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Address: 176 Splaiul Unirii , Bucharest  
Phone: (021) - 330.79.00, 330.79.11, 330.79.14  
Fax: (021) - 330.87.74  
E-mail: euromentor.ucdc@yahoo.com

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# **EUROMENTOR JOURNAL STUDIES ABOUT EDUCATION**

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# IS THERE A PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN?

GABRIELA POHOAȚĂ\*

[gabriela\\_pohoata@yahoo.com](mailto:gabriela_pohoata@yahoo.com)

CONONA PETRESCU\*\*

[conona57@yahoo.com](mailto:conona57@yahoo.com)

"Philosophizing means answering the questions the children ask themselves with super mature means".

*Lucian Blaga*

"The child is like a mirror that bewilders you a little. Or like a window. The child always intimidates you as if he knows what he knows. You are not mistaken, because his spirit is strong, before you dwarf it."

*Antoine de Saint-Exupery*

**Abstract:** *This text attempts to problematize if philosophy can be practiced by the youngest disciples taking into account that, starting with the current school year 2013-2014, the Ministry of National Education management has decided to introduce Philosophy for children, as an optional discipline in 3rd and 4th grade.*

*If philosophy is regarded as a subject meant to develop the children's thinking and their personality, then we can philosophize at this level, too. But philosophy as an aspiration for wisdom cannot be supported only by the discursive exercise of reason. It needs a revealed background of knowledge to start from and to come back to in its own reflection. Therefore, philosophy means a particular state of mind grafted onto self-knowledge to which the young schoolchild cannot accede yet because he does not have the necessary cognitive experience of decoding the esoteric and consciousness philosophy, regarded as a spiritual phenomenon. The philosophical education in the sense of paideia may begin in childhood and continue throughout life for the development of a harmonious personality.*

**Keywords:** *paideia, children and philosophy, astonishment, thought, personality, axiological intelligence.*

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\* Senior Lecturer PhD., "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University, Bucharest, Romania.

\*\* Lecturer PhD., "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University, Bucharest, Romania.

1. For a preponderantly reproductive education system such as the Romanian one, the introduction of *Philosophy for children* in the 3rd and 4th grade, even if as an optional discipline with only one hour per week, is a sign of great opening and flexibility of a curriculum that starts to become consonant with a modern, transdisciplinary education, able to meet both the external and internal requirements of the students.

Undoubtedly, such an approach is not a purely Romanian initiative. There is an apperceptive background in this respect at the international level, materialized by experiences which have confirmed the fact that initiation into philosophy can start in the small classes, that a *philosophical relationship* can be built with children, as they represent a pure and unperverted universe.

In this respect, we bring into discussion the name of the American Professor Matthew Lipman<sup>1</sup>, who represents a landmark for the *philosophy for children*, making us understand that the *philosophical education* in the sense of *paideia* is a necessity for building an *axiological intelligence* within the child, in other words, for the elevation of the child's spirit.

In his professorship career, Matthew Lipman observed and met many adults who were unable to think logically. Considering that for some of them it was a little late to learn this thing, he thought of implementing the study of logics and philosophy even starting with the kindergarten and continuing with each stage, up to high school. His theory was a challenge for the educational environments in the '70s, especially due to Jean Piaget's<sup>2</sup> well-known and widely accepted conception that children are not able to think about thinking before the age of 11-12 years. It was proved, following the subsequent experiments that it is not like that at all. The preschool and school children who attended Lipman's program achieved high performance in thinking and creativity. That is why, not only did the new theory have a great impact, spreading to many American and foreign schools, but it was also homologated as a state program in the USA in 1986.

2. Lipman started it all with a short story, called *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*<sup>3</sup> written in 1969. This was the first one of a long series of writings on the theme of how to teach young and very young children to think. Gradually, he also developed a complete curriculum with the steps to be followed by children from 6 to 16 in order to assimilate different types of

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Lipman, *Philosophy for children*. Sânziana, Bucharest, Humanitas, 1993.

<sup>2</sup> Jean Piaget, *The Origins of Intelligence in Children*, Bucharest, E.D.P., 1973.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew Lipman, *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*, NJ: IAPC, 1972.



thinking: logical thinking, interrogative thinking, argumentative thinking, critical thinking, verbalized thinking. Within this program of study, the short stories have a central role: that of teaching materials that give ideas, suggestions and pleasure for actual discussions with children. In this respect, a cornerstone for the analyzed problem is the short story *Sânziana*, which was translated into Romanian and published by Humanitas Publishing House in the '90s<sup>4</sup>. It was conceived and written for children of 6-7 years old, but also for those who missed the chance of initiation and want to recover what they didn't learn when they were so young. The main character is *Sânziana*: a girl who thinks a lot, but who hardly ever exteriorizes her feelings. The account of the happenings she goes through is written in a language that initiates children into the practice of comparisons, distinctions and connections in an intelligent and pleasant way. Here is an excerpt that highlights, we can say, the possibility of philosophizing at an early age: *"Today Andrei said: Sânziana never speaks. Maybe she does not really exist! Look, you can see how wrong he is! I might not talk too much, but I think all the time! I think even in my sleep. I do not have crazy dreams. When I sleep, I do nothing but think about the same things which are on my mind when I am awake. (...) and I answered myself. "You stupid girl! If you can doubt, it is impossible not to think! and then, if you think, whatever Andrei may say, you really exist"*.<sup>5</sup> The American professor is right when he allows us to understand that the most frequently asked questions by children are, in fact, the essential questions of philosophy, and their overall discussions are some kind of review of the history of philosophy. The more they bring examples from their own experience, the more children feel the need to discover the meaning of moral concepts and thus they are able to engage in a dialogue with the others going further than we can imagine: "What does good mean when Daddy says that's good?" "Where did my grandfather go after he died?" "Why do we die?" "Do all questions have an answer?" My mom said I judged properly. What did she mean?

The philosophical questions are pure, free from individual, empirical contents. From this perspective, many of the children's interrogations are profound and can generate genuine philosophical discussions.

We consider it interesting to remind in this context that Plato and Aristotle left us a well-known adagio, focused in the assertion: *"the beginning of philosophy is surprise", astonishment.*

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<sup>4</sup> Mattew Lipman, *Philosophy for Children*. op.cit.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem.

Plato in the Dialogue Theaetetus stated: "The quality of wondering is specific to the philosopher; there is no other beginning for philosophy than this".<sup>6</sup> The statement has been extended over the whole Greek philosophy, the inquisitive spirit of the Greeks, wondering at everything that exists and is going on around the world, asking questions and giving just as many answers.<sup>7</sup> **Here is the passage from Aristotle's *Metaphysics*: "For today's people and those of the first times, when they began philosophizing, were driven by wonder."**<sup>8</sup> At the topmost level, the texts under discussion tell us that philosophizing is man's destiny and the principle - or essence - of philosophizing is the miracle.<sup>9</sup>

The manner in which the philosopher resorts to amazement, resembles very closely with the way children wonder; neither by naivety, nor by candor, but by a certain purity and deep innocence, by a sincere contribution, without artificial interface, without interposed sophisticated things, without intellectual and cultural barrier .... in other words, by the very fact of thinking by oneself.

In a theme interview "*Education and Philosophy*" conducted by Ioan Vezeanu<sup>10</sup> with Thiery Menissier, PhD., Senior lecturer at the University of Grenoble, the perspective of the importance of philosophy for children is analyzed and the French teacher, after an experience of teaching 4 lessons of philosophy to children, concludes that the philosophical relationship with children is healthier than the one with adults, as children are able to do a certain dialectic exercise that can mean an initiation into philosophy, which in his view means "problematization of contents". The first of the ideas reached by the French Professor in his philosophical dialogue with the children after the first fifteen minutes of discussion is very interesting: "*Philosophizing means trying to succeed in life*" or, in other words, "*Philosophizing means living better*", what directs to the original calling of philosophy. Here's how philosophy can be a real invitation to reflection, to thinking at the children's level, even if they are not spiritually ready for the invitation to self-knowledge.

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<sup>6</sup> Plato, *Theaetetus* (translation, interpretation and notes by Andrei Cornea), Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 2002, p.155d.

<sup>7</sup> Anton Dumitriu, *Philosophia mirabilis*, Ed. Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 1974, p 30.

<sup>8</sup> Aristotel, *The Metaphysics*, IRI Publishing House, Bucharest, I(A), 2, 982b).

<sup>9</sup> Anton Dumitriu, works cited, p. 31.

<sup>10</sup> Ioan Vezeanu, *Education and Philosophy*, interview with Thiery Menissier, Senior lecturer at the University from Grenoble, Tribuna, no.194, 1-15 Oct. 2010.

*Teaching philosophy means awaking*, which gives this discipline an exceptional *training role*. Philosophy is *telos* (purpose), and in this *telos* philosophy decisively influences the one who is studying, and, indirectly, the others who are looking for the *value of philosophy*. We support this idea with the arguments of the American Professor Lipman, a promoter of philosophy for children: **"To the same extent that philosophy begins with wonder, it is also a reflective dialogue through which ideas enter into the experience of life, enriching it. But these transitions must be facilitated - and maybe one day there will be a literature that will help children to cross the chasm between wonder and reflection, between reflection and dialogue, between dialogue and experience. The impact of such literature on today's children may not be immediately visible. But the impact on tomorrow's adults could be so great that it will make us remember in wonder that to this day we have deprived children of philosophy."**<sup>11</sup>

3. Thus, the approach of the Ministry of National Education signifies a beginning of rethinking the education system, an act of courage, given that, until 1989, philosophy was mistaken for ideology, which led to a distorted understanding of what philosophy really means; the educational profit for this generation, through this decision, is and will be huge in time, because philosophy, undoubtedly, contributes the youngsters' spiritualization making them aware of everyone' role and place in this world.

Of course, in the 3rd and 4th grade, at the discipline "Philosophy for children ", the schoolchildren will learn the steps that involve solving a given problem, how to support a point of view, and how to respect the others' points of view. For a serious approach, I consider it necessary for students to study philosophy like mathematics, throughout their schooling period, because learning philosophy requires a certain understanding, a discursive understanding spread over several years of study.

The perennial philosophical problems themselves, that are recurrent in that they are addressed from antiquity and resumed through ages from one perspective or another, show us that philosophy can be learned and understood along with the development of the cognitive experience and the personality of each person. It is clear that philosophy cannot be learnt by heart. One can really claim to philosophize when one succeeds in

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<sup>11</sup> Lipman, works cited.

ascending to the idea. **The genuine philosophical exercise can be achieved only on a background of inner freedom, of clear thinking and requires: understanding, reasoning, explanation, demonstration and interpretation.**

If we can speak about a philosophy for children, then it is possible and necessary at any age, because man asks himself and formulates questions at any age, what differs is the form of expression, the philosophical language, the attitude towards life and world, towards one's own being.

The poem "Three faces" of the greatest Romanian philosopher and poet from the interwar period, Lucian Blaga, is relevant in this respect<sup>12</sup>:

**The child** laughs:

"Play is love and wisdom!"

**The youngster** sings:

"Love is my wisdom and play!"

**The old man** doesn't talk:

"Wisdom is my love and play"

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<sup>12</sup> L.Blaga, *Poems/Poems of Light*, 1919, edition overviewed by George Ivaşcu, Edition for literature, "Biblioteca pentru toţi" Publishing House, 1968. (translated from Romanian by Lori Tiron-Pandit).

# LES SENS ET LA PERTINENCE D'UNE ÉDUCATION À L'AVENIR

IULIANA PAȘTIN<sup>1</sup>

julpastin@gmail.com

**Abstract:** *The knowledge conveyed in education today cannot ignore the need for a philosophy of the education. Different disciplines such as pedagogy, didactics, psychology of learning, and many others that are regrouped under the name of Science of Education are not sufficient to explain the meanings of education in the future. The philosophy of education in the future which constitutes a starting point for our analysis involves a critical reflection on the problems of education and on the fundamentals of educational activity.*

**Keywords:** *pedagogy, psychology, teaching, education, philosophy, future, critical attitude.*

La philosophie commence là où les choses ne vont pas de soi et où tout ce qui était évident pour tout le monde cesse de l'être. Elle commence peut-être avec l'ironie socratique de la connaissance de soi. Alors, la philosophie de l'éducation sera avant tout une interrogation des gens sur les sens profonds du monde et de la vie. Dans ce sens, la philosophie de l'éducation ne peut être approchée uniquement comme un corpus de connaissances mais plutôt comme une remise en question de tout ce que nous savons ou nous croyons sur l'éducation. Comment peut-on caractériser cette approche, car, comme nous le savons, le philosophe n'est pas un connaisseur absolu, mais on peut philosopher en plusieurs directions: art, politesse, science, langage, éducation, droit, religion, pratiquement, aucun domaine n'échappe à l'interrogation philosophique? C'est d'ailleurs ce qui légitime la philosophie de l'éducation. En outre cette interrogation est radicale, c'est-à-dire qu'il s'agit d'une analyse plus profonde. Pour mieux répondre la question : pourquoi la philosophie de l'éducation il vaudrait mieux tout d'abord éclaircir le sens de l'expression **philosophie de l'éducation**.

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<sup>1</sup> Senior Lecturer PhD., The Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University, Bucharest, Romania.

1. Un premier axiome: la philosophie est avant tout un éveil de l'esprit, comme elle a été définie pendant l'Antiquité. Socrate ne craignait pas de dire aux Athéniens qu'il n'arrêterait pas de les réveiller et, qu'en l'envoyant à la mort, ses ennemis ont choisi de rester en état de sommeil tout le reste de la vie, en ajoutant toutefois qu'une vie sans examen, c'est-à-dire sans interrogations «une vie sans examen ne vaut pas la peine d'être vécue». Héraclite lui-même, il reprochait aux gens de mener même dans un état de veille une vie d'endormis. «mener, tout éveillés, une vie de dormeurs».

*Les trois éléments contraires à la vie sont la folie, l'endormissement de l'esprit et la mort comme le remarquait aussi Aristote dans Protreptique: car, "pour nous, vivre, c'est, être éveillé" (Rémi Brague, Aristote ou la question du monde, 1991:95) <sup>1</sup>*

Peu sont ceux qui aimeraient être ce que le grand savant des temps modernes appelait «ces morts vivants» dans les termes suivants:

*«J'éprouve la plus vive émotion devant le mystère de la vie. Ce sentiment crée le beau et le vrai, encourage l'art et la science. Si l'on ne connaît pas cette sensation on ne peut pas ressentir l'étonnement ou la surprise, l'homme est un mort vivant et ses yeux sont déjà aveugles»<sup>2</sup>*

Donc, la philosophie est un état de veille, une permanente interrogation sur la condition humaine. Nous, les hommes, sommes des êtres extrêmement fragiles, nous naissons vulnérables et nous sommes dans un incessant changement et devenir, dans une permanente transformation.

Quand dans les jardins naît une nouvelle rose, les jardiniers en sont émus et le grand écrivain humaniste Antoine de Saint Exupéry nous le rappelle à la fin de son livre reportage *Terre des hommes* ou dans *Le Petit Prince*.

*On isole la rose, on cultive la rose, on l'arrose, on la favorise. Mais il n'est point de jardinier pour les hommes.<sup>3</sup>*

A une question banale comme celle-ci: quelle heure est-il? le philosophe répond: Que-ce que c'est le temps? Dans le domaine de l'éducation le philosophe ne se demande pas comment guérir les difficultés de la lecture mais plutôt quelle valeur ou quel sens implique le

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<sup>1</sup> Rémi Brague, *Aristote et la question du monde*, Paris, PUF, Coll. Epiméthé, 1991, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> Albert Einstein, *Comment je vois le monde*, trad. Maurice Solovine et Régis Hanrion, Paris, Flammarion, Champs, 1979, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Antoine de Saint Exupéry, *Terre des hommes*, dans „Œuvres, Paris, Gallimard, Pléiade, 1953, p. 260-261.

fait de savoir lire. De nombreux philosophes parmi lesquels Alain, Hannah Arendt dans la *Crise de la culture* ont réagi en ce qu'ils croyaient que c'étaient des dérives, des écarts par rapport au rôle de l'éducation dans le monde. Ce sont eux qui inspirent aujourd'hui aussi dans la société occidentale, notamment en France, le courant républicain. Les notions de transmissions des connaissances, d'intérêt accru de la philosophie pour l'éducation, d'initiation dans la connaissance, ont été remises en question.

Olivier Reboul, l'auteur du livre "*La Philosophie de L'Education*" a désiré qu'on soumette à l'examen critique certains mots devenus slogans tels que: La Nouvelle éducation, L'Ecole Traditionnelle, la Vie ou L'intérêt pour l'apprentissage. Il a montré qu'on ne pouvait pas se contenter d'opposer l'école moderne à l'école traditionnelle de l'obéissance. Selon le philosophe O. Reboul l'éducation ne peut pas être dépourvue de contradictions que nous ne pouvons ignorer parce que celles-ci constituent exactement les données du problème. Nous éduquons les enfants pour les émanciper, les amener à vivre d'une façon indépendante même si cela suppose que ceux-ci ne peuvent pas agir librement quand ils sont petits, étant donné que nous devons exercer sur eux un travail d'éducation, les protéger, leur apprendre à discerner entre le bien et le mal. L'adulte doit discerner le plus souvent, lui-même, entre ce qui est le mieux ou le pire pour l'enfant ou pour le jeune qu'il doit éduquer. O. Reboul ne repousse donc pas la pédagogie, il comprend l'approcher par ses manières d'applications.

Olivier Reboul (1925-1992) a été professeur de philosophie de l'éducation à l'Université de Strasbourg II. Il a écrit surtout sur les slogans, l'endoctrinement, la philosophie de l'éducation, la rhétorique tout comme Kant, Nietzsche, Alain, etc. Il a été aussi préoccupé par l'étude des thèmes concernant certains problèmes de l'éducation tels que: Education selon Alain, Que signifie apprendre? Les Valeurs de l'éducation, etc. Dans le livre *La Philosophie de l'éducation* est entamée une philosophie qui n'a pas la signification d'un corpus de connaissances mais qui signifie une remise en question de tout ce que nous savons ou croyons savoir sur l'éducation. Cela constitue, du point de vue de l'auteur une interrogation sur les sens et les buts de l'éducation et celle-ci est totale: «totale, radicale et vitale».

Le philosophe didacticien O. Reboul se propose de répondre à la question: qu'est-ce que l'éducation? en partant des trois verbes presque synonymes: **élever**, c'est-à-dire éduquer, **enseigner**, transmettre des connaissances à l'école et de **former** ce qui caractérise tout le reste de la vie: *élever, enseigner, former. Le premier renvoie à la famille, le second à l'école, le*

troisième tend, depuis quelque temps, à se substituer à la notion d'éducation, qu'il s'agisse de formation initiale, professionnelle, tout au long de la vie... Substitution, mais aussi, souvent, «exclusion», ce que déplore O. Reboul qui estime « possible, voire souhaitable, de les unir ».<sup>4</sup>

En ce qui concerne le rapport entre la nature et la culture, la philosophie de l'éducation se propose de répondre à la question qui a obsédé tant de générations: nous naissons hommes, c'est-à-dire ayant des caractéristiques essentiellement humaines ou nous le devenons par l'éducation.

*«L'éducation est l'ensemble des processus et des procédés qui permettent à tout enfant humain d'accéder progressivement à la culture, l'accès à la culture étant ce qui distingue l'homme de l'animal»<sup>5</sup>.*

L'éducation se réalise par l'intermédiaire des institutions éducatives: famille, école, université. Nous mentionnons que, bien que la famille ait été longtemps sous-évaluée, elle est quand même celle qui éduque et forme les sentiments du début de la vie. L'école a été longtemps critiquée, elle est pourtant irremplaçable dans le processus éducatif. Voilà pourquoi O.Reboul distingue quelques caractéristiques de l'apprentissage scolaire: *"le savoir scolaire à long terme, organisé, adapté, argumenté, désintéressé"*.

Il n'y a pas de société sans école, comme le souligne le philosophe *«Hors de l'école, point de salut!»* et il faut plaider pour le *«tiers milieu»* éducatif (*mouvement de jeunesse, associations, maisons de la culture...*). C'est la raison pour laquelle nous devons plaider aussi pour une troisième voie dans le domaine de l'éducation: celle intégrée dans des mouvements de la jeunesse, dans des associations, dans des maisons de la culture, etc. Qui dit éducation, dit également pédagogie, c'est-à-dire dans un sens classique, l'art d'éduquer et d'enseigner, de transmettre des connaissances aux autres.

En ce qui concerne le thème des valeurs de l'éducation, assez passé sous silence dans le passé récent, il serait bon d'avoir une approche dans une perspective plus actuelle, pendant une période dans laquelle les responsables de l'éducation: parents, professeurs, administration publique, facteurs du pouvoir semblent incertains, voire indifférents par rapports aux valeurs que l'on doit transmettre.

Pour O. Reboul il n'y a pas d'éducation sans valeurs, même si, comme l'affirment certains chercheurs et philosophes, toutes les valeurs dans

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<sup>4</sup> Kimmel Alain, «Olivier Reboul, La Philosophie de l'éducation», Revue internationale d'éducation de Sèvres, 2002, p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, 24-25.



l'époque contemporaine sont relatives. Le Bien, le Mal, la Justice, etc. peuvent être différemment appréciées en fonction de l'époque, du niveau de développement de la société et du niveau culturel. En même temps, affirmait le philosophe: «*la relativité des valeurs n'exclue pas la nécessité de l'éducation*». Ce qui est important pour bien comprendre, c'est d'apprécier correctement ce qui vaut la peine d'être enseigné aux jeunes, sans tomber dans l'indifférence ou sans exagérer, en imposant une certaine idéologie.

Eduquer, signifie nécessairement adopter un projet, celui de créer un type d'homme épanoui auquel on aspire. L'éducation est définie moins par un système cohérent de valeurs que par les enjeux plus ou moins contradictoires, en opposition les unes par rapport aux autres. O. Reboul appelle antinomies ces oppositions de thèses et anti thèses telles que: éduquer l'enfant pour lui-même ou pour le monde tel quel, pour la société, etc. En fonction de ces antinomies il y a la possibilité d'une réflexion sérieuse et d'une action en conséquence. La pédagogie n'est pas une technique, mais plutôt un mélange de connaissances scientifiques, d'affirmations philosophiques et de passions car a-t-on le droit de se servir de mensonges pédagogiques, de manipulations?

Cependant, on ne peut pas faire l'éducation sans normes et sans règles, sans modèles. L'enfant apprend à devenir adulte, l'école devenant ainsi une petite société, une démocratie en miniature. Etre adulte, cela suppose être responsable de ses actes, des conséquences de ses actes, être à même d'éduquer les jeunes. L'adulte doit être un exemple, le fonctionnement de l'école doit être basé sur des valeurs telles que: justice, égalité, responsabilité. L'école ne doit pas être réduite à la simple administration ou à des contraintes. Il ne s'agit pas non plus d'indifférence et d'indolence. C'est alors le rôle du philosophe qui doit toujours intervenir pour développer une pédagogie implicite, même si cela concerne des termes très généraux. Nous ne pourrions pas nous prononcer sur la nature des savoirs sans en être conscients de la manière qui nous permet d'y accéder. L'empiriste ne sera pas d'accord avec le naturaliste pourtant leur rôle ne s'exclue pas.

Toutefois, «*la relativité des valeurs n'abolit pas l'éducation, mais l'universalité de l'éducation*». Il faut se garder, avertit l'auteur, de la confusion entre «relativité» et «relativisme». La première peut être acceptée, le second, pour lui, est, à proscrire.... À cette interrogation, Reboul répond: «Ce qui unit et ce qui libère».<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Kimmel Alain, «Olivier Reboul, *La Philosophie de l'éducation*, op.cit., p. 26.

On impose par conséquent à l'éducateur une éthique. Cette éthique se définit comme une mesure de la responsabilité, de la sollicitude par rapport à l'enfant, au jeune. Ce dernier doit être respecté non seulement comme tout être humain, mais il faut aussi tenir compte que celui-ci a besoin de l'éducateur pour s'humaniser, pour accéder à la liberté intellectuelle et à ses propres responsabilités.

### **Conclusion**

Le problème qui se pose n'est pas seulement la nécessité de l'éducation mais aussi la manière dans laquelle nous éduquons les jeunes et dans notre cas, dans les Universités. O. Reboul souligne un problème de très grande actualité que l'Université est un établissement qui allie l'enseignement Supérieur à la recherche fondamentale et les fonctions sociales tellement nécessaires à la formation des adultes.

