutions** where training is carried out refers to flexibility, since training can be carried out at institutions whose basic activity is research. Instruction does not have to be carried out only at related teacher training faculties. The trainer (professor, mentor, instructor) can carry out the training through didactic, i.e. pedagogical, psychological and other kinds of workshops. What is important is for the candidate to complete the professional syllabi regulated at a national level. The flexible system of training reduces the risk from bad professional training, because at the teacher training faculties usually there are professors who work for 30-40 years and do not implement new forms or work and repeat the unproductive and outdated stereotypes.

The existence of specialized training centers, which will conduct specific programs (didactic, psychological, pedagogical disciplines, etc.), will result in a high degree of professionalism and expertise, and produce the needed mentor staff that will have an important role in the chain of institutions. This staff is going to share its knowledge and experience in practice.

❖ **The permanent training of the teachers** is individualized. The permanent training is a continuation or part of the initial training. The permanent training includes new content

which explains what has changed in the knowledge acquired at a specific faculty. This means that the outdated is being updated.

The teacher training institutions are integrated in the permanent training (for example, the faculties of pedagogy cover the pedagogical, didactic and methodological content, and the faculties for social and cultural disciplines cover the content from that area).

The schools that have made the greatest changes in a positive sense and which are open to changes, i.e. for modern tendencies in the work, are included in the permanent training.

In this way, all institutions will integrate in one, encompassing institution (for example: 15 years ago, the counties of the OCD took an initiative for the permanent training to be carried out only at the schools).

❖ **Learning through practice**(experiential learning) leads to better and well-founded results, because it is based on several principles:

- The role of the theory is only to help the practice;
- The theory is set in function of solving the problems;
- Exchange of experience;
- The topics that process (explain) the completeness (knowledge acquired through practice – experience) are more useful;
- It determines which learning place is better: the one where you use knowledge or the faculty (the amphitheatre or the classroom);

For example: A student can get a good training in psychology, pedagogy, philosophy at a faculty, but it cannot help solve the problems in the classroom.

❖ **Team work in the assessment of the quality or the result of the training.**

Whether a candidate gets a degree for a completed training is decided by:

- ✓ The professors
- ✓ The mentors
- ✓ The didacticians
- ✓ The methodologists

The team reviews the documents (from the file) for how well the candidates for teacher did in the work with children, how they treated the children, parents, colleagues, their expertise and professionalism.

There are no alternative institutions in our country

Is there anything we can say regarding the reasons why we lack teaching staff that our schools and our county need? The answer is obvious, however, the issue is not dealt with at

any level. The status quo remains. Arguments:

There is a high percentage of university professors (at the teacher training faculties) who are not quality trainers because they lack school practice, have not attained the hidden curriculum, are resilient to changes, hold a single position for a long time, use stereotypes and incomplete norms.

The conditions in the institutions are bad in terms of:

- lack of technical tools;
- great number of students;
- lack of mentoring staff in the schools;
- insufficient literature that is needed for quality training, as well as other shortcomings.

The curricula and syllabi at the teacher training faculties are not designed according to the needs for quality training, but rather on the grounds of the subjective opinions and needs of the professors to add or remove subjects and lessons. The curricula and syllabi are developed by random professors gathered in teams without any criteria for expertise, professionalism and potential to design good curricula and syllabi.

The forms and models that are used for teacher training are inadequate to the needs of the future teachers for quality instruction in the school – to become teachers that the schools need, i.e. teachers that the country needs, namely teachers who will train the students to successfully integrate in the collective, their future job, and life.

The hidden and obvious criterion is not studied. Without it, it is not possible to reach the necessary educational level and quality for the users of the educational services, who will help the country develop further.

There is no propaganda for permanent education, i.e. the institutions do not offer information about the types of training they provide.

The employed staff is resilient to changes and demonstrates aversion towards further training and improvement from a professional point of view.

The eminent teachers in the schools set new demands related to the objective conditions, but they are not given support by anyone.

Possible guidelines

What is needed is improvement of the working ambient at the teacher training faculties and the schools, especially in terms of technical means, teaching tools, expendable materials, as well as professional and vocational literature;

The forms that are carried out need to follow the trend and take the structure of the ones

that are affirmed and proved in the European teaching institutions;

Law sanctions to be introduced regarding the right and obligation of the teachers for permanent training and specialization in the job and profession by the means of good rulebooks and statutes;

To increase the level of supplies of the libraries with professional and vocational literature and periodical that will be available to all teachers the entire time. This is explained by the fact that no education can be provided without adequate literature, and it is so obvious that our libraries and schools lack literature of this kind.

To cultivate forms and approaches that will motivate the staff to specialize and improve further.

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