*Quant à l'université, elle est toujours confrontée à une série de dilemmes: enseignement de la culture ou formation professionnelle? fonction d'enseignement ou de recherche? sélection ou accès pour tous? ... Pour l'auteur, l'université est essentiellement une institution qui réunit «enseignement supérieur», «recherche fondamentale» et fonctions sociales («collation des grades et formation des adultes»<sup>7</sup>.*

La philosophie de l'éducation doit répondre à toutes les provocations du type: Comment pouvons-nous attirer les étudiants pour qu'ils puissent participer avec des arguments au débat des grands problèmes de notre temps? Le rôle essentiel de l'éducation au niveau supérieur, c'est-à-dire dans l'Université est d'apprendre aux jeunes à penser. Les étudiants pourraient ainsi obtenir un diplôme qui leur atteste certaines habilités techniques mais sans avoir développé une certaine manière de penser, ce qui ne caractérise pas une vraie éducation car ils auront peut être du mal à accomplir leur rôle de vrais citoyens. Cette éducation de la pensée constitue un élément fondamental dans la formation de l'esprit critique et de la capacité des jeunes à formuler des jugements de valeur.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibidem, p.29.

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# SURMOUNTING BARRIERS IN THE WAY OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION - THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

DUMITRU BORTUN<sup>1</sup>

bortund@yahoo.com

*"... we must assume a maximum responsibility for our facts and discourses."*

Boris Yulyevich Kagarlitsky, Manager of the Institute of Globalization in Moscow

**Abstract:** *In our times, a new form of responsibility is needed: the communicational one. For the scholars in the field of communicational sciences it has become obvious that "to communicate" means "to action"; that the effects of communicational acts are as important for human lives as the effects of any other human acts.*

*When we lack responsibility, what we say, the way we say it, the moment and the place we choose for a communicational act may determine the breaking of a working relation, of a political cooperation, of a friendship or of a sentimental relationship, thus putting to an end valuable projects, alliances, couples, families etc.*

*In this respect, my paper is an analysis of these aspects, applied in a domain that is vital for the quality of life: the management of interpersonal relations.*

**Keywords:** *effective communication, communicational responsibility, interpersonal communication, communication barriers, non-destructive communication.*

As I wrote before in a recent article (Bortun 2013), in today's world, in which all real challenges underwent a modernization process, we are growingly urged by the need of a new form of responsibility: *the communicational responsibility*. This need is felt at all levels of human life – from day-to-day life to international life; from interpersonal relations, to interstate relations; from communication between generations to

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<sup>1</sup> PhD., Associate Professor, Faculty of Communication and Public Relations, National School of Political and Administrative Studies.

communication between different cultures and opposable ideologies: "Today we know: a word said to the wrong person, in the wrong moment and in the wrong place or in the wrong manner can destroy a friendship or a love relationship, a political alliance or an international treaty, the peace in a country or the world peace"<sup>1</sup>.

Interpersonal communication is also impaired by numerous barriers which are easily surmountable but whose surmounting requires, as in the case of the above-discussed obstacles, the presence of responsibility. They can be physical (verbal and acoustic deficiencies, location, light, temperature, hour etc.) or semantic (vocabulary, grammar, syntax, emotional connotations of certain words, etc.). The communication barriers can be determined by internal, psychological factors as well: *positive involvement*: "I like my colleague, therefore I listen to him", *negative involvement*: "He talked behind my back three years ago, so I know that everything he says is against me"; *fear* "I am so preoccupied by what I will say that I can't even hear Mihai"; *threat of the statute*: "If he shut up, I would say something more important, that would boost my prestige"; *subjective speculations*: "You look just as a former colleague of mine that I can't stand. Every time you talk, I feel like I hearing him"; *hidden agenda*: "Can we talk about this topic in the next meeting? ("Once the meeting is over, I go to the football game")<sup>2</sup>.

### **Differences of languages**

Obviously, in order to obtain a problem-free communication, first and foremost we need a common language. But language does not only stand for "vocabulary"; it requires a certain meaning assigned to words, certain semantics. There are situations in which the semantics is common and the vocabularies are different (for instance, the mathematical language expressed in two natural languages) as there are antipodal situations: common vocabulary and different semantics. In the first category, the problems of communication are relatively easy to settle, by using the dictionary. If two mathematicians (let's say a Romanian and a British one) do not speak the same natural languages (do not use the same vocabulary), the problems that might occur are relatively easy to deal with: they shall use a translator and eventually, a dictionary. The

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<sup>1</sup> Dumitru Borțun, "Communicational Responsibility. Two Case Studies", in *Cogito. Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, Vol. V, no. 2/June, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Viorica Ana Chișu, *Specialist's Textbook in Human Resources*, IRECSO, Bucharest, 2002.

situations that fall under the second category are the most unfortunate as they present two major inconveniences that feed each other: a) due to the different semantics, the real communication is impossible; b) due to the common vocabulary, the illusion of real communication can be upheld – sometimes for a long time.

The situations in the second category, the meaning assigned to the words of the same vocabulary differ from one interlocutor to another (from a culture to another). Different languages entail the following possible effects: i) from a semantic perspective, we have a “dialogue of the deaf” (which means that each interlocutor decodes the other’s message through its own language, meaning that he “hears” only his own thoughts and not what his dialogue partner thinks); (ii) from a psychological perspective, we have a source of psychical discomfort, of surfeit, and sometimes even exasperation (which accounts for the tendency to avoid contacts with the other); iii) from a pragmatic perspective we have a dissensual cooperation and, almost always, an occasion of conflict. It follows that the absence of a common language generates effects opposable to communication, tolerance and cooperation. In fact, the history of humanity teaches us a fundamental thing for the human condition: “There is as much violence as there is lack of communication!”.

The differences of language may appear as a result of the differences between cultures and subcultures (including professional subcultures), as a result of the excessive labor division, of tasks specialization, as well as of the differences of socio-cultural statute. The communicator’s incapacity to think out of the “box” of his own language leads to the undue formulation of the message – which results, in its turn, in the increase of the “fog index”<sup>3</sup>: sophisticated or too technical terms, complex phrases, too long phrases, ambiguity. This is exactly what Grice’s maxim of manner preaches; it refers to the way in which interventions are to be formulated within a verbal exchange and which requires clarity (manifested through the avoidance of obscurity, ambiguity and prolixity) as well as the logical structuring of the phrases<sup>4</sup>. In such cases, it is hard to distinguish the weight of incapacity and

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<sup>3</sup> The fog index is a methodological instrument designed to show how easy or difficult a text is to read. It must not be confused with the contextualization index which refers to the signs that allow the participants to interact verbally and to identify correctly the context thereof, to determine exactly whom they are speaking with, in what type of discourse they are engaged, what role they have to play, etc. (see Dumitru Borțun and Silvia Săvulescu, *op.cit.*, p. 44).

<sup>4</sup> In H.P. Grice’s view, the basic conditions of an efficient use of language are

the weight of irresponsibility; often, the use of a language that is inaccessible by the Other is caused by the professional pride of the emitter or his desire to confirm his prestige, corroborated with the absence of the interest in the success of the communication act and in the consequences of failure – therefore, the lack of communicational responsibility.

### **Disturbing factors**

Communication in excess shall trigger effects contrary to the desired ones. Individuals bombed with too many messages shall protect themselves from the “informational stress”: they will ignore some of the messages or they will basically get bored and will not pay due attention to them. In such cases, the responsibility regarding the communicational output – or in other words the quality of information is essential. The volume of information supplied by the participants to a verbal exchange is regulated by the maxim of quantity – the first of the four Grice’s maxims: the quantity of information supplied by each participant must fall into the limits enforced by the targets of the respective exchange (it shall be neither insufficient, not excessive). The maxim of quantity can be defined as follows: “one should be as informative as one possibly can, and give as much information as is needed, and no more”<sup>5</sup>. Once again, we come across the ambivalent character of the compliance/non-compliance with this rule. On the one hand, we are dealing with a pragmatic competence and every so often with emotional intelligence (with which an individual is more or less endowed, independently of his will). When someone breaches the rules of the maxim of quantity, he leaves a bad impression: he is either labeled as “rambler” (i.e. Chronophage – time-consuming) or

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determined by a cooperative principle that can be defined as follows: Make your contribution such as it is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged” (apud Dumitru Borțun and Silvia Săvulescu, *op.cit.*, p. 47, 90). He sees in this principle a sort of methaprinciple that coordinates the verbal exchanges and divides it in four conversational maxims that he deems a priori to any verbal communication. Known in the specialized literature as “Grice’s maxims”, they are: the maxim of quality (be true), the maxim of relation (be relevant), the maxim of quantity (be as informative as required) and the maxim of manner (be perspicuous) – cf Dumitru Borțun and Silvia Săvulescu, *op.cit.*, p. 47-48 and 90). The maxims that derive from the cooperative principle describe rational means that ensure the efficiency of the conversation. But their observance in the practice of verbal interactions is not a matter of rationality but of morality; it indeed presupposes a responsible communicational attitude.

<sup>5</sup> Dumitru Borțun and Silvia Săvulescu, *op.cit.* p. 47.



he is perceived as a mentally deficient person “with issues” who fails to perceive the overall communication situation or who is unable to seize the person he is talking to (the wide-spread case of the one who says something that the interlocutor knows better – as in wanting to sell ice to the eskimos)<sup>6</sup>. On the other hand, we may be dealing not with stupidity but rather with communicational responsibility of the person who participates to the verbal exchange: is he interested to communicate or all that he wants is to communicate? Does he want to contribute to the settlement of the issues under discussion or does he want only to strengthen his statute of prestige? Does he subordinate his intervention to the purpose agreed upon by the participants or does he uses it to serve his own image? The typical case is that of a subject who tries to pass for an informed person – expert in a matter or erudite (expert in any matter).

In large groups, messages go through various socio-cultural levels which filter the information through its own system of thought or interests, re-interpret it, which can lead to a considerable modification of the initial meaning. I believe that this phenomenon is best described in the classical theoretical model of Gerbner, which, after 57 years from its elaboration, is still broadly valid today<sup>7</sup>. Even in small groups, such as work group or family, it often happens that information losses its way or reaches its addressee with a certain delay. Here, another form of communicational responsibility is essential: the responsibility toward the functioning of the communication channels.

### **Cultural barriers**

They can affect the interpersonal communication not only within international contacts, such as the work relations within multinational

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<sup>6</sup> The main ways in which the maxim of quantity can be breached are: the lack of useful information (verbal clichés, redundancy); repetition of concepts with identical referential spheres of application (the speaker is self-paraphrasing himself); enumeration of all members of a totality and, at the same time, the naming of the whole (“I will come with my wife, the elder boy, the middle boy, the smallest boy, with my girl and my mother-in-law – with my entire family”); the excessive use of some key-words belonging to a certain ideology (no matter how rational a discourse may be, the repeated and abundant use of terms such as “labor force”, “plus-value”, “exploitation” or “alienated work” shall give the interlocutors the impression that you are the prisoner of a Marxist doctrine and you will be treated accordingly: as an “indoctrinated” person).

<sup>7</sup> G. Gerbner, “Toward a general model of communication”, in *Audio Vizual Communication Review*, IV.3, 1956, pp. 171-199, *apud* John Fiske, *Introduction in the Sciences of Communication*, Polirom Press, Iași, 2003, pp. 43-46.

companies, as it is commonly believed. Indeed, studies show that in multinational companies the expatriates and the autochthones have different perceptions on the organizational rituals, clothing style, gestures and values promoted by organizations and communication accidents happen. In fact, the human resources departments of such companies are more and more focused on the cultural barriers<sup>8</sup>. The researches initiated by Geert Hofstede lead to the idea that in the multinational companies the human resources management can no longer disregard the national cultures which tacitly found the organizational culture<sup>9</sup>. However, cultural barriers are increasingly more present at the level of our day-to-day life, in that “world of life” which has nothing to do with the organizations.

The gradual, spectacular or insidious globalization, faster or slower, brings closer more and more people belonging to different cultures – people who are neither ambassadors, nor negotiators, nor country managers of a multinational company, nor international officers and not even world-class sportsmen (these categories of people already have an intercultural experience, handed down from generation to generation, and I believe that we can say that they reached what I call “cross-cultural competence”<sup>10</sup>). I refer here to the ethically and/or racially mixed families, growingly numerous and more wide-spread than ever, to the international students who became so numerous that they already form a new “country-less people”, to the millions of economic immigrants as well as to the hundreds of men and women that encounter cultural otherness without leaving their country, the natal city or the work place.

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<sup>8</sup> See Viorica Ana Chișu, *op.cit.*, Carl R. Rogers and Richard E. Farson, *op.cit.*, John V. Thill and Courtland L. Bovee, *op.cit.*

<sup>9</sup> See Geert Hofstede, *Management of Multicultural Structures. The Software of Thinking*, Economic Press, Bucharest, 1996. Here, Hofstede proposed for the first time his famous comparative analysis chart of cultures: distance towards power, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, reference to risk and incertitude situations and, finally, the temporal orientation. However, it must be said that the *Management of Multicultural Structures* is just the peak of a huge iceberg that is the research program coordinated by Hofstede and his team, unfolded for a period of over 10 years (in which 15.000 managers from 28 countries have been interviewed). The merit of this paper is that it proved one and for all that cultural differences act in the day-to-day lives of multinational organizations, starting a new research direction; thus, Hofstede has transferred the cultural studies from the sky of international relations to the germinal ground of work relations.

<sup>10</sup> See Dumitru Borșun, „Intercultural Education and Cross-cultural Education”, in *Euromentor Journal*, Volume IV, No. 2/June 2013.

And if we shall assign the name of culture to any subcultures - rural or urban, agrarian or industrial professional, regional or district - as well as to the sub-cultures that they ceaselessly generate, we shall have a fairly realist landscape of the scene on which the drama of intercultural communication is playing - with all its barriers and tragedies, with its fascinating evolution that leads, day by day, to the birth of a new level of human competence: the cross-cultural competence. In default of such a competence, I don't believe we could seriously talk of communicational responsibility, reason for which we witness every day so many acts of irresponsibility in terms of intercultural communication<sup>11</sup>.

### **Selective perception and subjectivity**

Language is an abstract form of communication, the expression of life experience or of professional experience, of the emotional, motivational state or of the personal relationship with the interlocutor. For this reason, both the adaption to the training and knowledge level of the interlocutor and the avoidance of ambiguities of speech or of assessment of the interlocutor and of the things the latter valorizes in a positive manner are of a great importance.

As a matter of fact, almost no discourse is completely homogenous; the daily discourses mingle various types of sequences, convey under numerous forms the emitter's subjectivity. Subjectivity can be better understood by introducing the distinction between a comprehensive and a narrow meaning. Generally speaking, subjectivity refers to the presence of the interlocutor in the phrase, marked through special linguistic indicators called by E. Benveniste "subjectivity indicators"<sup>12</sup>.

In its narrow meaning, subjectivity refers only to those indicators that introduce in the enunciation the talking subject's feelings and attitude regarding the content of the enunciation. In this acceptation, there are two types of subjectivity: affectivity, as a manifestation in the enunciation of the interlocutor's feelings; modality, as a manifestation in the enunciation of the attitude, evaluation and subjective appreciation performed by the interlocutor.

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<sup>11</sup> For an analysis of some high-level communication irresponsibility proofs, see Dumitru Borțun, „Communicational Responsibility. Two Case Studies”, in *Cogito. Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, Vol. V, No. 2/June, 2013.

<sup>12</sup> The shifters are among the most important indicators of subjectivity. The term shifter has been introduced by Roman Jakobson and is synonym of other terms: deictic elements, referential expressions, indicial elements and symbols of indexation (see D. Maingueneau, *Les termes de l'analyse du discours, ed.cit.*, p. 33).

The issue of communicational responsibility is correlated to this affectivity and modality. To what extent are we able to communicate our feelings without considering the long-term consequences on the interlocutor, on others and even on ourselves? As responsible persons, when, where, how and in front of whom can we express evaluations and attitudes towards certain things? And towards which things in particular? It is common knowledge that in different cultures and epochs there are different taboos regarding what cannot be said or questioned<sup>13</sup>.

As such, in the North-American society of the '60s, if you asked someone how much money he earned, you were socially disqualified: you were breaching a taboo! Such taboos also referred to the appreciations concerning the ethnical affiliation, political options or religious belief. In their long democratic experience, Americans had learned that nobody gains anything from bringing up this sort of topics – on the contrary, everybody loses. Following the fight for civil rights of the black population, culminated with the March on Washington, the racial affiliation was added to the taboos list. Toward the end of the century, all these taboos have been coded in the formula of *political correctness* which comprises not only a set of positive discriminations, as people often thought, but also a set of discursive interdictions, of communicational taboos.

Today, political correctness is criticized from several directions and for diverse reasons – some well-grounded (among the most important ones being the cultural relativism and the equivalence of all values that it promotes or the exaggerations made on its behalf which often verges on grotesque). But in my vision, this political paradigm remains a sample of communicational responsibility for which we must, if we are honest, give credit to an intelligent and responsible political class – the American political class from the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Incapacity to listen: “we see and hear what we want”**

Listening is a *sine qua non* condition of an efficient communication. Listening is the most necessary capacity of communication but which is learnt the least of all. This can be noticed everywhere. Specialists reached the conclusion that a person spends 80% of its time communicating and that it allots to listening only 45% of the time dedicated to communication.

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<sup>13</sup> We can find a history of communicational taboos in Michel Foucault, *The Order of the Discourse. A Discourse about discourse*, Eurosong & Book, Bucharest, 1998. For the contemporary society see chapters IV and V – “The Great Taboo” and “The Function of Taboo” in *The Useless Knowledge* (Revel 2007, 39-81).

In spite of this, listening is the least taught, as compared to speaking (a little), reading (a lot) and writing (the most)<sup>14</sup>.

Listening covers more aspects: struggling to hear; being attentive to what it is said; attaching importance to what somebody says (taking it into account). If one of these components is missing, listening loses its significance. Reduced to a physiological process (hearing), the received information is not processed nor valorized by the addressee; if the addressee fails to interiorize it, it does not become a message.

There are numerous causes of defective listening and we shall not approach all of them in this paper. But two of them deserve special attention: the desiderative thinking<sup>15</sup> and the closed mind. The former has been captured in the title of the paragraph when I wrote "we see and hear what we want". For many people, the cognitive function of thinking is weaker than the balancing function of the psychic system; in other words, the psychic dominates the cognitive, psychology beats gnoseology! These people reason not because they want to reach true conclusions, but because they want to reach the *desired* conclusions. Why? Because their psychical balance suggests both the decrease of the uncertainty as well as the reduction of the cognitive dissonance<sup>16</sup>, and the desiderative thinking satisfies both of these needs. Don't they need truth? In his book *For a transformation of the Soviet System*, George Soros identifies a "way of

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<sup>14</sup> Carl R. Rogers and Richard E. Farson, „Active Listening”, in *Organizational Psychology: Readings on Human Behaviour in Organizations*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ Prentice-Hall 1984, pp. 255-267.

<sup>15</sup> From *désir* (fr.) – to desire, desire.

<sup>16</sup> The concept was introduced by Festinger, who defines it as psychic discomfort generated by the simultaneous apparition of two or more cognitive elements which are denying or contradictory to one another. (*A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1957). More specific, Festinger sees cognitive dissonance as the lack of consensus among someone's opinions, attitudes, knowledge and values. (*When Prophecy Fails*, 1957, p. 260, *apud* Chelcea 2002). According to psychologists P.D. Swveeney și L.L. Gruber, after making a choice the individual tries to reduce the cognitive dissonance by *selectively exposing himself to data*: "taking into account the data that confirm his choice and avoiding the opposite data" (*apud* Chelcea 2003, 117-118). The mechanism of selective exposing is also affirmed by the psycho-sociologist Septimiu Chelcea: the individual tries to reduce the dissonance "whether by reducing the importance of the dissonant element for his belief, or by searching for data according to his initial belief." (*idem*). The individual's tendency to reduce his cognitive dissonance makes him select both the information sources and the messages according to his own beliefs. Here issues the tendency of the majority of individuals to look for interaction with people having the same vision of some domain, the same views, the same beliefs.

thinking” corresponding to postmodern societies that he calls the “traditional way of thinking”: there is not a world of ideas and a world of facts; the dominating ideas are accepted as being reality itself, and the use of language expresses this confusion. Consequently, the issue of the truth does not exist because there are no criteria from telling true ideas apart from the false ones. Affirmations are admitted and rejected not depending on their conformity to reality, but on their appropriateness to tradition. Traditional concepts must be accepted automatically; the answerless questions are dodged (there is not such thing!) as they would destroy the unity between ideas and reality<sup>17</sup>.

Therefore, in the history of humankind there have been societies in which people were not preoccupied with the truth; according to Soros, they could not even raise the issue of the truth because they lacked the distinction between true – false ideas. Is this indifference towards the truth the attribute of traditional societies or does it represent a constancy of history? The French philosopher Jean-Francois Revel, in *The Useless Knowledge*, chapter IX, „The need of ideology” answers this question as follows: he considers that ideology is not only a system of illusions but also a symbolic good without which people could not live. Furthermore, they do not love the truth: this is the last thing they resort to when they want to settle a problem: „The force of ideology stands also on the lack of people’s curiosity toward facts. (...) Their need of mental peace and security is very strong. The ideas that rise the most our interest are not the new ones, but the ones we are already used to. (...) In order to born and develop, science had and still has a lot to fight with this primordial tendency: people’s indifference toward knowledge”<sup>18</sup>.

As regards the second cause of defective listening, the closed mind, we shall just present the portrait of a fanatic performed by the Israeli author Amos Oz in *How to cure a fanatic*: “He is a great altruist. More often than not, (...) he is more interested in you than in himself, open for sacrifices for your own good. He falls on your neck because he truly loves you. He doesn't lie telling you this and does his utmost to prove it to you. But when he thinks you are unredeemable, that you cannot be saved, liberated from sin, converted, reclaimed, he is at your throat. The attachment and love embraced before develop into hostility and

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<sup>17</sup> George Soros, *For a Transformation of the Soviet System*, Bucharest, Humanitas, 1991, p. 46.

<sup>18</sup> Revel Jean-Francois, *The Useless Knowledge*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2007, pp. 247-248.

disdain”<sup>19</sup>. Such a man will never truly listen to you; all he wants is to be listened to. When he listens, he listens to himself. Fanatics do not communicate, they communicate themselves. How is it possible for such a man to be born? Amos Oz: „Conformity and uniformity, the need to have a certain place in society and the desire to make all the others to have the same place might be the most common – and possibly the most dangerous – forms of fanaticism”<sup>20</sup>. The conclusion is depressing: the attempt to discuss with a closed mind is doomed to failure; therefore and in such cases, the communicational responsibility means avoiding, postponing or interrupting the communication.

### **Absence of feedback**

This barrier may lead to the false impression that the message hasn't been understood when in fact it has been understood and the other way around: to the impression that the message has been understood when in fact it hasn't. This obstacle may give rise to serious malfunctions in the collaboration relations (in the household or at the work place) and may be a source of conflict between interlocutors (between members of a couple or marital partners, between parents and children, between friends or between work colleagues).

Some people have difficulties in fully understanding what has been communicated to them but they lack the strength or the courage of admitting this. This is why feedback is much recommended. Prior to the First World War, the Romanian army was mainly made up of peasants, many of whom were illiterate. In order to make sure that their message has been understood, the commanders compelled the soldiers to repeat: “*I order you to escalate quota 1.100 tomorrow morning at five o'clock! – We understood! We will escalate quota 1.00 tomorrow morning at five o'clock*”. This procedure has proven to be so efficient that during the following war it has been spread to all superior- subordinate relations.

Experience shows that the feedback is efficient when it has the following characteristics: it is descriptive as opposed to evaluative or accusing; it is rather specific than general; it takes into account the needs of the ones giving it and of the ones receiving it; it is oriented towards a behavior of the addressee, upon which it is expected to act; it is rather required than enforced; it is well-timed; includes verifications so as to

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<sup>19</sup> Amos Oz, *How to cure fanatic*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2007, p. 25.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 24.

ensure its clarity and understanding; is verified with others (the request of other opinions, helping the addressee to receive other reactions from the other members of the groups in order to compare them)<sup>21</sup>.

The communicational responsibility finds here a wide ground of action. Although the feedback can be a way of self-knowledge, it is often rejected out of various reasons. One of these reasons would be that it is hard for a person to acknowledge the fact that he/she has difficulties. Admitting such difficulties in front of others is even harder. More often than not, the trust in that person is not a sure thing. As a rule, people expect to hear only negative opinions about them, the majority harboring the conviction that others tend to ignore their qualities.

On the other hand, offering positive feedbacks is not always easy. Most of us like to give pieces of advice because in this way we legitimate our competence and importance. We easily lend ourselves to the role of "advisors" failing to check whether that advice suits the issue under discussion or the abilities or qualities of the person we would like to help. If that person bears out, we could try to disagree or force him/her to accept that he/she needs help. The addressee's defense and/or denial are clear indications that the method being used is wrong. We may not be well-synchronized but at any rate a responsible attitude demands the ability to stop until we are able to reevaluate the situation. If we fail to react, the addressee's resistance will increase. A useful feedback requires mutual trust: it must be received as a common experience, of careful listening, especially from the part of the emitter, and the emitter's behavior must be directed towards helping the addressee to speak.

A responsible feedback takes into account both the addressee's needs and the ones of the emitter. Generally speaking, the positive feedback is well-received by the addressee only when it is a true feedback. If the feedback occurs in a learning situation, observing the conditions described herein, it may become one of the main meanings of learning about oneself<sup>22</sup>. No message is more efficient and at the same time more moral than the instructive message.

Finally, in order to be a responsible act and to actually prevent failures in communication, feedback must be subject to the principle of cooperation, it must be constructive, it must provide relevant information

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas H. Patten, Jr., *Organizational Development Through Teambuilding*, New York, John Wiley and Sons, 1981.

<sup>22</sup> James Vander Zanden, *Human Development*, McGraw-Hill, 1993.



about the way in which the message has been interpreted and it must offer the emitter as much information as needed to rephrase the message in a version more intelligible and accessible to the addressee.

In all the situations described above, communicational responsibility is an ethical and at the same time efficient solution of achieving a harmonious and non-destructive communication that does not leave behind the ravages of irresponsible communication. Whether we are dealing with the overcoming of obstacles and barriers or with their wise avoidance or patient stopping in front of them, the responsible attitude renders us more efficient and constructive. After all, it conveys a higher and nobler meaning to our lives. I believe this is a sufficiently well-grounded reason for us to become the promoters of the communicational responsibility, to encourage its training as one of the educational targets of our society.

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# THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING ON TEENAGERS' SCHOOL SUCCESS

SELAMI AHMET SALGUR\*

dragulinsabin@yahoo.com

**Abstract:** *The utilisation of Social Networking services has become an important part of teenagers' daily life. Every day, more and more teenagers are increasing the number of the members of social networking services. In this paper, I am examining whether this habit affects or not the school success of teenagers. I have prepared a survey about the impact of the utilisation of social networks on the study habits of teenagers. More than 525 teenagers participated in the present survey.*

**Keywords:** *Social networks, teenagers, school success.*

## Introduction

Social networks are an inevitable part of the communication area and are being used by more than a billion users all over the world in today's internet world. People have huge interaction possibilities, therefore they can share news, ideas, information with their friends or even with strangers in these social networks. During this interaction, a lot of information, even personal information is being shared by the people with others and also new ongoing relationships are built. This new way of interaction affects also teenagers' daily life. It changes the way teenagers interact and socialise with their environment. As a result, today's young people can be defined as "the most electronically social generation" of the human beings. This situation created a very big gap between parents and their children.

Social network sites may be useful for educational aims. Some scholars think that social network sites have a great potential for educational purposes and these sites may have the ability to promote both active learning and collaboration<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, social networking may promote the students by allowing them to access new networks of

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\* PhD. from Faculty of Sociology and Social Work - University of Bucharest.

<sup>1</sup> Maloney, E., What Web 2.0 Can Teach Us about Learning», *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 53, 2007, no.18:B26.

collaborative learning, established around interests and attractions that are not possible in their actual educational life<sup>2</sup>. Consequently, social network sites have the possibility to provide a platform for extending the traditional school atmosphere and letting the members to create groups that satisfy individual educational curiosity<sup>3</sup>.

### **Literature review**

#### **What is a Social Network Site (SNS)?**

Social Network Sites can be described as web-based operations that allow people to design a public or semi-public profile within a closed system, make a list of other users in this system, and share information with these people using the same social network system<sup>4</sup>. Social networking is an interaction in which people share information generally called profiles with friends who are known or unknown people willingly online. A social network service is an online website where members can share information. This information can be personal files, pictures, fun stuff and other materials sent by e-mailing or instant messaging over the internet.

'SixDegrees.com' is known as the first recognizable social network site that was launched in 1997. At that time, its users could design profiles and make a list of their friends. 'Classmates.com' allowed users to connect with their ex-friends from high-school or college and also surf for new users who were also connected. In this network, people had no possibility to design their own profiles or make lists of their friends in the first years<sup>5</sup>. Today, there are many social network sites, with modern technological services and they provide information about a variety of interests and practices. The functions of these social network sites are different even though they have similar technological features. Most sites support the maintenance of pre-existing social networks, but others help strangers connect based on shared interests, political views, or activities. Some sites cater to diverse audiences, while others attract people based on common language or shared racial, sexual, religious, or nationality-based identities. Sites also vary to the extent to which they incorporate new information

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<sup>2</sup> Selwyn, N., Faceworking: Exploring Students' Education-Related Use of "Facebook"», *Learning, Media and Technology*, 2009, 34(2), p. 157-174.

<sup>3</sup> Pollara, P. & Zhu, J., *Social Networking and Education: Using Facebook as an Edusocial Space*. In Proceedings of Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference 2011, p. 3330-3338. Chesapeake, VA.

<sup>4</sup> Boyd, D. & Ellison N., «Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship», *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 2007, 13(1), p. 210-225.

<sup>5</sup> Weinreich, A., *Personal Communication*, 2007, July 11.

and communication tools, such as mobile connectivity, blogging, and photo/video-sharing<sup>6</sup>. All these different social network sites fulfil their expected functions and their common objective is to connect people.

What makes social network sites unique is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks. This can result in connections between individuals that would not otherwise be made, but that is often not the goal, and these meetings are frequently based on "latent ties"<sup>7</sup>. On many of the large SNSs, participants are not necessarily "networking" or seeking to meet new people; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network. To emphasize this articulated social network as a critical organising feature of these sites, we label them "social network sites"<sup>8</sup>.

Social network research has become very popular in the last several decades and is related to many fields of social science<sup>9</sup>.

### **Social Network Sites and Teenagers**

The technological developments of our century have changed the study habits and abilities of teenagers. Teenagers live nowadays in a world of technology and can get technological competence in early years. This technological competence can be very important for their school success and general progress in adapting to the future's digital world<sup>10</sup>.

The use of social network sites by teenagers is a popular research topic currently. In fact, as it is expected, these sites are basically used for personal purposes rather than for educational purposes<sup>11</sup>. Certain researches have shown that college students use social network sites to build a social capital and to strengthen the offline relationships<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Boyd, D. & Ellison N., works cited.

<sup>7</sup> Haythornthwaite, C., «Social Networks and Internet Connectivity Effects, *Information, Communication, & Society*, 2005, 8 (2), p. 125-147.

<sup>8</sup> Boyd, D. & Ellison N., works cited.

<sup>9</sup> Freeman, L. C., *The Development of Social Network Analysis: A Study in the Sociology of Science*, Vancouver, Empirical Press, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Prensky, M., «Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants, *On the Horizon* 9(5), 1-6, 2001.

<sup>11</sup> Luckin R., Clark W., Graber R., Logan K., Mee A., & Oliver M., «Do Web 2.0 Tools Really Open the Door to Learning? Practices, Perceptions and Profiles of 11-16-year-old Students», *Learning, Media and Technology*, 34, 2009, p. 87-104.

<sup>12</sup> Ellison N.B., Steinfield C. & Lampe C., «The Benefits of Facebook 'Friends': Social Capital and College Students' Use of Online Social Network Sites, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12, 2007, p. 1143-1168.

The use of internet has become a common part of the daily activities of teenagers in their home and school environments. Social network sites are spreading quickly acquiring a worldwide dimension and they have quickly become a universal method of communication and socialisation for teenagers. As a result of this spreading, the communication ways of teenagers who use and engage with internet and with each other have been thoroughly affected by social network sites in the last decade. Social network sites create new and multifarious ways to communicate on the internet and teenagers can connect these sites to their personal computers or cellular phones. This mobile interaction and connection with social network sites has become an indispensable part of teenagers' life style<sup>13</sup>.

Teenagers are fast to apply the new technologies in their online and offline activities. Moreover, social network sites are also changing very quickly themselves as new mobile technology develops and there are many new social network sites that are being launched every day. This causes the increase in the number of users and visitors to the social network sites. The ways in which teenagers connect to social network sites are also increasing. Game-based and cellular phone-based social network sites that are connected to existing web-based platforms are quickly progressing fields<sup>14</sup>.

### **Benefits of Social Networking**

There are many discussions and arguments about the effects of social network sites on the social lives and the educational lives of teenagers. Indeed, social network sites have a great potential to be used effectively in learning, teaching, and research<sup>15</sup>. This potential cannot be accomplished without a deep conception of scholars who can take part in and experience social networks<sup>16</sup>.

However, it is very clear that the use of social network sites develops the self-confidence of teenagers because of the social interaction and the skills to make new friends on the internet. As a result of this self-

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<sup>13</sup> Zwart, M., Lindsay, D., Henderson, M. & Philips M., *Teenagers, Legal Risks and Social Networking Sites*, Grants Pub.Education, Australia, 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Young People and Social Networking Services, retrieved March 18, 2013, <<http://www.digizen.org/socialnetworking/benefits.aspx>>

<sup>15</sup> Greenhow C., *Social Scholarship: Applying Social Network Technologies to Research Practices*, *Knowledge Quest*, 37, 2009, p. 42-47.

<sup>16</sup> Veletsianos G. & Kimmons R., *Scholars and Faculty Members Lived Experiences in Online Social Networks*, Manuscript submitted for publication, 2011.

confidence, teenagers may feel more comfortable in different situations, such as going to a new school, taking responsibility in a new social activity or making new friends from outside their immediate society. Social network sites provide numerous opportunities to create new friendships and strengthen the existing ones. Teenagers can succeed in making friends with the people from their school, neighbourhood or across the world. This friendship is very important to understand social and cultural differences which will be essential in their future life.

Moreover, teenagers can adapt themselves more comfortably to the new technological developments because social network sites update themselves very frequently and quickly. They can also improve their media literacy through dealing with these types of online media.

Another advantage of social network sites is that teenagers can find other teenagers with the same interests or issues that encourage joining the new online or offline communities. These new communities can be very multifaceted and help gain new ideas, concepts, opinions and experiences.

Social network sites share in keeping the family members connected to the internet if teenagers or some family members live presently far from home.

The benefits that I mentioned above are related to the personal life of teenagers.

However, there can be other advantages of the social network sites dealing the with school life of the teenagers.

It is very clear that these sites have become a part of the school environment. Teachers have also started to use these sites to communicate with their students when they are not at school (Parent Further). Furthermore, teenagers can have a possibility to share projects, works and other activities related to school and have also a chance to improve their use of information and technology.

### **Risks of Social Networking**

Most teenagers do not see the social network sites as a tool for any educational or academic activity. For this reason, they do not believe these sites can be useful for any educational and academic purposes. Teenagers tend to delay their educational responsibilities such as doing their homework, or self-studying as a result of social networking. They admit they indulge in social networking in order to avoid studying and even

share this opinion with their friends on their social network pages<sup>17</sup>.

Moreover, the world-widespread of social network sites has caused the sharing of an excessive amount of personal information on the internet. Teenagers should be careful about sharing their personal information, such as addresses, telephone numbers on their own social network sites to make sure that they do not face these kinds of problems in their future life<sup>18</sup>. The fact that in good faith someone shares online information, like gender, age or marital status, can be easily manipulated by other users. Furthermore, there is no control related to this information made public on their personal web-pages, and it makes it easier for serious crimes like identity theft to be committed<sup>19</sup>.

Another possible risk of social networking is that the information posted by teenagers on their social network web-pages can cause various kinds of troubles. This information can entail a libel or criminal charges being filed<sup>20</sup>. According to Kierkegaard<sup>21</sup>, many cases of defamation result from unintentional postings that can be considered as defamatory.

Another issue that needs to be discussed is related to the use of social networking that causes bullying and more serious crimes in schools<sup>22</sup>. Teenagers should be aware of the increasingly greater risks that social network sites pose. They may have many friends on their social network sites, but this does not mean that these relationships are real and serious, for they are mere virtual relationships, which, in addition, can affect negatively their employability by diminishing mainly their actual relationship abilities<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Hew, K., «Students' and Teachers' Use of Facebook. *Computer in Human Behaviour, Article in Press*, 1-2, 2011.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>19</sup> Nosko, A., Wood, E. & Molema, S., «All about Me: Disclosure in Online Social Networking Profiles: The Case Facebook», *Computer in Human Behaviour*, 26, 2010, p. 407.

<sup>20</sup> Wright C., «The Use of Social Networks by Students: the Possible Risks and Implications», *The New Researcher* 4, 2010, p. 1-5.

<sup>21</sup> Kierkegaard, S., «Twitter Thou Doth?», *Computer Law and Security Review*, 26(10), 2010, p. 577-594.

<sup>22</sup> Wright C., op.cit.

<sup>23</sup> Kim, W., Jeong, O., Kim, C. & So, J., «The Dark Side of the Internet: Attacks, Costs and Responses, *Information Systems*, 4-7, 2010.



## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

The survey was conducted on teenagers from 8 different schools in Bucharest, Constanta and Iasi at the beginning of the Spring term 2012-2013 Academic Year. A total of 525 responses were received. They were 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. The representation of each grade group was as follows:

- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Participants: 93
- 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Participants: 128
- 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Participants: 190
- 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Participants: 59
- 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Participants: 55
- Total Number of Participants: 525

The age average of the teenagers who participated in the survey was 15.4. The percentage by sex of the participants was as follows:

- Female teenagers: 47.82%, and
- Male participants: 52.18%.

### Research Questions

The purpose of this paper is to understand the time spent for social networking by teenagers and to see whether it affects the school success of teenagers. There were 15 questions designed to explore the purpose mentioned above in the survey. The respondents gave the answers of the survey online during their ICT classes.

Some of the survey questions were as follows:

- How frequently do you connect yourself to social networks?
- How much time do you spend on social networks in a day?
- Do you think that you spend too much time on social networks?
- How much time do you study daily?
- Do you think that it is enough?
- What is your first term school average?
- Do you think that spending so much time on social networks affects your school success?
  - Do you believe that social networking is useful for your educational life?
  - Do you think that you use social networking for educational purposes effectively?

## **Result and Discussion**

One of the important results of this survey demonstrates that the majority of the respondents (98.3%) have accounts on at least one of the social network sites and they make use of them in their daily life. Around 55% of the total participants visit the social network sites 2 or more hours in a day.

The teenagers' access to social network sites by teenagers concerned mainly a few highly popular sites, such as Facebook, Twitter. About 22.39% of the respondents use only Facebook. This use of Facebook becomes 90.65% when there are two or more social network sites accessed by the same teenager. The use of Twitter is of 22.39% when the student uses also other social networks.

The female percentage is of 46 and the male participants' percentage is of 54%. However, only 31.6% of this group studies 2 or more hours per day. It means that the teenagers who spend much more time on social network sites do not study enough and they are aware of this problem. In fact, first term school averages show this fact. Only 12% of them have the school average between 9 and 10.

On the other hand, only 10% of the respondents spend ten minutes or less per day with social networking. The first term school average ranges between 9 and 10 in the case of 54% of this minority and between 7 and 8 in the case of 27% of this group. This shows that teenagers who spend less time on the internet have a higher school average.

Teenagers who spend two or more hours with social networking daily are not aware of this problem and they still continue spending time with that. About 70.22% of the respondents spend 2 or more hours and only 20.43% of them think that they spend too much time on social networks per day. The rest thinks that it is normal to spend so much time on the internet. Another interesting point concerns the use of social network sites in their educational life. Most of the teenagers (75.45%) do not believe that social networking is useful for their educational life. Moreover, only 11.35% of the responds use the social network sites for educational purposes.

## **Conclusion**

Online communities have become very common and attractive especially for the young people all over the world. Social network sites offer teenagers new ways of expressing themselves virtually. Furthermore, the increasing use of handheld devices such as "smartphones" or

palmtops caused this widely use of social networks. Young people can get and share information easily such as photos or videos, which is a very dynamic and interactive way of communication. Another reason why these social networks are so popular is that their users can also take part by using many tools available to them. They can tag the pages that they want or bookmark them for different purposes.

The result of this survey has confirmed our expectations. That means the use of social network sites by teenagers is very popular and common in teenagers’ world. Social Network Sites may help the socialisation of teenagers with new people or groups. Consequently, spending so much time with social networking does not seem to be a serious problem for them. Nonetheless, social networking may interfere with other activities of their daily life. Unfortunately, there is no scientific procedure to prove that social networking is a serious addiction that can be considered as a disease or disorder. As afore-mentioned, teenagers spend two or more hours on social network sites and they do not think that it is too much time allotted to this activity.

Moreover, they have some doubts about the utility of using social network sites in the educational field. Some find an advantage of using social network sites for educational purposes. However, there are also reserves about it. In the educational field, there are important question marks to be aware of regarding the use of social network sites such as keeping privacy, spending too much time, and face to face communication disabilities. Some of the advantages of social network use in the educational field can be its flexibility, repeatability, and the fact that it can be easily accessed.

## FIGURES AND TABLES

### a. Social Network Usage by Grade

Grade	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Percentage	17.71	24.38	36.19	11.24	10.48

### b. Social Network Usage by Age

Age	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Percentage	0.87	1.96	3.91	14.20	25.20	35.36	11.85	5.00	1.65

### c. Social Network Usage by Gender

Gender	Male	Female
Percentage	52.18	47.82

### d. Social Network Usage Frequency

Frequency	Don't use / rarely	Once a day	Several times a day	Many times per day	Every couple of days	Several times in a week
Percentage	8.04	8.26	29.13	35.43	11.09	8.05

### e. Social Network Usage Period

Period/Day	Less than 1 hour	About 1 hour	About 2 hours	More than 2 hours
Percentage	26.96	17.17	31.74	24.13

### f. Study Period per day

Period/Day	Less than 1 hour	About 1 hour	About 2 hours	More than 2 hours
Percentage	28.48	25.87	26.30	19.35

### g. First Term School Average

School Average	Less than 5	Between 5 and 6	Between 7 and 8	Bigger than 9
Percentage	0.44	21.30	51.74	26.52

### h. Do you think that you spend too much time with social media in a day?

Spending too much time	Yes	No	Normal
Percentage	16.09	63.91	20.00

### i. Do you believe that social networking is useful for your educational life?

	Yes	No	No idea
Percentage	14.18	75.45	10.37

**j. Do you think that you use social networking for educational purposes effectively?**

	Yes	No	No idea
Percentage	11.35	80.56	8.09

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# TESTING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE AS PART OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS

CRISTINA NICOLAESCU<sup>1</sup>

chris2013x@yahoo.com

**Abstract:** *This paper is based on my research-based teaching activities assisted by computer, applied to my students of English in order to achieve a higher level of performance on both sides. In a previous article I examined the benefits of online learning and how I found useful the theoretical and practical findings having quality assurance consistently in mind. Since the educational process is challenging with each group every year, I feel it is my responsibility as a teacher to develop and improve my technical skills, in an endeavour to be up to date in what regards the latest methods of teacher-student interaction within the winding and complex, quickly changing learning and working climate in our country. This kind of flexibility is a must for any educator who wants to keep up with developments in the field of methodology, and a "gate" for the students through which they can pass into the future. I will address testing methods this time in the present paper, as long as for me these are indicators of remedy requirements.*

**Keywords:** *Online learning, Assessment, Efficiency, Performance, Testing, Quality Assurance.*

## I. EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY OF TEACHERS

### 1.1. Questions and Concerns

This evaluation phase may give a clear image of the testing techniques' efficiency, the one that signals the need of changes for a presumable improvement. First I choose to start with the hypothesis that undergraduate compulsory education is or should be designed and made use of by academic staff as the preparation basis for e-learning in continuing professional education. The project on lifelong learning I've been working on provides concrete outcomes of adult learners in the form of formative and summative assessment, on the purpose of emphasizing how the shift from higher education level to a career-making

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<sup>1</sup> Lecturer PhD., Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, „Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University (Cultural Studies), Bucharest, Romania.

advancement. I will give an account of both strategies and methods following a stage-based structure from goals to achievements. The investigation into strong and weak factors of the process will further mark the beginning of a deeper analysis. The successful review becomes the reference point within the proposed quality assurance activities with relevant general conclusions. This paper is also meant as an attempt at demonstrating why educators should be quality-oriented in their mentoring. It is my hope that the tested guidelines, in compliance with the Common European Framework, will be a source of inspiration and further research in contemporary adult education, based on the syllabuses for English studies for a more efficient assessment of language competence.

Universities in the world are ranked according to quality in education, but paradoxically the indicators or criteria by which it is determined have remained mainly quantitative. This is a new challenge in the context of educational internationalization through teachers or students exchange or joint programs and projects. The question I have always desired to raise is related to the logic of the process itself that I am looking for in the devoted policies. If we consider a common indicator for international ranking of universities, such as the number of enrolled students and credits taken concerning education and the number of doctoral thesis and scientific articles published from the research point of view. We do not have to go deeper into this matter to realize that we already deal with a dilemma about how to equate quality with quantity, since the Latin dictum “non multa sed multum” seems to have lost validity, at least at first sight. I have not chosen a critical stand on purpose, being a teacher and assessor myself, though I cannot help noticing the importance of properly understanding and applying the quantity-quality relation in our teaching and assessment activities.

## **1.2. Standardized Learning Markers: Levels and Other Indicators**

This is a key factor that presents itself as a result of an utmost investigation into multilevel planning of syllabuses for English studies, including roughly: learning contents, goals and requirements. Performance indicators applied to learning, teaching and research measure both quantity and quality of educational outcomes. Are figures representative for achieving efficiency? Obviously, quantitative factors should be then rooted in all qualitative operators so that they have relevance in the assessment process.



As to the undergraduate and graduate cycles, European standardization for teaching and guiding competences is regulated by documents such as Standards and Guidelines. Presumably there is a link between those criteria and the internal quality assurance system of a particular higher education institution. Nevertheless, assessment uniformity in Europe remains more like a desideratum than as a real possibility, which is for the better. Major guidelines are, of course, observed by all universities within the framework required for accreditation. Here I raise one more question: does the accreditation process obstruct diversity and creativity in planning educational programs strategically?

For instance, “constructive alignment”, a term coined by John Biggs advocates the idea of harmonization and cohesion between learning activity and assessment of students’ performance: “What and how students learn depends to a major extent on how they think they will be assessed”<sup>1</sup>. Summing up, the learning outcome based on motivation should be aligned with the teaching/learning activities within quality culture. The long process from the undergraduate level to post-compulsory learning should be continuous, highly stimulated and going through such a smooth shift that the process is felt like a natural activity always in need for improvement. This ideal situation we, as educators, aim at attaining can only be possible if our students are goal-oriented and much less focused on the marks they get. Students’ mentality concerning their own learning is one of the challenges all teachers have to deal with. One means by which I consider students get more independence is e-learning, since this provides them with the necessary tools for individual study more than anything else. Besides other benefits of online practice, the most important advantage is undoubtedly the attitude change towards language acquisition and skills improvement. The teacher becomes to be regarded, eventually, as a mere facilitator of their learning, not the only person responsible for the learning outcomes in the educational process equation. If students are not ready to assume responsibility for their own learning they will not be able to manage the next stage of their professional development, which is post compulsory education. This new step would be very difficult if not prepared in advance by relaxing the teacher-learner relation, by the partial detachment from their “guide”

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<sup>1</sup> Biggs, J.B., *Teaching for Quality Learning at university*, Buckingham, Open University Press, 2003, p. 140.

through the maturation process. On the contrary, if students become more and more self-confident in their ability to make progress without a close or very strict monitoring on the teacher's part they will not feel insecure after graduation, but will have a "kit of tools" for the time to come. Expanding this metaphor I would represent these necessary tools in relation to the events bound to happen, a reason why I emphasize the huge role played by assessment in this reasoning.

*Formal and informal training at undergraduate level within the quality assurance process.*

There is a tight connection between stages at undergraduate level that requires a special attention, with the mind set on quality at all times.

The smooth shift from stage 1 to stage 2 should be ensured by a quality assurance process. "It should be noted that the answers of some countries suggest that they think internal quality assurance within higher education institutions means only preparing self-assessment reports, without any reference to learning outcomes-based and improvement-oriented internal quality assurance systems. In addition, some HEIs have established a management system and they claim that it is a quality assurance system."<sup>2</sup> The mental activities triggered in the learning process are mainly: speed, attention, memory, problem solving capacity and flexibility; besides these personal abilities, learners also need to be provided with "kit of tools" to guide them from compulsory to non-compulsory education, the critical phase they go through smoothly if well prepared mentally and psychologically.

### *Psychological issues*

LEARNING MOTIVATION BY GOAL ORIENTATION  
GETTING AWARENESS OF THEIR OWN LEARNING  
BEING MORE SELF-CONFIDENT, AS A RESULT OF A VISIBLE  
PROGRESS  
FEELING INDEPENDENT AND BETTER PREPARED  
ETC.

The psychological issues are of an utmost importance in learning and self-assessment, that is why good educators never neglect these components when designing lessons' goals.

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<sup>2</sup> Rauhvargers, A., Deane, C. & Pauwels, W., Brussels. *Bologna Process Stocktaking Report*, Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, 2009, p. 51.

### 1.3. Strategic Planning Based on European Framework Policies

The issue of policies harmonization with internal strategic management of the educational process in an individual institution is the other heavy challenge, more demanding than ever in the process of education internationalization, not only Europeanization. I will refer though to the major European policies derived from essential documents such as The Framework, Standards and Guidelines and the Bologna project with reference to language teaching, briefly presented in the table below.

European Framework Policies on quality assurance Survey Findings “Institutions should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programs and awards. They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognizes the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.”<sup>3</sup>

A key aim of the Bologna Process is quality improvement in European higher education with the view to promoting competitiveness and increasing mobility. The European Standards and Guidelines have become a common reference framework for modeling quality assurance systems in educational institutions, though not designed as such. They are basically generic principles supposed to function by virtue of their guiding role. The stress laid on quality should signal the main focus of programs on efficiency.

“Institutions should have formal mechanisms for Formal mechanisms are largely in place and the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programs and awards.” [idem]

reviews are also frequent at all managerial levels. Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.” [idem]

The main aim of our university is to have a uniform assessment system, differentiated only according to the subjects specific and particularities.

“Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do

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<sup>3</sup> ENQA, *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, Finland. Helsinki. Sense Publishers, 2009, p. 7.

so. They should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in reports.” [idem]

Teaching staff competence is related to efficient activities from the mentor to the students and as far as possible they are described in reports objectively, since we all give accounts of the research done, methods used, difficulties encountered, achievements and improvements suggestions. Certainly, publishing program details and awards regularly is an obligation of any educational institution and it is met at all times, since this is to the best interests of the university.

## **II. STAGES OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS IN PERFORMANCE TESTING**

### **2.1. The First Steps to Proficiency - General Framework**

Assessment means first of all gathering information in order to make critical decisions about a learner through a variety of methods. This is useful for identifying students’ needs, planning instruction steps and measuring the progress made. Language acquisition and communication abilities are the main goals of any language studies planning, therefore multiple checks are required on a regular basis to determine the level of targeted abilities. Frequent monitoring through observations, improvement checklists and rating scales has a double benefit: firstly it provides data about teaching effectiveness and secondly about students’ learning quality to prevent their failure. The Remedy Program will run simultaneously with the evaluation scheme, so that formative assessment becomes a systematic and objective procedure with a clear target: quality assurance. In pedagogical research throughout Europe on the extension of Lifelong Learning educators have frequently emphasized the relevance of cooperative learning methods and have developed various application plans reviewed over and over again. Once the connection established between undergraduate and post-compulsory education, the stress has been primarily laid on lifelong learning through online practices but not only. The technical means have been suggested though as the best alternative to studies guided by a human facilitator. The second step of the assessment process is also related to the students’ cognitive, emotional, psychological abilities to deal with a foreign language, as well as to the capacity of making maximum use of individual study, less and less guided, on the way to independent learning. Learning with technology is nowadays globally viewed as referential to establishing a highly-skilled workforce in specialized areas and also empowering people by the

opportunities that may be offered to them in the future. The third and final stage of my assessment scheme is summative evaluation that gives the first statistics for successes and failures. Now therefore a different Program this time envisaging quality assurance of the whole educational process, including both teaching and learning according to standardized European and local criteria and indicators referred to above.

## **2.2. The First Steps to Proficiency - Specific Goals of Performance Testing**

This three-step general framework of the evaluation process for quality assurance from my research project has specific goals to be attained when testing performance. The partial outcomes of formative assessment provide relevant data about individual performance of students, collected gradually on the purpose of measuring progress against the performance standards. Benchmarking learning helps determining the maximum learning potential of each student on the condition they benefit at the time from both a high quality teaching and individual or cooperative study with the aid of new computer technology. In case the summative assessment outcomes are at least passable, at the lowest rank possible, the guidelines for the following stage of unguided study should be initiated only checked at the end of the process. This is done in preparation of the post-compulsory education, when they do not have points or credits as reference for their performance. In this way, hopefully, students become more aware of their achievements in language acquisition in a stress-free manner, since getting passable or good marks is no longer a target (as it should never be). While there is still a learning facilitator, teacher or tutor, he/she should emphasize the weak points of students' learning, so that they know what the areas they should work on harder. At the same time the strong points should be revealed and discussed with the individual students, so that they know how to appreciate their own performance objectively. These are briefly the major points of my project's findings connected to instruction in higher education institutions based on the targeted quality indicators.

## **III. CONCLUSIONS**

EUA regards quality assurance as a dialogue and an interaction and we can only agree to aim at successful practices implementation within the university through their adaptation to the national context where new trends in the educational process innovation manifest themselves: "We

encourage the creation of platforms for both horizontal and vertical dialogue at various levels".<sup>4</sup>

Higher education institutions (HEI) have turned to e-learning extensively in diverse forms lately in order to provide flexible and convenient access to high quality training and education that is required to meet all the emerging societal demands. As e-learning needs a complex task to implement, these institutions are grappling with several technological, organizational and pedagogical issues beforehand. My paper primarily focused on the relationship between the implementation of online learning and high quality learning, as one of the possible means, the outcomes being reflected at the assessment stage, which I took as reference for the topic under analysis. My research revealed the fact that each stage is relevant to the learners' performance level I had planned to get during formative assessment. From the first step (failure prevention) to the last one (summative evaluation), all data gathered throughout this process should be examined having in mind the increase of learning quality. Among the most reliable findings of my projects are the points discussed in this paper, such as: the balance between quantity and quality in weighing learning accountability, a steady monitoring of learners' language acquisition assisted by the computer through formative assessment, the need of a clear rationale of the methodological study, forecasts including remedy measures based on feedback from learners. The assessment standardization at the higher institution level shall follow the European guidelines from all the current documentation on quality assurance, using the outcome records already processed from earlier years or stages according to quality criteria. The summary reports of learning performance are not only simple statistics filled with figures and ascending or descending curves, but an accurate image consisted from specific fields or columns with items that measure performance. Whenever expectations are not met, a remedy plan should be put into practice after a thorough designing work. The input record (initial level of knowledge and skills) is the starting point or placement from where progress should appear, marked conventionally with a corresponding letter for a pre-established period of study. The sooner the following level is achieved, the better quality learning has.

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<sup>4</sup> European University Association (EUA), *Improving Quality, Enhancing Creativity: Change processes in European Higher Education Institutions*, Brussels. EUA., 2009, p. 18.

The progress in meeting goals on the student Individualized Education Plan is the ideal form of monitoring with small groups. Whatever the situation is, standardization establishes a set of rules and procedures to be followed by both teachers and students, without hindering initiatives as experimentation, as well as good practice guidelines. The specific area of foreign languages acquisition is approached from the perspective of lifelong learning, we as educators building up for our students the bridge they are going to use when crossing from compulsory to post-compulsory education, from institutional rules and goals to their own criteria and priorities setting.

Obviously, the quality of teaching is reflected in the quality of learning, but when the students graduate and are deprived of educational guidance provided up to that time they should not feel without a support since they still have the technical means take their learning further.

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# TEACHING BECOMES LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION BY APPROACHING THE ACTIVATION LECTURE

MARIN TUDOR\*

marintud@yahoo.co.uk

**Abstract:** *In the field of education, in recent decades, a great importance has been attached to the activation of students in the process of teaching – learning – assessing, as knowledge is not habit-forming by itself, but by the process covered to reach it. In this context, several pedagogical theories were developed on training and education from the perspective of the active-interactive approach.*

*The active approach of the educational process must be seen as a higher type of training based on the activation of the trainees, on involvement and their active and complete participation in the self-training process.<sup>1</sup>*

*The interactive approach is a higher type of training including an active training plus interactions, intellectual exchanges, ideas, confrontation of opinions with arguments between subjects.*

*In the academic environment, for students to absorb in an active way and to understand the information / knowledge received, in order to integrate them into their own system of knowledge, the interactive lecture can be used successfully.*

**Keywords:** *Active training, interactive training, intensifying (activation) lecture, types of lectures, planning the lecture, quality of the lecture.*

## I. Conceptual clarifications

In the pedagogical thinking of the last decades there were major concerns related to the activity and activation of students / pupils to the university course/ lesson.

The problem of active / interactive training is not new, since it was present in the thinking and teaching practice from Socrates, continuing with traditional pedagogy, modern pedagogy until nowadays when we speak of postmodernism. As such, the active and interactive training are

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\* Lecturer PhD., “Dimitrie Cantemir” Christian University, Faculty of Science of Education, Bucharest, Romania.

<sup>1</sup> Boco Mu ata, 2002, *Interactive instruction. Landmarks for reflection and action*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană.



desiderata of all times over which not only scholars but also practitioners looked into the education of children / youth / adults; there were found different more or less happy, efficient, effective means by which the educational process has become active - interactive. In this study we present some methodological considerations to approach the academic course through the activation lecture.

Etymologically, lecture comes from Latin 'praelegere' - to read in front of an audience, and is always a specific form of organizing a university course; therefore it is an oral communication method of expository type (affirmative). In the context of modernity, the teaching - learning - assessing process has known a considerable tightening of the expositive moment in favour of increasing the intensification of active / interactive training (especially in higher education).

However, to exceed the limits of the expositive, the focus was put on:

- intensified versions of the lecture, namely: exposure to opponent, lecture-discussion, background briefing, conference-debate etc.
- necessity to approach the receiver to the transmitter as to achieve an adequate correspondence between the content of the message and the capabilities of those who will receive and decode the transmitted message;
- approaching some procedures in which operations of thought are applied extensively and effectively, students will be more involved in examining ideas exposed by the teacher;
- using mostly explanatory elements in the lecture as to highlight the elements and interactions between them and giving up as much as possible to present descriptive aspects, as the descriptive aspect reveals only the existence / description of the elements;
- introduction of 'stimulators' of exposure, that is approaching various visual teaching methods and listening aids especially multimedia;

The academic course work must be seen as academics held in a unit of time, generally two teaching hours, and which conveys a great deal of information of high scientific level. Essentially, the lecture is an expository method (affirmative), oral communication but with multiple activizing meanings.

In higher education important changes occurred both in the years after 1980, as well as during the first decade of the third millennium. Reforms were carried out in most parts of higher education, especially in teaching and student assessment. Also major structuring and restructuring of the curriculum occurred, but there have been and there are attempts to modernize teaching - learning - assessment methods.

Recently, a great interest has been shown to '*complementarity of formal, non-formal and informal learning as knowledge, skills, abilities that people / students need can be acquired through learning in all contexts*'. Daily, especially young students take part in a variety of activities both in the academic educational system and in non-formal activities. In this context, active-interactive methods of teaching - learning can provide a real approach to a qualitative higher education.

## **II. The activation (intensifying) lecture**

From the perspective of higher education, the lecture should become intensified (activated). In order to have this quality, it requires:

a) **creating the framework for teaching and learning.** For the students to receive information in an active way and to introduce them in a logical and systematic way in their own knowledge system, they need a new approach to designing the lecture (a new framework for teaching - learning). This teaching desideratum for the academic lecture is achieved by intensifying moments of individual or group activity of the students; for example: during the teacher's lecture, the audience must have properly chosen, specific and well thought out moments for a limited time as to resolve an individual / a group teaching task, in writing or orally, for the interaction to occur between student - student, student - group group-group, student / group - teacher. From the perspective of learning theories, it appears in the foreground the cognitivist-constructivist approach with at least three fundamental stages of the lecture intensified, ie: **evocation, realization of meaning and reflection**<sup>2</sup>.

Stage '**evocation**' refers to updating knowledge and previous experience of students on the theme / topic that will be discussed during the lecture by the teacher (in fact it is an update anchor ideas). The focus / awareness of declarative knowledge, conceptual and even conditional will lead to the development of learning tasks that students receive during the subtype of activated lecture.

From the perspective of the stage, '*realization of meaning*', students have a great importance in the lecture as they come in contact with new learning tasks such as: listening an interesting exposure through scientific content, watching videos / diagrams / models using multimedia,

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<sup>2</sup> Steele, J., Meredith, K., Temple, C., *Further Strategies for Promoting Critical Thinking*, edited by Soros Foundation and the Open Society Institute within the project for "Reading and writing for critical thinking development", Cluj-Napoca, 1998.

discussion within the group; for the stage 'realization of meaning' during the intensified lecture, to achieve the objectives, motivation and cognitive-affective engagement of the students is needed (and of pupils when it comes to pre-university education). The teacher has a major obligation to maintain cognitive and affective involvement of students through short and clear questions about the relevant ideas on the newly approached subject, but also through relevant answers you need to give to questions from the audience. We can say that at this stage the 'realization of the meaning' both students and teacher must monitor their own comprehension, analysis, synthesis, assessment on the novelty of exposure in terms of scientific content or methodological considerations. If students will be passive during the lecture of the professor, comprehension gaps occur and as such information will be confusing, with omissions and notes (when taken) are not relevant in terms of the logic of the subject debated. If students show interest in the lecture plan / sketch, for the novelty of scientific ideas, cognitive connections are built between the apperceptive and new ideas and consequently, the new information / knowledge enter into the patterns of knowledge that students have.

The, **reflection**' stage can be considered the proper learning, as students can achieve consideration and reconsideration in the binom what I knew - what I know in terms of a genuine and lasting change. At this stage, the teacher made many discussions with students through many lecture subtypes even including the Socratic method (maieutics) for discovering the truth through dialogue. As an aside, in terms of discovering the truth through dialogue, it would be necessary to recall the methods used by Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, Rabelais, Comenius, J.J. Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Herbart, Spencer and all members of the trend 'new education'.

b) **Techniques used in lecture activation (intensified)**. Higher education traditional lecture presents with enough force limits such as: the transmission of knowledge in a ready-made form, focusing the activity on the teacher, placing the student in a state of passivism, superficiality and formalism, formal interaction teacher - student with feedback very often irrelevant. For the lecture to become interactive teaching - learning and represent a possible path for a quality higher education, it must use techniques that have the following characteristics<sup>3</sup>:

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<sup>3</sup> Dulamă M.E., *Methodological Consideration on interactive academic course in Methodological Guide on academic pedagogy*, coord. Voiculescu, F., Alba Iulia, Aeternitas Publishing House, 2010.

- to maintain audience interest and motivation for the lecture of the teacher;
- to compel students to quickly resolve workload within specific time of the lecture
- the teacher should be able to ask students at a specific time during the lecture the result of the teaching load;
- to be applicable to auditoriums where there is a large number of students.

Techniques used in the activated lecture (intensified) are multiple<sup>4</sup>, but from the perspective of our topic we would like to bring to the attention of teachers and students the following (the choice was random):

➤ **The brainstorming technique** was initiated by A.F. Osborn and is both a method of stimulating the creativity of the participants and of discovery of innovative solutions on issues in question, but also the proper framework for active-interactive training. As a method of postponed assessment, any statement issued by the student is not subject to the first stage of a critical approach and in this context, is created in the group / the office / the amphitheatre a constructive atmosphere, devoid of inhibitor factors and blockage of spontaneity of thought; students think creatively, and by the ‚contagion’ phenomenon more genuine solutions often appear. By criterion of exposure mode of ideas in the activated lecture several types of brainstorming may occur:

- free exposure of ideas technique;
- Turn-taking expression of ideas technique (in this case the leader / secretary will ask the group to brainstorm in a certain order, usually circular)
- slips technique that involves expression of ideas is not free but on books, sheets, blackboard, etc.;

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<sup>4</sup> Techniques for lecture activation can be studied in the works:

Voiculescu, F., coord., *Methodological Guide on academic pedagogy*, Alba Iulia, Aeternitas, Publishing House, 2010;

Boco , Mu ata, *Interactive Training. Landmarks for reflection and action*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2002;

Ioan, Cerghit, Ioan Neac u, Ion Negreț-Dobridor, Ion Ovidiu Pâni oară, 2001, *Pedagogical Lectures*, Polirom, Ia i, Ion Negreț- Dobridor, Ion Ovidiu Pâni oară, 2005, *Learning Science from Theory to Practice*, Ia i, Polirom,;

Marin, T., *Learning Theories and Changing Didactics from the constructive perspective*, Bucharest, V&I Integral, 2009;

\*\*\* Landmarks – Educational Sciences Journal, 1<sup>st</sup> year, no. 1, 2008, the University of Bucharest Publishing House.

- Mixed technique that can sum up the above.

Brainstorming is worthless without a reflection period (incubation period) to be followed by assessment and selection of solutions presented. It is possible for some students to be passive; in this context, the teacher may request answers of all students respecting the right to answer or not.

➤ **prediction with given terms.**<sup>5</sup> The philosophy of this technique is based on some keywords given at the proper time during the lecture by the teacher to the students, these will solve the teaching task in a time limit, individual or group. Typically, students will write their thoughts concerning the teaching task, and later to establish a moment to review the written ideas.

➤ **technique Think - Work in Pair - Communicate (Think-Pair-Share)** provides the opportunity to each student to submit written responses to several questions asked by the teacher on their prior knowledge. Note that response time is limited and short. After working individually will work in pairs to compare answers and to formulate a convenient one; further, answers in pairs will be displayed on the blackboard / flipchart issue for debate and consensus.

Lately, lectures in higher education are increasingly illustrated by films, photographs, maps, schematic drawings, etc.. As tools, projector, Internet, virtual classes, closed-circuit television are used. In addition to the trend, we believe it is a real requirement of an alive higher education, capable of performing through the skills of the student.

### III. Types of lectures

Lectures are classified in a variety of categories based on the criteria they use (teaching methods and procedures, the number of representatives, types of tools, etc)<sup>6</sup>.

1) *By teaching methods and procedures*, the lecture can be:

- **main lectures (traditional)**, that is are based on exposure 'ex cathaedra';

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<sup>5</sup> Steele, J., Meredith, K., Temple, C., *Further Strategies for Promoting Critical Thinking*, edited by Soroş Foundation and the Open Society Institute within the project for "Reading and writing for critical thinking development", Cluj-Napoca, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Works with presentations of really scientific value as to the lecture type:

Voiculescu, F., coord., *Methodological Guide on academic pedagogy*, Alba Iulia, Aeternitas, Publishing House, 2010;

Boco, M., *Interactive Training. Landmarks for reflection and action*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2002;

Ioan, Cerghit, Ioan Neac u, Ion Negreţ-Dobridor, Ion Ovidiu Pâni oară, 2001, *Pedagogical Lectures*, Polirom, Ia i, Ion Negreţ- Dobridor, Ion Ovidiu Pâni oară, 2005, *Learning Science from Theory to Practice*, Ia i, Polirom;

- **lectures with dialogue (with discussion)**, which is a mix of teacher lecture with conversation between teacher and students or of students on the given subject. Dialogue lectures are structured in the following subtypes:

a) **lecture with opponent**; differs from traditional lecture as students among the audience can step in during the lecture asking questions, asking for clarification, explanation, making relevant comments. This lecture subtype leads to a teacher-student dialogue, stimulating the development of higher mental processes;

b) **lectures with early intervention from students**; and these interventions are without simulation and require careful design of the lecture as a choice of content, support materials, moments and duration of interventions by students, lack of rigor in this subtype of lecture creates chaos;

c) **lectures with random interference of the students**; this subtype lecture must motivate students to formulate questions or even answers in situations where the teacher requests; the questions, answers and opinions of the student also represent a feedback;

d) **lectures fragmented by short debates**; during the lecture, the teacher should create exposure periods should enable students to debate short on content theme set by the teacher;

e) **lectures - survey**; teacher can interrupt the lecture for students to ask questions in order to find out what they think about the topic approached; also survey questions are also designed to directly involve students; the feedback also occurs;

f) **lectures with demonstrations and applications**; enables during the lecture the use of schematic drawings, demonstrations, logical drawings, photographs, films, maps, etc.. In this lecture subtype, the professor exhibits, demonstrates, illustrates, draws, that is communicating the message is realized through exemplification or through means of training;

g) **intensified lectures**; (to read point III).

2) *By the number of exponents*, there are:

- **master or traditional lectures**; the lecture is performed by a single teacher;

- **team lectures (team teaching)**; this subtype is conducted by a group of teachers or specialists who present their options according to the prepared scenario;

3) *By training tools*, there are subtypes:

- **master lectures (traditional)**; the teacher uses as a means of training notes, course materials, board, flipchart, etc..

- **lectures on printed materials**; in this subtype, prior to the lecture, students are given the full text of the lecture or course plan, according to the theme and style of the teacher;
- **illustrated lectures**; is used as a means of training: film- type material, listening materials, video, slides projection etc.
- **computer-aided lectures**; multimedia are used.

#### IV. Designing the lecture

For the lecture to be interactive, to have scientific consistency, didactic and logical consistency, several steps must be followed:

-**The choice of subject / theme for the lecture**; it is necessary to take into account: course name, course objectives, knowledge, skills, competencies considered to be acquired by students without omitting prior knowledge of the audience;

-**Setting cognitive goals**, methodological (procedural), attitudes (behavioral) to be conducted by students through their active-interactive participation to the course / lecture.

-**Specific documentation** to support the lecture, from the perspective of the teacher it is necessary either to design a course or update the existing one from all perspectives (scientific, methodological, innovative);

-**Choosing the content** of the lecture is done taking into account students' prior knowledge, the objectives set, the requirements of that science, without omitting the skills to be acquired by the students;

-**Setting the lecture plan** will be done by the teacher depending on the lecture type / subtype; in this sense, the teacher will prepare a plan of ideas / flowchart to keep exposure chronology;

-**Choosing the presentation strategy**. The teacher can use the inductive, deductive, analogical strategy or a mixture of them according to input and output flow.

In the interactive lecture, the teacher should choose the form of organization, and methods / procedures relevant to the lecture type / subtype. The explanation, conversation, demonstration, modeling, rhetorical dialogue, comparison, synthesis, generalization, etc.. can be approached. To achieve a better comprehension, it is necessary to use teaching methods, both traditional and modern (multimedia related).

-**Developing detailed content of the lecture**; to be clear and relevant, the main ideas of content will be found, will order logically, arguments and examples will be chosen.

-**Practicing lecture mode** by the teacher will be prior to lecturing in front of the students.

### **V. Quality of the lecture**

Any activated lecture of good scientific and pedagogical quality must meet a variety of conditions; they briefly meet the following aspects:

- **In terms of content**, a lecture must meet the subject matter, to be logical (ideas to flow naturally), chronological (phenomena to appear in order of their occurrence), ideas and to be argued and exemplified, and the amount of information to relate the student learning experience.

- **From the perspective of a speech-language**, the teacher should keep a simple, clear, concise speech, and avoid stereotyped expressions and polysemantic words, use correct grammar rules; everything he says is intelligible.

- **In terms of diction, intonation and voice intensity**, the lecture should be clear and with a pleasant tone, contrasting depending on the importance of ideas developed, to highlight key phrases and concepts, and take into account that a loud voice, strident tires audience and a weak voice causes boredom, sleepiness, inattention. Also, speech speed shows: slow flow is upsetting, fast flow (10 syllables / s) prevents the comprehension of the meaning and impedes proper note-taking, and the average flow rate of 5-6 syllables / respectively 120-150 words / minutes with pauses of 0.5 s between words is recommended in most cases.

- **Feedback**. In order to get real feedback on the lecture, the teacher will need to understand students' reactions, he will constantly look to students to observe their behavior and consequently will make the necessary changes for an efficient and effective lecture.

### **VI. Methodological issues concerning the actual presentation of the interactive lecture**

Generally, determining the presence of a proper contact, authentic and alive with students / audience during a lecture is related to several factors, summarized as follows:

- **Opening lecture** can be achieved through a variety of methods and techniques (Bailey, 1986); example: formulate questions that must be answered at the end of the course, drawing a problem that needs to be solved during the course, brief overview presentation of a perspective of the content to be presented, stating the objectives to be achieved in the course, metaphorical presentation of the course title. We must mention



that in the opening of many lectures, academics have taken the techniques used in non-formal education, especially from the perspectives of project activities.

- **Update anchor ideas** (prior knowledge of the students). We believe that a good comprehension of a new course depends both on providing an optimum environment for education, as well as bringing to the forefront the prior learning by students and useful for understanding new information / knowledge. Time updating "anchors" within a subtype of lecture related to the teacher lecture style.

- **Presentation / communication of lecture content** is related to the lecture subtype on how the teacher designed and developed the lecture, the level of experience of the students and discipline specific training. During the presentation of content there is the question of taking notes by students. This issue is controversial as some experts consider notes taking '*an activity completely useless and totally foreign to learning*'<sup>7</sup>), but other researchers such as Grawfort, demonstrates through the research undertaken that '*students who take notes during the hearing explanations or exposures recorded an increase of knowledge and understanding of the material taught as part sensations as visual, auditory, and the kinesthetic, motor whose effects are added together.*'<sup>8</sup> From our perspective, we consider taking notes a necessity as long as they contain ideas that pass through the filter of reason of the student. Taking notes, writing throughout the course without thinking, is a fiasco / failure for the student. The course lecturer / module in its fullness, is usually printed and distributed to the students at the beginning of the semester.

- **Questions from students** may occur depending on the lecture subtype. Typically, the teacher asks the audience / students at certain times of the lecture questions. Depending on the consistency of these questions a feedback can established. To be noted that the wording of questions from the students take up a lot of from the positive psychosocial climate progress; the teacher should encourage and engage students in dialogue. In this context, the teacher becomes constructivist.

- **Teacher responses to student questions and concerns** should be done through a positive dialogue with the students. The teacher can use multiple ways to engage students in finding appropriate responses (providing clues, additional information, heuristic conversation).

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<sup>7</sup> Gagne, R.M., *Conditions of learning*, Bucharest, EDP, 1975, p. 316;

<sup>8</sup> cited, Popescu, V., *Scientific Management Education*, Bucharest, EDP, 1973, p. 383;

Questions raised must be addressed with great didactic responsibility.

- **Conclusion of the lecture** can be achieved by variations that lead to a summary of arguments in favor of the ideas presented. In this context, there may be some synthetic sketches, possible lines of further research and documentation, bibliographic sources and even current students' personal development products in terms of the ideas presented in the course.

## VII. Instead of conclusions

The lecture as a specific form of organization and development of the academic course has a lot of advantages if interactive (intensified / activated). The advantages can be synthetically summarized as follows:

- Meet all the learning necessities of concepts in terms of cognitive and constructivist theories;

- Teacher and students have the opportunity to present their personal choices on the topic addressed in the course, which stimulates and facilitates student interest in learning;

- A teacher can train a big community of students if teaching becomes learning;

- Provides by means of actual content a model of rational and scientific approach to reality;

- Provides information / knowledge that many students do not have access to because it is either the research and opinions of the course holder, or innovations were not published yet;

- Encouraging 'contagion' phenomenon or collective suggestion.

Constant changes occurring in the use of lecture shows the interest of the academia for a professional training of the student. Teacher roles multiplying (sender of knowledge, moderator, facilitator, resource and support person, often fellow in research teams / work) favored the transition from a conventional to a more liberal teaching system. Intensified lecture offers the student the chance to create, integrate and communicate knowledge by involving the skills and competencies they possess.

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# E-LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION - EDUCATIONAL PLATFORM, OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE, CASE STUDY -

VALENTIN INCEU\*

valinceu@hotmail.com

PETRU BALOGH\*\*

petru\_balogh@yahoo.com

POMPILIU GOLEA\*\*\*

golea\_p@yahoo.com

**Abstract:** *The more extensive application of the concepts and methods specific for " e-learning" in education is favoured by the development of information and communication technology combined with the educational process centered on its beneficiaries. The present paper is part of a series of articles dedicated to the presentation of this topic of academic interest. This third article of the cycle aims to present the e-learning platforms used in higher education, the open source programs available and the criteria for their selection. Finally, as an example is shown briefly a solution to implement an e-learning system within the "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University (UCDC).*

**Keywords:** *e-learning, distance education, education platforms, open sources.*

## INTRODUCTION

In the academic environment, the spread of e-learning systems is eased by the adoption by many higher education institutions of part-time or distance study programmes.

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\* "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University, Faculty of Touristic and Commercial Management, Constanta, Romania.

\*\* "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University, Faculty of Touristic and Commercial Management, Constanta, Romania.

\*\*\* "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University, Faculty of Touristic and Commercial Management, Constanta, Romania.

The regular accreditation and academic assessment of part-time and distance study programmes is made according to the standards, performance indicators, and the methodology issued by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS), stipulated in guides of external assessment of part-time and distance study programmes.

To achieve e-learning systems are currently available a number of electronic educational platforms and software packages that ensure the development, the storage and the delivery of various teaching resources in transferable formats, using Internet technology.

### **1. EDUCATIONAL PLATFORM AND OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE**

The e-learning concept, could be defined as that type of distance education, organized by an educational institution and supported by a tutorial system, which provides didactic materials in electronic format, assists students' learning and ensures the didactic assessment by means of information and communication technology.

An important aspect related to the implementation and use of e-learning systems is the elaboration of some standards which allow the transfer of the educational materials in multimedia format and students' administrative data between software platforms that operate within the same institution or in different ones.

For example, the SCORM (Sharable Content Object Reference Model) standard, developed by ADL (Advanced Distributed Learning), a government institution in USA, is made to facilitate the sharing of educational resources between e-learning systems that rely on the Internet use.

The concepts which are the bedrock of the SCORM model are made up of:

- Considering educational resources as sharable content objects, by defining some metadata (specific data formats which ensure their import/export);

- Defining a management system of LMS learning that ensures students' access to all teaching services, as well as their administrative management;

- Defining a management system of LCMS that allows the elaboration, storage, and delivery of educational resources in transferable format.

Such standards have been adopted especially by e-learning systems used by commercial suppliers of distance training services.

Because of the criteria that part-time/distance education study programmes have to meet, e-learning systems implemented within higher education institutions have a functional structure more complex that has to fulfill various requirements.

By way of example, in the table below there are briefly presented the main procedures that have to be met by users of an e-learning system in the academic environment.

**Table 1** *Specific procedures organized on groups of users of the e-learning system*

No.	Categories of users	Specific procedures
1	Director/study programme supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- managing of data regarding the teaching staff</li> <li>- managing of curricula</li> <li>- distribution of tutors and teaching activities</li> <li>- the assessment of students' satisfaction regarding the quality of the didactic</li> </ul>
2	Teaching staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ensuring the didactic resources</li> <li>- posting the assessment tests</li> <li>- virtual didactic activities</li> </ul>
3	Tutors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- counselling and guiding activities</li> <li>- students' knowledge assessment activities</li> <li>- students' activity record</li> </ul>
4	Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the study of the didactic materials</li> <li>- solving the self-assessment tests</li> <li>- assistance and guiding solicitation</li> <li>- accessing the timetable of didactic activities</li> <li>- filling in assessment forms and questionnaires</li> </ul>
5	Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the planning of the didactic activities</li> <li>- curricula</li> <li>- students' enrolment and exams</li> <li>- students' administrative problems</li> </ul>
6	System administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- specific procedures of system administration</li> <li>- establishing the access degree of the e-learning system on users categories</li> </ul>

Educational electronic platforms (e-Learning platforms) are complex software products that use Web technology to ensure the implementation of the above mentioned procedures, specific for frequency and especially for distance and low frequency education programs.

As we know, the World Wide Web (WWW) or simply the Web is a collection of multimedia documents (text, static and moving images,

sounds, etc.), existing on different computers connected to the Internet. They are displayed as collections of video pages/web pages connected logically to each other.

To this end computer programs which enter into the composition of e-learning platforms must meet the following major functional requirements:

- *management of the database* that contains educational resources and also planning, recording and teaching evaluating data, administrative and financial data, etc. ;

- *providing network services* (data transfer, using Internet technology, between local subnets integrated within general network of the education institution);

- *providing Web services* (access to certain Internet addresses and their associated web pages to enable reading/writing data);

- *managing a Web portal* of educational institution (set of interlinked Web pages, providing interactive access to public or private data);

- *providing private interfaces* for each class of users (teachers, tutors, students, etc.);

- *providing private interface* for e-learning system operational administration.

From the point of view of the nature of integrated software products, e-learning platforms available today can be classified into three major categories:

- turnkey platforms provided by companies specialized in e-learning field, based mainly on their own software solutions, such as the *Blackboard Learn platform* designed by Blackboard Inc.;

- turnkey platforms provided by companies specialized in adjusting *Microsoft Learning Gateway platform* to the beneficiary requirements;

- *based on open source platforms* that may be used and developed freely by users, while having access to source code.

Blackboard Learn includes the following major components made in own conception: *Blackboard Collaborate* which provides creating and managing virtual classroom mentoring activities, *Blackboard Connect* which assure the access to educational resources in multimedia format and the communication between tutors, trainers, students, etc., *Blackboard Analytics* that facilitate didactical assessment and financial and administrative data management and *Blackboard Mobile* that allows users to access platform resources or to exchange information, using tablets and mobile phones.

Microsoft Learning Gateway platform integrates a range of Microsoft

software products such as *MS Class Server* destined to manage the educational content and the didactical evaluation, *MS SharePoint Server* providing the interactive management of Web portals, *MS SQL Server* that manage relational databases or *MS Windows Server*, a operating system that provides network services and common Web applications.

Finally, one of the most popular e-learning platforms is *Moodle* open source platform (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) that can run under operating systems such as Windows Server, Unix, Mac OSX or Linux.

This platform uses *MySQL* as open source database management, *PHP* open source environment to build dynamic web pages and *Apache* open source server to manage and transfer multimedia documents attached to a Web portal.

The *moodle.org* portal provides both the necessary documentation for platform implementation and a discussion & collaboration forum for a large number of Moodle users and developers such as teachers, tutors, students, researchers, and system administrators.

## **2. CASE STUDY - IMPLEMENTATION OF AN E-LEARNING PLATFORM IN THE UCDC**

Within "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University, part time/distance education programmes are being organized, according to current legislation and stipulations, for most of the study programmes accredited for part time education.

Currently, communication systems with students from part time/distance education programmes involve the use of the Internet, assigning an individual account for each student, ensuring the tutorial system, respectively of the individual tutoring, the use of other IT means.

Because within UCDC Part time/Distance education Territorial Centres are subordinated to the Part time/Distance education Department through the logistic service and the Informatics Service, also subordinated to the Department, serves all Territorial Centres, it results that there is already present the organisational structure necessary for the implementation of an e-learning system within the whole university.

On the other hand, UCDC has its own virtual network (VPN) within RoEduNet national educational network that connects by optic cable, the UCDC office in Bucharest with the faculties of cities of Timisoara, Sibiu, Cluj-Napoca, Brasov and Constanta.

This network allows the access to information resources and Internet



services, the broadband data transfer and ensures, in very good condition, the communication infrastructure for an integrated e-learning.

The question that remains to be solved is the choice of an electronic platform to meet the education needs of UCDC in terms of optimal cost/performance ratio.

The most attractive solution is to adopt an open source platform, while the implementation of a Moodle based platform for example can be achieved by the Part time/Distance education Department.

Complete with a small number of IT specialists, able to deal with MySQL, PHP and Apache software, this Department can provide the design & implementation of Moodle platform and also the administration, maintenance and future development of the entire e-learning system.

An interim solution in terms of cost is the option for customizing the Microsoft Learning Gateway educational platform to the specific UCDC requirements.

Operation and maintenance of such a platform is simplified thanks to full compatibility and embedded applications using Microsoft unified formats and standards.

The most expensive solution would be to adopt a turnkey based on dedicated software solutions, such as Blackboard Learn platform.

The cost of such a education platform license is calculated by the estimated number of users and incorporates also the high costs due to the research efforts requested by the development of the original software.

Choosing one of the last two options can be considered if UCDC is able to benefit from no reimbursable European funds.

This opportunity is listed by the Applicant Guide for so called "Better education programs for students and the labour market", according to Key Area of Intervention 1.2., named "Quality in Higher Education", published for consultation in April 2013.

In this request for proposals among the eligible activities it is included "Introduction/ expansion of ICT in teaching/learning, management and planning activities in higher education, including e-learning". On the other hand, among the eligible applicants for these funds there are also found "Accredited public and private higher education institutions".

Projects financed under this call for proposals will be implemented at multiregional, regional or local level, will have a total eligible value between the RON equivalent EUR 50,000 and EUR 499,999 and the contribution of private legal persons, without patrimonial purpose will be 2% of total.

## CONCLUSIONS

Developments in recent years demonstrate that the number of students attending full-time frequency education programs is decreasing and this trend will continue in the future.

As a result, the percentage of part time/distance education student reported to all students of "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University will be increasingly higher.

Currently, within UCDC there is an organizational structure providing distance learning programmes, coordinated by the Part-time/Distance education Department, a communication structure supported by a virtual private network as well as components of administration and academic management used by the existing informatics system of UCDC, which greatly eases the implementation of an integrated e-learning system within the whole university.

It remains only to solve the choice of the educational electronic platforms that provides an optimal cost/performance ratio, the easiest option being to use an open source e-learning platform. Due to higher costs, the adoption of other types of educational platforms is largely conditioned by the access to European funds.

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# TEST ANXIETY

MIHAELA STERIAN\*

mihaela.sterian@gmail.com

MIHAELA MOCANU\*\*

rmocanu99@yahoo.fr

**Abstract:** *Test anxiety represents a disorder that has raised lots of problems, both for diagnosis and classification. This paper aims to present a brief history of the theories that have dealt with the concept of test anxiety, to assess the main decisive factors leading to it, the specific manifestations, the relationship with the skill tests performances, as well as with school or academic performances, the relationship with motivation for school or academic success, more precisely the methods and techniques known in the field of intervention with a view to reducing and/or preventing the specific symptoms.*

**Keywords:** *assessment, performance, motivation, research, theory, anxiety state, anxiety trait.*

## Introduction

According to *Gale Encyclopedia of Psychology*, edited by B. Strickland (2001), the test anxiety is defined as a "state" characterized by specific, persistent and severe symptoms of anxiety that some people feel under various testing circumstances and which interfere with their performances. The pupils/students suffering from test anxiety have a higher degree of "concern" compared to those who are not affected by this emotional dysfunction. As a result, pupils/students with test anxiety tend to distort the meaning of the assessment situation, an aspect which leads to inhibition and dysfunction at the cognitive and affective level. Generally speaking, the fear of failure is not limited to the test, they have similar symptoms even when they have to deal with various social tasks. Specialized studies in this field have indicated the fact that 60% of people with test anxiety can be diagnosed with panic disorder according to the DSM III criteria.

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\* Lecturer PhD., "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University, Bucharest, Romania.

\*\* Lecturer PhD., "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University, Bucharest, Romania.

### **A brief history of test anxiety concept**

Research works on test anxiety have a long and complex history, the first results being published in 1914 (see Zeidner, 1998). Sarason and Mandler studied the relationship between test anxiety and the results from various cognitive tests, publishing the first relevant studies on this topic in 1952 (cf. Stöber and Pekrun, 2004). These results have provided the theoretical basis for the development of the first tool for assessing inter-individual differences on test anxiety, more specifically the *Test Anxiety Scale* - TAS (Sarason, 1978). The intensive preoccupations of the researchers from many countries (USA, Germany, Japan, India, Israel, Turkey, Hungary) have resulted in a rich *corpus* of observations and a remarkable increase in the number of scientific publications on test anxiety (according to Zeidner - 1998, more than 1,000 in the early 1980s). Thus, in the next 20 years, there has been significant progress in the conceptualization of test anxiety, many explanatory theories being developed. Among the theories approaching test anxiety variable, we mention: the interaction theory, the transactional theory of test anxiety, the theory of basic information processing deficit.

The interaction theory was developed by Endler (1975, 1980), who proposed two fundamental dimensions in the study of anxiety: anxiety state and anxiety trait. *The state anxiety* refers to a transitory emotional condition and *trait anxiety* relates to a relatively stable predisposition to respond to certain types of stress. Based on the factorial analysis, Endler and Rosenstein (1962) identified three situational factors: interpersonal threat, physical danger, ambiguous threat with impact in inducing significant test anxiety. Zeidner (1998) proposed the theory of transactional test anxiety which integrates a number of key elements for the understanding of this construct: the evaluative statements traits (nature and difficulty of tasks, time constraints, physical environment characteristics, qualities of the examiners, etc.), personal variables of the subject (acute need for achievement, self-efficacy, academic skills, information processing capacity, skills and abilities related to study and preparation for tests and exams, etc.), representations of the subject as to the test situations (assessments and reassessments of test situations considered as threatening or representing a challenge), the anxiety which the subject actually feels in a testing situation (cognitive concerns, emotional reactions, physiological activation), responses with adaptive value of the subject (reduction mechanisms of the anxiety felt at subjective level, as well as the active or passive strategies to adapt to the tasks the evaluative situations involve), etc.

The contemporary conceptualizations related to test anxiety effects focused on *deficiencies in the processing of information*, that seem to intervene in different stages of the learning-test cycle (Covington, 1985; Schwarzer and Jerusalem, 1992, Cassady and Johnson, 2002; cited by Cassady, 2004). The concept of test anxiety was not included in the DSM, but has attracted the attention of the researchers in the field since the early 20th century. During the discussions for DSM IV, the anxiety test was regarded as a form of social anxiety. Due to the fact that the fear of being evaluated negatively underlies the anxiety test, the researchers have assumed that it is a subtype of social anxiety.

### **Towards an integrated theory of test anxiety: causes, consequences, symptoms.**

The anxiety in testing situations (various tests, test papers, theses, examinations, school competitions, etc.) is a specific variable of the school and academic environment which many pupils and students face. Thus, according to Shaked (1996, cited by Moore, 2006), approximately 30% of all schoolchildren and American students suffered from a certain level of test anxiety. Among the characteristic symptoms of test anxiety we can include: association of testing results with the personal value, embarrassment in front of a teacher/professor, fear of growing apart from parents or friends, time pressure, fear of losing control. The physical symptoms include the acceleration of heartbeats, dry mouth, abundant sweating, stomachaches, feelings of dizziness, frequent urination sensations. In this respect, some researchers have considered test anxiety as a chronic disease that forces pupils/students to cope with negative results which do not reflect correctly their level of knowledge. The test anxiety interferes negatively with the capacity of concentrating one's attention and the mnemonic performance, making it difficult for the subject to remember the material studied for the test/exam.

A considerable number of research works have been conducted in order to study the consequences that test anxiety has on the individual plan, also including the performances of achievement tests. The findings of these studies lead to the conclusion that test anxiety determines the decrease of performances in the tests meant to assess the cognitive and intellectual skills (Sarason, 1980, Tryon, 1980, as cited Zeidner, 1998 Hembree, 1988). The research results have also revealed a positive correlation between the high levels of test anxiety and school/academic performance, meaning that a high level of test anxiety reflects the school

outcomes negatively (Hill and Sarason, 1966; Spielberger, 1962, cited Zeidner, 1998 Hembree, 1988).

It has been proved that anxiety interferes negatively with the performance in various tests that measure cognitive and intellectual abilities, both in experimental laboratory situations (Deffenbacher, 1978; Nottelmann and Hill, 1977; cited Zeidner, 1998) and real-life practical situations - such as the tests and exams for pupils or students (Alpert and Haber, 1960; Zeidner and Nevo, 1992; Zeidner, Klingman and Papko, 1988, as cited Zeidner, 1998).

Tobias (1986, cited by Zeidner, 1998) found a direct relationship between the self-reported levels of text anxiety and the difficulties related to information processing that the subjects encounter when faced with various tasks.

An approach in explaining the low negative correlation between test anxiety and performance highlights the importance of some situational aspects. Krohne (1980, cited by Bowler, 1987) **argues that test anxiety plays an indirect role, depending on the time availability and test preparation.** If a written examination is announced unexpectedly and, therefore, it is not possible to prepare for it, the performance variance can be explained by individual differences in terms of essential studying and learning skills which the pupils/students possess. On the other hand, if it is possible to prepare in advance for the test, anxious students will focus on developing *coping* mechanisms to overcome the possible threat posed by the assessment situation. Students with high levels of test anxiety have difficulties in cognitive processes, others than those related to failure in remembering information, as classical research used to argue. Thus, the students with a high level of test anxiety have problems with the processes of encoding and retaining (storage) information, which leads, in most cases, to an inappropriate conceptual representation of the contents they have to learn (Mueller, 1980; Benjamnin, McKeachie, Lin, and Holinger, 1981; McKeachie, 1984, Naveh-Benjamin, 1991, quoted by Cassady, 2004).

In order to explain the relationship between test anxiety (fear of evaluation) and academic performance, Becker (1982, cited by Salama, 1984) proposes an interactional model, which takes into account two variables: *achievement motivation* and *orientation towards failure*. Achievement motivation is defined by the conjunction between the level of aspiration and the importance the pupils or students attach to the examination, while the orientation towards failure is described by the negative perception that the pupils or students have at the level of their

competences, their expectancies regarding failure and through their aversion towards the exam.

Achievement motivation and orientation towards failure combine themselves, causing, on the one hand, the emotional reactions the pupils or students have when they are on the point of facing an exam (e.g. anxiety increase in the level of anxiety when getting closer to the exam) and, on the other, the direction of behaviors for adaptation and, at the end of the exam, the performance the pupils or the students will get.

### **Evaluation methods for test anxiety**

Among the benchmark tests for assessing anxiety we can include: "The scale to assess test anxiety in children" (TASC) on whose basis the researchers Hill and Wigfield (1984) showed that four to five million children in elementary and secondary schools in the United States of America are likely to experience the negative effects of the anxiety test. Spielberger, Pollens and Worden (1984) estimated that 20 to 40% of college students have experienced the fear of various evaluative social situations, including test anxiety (as cited in Hall, 2005). According to Shaked's assertions (1996), approximately 30% of all American pupils and students suffer from a certain level of test anxiety (as cited in Moore, 2006).

A significant contribution in the field of anxiety assessment methods was brought by CD Spielberger **who created and developed, over more than 40 years of theoretical and empirical research, the Inventory to assess state anxiety and trait anxiety/State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), a tool that has empirically tested the difference between anxiety-state and anxiety-trait, conducted ever since 1960 by RB Cattell.** In collaboration with several doctoral students and practitioners, Spielberger conducted numerous research works using the Test Anxiety Inventory (TAI) as evidence for evaluating the level of anxiety to testing and its dimensions. The first edition of the Inventory was published in 1980. For over a quarter of a century, the inventory is very commonly used in both empirical field studies and assessment practice in school and academic environment. **Analyzed in terms of conceptual and structural back-ground, the TAI inventory is similar to the Scale for assessing trait-anxiety from the STAI which measures the general predisposition of teenagers and adults towards the symptoms of anxiety. In addition to assessing the inter-individual differences regarding the predisposition to anxiety in testing situations, the inventory consists of two scales for assessing the cognitive preoccupations related to failure (Concern) and**

**the emotional reactions (Emotivity) - the two basic dimensions of test anxiety described by Liebert and Morris. Although the inventory was initially designed to assess test anxiety among students, it was later successfully used for high school population.**

The study carried out by N.Roberto, B.Varga. H.Ferguson (1989) shows that the scale represents a concurrent validity with other scales measuring anxiety. *The emergence of the multi-scale anxiety / depression* (Child Behavior Checklist) by Achenbach (1991) favored the correlation of data obtained from anxiety questionnaires with the overall aim of the student, obtained on these scales of behavior which parents fill in (Nuț, S., 2003 Anxiety and performance in young Eurostampa Publishing House, Timișoara, p. 11).

The latest scale developed by March (1996) envisages the *multidimensional assessment of child anxiety* (including test anxiety) *based on four factors* (Multidimensional Anxiety Scale for Children).

### **Intervention methods for reducing test anxiety**

In order to improve the specific test anxiety symptoms, several methods have been tested (biofeedback, hypnosis, cognitive behavioral therapy, rational-emotive therapy, systematic desensitization, training designed to improve practices related to study). However, some studies have shown that, of all these methods, the cognitive-behavioral therapy, combined with training designed to improve study and learning-related practices, seems to be the most effective method for reducing test anxiety and improving academic performances (Algazi, 1979; cf. Spielberger, 1980; Ergene, 2003).

Many other empirical pieces of evidence have suggested that the two components of anxiety test can be distinguished from each other by a number of features (cited Herrmann, Liepmann and Otto, 1987). For example, the scores for the component *Concern* remain fairly stable over time, while the scores for the component *Emotivity* rise immediately before the confrontation with testing cases, and then decline rapidly.

The scores for the component *Concern* can be improved by the administration of feedback on good performances, while the scores for the component *Emotivity* seem to be influenced by cognitive variables, such as feedback (Wine, 1982; quoted by Herrmann, Liepmann and Otto, 1987). The negative cognitions related to the factor *Concern* are more closely related to poor performance than to the emotional reactions (Holling and Otto, 1981, quoted by Herrmann, Liepmann and Otto, 1987) and are to a



greater extent responsible for maintaining the test anxiety (Deffenbacher, 1980, quoted by Herrmann, Liepmann and Otto, 1987).

### **Conclusions**

Test anxiety is a disorder of current interest. Whether it will remain a subtype of social anxiety, as it is currently classified in DSM IV, or it will be defined as an independent entity, its high incidence in the population ranks it among the most common types of anxiety, its recognition and appropriate treatment methods being extremely important.

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# ALICE VOINESCU - A DESTINY

MIHAELA DANIELA CÎRSTEA\*

**mihaelajianu74@yahoo.com**

**Abstract:** *This paper proposes to realize the portrait of a great lady, a woman of culture, who was Alice Voinescu. She had a life full of events, a husband who did not understand her, but became her confident after the death. Alice Voinescu's life passed through different epochs, she was a representative of Romanian culture outside the boundaries of the country. She refused important jobs in France or United States for a life in her country, where she became a professor at the University and married Stelo Voinescu.*

**Keywords:** *journal, life, religion, marriage, destiny.*

Alice Voinescu, the first female professor in our country, was born in Turnu-Severin, in 1885, in a family of intellectuals. She lived in different eras, whose characteristics were captured in her Diary, published and kept in good state by her student, Ana Maria Murnu. She began to write the diary at 44 years old, an age of intellectual maturity, in 1929. She put down events until the end of her life, the last notes dating May 30, 1961, and she died on the night of 3-4 June the same year.

Born in a family of intellectuals and living among intellectuals, Alice Voinescu studied at the Bucharest Faculty of Letters and Philosophy, and the Graduation Paper in Philosophy was sustained with Titu Maiorescu. The great critic is also the one who determined her to take a doctorate; therefore she went to Germany and France to study. She obtained the PhD title in Sorbonne, in 1913, with a thesis on "Interpretation of Kant's doctrine by the Marburg school. Study on classical idealism." Although she was offered professor departments in Paris and the United States, Alice Voinescu returned home, where he was awaited by Stello, her fiancé of that time and who was to become her husband. Alice will get a professorship at the Bucharest Conservatory of Dramatic Arts.

In addition to the particularly intellectual aspect of her classes, Alice

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\* Lecturer PhD., "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University, Economic College "Virgil Madgearu".

Voinescu had a special relationship with her students, offering them a part of her soul. The professor image was evoked by Ana Maria Murnu at the beginning of the published Diary. "I was waiting for her when going out after the classes in the dark and obsolete corridor, where elegant crews may have stopped once. I was not alone. She was always accompanied by a troop of students, eager to benefit some more from her presence. With slightly leaped walking, as if always ready to fly, carrying under one arm the books whose meaning she interpreted for us, with her golden hair waving around her stylishly leaning hat, listening to her children (as she used to call them) chirping of youthful fullness. I usually walked her home in Temișana Street, where she lived on the second floor of a house, in a small square, near Cazzavillan garden. In the exultant days of spring, we used to take a detour through Cișmigiu, a good opportunity to get to know each other and to group by affinities. Thus, we have unthinkably established the fervent garde de coeur: Madeleine Andronescu, Mircea eptilici, Miron Suru, Rodica Sofronescu and me - who often pushed the boldness up to expecting the Madam, as we called her, at the gate of her house, in order to walk her to the class."<sup>1</sup>

The cultural experience that marked her existence was the meetings from Potigny, an old monastery in France, where she met cultural figures of the time: Paul Desjardin, Roger Martin du Gard, Andre Gide, Andre Malraux, with some of them keeping a vast correspondence. The meetings she attended addressed different themes related to the respect for moral values; hence she became an intellectual who cultivated such values, for whom the principle of tolerance turned essential.

Although a prominent intellectual, after 1944, when the regime changed, her life took another turn. Her friends were laid off, she was replaced from the department, arrested and taken to Jilava, then to Gherla and then she was under house arrest in a village, Coste ti, near Târgu-Frumos. In 1953, she returned to Bucharest and stayed for a while in the Professor Marius Nasta's house, and afterwards she was assigned a room with access to kitchen and bathroom.

Mrs. Alice Voinescu's Diary appeared posthumously in 1997; its writing started late, when the author was 44, by noting down daily events and experiences. The first entry of September 28, 1929, is also a dedication of this diary, to Maricica, her niece. "I was aware that such a decision

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<sup>1</sup> Ana Maria Murnu, Alice Voinescu, *Guide and Friend*, in *Diary*, Albatros Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002, p. X-XI.

could not be accomplished consistently except by dedicating it to someone. You, Maricica, were the one who appeared in my soul at that time; so, when I was talking and laughing, to you I promised this deposit of what a human becomes under the influence of life."<sup>2</sup>

The author's desire was that her diary should be read only after she was no longer among us: "Since you will read these lines but when I'm gone, I can afford a sincerity that, as much as I want it, I could not reach it anyway, knowing that you will read this diary as I am live ..."<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the author has not the hypocrisy to assert that she does not want to be read, but wishes this to happen after her death, in order to maintain the objectivity and the power to note down sincerely the experiences and the events. However, she has only one pressure - the terror of being discovered by her own husband. "How many days have passed without being able to write down my thoughts! It's stupid that I have to hide this notebook - I cannot count on St(elo)'s discretion, although there are days when he could offer this as well, but he is so *primesantier* (A/N spontaneous)."<sup>4</sup>

The diary is not only an overview of the daily events and a recording of the moods, but also a presentation of the events that make up our interwar and postwar history, filtered through the consciousness of an intellectual who lived within their turmoil, who was affected by the changes not only emotionally, but also professionally. She speaks honestly about both the marital drama, but also about her destiny after Stelo's death and after 1944, even if the forced domicile period is dedicated fewer pages due to the diary economy. Also, the language used by the author of the diary is not sophisticated, but it is an honest language addressed to any reader interested in the dramas of the intellectuals during the communist period, the indignities to which they were subjected.

In the first part of the Diary, Alice Voinescu is under the negative influence of her husband, Stelo, a Don Juan, who has various affairs and cannot appreciate his wife. Her relationship with Stelo goes through many tensions, the intellectual Alice Voinescu trying to rise above the petty daily problems. She felt the burden of the betrayals in this relationship. "And St(elo), who is missing again "in order to punish me", as he says. Poor St(elo)! If he only knew that I am no happier than when I am alone, with a

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<sup>2</sup> Alice Voinescu, *Diary*, Albatros Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 15.

book and with God, whom I do not call to hear me, but to whom I speak precisely because He cannot take part in my sorrow as a human." However, she is happy when Stelo reacts as she would like, she feels the fulfillment that love can bring: "Stello intellectually satisfied me that night. We thought in the same way."<sup>5</sup>

She accepts the betrayals of the man she loves, as well as his fits of jealousy, with stoicism, not with rebellion, and when she does so, she realizes it's not the proper reaction. "I will endure and be silent, for I am sorry that I have not been always silent!"<sup>6</sup> She acknowledges the sadness and the emptiness that dominate her existence; but the deep unhappiness comes not so much from the loss of the youth years, lacking of the joy of shared feelings, but from the fact that her life has been lost in the fight with Stelo. "I am happy that I have been here, I have lived this moment quietly, beautifully, almost with dignity. The irreparable, the giving up any illusion as a woman, here, in the environment where they believe in many other sorts of values. The regret that I have not lived my youth is completely objective, it has nothing of the bitterness in my reaction at home, in front of the certainty that I have lost my life!"<sup>7</sup>

Alice Voinescu is a faithful person, a religious spirit, and faith is what sustains and helps her pass through the hardships of the existence, over the treatment applied by Stelo or over the humiliations from the prison time and the forced domicile period. Although she is used to a jealous and treacherous Stelo, she ends up by asking rhetorical questions, addressing to a God, from who she may be expecting a sign. "Life with Stelo becomes impossible. I wonder, God, what your plans are with me!? I am aware that I chose him, that you put obstacles in my way, but why should I pay a lifetime not only of humiliation, but also of actual physical pain, due to a mere physical attraction, so natural for a young girl?

I do not understand your plans, God! I obey, but not with joy. I know that's not what you ask of me. But Stelo degraded even my aspirations, even the power of enthusiasm and effort. I know that the fault is mine, that I could not do more."<sup>8</sup>

Until the last moment, Stelo is irritating, becomes difficult for her to tolerate his pretensions and his disease, but after his death, everything

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<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, p. 29.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem, p. 15.

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem, p. 55.

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, p. 157.

changes. At the beginning the author hides from her husband to write her diary, but now the diary becomes a confession to Stelo. The addressing manner is intimate and warm, sometimes inadequate to the context, as if unrelated to the previous experiences. Stelo becomes "honey", "darling", "dear Stello", "Stello my dear, always loved and nagged by me". Suddenly it seems that the woman's existence has changed and all the shadows of the life with Stelo disappeared. She hid the diary from her jealous husband, and now she devoted it to him. "I think this Diary, which I hid for years, but lately I believe I spoke to you about many times, will be a conversation with you, since it's conversation with me."<sup>9</sup> The first declaration of love appears after his death - "I love you". The connection to Stelo beyond death is permanent, she tells him all the events of her existence, confides in him, expecting from him solutions to the problems she faces.

"But, beware, an overturn occurs: Stello, the unfaithful and indiscreet husband, dies (1940) and the intimate diary changes its recipient: from now the confession will change, in fact, into a conscientious correspondence addressed to the late Stello. All the man's infidelities will be forgotten and Stello will become the addressee and the purpose of this private writing. From now on, Alice Voinescu will only address to him and the diary will become a long message of love and suffering, a genuine tender and mystical discourse. The confession tone changes totally, the previously blasphemed Stello becomes "darling", "dearest", "my beloved", "kind Stello", "my sweet", "my heart and soul" etc.. While in life, Stello was the potential enemy of the private diary. By dying, his status changes: he takes over integrally the tasks of the reliable confidant and acquires, in the imagination of the woman who writes, the dimension of a genuine mystical groom... A change of roles that I have not encountered so far in the subjective literature..."<sup>10</sup>

Throughout the entire diary, Alice Voinescu feels the failure in her personal life. Her support points are her pedagogical vocation, the role of mentor to many from the younger generation, and her faith (a common point with another Romanian diarist, N. Steinhardt). Her faith in God is what saves her during the forced domicile period and during the time when she lost everything and was forced to live in miserable conditions.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, p. 207.

<sup>10</sup> Eugen Simion, *Private diary fiction*, 3<sup>rd</sup> vol., Encyclopaedic Universe Publishing House, 2005, p. 316.

During the months spent in prison there is not writing, only the notation on 17th November 1952 at Costesti: "I do not want to think about the 19 months spent in jail. It is so foreign to my thought, to my true fate directed towards freedom that I do not recognize any relationship, any affinity or coincidence between me and what I went through. I tried in vain to fit this time within the meaning of my life. I wanted to find it a meaning, an explanation. I deceived myself when I pretended to be a great experience that I can use. I could not find use for all the ugliness and the filth and the buffoonery, than to delimit me even more, to rip me out of it."<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, she fails in finding any explanation for everything that happens to her, nothing is rational, or logical. The prison experience does not embitter her, does not turn her into a closed person, but brings her a lot closer to God, and the church is the place for meditation. "This morning I went to church - St. Toader. I feel good there. How generous our people are! How many kolivas, beautifully garnished! How much knot-shaped bread! I want to receive the eucharist tomorrow."<sup>12</sup>

George Pruteanu, commenting on Alice Voinescu's diary, states that she is a woman capable of tenderness and warmth, unable to offer her partner what he wanted or what he expected. Maybe that's why, after Stelo's death, all the affection goes to the missing one, as a compensation of what she did not offer him and what he did not receive while they were together.

Another coordinate of the journal is the author's fear of death. Such feeling can be seen in many notations. Here's what she says on May 30, 1961, a few days before her death: "It becomes worse, love. I wonder if I'll get to the fall. Breathing is a torment for me, today is better, but any movement chokes me. I got used to the thought of death, that's a little risky voyage, who knows what awaits me there! I hope that you all will come to the rescue."<sup>13</sup>

The *Diary* represents a complex writing, catching many areas of life - personal, cultural, social or political. It presents the history of the family in various periods of the Romanian history. She is the main character, but after death, her role is taken by the diary addressee, the unfaithful, but idolized after death husband, Stelo.

„Alice Voinescu's *Diary* is preponderantly emotional (which does not diminish its extreme critical lucidity at all) and comprehensive, in both

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<sup>11</sup> Alice Voinescu, *op.cit.*, p. 631-632.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 649.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 842.

ways, that is of an extraordinary power of understanding and a huge material comprehension. In Alice Voinescu's testimonies, the celebrities descend from their pedestal and enter the everyday and familiar life; they appear in their relationships with friends or with others, preoccupied with important or minor matters, happy or angry, circulating among the society as ordinary people, similar with the others, while such others appear but not once, more interesting or more reasonable. Throughout the diary, we witness the destinies of the generations observed by Alice Voinescu with interest, affection and care."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Alexandru Paleologu, *Alice Voinescu and her world*, foreword to the *Diary*, Bucharest, Albatros Pb.H., 2002, p.V.



# EDUCATIONAL OCCURRENCES OF PAIDEIA CLUBS IN INTERGENERATIONAL CULTURE

OCTAVIA COSTEA\*

octavia\_costea@yahoo.com

**Abstract:** *Our paper formalises data of the European project Connecting Generations, Grundtvig programme, European Commission, in which are involving partners from Italy, Poland, Slovenia, Greece, Turkey, Hungary, England and Romania. The starting hypothesis and indicators of the project are ones of construction of five Paideia clubs for Students Forum from the Faculty of Education, Christian University Dimitrie Cantemir. In the course of this project are four basic concepts: Paideia club, intergenerational learning chain, preparing children for life, cultural, spiritual and economic values. The five Paideia clubs of the Students Forum are exploring new values of the European concept of Paideia, signifying, actually, lifelong learning and learning forms of Agora whose ethical, spiritual and cultural values are transferred from generation to generation as a continuity form of human memory. Thus, Paideia clubs become initiative, learning and creative spaces - at the same time, it involves synergy, ethos, nobility and freedom.*

**Keywords:** *transnational project, intergenerational culture, Paideia club, participation, reification, impacts, learning community, social dimension of Bologna process.*

1. Our work formalises the European project data *Connecting Generations*, Grundtvig Programme, the European Commission, where are involving partners from Italy, Poland, Slovenia, Greece, Turkey, Hungary, England and Romania - Students Forum from the Faculty of Education, *Dimitrie Cantemir* Christian University. The Students Forum addressed the European transnational partnership in terms of specificity, assuming project indicators and construction hypothesis which are of five Paideia clubs in rural area (school of Ghimpatu, county of Giurgiu) and urban area (four kindergartens in various districts of Bucharest).

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\* Professor PhD., Faculty of Science of Education, „Dimitrie Cantemir” Christian University, Bucharest, Romania.

**Intergenerational culture** is a complex and multifaceted concept, specifically for dynamic post -modern realities, which essentially consists of a variety of components: quality of information, appropriated channels for access and dissemination, participation at all levels of society, to educate users, to use eco- efficient resources, capital investment, connectivity and infrastructure, public services for smart dissemination, social inclusion through ICT from a direct access to the global market of collaborative content (collective intelligence), continuous innovation of knowledge capital. The European project is derived from the concept of intergenerational culture. Students Forum from Faculty of Education, *Dimitrie Cantemir* Christian University has developed intergenerational culture within this project based on the concept of **paideia**. The objective of Paideia culture is transferring values from one generation to the next through investment in human capital with information technology and training, learning to generate and exploit knowledge and progress for humanity. Paideia is a form of lifelong learning and also a form of learning present in the public agora whose ethical, spiritual and cultural values are transferred from generation to generation as a continuous human memory.

Paideia therefore not only education, it is also creation and invention. Paideia includes a strategy for cultural education for synergy, generated methods in its true human progress - real and genuine human nature. Since self-government is important, Paideia combines with ethos, adjusting man capable of being a good citizen or a leader. This education is not only to learn a craft or an art, but it is a form of liberation, freedom, nobility and beautiful. Paideia is the cultural heritage, which are represented all the people of Europe and also of worldwide, there is still and keep various traditional forms of Paideia. It is necessary to rediscover and re- use the Paideia forms in the humanist culture of generational transfer in generations. In Romanian society, traditional forms and post -modern forms coexist, such as: rural circles, bees, village drummer or other agora (meetings, workshops, clubs, etc.).

2. The five Paideia clubs of the Students Forum are exploring new values of the European concept of *Paideia*, this expressing, currently, lifelong learning and learning Agora forms whose ethical, spiritual and cultural values are transferred from generation to generation as continuity form of humanity memory. The clubs of the Forum of students and teachers of the Faculty of Education, the *Dimitrie Cantemir* Christian

University are supported by students and teachers of this faculty, both in urban and rural areas:

(1) **Local memory Club**

School of Ghimpatu, Giurgiu county

Local project promoters: lecturer, Marin Tudor, PhD.

(2) **Research mysteries of the universe**

Secondary School no. 168 with preschoolers, district 6, Bucharest

Local project promoters: Mihaela Gavan, student

(3) **World's Pacala** (ceramic workshop)

Goethe German College, district 1, Bucharest

Local project promoters: Ingrid Târziouru, student

(4) **Laboratory of jam and cakes**

Kindergarten No. 44, district 1, Bucharest

Local project promoters: Ionela Turita, student

(5) **All about Romanian festivals** (management and marketing)

Kindergarten *Stropii de Roua*, no. 199, district 4, Bucharest

Local project Promoter: Elena Rasnita, student

### 3. Terms of reference

The terms of reference of the content and the activities of Paideia Clubs are designed on four levels:

(1) How could the contents, activities and results of Paideia Clubs to participate in the sustainable development of kindergartens schools and local communities?

(2) How was directed training of students forum? Support activities are more successful than others in use?

(3) What was the impact of the project on kindergartens and schools, communities and target groups? What are the factors of success or failure?

(4) What are the added values that could be attributed to the students, kindergartens, schools, local community?

The transnational projects *Connecting generations* is designed as a conceived form of **participative learning** structuring experiences, providing a common sense and community, but also a form of **reification**, using many types of communication, direct and *online* (web-sites, e-mail, face-book, dropbox). The merger between the two ways of communication, face to face and *online*, through which evolve and shape the learning behaviours becomes feature of this transnational project. The

project is a learning community whose the partners are: Eda Forum - Italy; Merseyside Expanding Horizons Ltd - U.K.; Telos Provider Cultural Partnership - Hungary; Living Value - Greece; Mercan Uluslararası Gönüllüler Derneği - Turkey; The University of the Third Age in Bialystok - Poland; AIDEA Associazione di Educazione degli Adulti La Spezia - Italy; *Dimitrie Cantemir* Christian University, Faculty of Education, Students' Forum - Romania.

The meetings in Budapest - Hungary, Ayfon - Turkey, Bucharest - Romania, Bovec - Slovenia, Liverpool - England, as well as the expected in Florence - Italy, Athens - Greece, Bialystok - Poland put together European cultures and educational experiences of exchanges project partners and transfer best practices in generational culture. Relational practice becomes a coherent source of learning community through connections of ideas and experiences between participants: mutual commitment; partnership - which is out of a network or a team; sharing ideas and experiences; and the most pertinent way - European learning. A repertoire of learning and participation shared, directly and online, by all confers specificity and brand for a learning community.

The Romanian component *Paideia Clubs* of the transnational project *Connecting generations*, the local specificity is a valuable resource of best practices and the integration of ICT was exploited by the promoters. Linking to specific problems of the kindergartens and school, mentioning their needs, identifying target groups, knowledge of difficulties, identifying institutional and community development perspectives are implicitly present in turning local specificity. Local specific thematic areas addressed by participants in *Paideia Clubs* are: history, organising spaces, architecture, heritage, people, food, trade, crafts and artisans, activities of people, businesses, local services, kindergartens, school and after school, transport, movement, security and prevention, information, advertising, cultural life, leisure, sports, household recycling, pollution, noise, natural environment etc.

4. Four concepts are underlying in the development of Romanian component:

- Paideia club;
- chain of intergenerational learning;
- preparation for life of children;
- cultural, spiritual and economic values.

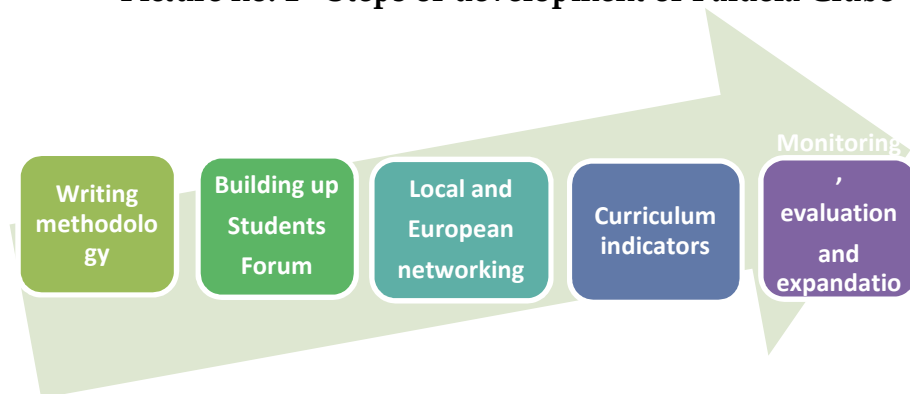
Paideia clubs are in our view:

- space for local initiative;
- learning and creative space;
- intergenerational and social synergy (parents and children learn, create and are entrepreneurs together);
- universal values and national values: ethos, nobility, freedom, brand and local entrepreneurship.

*Paideia Clubs* aims rural and urban learning environments in which they invested and Paideia from which participate in local development, producing changes in relationships, transforming kindergartens, schools into community centers and sustainable competitive in terms of social learning capital economic - cultural, education and local business environment. Proximity generates local partnership (hence, the importance of neighbourhood culture in a community project). Vision is multisectoral, whose stake is the ability that audiences will know how to get the information, skills and transfer of traditional values and use them intelligently to produce further transferred knowledge and values in order to transform them into profit for the local and European community.

The steps for conducting Paideia Clubs were:

**Picture no. 1 - Steps of development of Paideia Clubs**



Analysis of the intermediate findings resulting from the activities aims at integrator, constructive and participatory potential of human resources in kindergartens, schools and local environment, ascribed to them, involved in the project. Local evaluation of the project is one of prospective type, is based on a critical and open model that allows analysis of inputs and outputs, and progress of the project, based on

targeted indicators and expected results. It aims to verify the recovery in kindergartens, in schools and communities - awareness and training - introspection - achievement - gear and dissemination - based on curricular theme and content assimilation at timing levels, monitored (immediate and short term) and cumulative (medium and long term).

The project is part of a sustainable vision consisting of participation for sustainable capital bringing to the kindergartens and school to build a path of personal development and socio-professional, to participate in institutional and European Community development. We're talking about over time cumulative effects: students and teachers participating, ideally, become motivated in future to participate in other projects and multiplier for this unique experience in their communities and other communities. The report is based on analysis of appropriate assumed indicators, on stage reports as well as on empirical evidences and testimonials.

The results improve quality of life: power, time, competitiveness, experience, relationships between generations, openness, equal rights, identification of projects and business opportunities, partnerships, national and international cooperation opportunities etc.. Pedagogical premise from which leave is that once the project beneficiaries, parents and children, acquire the ability to use tools, there is no need for external intervention to keep awake the created need. They themselves will be relays to the institutional and local development. It is an irreversible process of socio-cultural change that creates a potentially applicable to the rural and urban communities.

In the introduction to the project *Connecting generations* have been defined background variables of educational policy documents post-Lisbon, its specificity concerning paideia clubs and project indicators. The data collected allowed us to detect quantitative dimensions of the product on the level and quality values related to intergenerational culture. Also, in addition to the overall assessment of paideia clubs, we could detect global information about target groups - children and parents, students and teachers.

In this thematic frame of reference, we mention any dimensions by *Connecting Generations* project: European values, gender and empowerment of the condition of women in rural and urban areas, socio-cultural dimensions of educational policies, social inclusion and e-inclusion, entrepreneurial dimension, action, and value added. We add to this the identification of specific factors that causes local change: factors of emergence, continuity and sustainability factors, quality factors,

competitive factors, expectation and need meeting factors by participating in the competitive European projects market.

6. The project has gone through several stages of work and made a number of impacts to kindergartens, schools, local communities or districts and target groups.

The first tangible impact was empowering students with integrated key competences, particularly, the entrepreneurial competences. We note the acquisition of new key competences and change in learning behaviour, such as: to seek; to process information; to familiarise with Paideia techniques; to relate with local and international partners; to know the ways of ensuring sustainable development of school unit and local community; to identify human resources and project finance; establish the purpose and objectives of the project from analysis of local needs and aspirations.

The second tangible impact was positive change of attitude. The project resulted in increasing militancy of the action, increasing the potential for networking and cooperation in kindergartens, in schools, in the community, and also in European partnerships. We're talking about cumulative impacts, expanding exponentially in time.

The third level of impact was related to the motivation and instrumentalisation of target groups: increasing confidence and motivation of the target groups for reprinting such learning behaviours. The specific content of project *Connecting Generations*, which is ongoing, it is not surprised benefits generated intangibly, cumulative learning which opens opportunities of living and social integration quicker for direct and indirect project beneficiaries.

Another impact is related to enhance levels of social and professional recognition and personal development and socio-vocational of teachers included in the project. Project records prove change in internal context (kindergarten and school teachers, students), and also in external context of the partners of the project *Connecting generations* through:

- Change in learning behaviour;
- Implementing Paideia rules;
- Factors of continuity and sustainability;
- Socio-economic impact factors;
- Factors of reading the expectation and need ;
- Transfer of best practices;
- Plus amount of personal, social and vocational training;
- Added value for human resource training.

## 7. Processed European Paideia values:

### Values in kindergartens and schools:

- Participation and learning: class progress, team teachers, school progress;

- Management and outreach: teaching repertoire, exploration, collaboration, reflective practices; collegiality, team teachers, continuous progress, school project; content, teaching strategies, skills, management;

**Values of European participation:** developing knowledge and understanding of cultural and linguistic European diversity; employability and active citizenship; improving school management and teaching methods; promoting linguistic diversity in Europe and encouraging the use of all official languages of the Union; the life expectancy average in Europe; improving the knowledge and skills of adult; personal development, increasing employability and participation in the European labour market; improving the attractiveness of vocational education and training; familiarity with trends in Europe; social responsibility; improving kindergarten-school-community partnerships; improving access to quality education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds; promoting active citizenship among young people; developing feelings of solidarity and tolerance; support for mutual understanding between young people in different countries; promoting European cooperation and support to improve the quality of youth business systems.

The educational anthropocentric model of Romanian school in local community is historically well defined, we mention ministries Titu Maiorescu, Spiru Haret, Dimitrie Gusti, Nicolae Iorga, and others. *Paideia clubs* as component of transnational project *Connecting Generations* envisaged the entry in the traditional successful line of the Romanian school by making and practicing all local resources (human, material, natural, informational, etc.) for sustainable development, specifically targeting both personal development, socio-professional and Paideia community development by harnessing ICT content of entrepreneurship and local specificity. The educational value added is relevant because it is a refreshed model of institutional success, which is that school practice, axiological, local and global values, individual, collective and relational capital forms act on the competitive social and economic goods. This project is part of the new Paideia axiological critically and act, consists of current and innovative educational values (specific local, European values, the competitive market of products, post-modern values, human values



relational between generations), cumulative exercise axiological critic and exploitation of traditional Romanian heritage that the school plays. Paideia clubs are open space initiative, learning and creative - while they involve synergy, ethos, nobility and freedom.

The project *Connecting Generations - Paideia Clubs* is a learning community and also accomplishes an actual prerogative of social dimension of Bologna process.

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# COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN THE KINDERGARTEN

IOANA LAZLO\*

lazlo\_ioana@yahoo.com

**Abstract:** *Because democratization and access to knowledge, the teacher is an organizer, a guide to learning, offering preschool to the traditional „transmission of knowledge" real „learning experience". This can be achieved but only in an inclusive kindergarten, who can respond to a large diversity of children, a garden where everyone participates and is treated as equally important.*

*Collaborative learning methods provide a solution this new challenge inclusive research demonstrating that collaborative methods and techniques can enhance positive attitudes towards learning, school performance and self-esteem of preschoolers, promoting positive interaction and mutual support between children.*

*Collaborative Learning:*

*Education - is a way that is based on the capitalization of collaboration within a group;*

*-is a teaching tool for group work, communication and collaboration;*

*-is used when there is a real interdependence among group members in a task, a sense of responsibility to the group and its goals;*

*-is based on discussions between the participants and the active work through teaching material*

**Keywords:** *Collaborative learning, methods, small group skills, cooperation, communication.*

## **WHAT is collaborative learning?**

*„Tomorrow's illiterate will not be the one who cannot read, but who has not learned to learn" (Herbet Gerjuooy, A.Toffler).*

Romanian education are facing increasingly complex, which requires new thinking, new ideas, new information and of course, a new way of learning. One of the themes addressed by theorists and practitioners often represents collaborative learning education.

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\* **Preschool Inspector.**

Collaborative Learning is a structured, systematic instructional strategy in which small groups work together to achieve a common goal. Collaborative premise is that, individuals who work in teams are able to apply and synthesize knowledge in varied and complex ways, while learning more thoroughly than for individual work" (Oprea, branches, Lăcrămioara, 2003).

There were various "names to illustrate collaborative work, learning in groups, such as cooperative learning, collective learning, community learning, peer learning, learning, study group, study circle.

Cooperation (cooperation, work with someone), involves collaboration (active participation in an operation based on the exchange of proposals, ideas). Although the two terms are synonymous, we can make some distinctions of meaning, understanding collaborative "form of relationship between students, which consists in solving problems of mutual interest in which each contribute actively and effectively" (Handrabura, Loretta, 2003) and cooperative "form of learning, study, interaction, interpersonal / intergroup variable duration resulting from the interaction of agents involved influențările" (Handrabura, Loretta, 2003).

Collaborative learning requires joint action of several people (children and teachers) to achieve common goals through the influence enjoyed by everyone involved. "The collaboration is focused on the tasks involved relations and cooperation in the process of achieving pregnancy." (Oprea, branches, Lăcrămioara, 2006) It can be said that "integrates collaborative learning cooperative learning." (Oprea, twig-Lăcrămioara, 2006).

### **The ELEMENTS of collaborative learning:**

In 1994 Robert and Davis Johnson identified five necessary components of collaborative learning that emphasizes the difference between students working in small groups and those working in effective collaborative learning groups. These items are listed and defined as follows:

**Positive interdependence** - the efforts of each member of the group is necessary and indispensable to succeed. Group members must rely on others to meet their goals, each with two responsibilities: to make a unique contribution to the common efforts because resources or responsibilities derived from the task and to ensure that every child in the group will benefit from this contribution.

**Face to face interaction** - each group member through direct interaction promotes the success of others in completing tasks through

cooperation. Much of the information should be discussed interactively. These direct interpersonal exchanges are vital to help children to support, encourage, praise, and stimulate each other.

**Individual responsibility** - each group member is responsible for his work and tasks of the position held. Children need to know that they cooperative learning strategies is one way that only some do all the work. Children who do not get credit help. Individual children can be empowered by several methods such as oral examination random children, observing and recording the individual contribution of each group, etc.

**Interpersonal and small group skills** - direct teaching interpersonal and small group skills necessary for effective participation in cooperative learning groups. Among the skills that children need to work successfully in small groups are: confidence, ability to lead, decision making, communication skills and conflict management situations.

**Processing group** - it is essential that group members discuss how well the group so that they can make pointer and improvements. The Group assesses how well her job and how effective were the members of the group worked.

### **OBJECTIVES cooperative learning**

- Values the intellectual and verbal exchanges, enhance information processing and relies on an approach to learning that takes into account the opinions of others.

- Teamwork is an intellectual stimulus and trigger the exchange of views and information.

- Fosters the exchange of ideas and discussion, that the conditions that contribute to the education of critical thinking, objectivity and reflexiunii speech.

- Critical analysis of solutions issued to participants develop self-assessment skills.

- Encourage the students an open attitude based on personal initiatives.

- Favors intense involvement of students in solving learning tasks

- Sociability, accommodating the different roles and abilities of disciplined behavior, organizational skills, initiative, the formation and stabilization of personality traits.

- Contribute to conflict resolution based on mutual respect and leads to the formation of autonomous moral opposition heteronomous morality.

### STEPS cooperative learning

- The first stage envisages the establishment of the working group. Group members must have certain qualities: be tolerant of the views of colleagues, to have the best communication skills, do not be selfish, give and receive help, etc..
- The second stage is reflected when participants are faced with the situation resolved and are encouraged to work together to solve it.
- The third step is for reflection, incubation and exploratory.
- The fourth stage is reserved for collective debate, when confronted ideas are analyzed errors and strengths.
- The fifth stage relates to the structuring steps to end debate and conclusions obtained with the matter.

### Why Use collaborative learning in kindergarten?

Learning cannot be designed in the current context, without collaboration: Children 3-4 can work in a group, 16 to 20 children in a group, but can work and children at kindergartens and different joint projects. Determination of preschool children to work in teams is a well-known technique to promote active learning and a preparation for school integration, knowing that the ability to work together has become the preserve of the new educational reforms.

For this reason, all learning activities should not be explanations boring, but role playing games, simulation, story problems "cut" of everyday life. At any time during the child is involved in an activity with a clear task and always his participation aimed at finding a solution to award a merit for his efforts. Children should be taught to work in small teams.

The role of collaborative learning

FEATURES	RESULTS	
	ALLOW	worship
Children set tasks / collaborate / exchange ideas / select the right information; Performs a variety of information sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exchange of views</li> <li>• debate</li> <li>• develop self-confidence</li> <li>• socialization</li> <li>self-evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tolerance</li> <li>• motivation</li> <li>• creativity</li> <li>• desire for knowledge</li> <li>• action</li> </ul>

Help develop oral communication and conventional Makes educational intervention / observer to be optional	based on the analysis and comparison with peers	•individual responsibility and group
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**How are the kids?**

- help each other to learn and share their ideas;
- sit near each other, explaining what I know of others, discussing every aspect of the topic that you have to solve together, learn from each other;
- Children should be able to:
  - provide leadership group;
  - coordinate communication;
  - establish a climate of trust;
  - make decisions;
  - mediate conflicts;
  - be motivated and act as required educator.

**What does the teacher?**

- Arrange classroom furniture properly. Ideal is to form groups of four, arranged on both sides of a small table;
- Establish criteria group (gender, friends, the skills in a particular area, the number, different games, etc..) And group size (2 to 6 children);
- Establish business rules (speaking in turn, attack the person but not his opinion, consult among themselves, not monopolize the discussion, do not solve one task, working with different colors, etc..)
- Explain clearly the objectives of the activity, specify the time you have kids available.

**Advantages and disadvantages of collaborative learning**

**ADVANTAGES**

- occurring ideas and more good;
- children learn from one another, not only from the teacher;
- encourage contribution personal;
- intervention assessment diversity;
- child coming into contact with other opinions than his own;
- helps the child to accept change and cooperation;

- to carry out development social
- develop some relationships interpersonal;
- evaluation seeks aid immediately;

### **DISADVANTAGES**

- imposition of teamwork fails to integrate shy children and those with major communication weaknesses
- productivity of children may decrease;
- the teacher faces the need to compromise between efficiency and performance;
- requires more time;
- some children may dominate the group; may lose sight of the endpoint, learning, paying close attention intra-group relations.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Modern Nursery promotes collaborative learning as a higher form of psychosocial interaction based on mutual support, the tolerance on the part of all effort, directed towards the same goal. Approach to achieve the tasks is achieved by collaboration. It shared the view that all can provide valuable alternatives to solve the problem if you are helped. Collaborative learning helps children learn by cultivating deeper relationships based on mutual respect and constructive cooperation. It is also a method of teaching and learning in which preschoolers working together, sometimes in pairs, sometimes in small groups to solve one and the same problem, to explore a new theme or launch new ideas, new combinations or even genuine innovations.

Collaborative learning can reach every teacher, provided that, at the stage of design activities aimed appropriate topics and to provide children suitable materials.

Working primarily means a gain in terms of interaction between preschool generating feelings of acceptance and sympathy. Far from conflicts, it establishes good understanding, harmony and stimulates behavior to facilitate the success of others.

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# ECONOMIC EDUCATION BETWEEN FORMAL, NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL

MONICA ELISABETA PĂDURARU\*

monicapaduraru@yahoo.com

**Abstract:** *If we consider how to effectively deal with economic education, we should start from the questions that entrepreneurs use to ask themselves when they want to start a business. Their goal is to make it profitable. It is therefore necessary to answer to the following questions: What do we produce? How to produce?, Where and by what means? In other words: How to teach students? How much should we teach?, Where and by what means to teach?. Economic education can be achieved in formal, non-formal and informal ways, the share of each structure depending on structure of the educational system, its resources, the principles that govern it, and the ways chosen by the teachers.*

**Keywords:** *economic education, formal, non-formal, informal education.*

## 1. Lifelong learning - "a lifestyle of modern man"

*'Lifelong education'* is being developed around the world, resulting in changes and diversification of educational systems. This development appears normal and is mostly conducted under the auspices of social contradictions: the growing role of the voluntary and non-profit associations, the on-going search for new values and cultural identities in response to various forms of cultural hegemony, economic crisis, unemployment and the increase of the free time.

## 2. Integration of economical types of education

### 2.1. The specificity of economic education

Educational offer for economic disciplines at pre-university level is formed on the basis of centralized decision by the authorities. Beneficiaries (students) are subordinated according to objective / territorial criteria, and transfers are relatively small in number, without changing school offer. It also does not affect the bid price, secondary education being supported by the state.

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\* Lecturer PhD., Bucharest University of Economic Studies - Teachers' Training Department.

Regarding the structure of the educational offer individual provider has reduced freedom, according to the curriculum and syllabus. School curriculum has a share of 5% -20% of the total curriculum. Economic education can take up to 1 hour / week, starting third grade until eighth grade, these hours may be supplemented by the inclusion of economic, interdisciplinary activities. At high school economic education changes its weight by their profile, but the offer of economic education (core curriculum) in the upper cycle oscillates around 3% of the total hours, tending to a maximum of 6% -7% in social science classes and the service profile<sup>1</sup>.

Demand of economic education comes from students, especially high school students who choose technological high profile services, or theoretical high, humanities, social sciences specialization or those who chose to enroll in this curricular area optional courses that are available in their school.

In Romania the demand has declined in the last decade and a half - partly due to the decreasing number of suppliers and human resources available in public schools, although in recent years one can observe a slight recovery, especially in the private supply of economic education.

Comparative educational studies show consensus opinion on the role of economic education as an essential part of the general culture of citizen<sup>2</sup> and the preparation for a globalized, emerging economy.

## **2.2. Types of economic education**

If we consider how to effectively deal with economic education, we should start from the questions that entrepreneurs use to ask themselves when they want to start a business. Their goal is to make it profitable. It is therefore necessary to answer to the following questions: What do we produce? How to produce? Where and by what means? In other words: How to teach students? How much should we teach? Where and by what means to teach?. Economic education can be achieved in formal, non-formal and informal ways, the share of each structure depending on structure of the educational system, its resources, the principles that govern it, and the ways chosen by the teachers.

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<sup>1</sup> [<http://www.isj.rdsbv.ro/Specialitati/socio/precizari/NotificareFINAL.pdf>]

<sup>2</sup> G. Georgescu, *Economic education efficiency, Doctoral Thesis, A.S.E. – The Faculty of general economy, Bucharest, 2006, p.5.*

### **2.2.1. Formal education**

From the conceptual point of view, formal educational includes all activities and actions carried out at the institutional level (in kindergartens, schools, colleges, universities, training centers, etc.) in the education system, planned and organized by level and year studies with well-defined education purposes. It is done in a rigorous training process achieved in time and space: plans, manuals, courses, learning materials etc.<sup>3</sup> Etymologically, the term originated in Latin 'formalis' which means organized formally. In this sense, formal education means official education.

Economic education provides basic economic knowledge for economic activity, consumer and producer exchange, money and interdependence, efficiency and productivity, and market price, supply and demand, competition, revenue, role in the economy, growth and economic stability, unemployment, inflation, free trade and trade barriers, exchange rate and trade balance, globalization and economic integration<sup>4</sup>. These concepts were chosen taking into account the role that each individual plays in society, from consumer to producer, who must make a series of choices.

There is also a sensitive side: How much to teach? How much to deepen a theme, especially now when there are alternative textbooks at undergraduate economic education? It is difficult to answer, but the syllabus for the baccalaureate exam can be considered as a landmark.

### **2.2.2. Non-formal education**

Non-formal education means student interaction with cultural institutions (theatres, museums, libraries, etc.), NGOs or other institutions for educational purposes, which have staff specializing in specific areas of activity, often with training and teaching, but not necessarily with temporal finalities determined at project level. The contents are organized on a particular issue and completion of milestones not always requires certification. But in this case, there is great freedom to choose and organize the themes and content of education as opposed to formal education.

Moreover, non-formal economic education brings a number of direct benefits to students: opportunities for capitalizing life experiences, skills

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<sup>3</sup> S. Cristea, *School Psychology and Pedagogy*, Constanța, Ovidius University Press, 2002, p. 212.

<sup>4</sup> M. Lăcătuș, *Pre-university Education and Economic Education*, Doctoral Thesis, Bucharest, A.S.E.- Faculty of Economics, 2008, p. 47.

and abilities necessary for life, but also access to a better service, better paid. Non-formal education limits reported in the literature is the fact that this type of education includes programs sometimes too flexible, focused only on short-term objectives and too much "freedom" methodological educators.

In Romania non-formal education offer is diverse - many student organizations, foundations, associations that aim to create a bridge between the world of corporate, business and future employees, students today. In secondary education stands out Junior Achievement Romania, a non-profit foundation, whose mission is preparing the younger generation to succeed in a market economy. Students are involved in programs and projects, competitions, by which they are introduced in economic education, achieving at least economic literacy.

### ***2.2.3. Informal education***

The last form of education is informal. The term comes from the Latin, *informis / informalis*, meaning spontaneous, unexpected. Informal education includes all everyday influences, spontaneous, heterogeneous, incidental, bulky quantitatively not deliberately aimed to the achievement of educational goals, but with educational effects, occupying the largest share of time in the life of the individual; these spontaneous influences, are not pedagogically selected, processed and organized<sup>5</sup>.

The need for informal economic education is correlated with development of the knowledge economy, where the central role is development of the competitiveness. For the employer, diplomas, certificates and other qualifications is a benchmark in the company and the labor market.<sup>6</sup>

## **3. Valorisation of synergies between formal, non-formal and informal economic education**

### **3.1. Brief overview**

Types of education were defined traditionally, as we explained above, in formal, non-formal educational and informal education. This distinction is valid only in theory because in reality, all three functions simultaneously, forming a complex whole.

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<sup>5</sup> Link Education and Practice, *Guidelines for Education Form Development*, [<http://leap.ro/Downloads/Directii%20de%20dezvoltare%20a%20formelor%20educatiei.pdf>]

<sup>6</sup> O. Ciobanu, *Economic Education in Romania*, Bucharest, A.S.E, 2003, p. 48-49.

Thus we will try to highlight the interaction and connection between all three forms of education as part of lifelong education. To that end, we followed the connections between the elements of formal, non-formal and informal education in economic education for high school students through comparison curriculum syllabus for economic, the upper cycle, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, Program Applied Economics held by Junior Achievement Romania and influences of economic informal education in the process of the student training.

### **3.2. Formal Economic Education**

In order to conform to the needs of the market economy, students are familiarized with a curriculum that includes:

*An explanatory dimension*, aiming at acquiring knowledge about the economic activity of the rational behavior of consumers and producers, as well as mechanisms of market economy;

*The normative dimension*, regarding the behavior and decisions of individual as an economic agent, in accordance with the norms, principles and laws of economic activity;

*Reflexive dimension*, which takes into account the specific skills of critical thinking and practical dimension, following the formation of attitudes and practice of rational economic behavior.

### **3.3. Economic Non-Formal Education**

For exemplification we have chosen the program, Applied Economics' Foundation Junior Achievement Romania. It is included in the series of economic education programs that help students to experience real-life roles: consumer, employee, and contractor (through computer simulations or in the classroom, role play scenarios, analysis of case studies).

The program Applied Economics consists of a series of activities for students aged between 16 and 19 years, providing case studies presented by an authentic learning: basic economic concepts are accessible, but are also linked to everyday life. Moreover, it creates a range of skills required of students in the future, as an employee or contractor, such as data analysis, research, charts construction, documentation, critical thinking, data interpretation, decision making, teamwork, negotiation. The topics addressed are: What is the economy, supply, demand and market prices, business in a free economy, business financing, production and productivity, competition in business, government and economy, money

and financial institutions, economic stability, international trade and economy global-achievements and challenges.

The program can be done in 12 to 24 hours of training and can be included as optional/auxiliary for applied economics and entrepreneurial economy<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, Junior Achievement Romania offers free materials for this course, but also the participation of volunteers from the business community.

### **3.4. Informal Economic Education**

In economic education, informal element is essential. Students learn new things in the museum, home, library or park. This information is not always accompanied by the correct explanation for the concept or process described. Lacking a constant evaluation activity and organization, informal education may have negative impact. For example, discussions about the causes of the current economic crisis bring into debate similar situations such as the Great Depression of 1929, the concepts of inflation, unemployment, minimum wage, but they are not explained properly, by people with specific training. Children assimilate some knowledge incorrectly, partially or not at all understood, for later use in other contexts.

But there are initiatives such as youth groups that are formed for discussion on specific topics of interest and receive the help of volunteers, sometimes specializing in the field, designed to encourage participants to think about their own experiences, situations life and discuss them with other members, clarifying the economic concepts they use in the discussions.

## **4. Conclusions**

It is important for students to be offered the necessary element for the proper use of economic terms and concepts, both through formal educational institutions (such as schools) and through non-formal educational providers such as NGOs and other associations to promote economic education and not the least, encouraging informal education activities through discussions on economic interest. Career success as an individual is given by the knowledge, skills owned, and the way in which the student, as future employee or employer will know how to react to everyday problems they will be faced.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.economieaplicata.jaromania.org/>

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# PSYCHOANALYSIS IN THE UNIVERSITY

GABRIEL BALACT\*

balacigabriel@yahoo.fr

**Abstract:** *The importance of the study of psychoanalysis in the university, the social-humanistic faculties, is emphasized by the graduates of these faculties, arrived in the labor market. As a study discipline, psychoanalysis offers a profound vision over the human personality, granting the proper importance to the unconscious and its influence over the conscious. Also it's the discipline that approaches the depths of the human being, having in its object of study the will, the dream, the libido, the psychosexual identity. Studying psychoanalysis, the social-humanistic faculty graduate, who will activate in a social, educational, or medical field, will have a much better approach in the relations with the beneficiary of he's work, having at the base a solid system of knowledge and a profound understanding of the others personality, as well as he's own.*

**Keywords:** *university, psychoanalysis, unconscious, personality.*

I think that we can all agree that the University is the institution for higher learning which has the goal to respond to the need for knowledge, of those who chose to follow its courses and their need to grow professionally. A lot of students arrive to the University, at different faculties, not knowing from the beginning what they really want. Some change their orientation just after the first year, others after the second year and the most undecided ones, finish their studies only to choose a totally different profession from the specialization they finished. Even more worrying is the fact that some students wish to work in the fields that they prepared for, and when arrived in the labor market, they realize that they do not possess the necessary amount of knowledge to succeed, despite the fact that they finished the three years necessary for the Bachelor's degree and the two years for the Master's degree.

This fact is often encountered at all the faculties. It could be in fact a problem of scholar and later, professional orientation, but there are situations in which the students opted knowingly, for one faculty or the other, and when finishing their studies, despite their wish to put into

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\* Lecturer PhD., West University "Vasile Goldis" Arad.



practice what they assimilated in the five years of studies, they can't manage to stand up to the needs of the position they occupy.

Further I would like to approach this matter from the perspective regarding the forming of the Socio-Humane Faculty graduates, there I am directly involved due to my didactic activities.

By making a comparison between the disciplines studied in the Psychology faculty, during the years 1992 - 1997, when I was a student, but even some years after, I find the disappearance of some fundamental disciplines for the study of the human personality. Some of these disciplines are Projective Psychology and Psychoanalysis. By keeping a good relationship with the Psychology graduates from the University where I teach, but even with others, fresh psychologists just out of other faculties, I was able to listen to their complaints and difficulties in their practice as psychologists. Also, their lack of exercise in a continuous preparation, their haste to impress with what they know, and the refuse to assimilate new knowledge, the lack of depth in the approach of inter-humane relationships, including the psychologist/patient relationship. A lot of times, those working in the clinical field, feel that they do not possess the necessary knowledge to understand the patients' problems. These gaps come not only from the lack of interest of the students, but also from poor scholar programs. The scholar program, and I make a reference here, especially to the Psychology Faculty, is missing fundamental disciplines, like Psychoanalysis. How is it possible that Psychoanalysis is ignored as a discipline, despite its clinical efficiency and the applicability of its findings in the personal and social field?

Psychoanalysis is a science created by S. Freud and within it we can distinguish three levels: it is a method of investigation of the unconscious, of decoding the significance of the unconscious contents of a patient. The base of this method is the free association of the subject, which will be interpreted by the psychoanalyst, based on the psychoanalytical theories elaborated by Freud and developed by other psychoanalysts. It is also, a therapeutic method based on the prospecting of the unconscious method and the interpretation of the resistances, the transfer, the patients' desires. The third level of this science is represented by the elaborated theories based on the findings tied to the unconscious and the treatment of psychical illnesses with the help of the word.

We have to mention that psychoanalysis was the first form of psychotherapy, treatment through word, and all the other forms of psychotherapy derive from psychoanalysis, even if it is hard for them to

accept it. We must not forget that psychoanalysis also led to the separation of psychopathology from medicine and changed our way of dealing with the mental patient. It had and still has major influence on psychology, literature, arts, cinematography, sociology etc. Along with its development as a science, psychoanalysis determined major changes at the social level, for example, at the way the child was looked upon, he's place and importance in the family. We can mention here the studies of A. Freud, M. Klein, F. Dolto, D.W. Winnicott, in present, R. Roussillon, B. Golse. The recognition of the infantile sexuality, which is mainly ignored even today, this brought psychoanalysis a lot of criticism, but did not reduce its practical need. The knowledge about the infantile sexuality, about the manifestation of the sexuality at early ages is extremely important, not just for psychologists, but even for educators, teachers, professors, social workers. This requires the study of psychoanalysis even in the pedagogy faculty and the social work faculty.

The reintroduction of Psychoanalysis in the school curricula is extremely important, not just for the future psychologists, but for all the other professions, in which the main activities involve direct contact with other persons, found in different existential moments, or that face different problems which disrupt their psychic comfort and equilibrium. Knowing the unconscious and he's influence over the personality overview, allows the specialist to better understand and approach, in a deeper way the causes of the patients problems. "The doctrines of resistance and repression (pressing), of the unconscious, the etiological significance of the sexual life and the importance of childhood events, are essential parts of the psychoanalytical building<sup>1</sup>."

Freud put in question the importance of Psychoanalysis study by the doctors, as early as 1919, in he's article "Should Psychoanalysis be thought in the University?"<sup>2</sup> In the ratio between University and Psychoanalysis, we can distinguish, on one side the independence of Psychoanalysis against the university, and on the other hand the necessity for the Universities to pass on such a profound knowledge and with such a great applicability in the personal, professional and cultural life of its graduates.

Psychoanalysis became a science and proved its practical value, that is reconfirmed even in the present, all the times the discussion is raised,

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<sup>1</sup> Freud, S., (1925), *My Life and psychoanalysis*, Chisinau, Moldova Publishing, 1993, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> Freud, S., (1919), *Should we teach psychoanalysis at the university?*, Complete Works, T. XV, Paris, PUF, 1996, p. 109-114.

independent from the university. Psychoanalysis was born on the field of medicine, bringing a new way of dealing with the psychopathological manifestations, and has extended its undisputed applicability into the social and cultural domain. The universities, with their major role they play in culture, need to reintroduce the study of psychoanalysis in their curricula. The necessity for studying psychoanalysis comes from the students' need to profoundly understand human nature, to understand the manifestations of human creativity, and to understand the motivations behind destructive behavior.

During my didactical experience, I had the pleasure, after the clinical psychology class I thought, from a Psychoanalytical point of view, to be solicited by the students, to create a study group, to better understand some psychoanalytical theories. The interest of the students grew proportionally with the number of students attending the study group. Due to this experience, I am raising a series of questions out loud, if the university wants to help the student in he's need for knowledge, then why doesn't it respond to he's wishes? Does the scholar curriculum take into account the students' interest?

I do not wish to transform this presentation into a psychoanalysis course, but I believe it is necessary to argument the importance and necessity of the reintroduction of psychoanalysis into the university, underlining some particularities of psychoanalysis as a study discipline and its positive effects on the perception of reality for the future specialist. The personality is called in psychoanalysis, *psychic apparatus*. With this term, Freud designates the psychic capacity to transmit, to transform, a determined energy and it's differentiation in personality instances, which interact between them based on a certain organization, objectified at the personality structure level. So, in psychoanalysis, personality is no longer present as a structure formed from temperament, character, skills, but, without minimizing the importance of these three components, psychoanalysis tries to bring to light, for the conscious, the sense for different behaviours, the internal conflicts that are at the base of these behaviours, also the role of the impulses in the psychic economy. All of this can be cleared and understood if it is granted to the unconscious the proper attention, during the study of the personality. When describing the psychic, Freud elaborates two topics, first in the year 1900, which he presents in he's work "The interpretation of dreams", here he describes the three levels of the psychic: the unconscious, formed through pressing, and it is the home of the impulse representatives, the preconscious, and at the

superior level, the conscious. The preconscious has the role of filtering the unconscious contents that accede towards the conscious, its contents are not conscious, but they can be accessible to the conscious. The conscious, being the superior level, serves for the adaptation to the reality of the subject.

The second topic was elaborated in 1920, in the work *Beyond the principle of pleasure*<sup>3</sup>, being researched in 1923 in the work *The Ego and Self*<sup>4</sup>, without cancelling the first, and approaches the three instances of the personality under the functionality point of view, in the field of inter-subjective relations. In this new perspective of the personality, the three components are the self, the psychics spring of energy, home of the unconscious content, the Ego, is the part of the personality that detaches from the self and it is structured through the contact with the world, and the third instance is the Superego, which has the role of a moral censor and it is also formed out of the self, by the introjection of the moral norms and laws. Beyond the description of these instances, psychoanalysis does not ignore their evolution during the life time of the individual. Thus, psychoanalysis offers us a complex conception regarding the personality development, on one side the development of the Ego, and on the other side the development of the libido, this being the psychic energy of a sexual nature, which allows the human individual to interact with persons and objects from the real world.

This vision over the psychic, allows a wider knowledge of the human nature, of the forming and development of the personality, this assures a more objective and correct reference to our own person, regardless of our social role, but also to the others, when we are interacting with them.

Psychoanalysis is not just a discipline of study, but it can be taught in the university, at all the socio-humane faculties, in fact it is a way for probing the unconscious, a therapeutic method and complex theory of the psychic, it is a way for a deeper understanding of reality. The way to understand the psychical processes, the development of the personality as psychoanalysis proposes, aims an approach with three perspectives: topic, economic and dynamic. We can see that not only the psychic can be observed from these three perspectives, but the whole society,

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<sup>3</sup> Freud, S., (1920), *Beyond the principle of pleasure*, in *Œuvres complètes*, tome XV, Paris, Publishing P.U.F. 1996, trad. J. Laplanche.

<sup>4</sup> Freud, S., (1923), *The Ego and Self*, Paris, Payot, coll. "Petite Bibliothèque Payot", 2010.

organisations of any kind, family. To clarify this extrapolation, I will explain these three terms.

Dynamic “qualifies a point of view that represents psychic phenomena as a result of conflict and the composition of forces that exercise a kind of pressure, these being, in last analysis of impulse origin<sup>5</sup>.”

The term *economic* “ qualifies everything that regards the hypothesis according to which, psychical processes consist in the circulation and reparation of a quantifiable energy, impulse energy, meaning it is likely to increase, decrease, or be equivalent<sup>6</sup>.”

*Topic* involves “...a differentiation of the psychic apparatus, in a certain number of systems, equipped with different characteristics and functions arranged in a certain order, ones against the others, which allows us, metaphorically speaking, to consider them psychic places to which we can give figurative spatial representations<sup>7</sup>.”

For Freud, the conflict, the dynamic point of view, qualifies mostly the unconscious contents, which constantly exercise a pressure over the conscious and which need contrary forces to stop them from entering the conscious.

These three points of view can be used in the analysis of social phenomena, cultural, artistic etc. This approach allows a deeper understanding of things, of the psychic processes and phenomena, but also of the personality overview. These understandings allow the future specialist to look deeper into the issues regarding personality, social events and phenomena, artistic, literary, etc.

### **Remarks regarding psychoanalysis**

Psychoanalysis, despite the shallow and unjustified incriminations, that it's outdated, that when it's used as a form of psychotherapy, it takes very long, it's expensive, takes everything down to sex (like sex is so meaningless in a man's life), that the psychoanalyst is passive and reserved, are in fact unjustified vicious remarks and indicate a poor knowledge of the psychoanalysis theories and clinics. All this remarks, in fact, underline the qualities of psychoanalysis, the way psychoanalysis shows its respect for man. The fact that is outdated is incorrect. How can

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<sup>5</sup> Laplanche, J., Pontalis JB, *Vocabulary of psychoanalysis*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1994, p. 118.

<sup>6</sup> Laplanche, J., Pontalis J.B., *ibid*, p. 122.

<sup>7</sup> Laplanche, J., Pontalis J.B., *ibid*, p. 432.

something be outdated, as long as its findings determine positive changes in the patients that solicit psychotherapy. Regardless how superior or evolved a person thinks of himself to be, he cannot escape, he can't go back on himself, to annihilate or ignore he's unconscious. Many of the psychoanalysis critics are confused between psychoanalysis and Freud's work. It must be mentioned that Freud made the groundwork for psychoanalysis, and it's utility we can't deny, but starting from he's theories, a lot of psychoanalytical and more schools and orientations developed, these are in a continuous evolution according to the changes that rise up in the clinical field, to the social rules and norms, in the content of the psychosexual identity structuralization, to the family.

The way of passing on psychoanalysis it cannot be broken from the clinical psychoanalysis, from the knowledge resulted from the psychoanalysts practice. Even if psychoanalysis is framed into the universities disciplines, what will be transmitted, will be just a general conception, a psychoanalysis speech, just a rough guide for the students, towards their depths and those of their future patients or clients. Taking a university course in psychoanalysis, doesn't mean by far, becoming a psychoanalyst, but shortly it helps us become deeper, more anchored in the physical and psychical reality, as well as ours and of the others.

The fact that psychoanalysis is not in a hurry to demonstrate its efficiency, but gives priority to the patient and he's rhythm to change, not limiting him with a time frame, can only be a quality rarely found in other forms of psychotherapy. The accusation that psychoanalysis reduces everything to sex, is a fabrication coming from the superficial knowledge of the psychoanalytical theories, and its practice. Sexuality in psychoanalysis has a greater meaning than in the common language, including in the field of this concept, the reference to the own body, the relationship with pleasure, desire and the way desire is built, the identity and the building of the psychosexual identity. Knowing the process of building the psychosexual identity, is extremely necessary for those who work with children in different moments of their development. Here I think about educators, teachers, professors, psychologists, social assistants and, why not, parents.

The price of a psychoanalysis session allows the patient to reevaluate himself. With the changes that a patient goes through, he's life quality grows, and the patient needs to think of himself as the main pawn of this transformation. The financial efforts only harden he's satisfaction about the psychical evolution.

Clarifying, even partially, these critics, has the role of decreasing the resistance for accepting psychoanalysis into the university. The psychoanalytical way of thinking, that influenced and still continues to influence significantly, culture, society, art and even politics, but even offers an explanation to the phenomena raised in these fields of the life of an individual, it is necessary to be cultivated through the future intellectuals that are formed in the universities.

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# PARENT EDUCATION - EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

CAMELIA STĂICULESCU \*

camistaiculescu@yahoo.com

**Abstract:** *Family plays a major role in shaping children. Parental education is a defining element in the educational partnership.*

*In a world in constant motion, the rapidly changing values and patterns, parent education is needed not only for raising and educating their children properly, and social progress.*

*These papers address the defining issues of parental education in contemporary context and formulate solutions to improve educational partnership.*

**Keywords:** *parental education, educational partnership, parent education forms.*

Family plays an important role in children development. Taking this into account, we consider that parental education represents a major element in the educational partnership.

We start our analyzing process from Kant's<sup>1</sup> affirmation: "Parents who themselves have received an education are already some models for their children. But for making them better persons, it's necessary to transform pedagogy into study; otherwise we cannot expect anything from it and education is handed to some people with wrong training."

In a world that is continuously moving, in which values and models are rapidly changing, parent education is necessary not only for proper growth and education, but for social progress too. Nobody teaches us how to be parents, we rather follow or imitate models and behaviors that we find appropriate for our children. That's why we consider parent education to be a basic component in education through our whole life, an effort that should be made consciously.

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\* Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies, Department of Teacher Training, Bucharest, Romania.

<sup>1</sup> Imanuel, Kant, *Treaty on Pedagogy*, Iași, Agora Publishing House, 1992, pag. 15.

There are multiple functions that family fulfills in children's life: economic, social, educational, emotional support, sympathy.

To analyze these functions means finding some potential directions for educational activities for parents.

*The economic function* has been constantly fulfilled by family through time. Family assures the basic needs of its members. Fulfilling this function leaves an open space for other family functions to manifest; on the contrary, it's dangerously possible for these not to manifest and this way the family can disappear.

In the traditional society, the economical function is possible through:

- The productive component that assures the goods and services necessary for the family;
- The professional component, through which parents occupations were transferred to children;
- The financial component, which means budget administration and family expenses.

The economical function in the modern family suffered a number of transformations. Goods production for self-sustainability is not sufficient anymore; these goods are industrial products most of the times, the family administrates incomes from outside their home to assure their living, etc.

The descendant's professional training has its own way and transmitting parent's occupation to children is manifesting less and less, most of the jobs being outside the family circle.

Low possibilities of fulfilling the economical function for most of the families in Romania, has led to work immigration to countries with a higher economical level that can assure bigger incomes than the ones in Romania. This phenomenon affects children in these families.

Parental education can be made in courses, informational sessions, workshops in which many topics can be approached: adequate usage of children budget, when and how to use children material gratification, how can we teach children to manage their own budget, what should a parent do for his children when he decides to leave and work in another country or when he decides to return after a period of time (the case of parents who had children with them while going to school or studying abroad) etc.

The initiative of organizing these kinds of activities for parents can belong to school representatives (school board, form masters, school counselor) and to other institutions (children protection, church etc.) and organizations (professional organizations - counselors, psychologists, parental organizations etc.).

### ***Socialization function***

Socialization is a “transmitting process – attitude, values, concepts or behavioral models assimilation, that are specific to a group, and leads to one person’s structure, adaptation and social integration<sup>2</sup>.”

Family is the primary factor that contributes to young generation socializing.

The family social function is influenced today by social gradation and this function’s manifestation has been sorbed by institutions: nurseries, kindergartens, schools.

Parents make socialization possible for their children through three important methods of influence:

- Direct adjustment of children behavior (encouragements, homework control, monitoring tasks execution, implementing gratification and sanctions etc.);
- Communication with children (exchanging information, opinion communicating, telling secrets etc.);
- Cooperation, participation to common activities (visits, walks, games etc.).

This way parents can be educated, informed, counseled on how they can interact with children in an adequate way, how they can develop children’s potential, on age differences etc.

### ***Educational function***

Family has a lot of influences on children with two ways on manifestation:

- Through direct influence, meaning more or less organized and directive educational methods and techniques.
- Through indirect influence, meaning behavioral models given to children by psychosocial climate in the family.

The received influences of a child in family context can be divided as follows:

- *Informing and forming* – parents are the source of lots of information for their children, they are satisfying their curiosity, especially in the first years of life. Children receive different information on utilizing objects, tools, about ordinary phenomena, they accompany the family in different places, they receive explanations and demonstrations etc. Inside the

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<sup>2</sup> C., Zamfir, L., Vlăsceanu, *Dictionary of Sociology*, Bucharest, Babal Publishing House, 1993.

family, children get habits, competences, they develop attitudes and learn to communicate. All these are conditioned by many factors: parent's level of education, their available time and involving themselves in activities with their children, family incomes and habits, etc.

- *Moral* – children copy behavior models from their parents through imitation and learning. Parents send values and standards to their children through an explicit system (explanations given to children, rewards, penalties in case of mistakes etc.) and through default given models;

- *Social and integrative* – specialists found out that the level of one's social adaptation and integration are conditioned by social acquisitions obtained by the affiliation group. This way, interpersonal interaction methods, social standards and values, group behavior models are obtained.

- *Cultural* – family members give their cultural “appetite” to children, they cultivate or not their taste in beautiful things, critical spirit, artistic aptitudes and give children the proper context for developing these aptitudes, etc.

I. Mitrofan and C. Ciupercă<sup>3</sup> identify three family types from educational actions awareness point of view:

1. *Highly educated families* – they support children education and keep a tight connection with their school for keeping control of activities in this area;

2. *Families with a satisfying level of education* – they make sure that children have proper educational conditions but they don't organize and control activities in this area;

3. *Families with a low level of education* – they are characterized by the lack of family education and parental control.

By promoting an active partnership between school and family we can contribute to the growth of educational factors inside the family. With specific activities, parents can be trained to be aware and correct wrong behaviors and attitudes and to get involved in educational activities. Parents can participate together with their children in common activities, debates on specific problems of children can be organized and also group and individual counseling sessions.

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<sup>3</sup> I., Mitrofan, C., Ciupercă, *Foray into the family psycho-sociology and psycho-sexology*, Bucharest, “Edit Press” Publishing House, 1998, pag. 175.

### *Sympathetic function (emotional support)*

One of the basic needs of a human being is the emotional one. In the family context, sympathy and solidarity assures the unity, intimacy, emotional security, protection and trust between group members. Family solidarity is influenced by the received education of every member from the family of origin (mother and father), but it is also built, it gets stronger and stronger in the everyday life of the family through compromises, adjustments and negotiation.

A special situation is the one of the families that are going through a process of divorce.

A divorce is felt by the child who, most of the times, has the tendency to exteriorize what he is experiencing in acts of violence, low concentration on homework, low performance in school, getting into delinquent groups etc. It is well known that the family atmosphere has a big influence on: school performance of children and their behavior. Inside the families that are going or have been through a divorce, usually there is a stressful atmosphere with verbal and physical violence, one of the parents tends to get in charge of the child's care and education. (especially the mother).

A divorce has unwanted educational consequences on children. They need both gender models for building a strong identity. The roles of parents are different and the child is identifying himself with the same-sex parent and is searching for affection in the other one. None of the parents can fulfill their role in an efficient way if they are living apart from one another. The family climate before the divorce is a very toxic one for the child.

The inside family atmosphere is suffering negative changes, especially before the divorce. In the Romanian society there is a divorce agreed by both parts is rarely taking place, in which parents try to keep a calm atmosphere. Divorce often comes with physical and verbal violence in most cases and nervous reactions of adults that become a traumatic experience for children. The tension is making them become anxious, to lose trust in parents and they develop the fear of abandon, without somebody to take care of them. Some of them may think that their parents don't get along very well because of something they did, and this way they feel guilty. After their parents' separation, children's suffering can grow because of each parent's tendency to "grab" them, with the excuse that the other one is not taking care of him in a proper way. One of the parents can do that just to blame the other and make him look guilty in the eyes of the child, gaining his exclusive love.

From parent education point of view we consider that special interventions can be made.

Psycho-pedagogic training for teachers is absolutely necessary (initial and continuous). A divorce influences children behavior in school, they develop problems in this area and they have low performance and bad grades. We can consider these signs as methods of drawing their parent's attention on their own problems. If in these situations teachers act tough or they sanction children, if they don't listen to their problems, children can go deep into their problems and even abandon school.

Developing the counselors and psychologists teaching network represents another measure that the school can take. They can offer their support and counseling to children and also families and to other teachers.

We think the introduction of educational courses for the family life in school's educational offer is possible. All that children learn about the family life is informal, from the family they belong. We consider training for future parents to be very necessary, taking into account not only the transmitted information, but also an educating a pro-family attitude.

Another measure that the school should consider is developing the partnership with social assistance services, leaning on each other. The school cannot resolve all these problems by itself and that's why this collaboration is necessary. Parents counseling, meaning sessions with specialists (schools counselors, social assistants, jurists etc.), giving them information about the effects of divorce on children, all these are actions that have the same purpose: reducing negative effects of the divorce on children.

A very well know phenomenon from last years is workforce migration. This has major social effects. We consider taking into account the education of those parents that decide to work abroad or for the ones that come back from working together with their families. This education can be made with help from schools, social assistance groups, NGOs).

Parents should be informed about the effects that their absence has on their children's life and counseling for them is very important. This can be made by school representatives and also by the social assistance institutions.

The actual education system is not very flexible, dysfunctional and too formal when it comes to parents and community. Collaboration, the partnership between the school and community cannot be possible without a mutual agreement.

As we mentioned before, the family has many functions: social, informational, cultural, emotional support etc. For fulfilling these

fundamental functions, parents should develop their educational awareness also taking into account the evolutionary needs of children.

*Parent education can be systemized in two:*

- *Educating the future parents through:* introducing courses on sexual education and family planning etc;

- *Educating the actual parents* taking into account children needs. For the little children there are courses on children care and development, medical and judicial aspects etc. Courses can be made also for parents of adolescents and they would treat their psychological characteristics, risks and communication methods etc.

G. Bunescu numbers the important forms of organizing parent education (institutionalized) and of team work between school and family:

- parental associations (and teachers as well) that have a big freedom of initiative (they first appeared in the USA in the past century);

- parenting schools (they first appeared in France in the inter-war period).

- schools for mothers (formed in Germany);

- school-administration boards, formed only of parents, with an informational, advisory and decisional role (found in Belgium, Denmark, Holland and other occidental countries);

- parents comities, on classes and schools, without a decisional role, that sustains school in resolving some problems (in the east - European countries). They are usually administrative and disciplinary.

The ones that can have an actual role of training in parent education are: mass-media (through TV shows for parents with an educational purpose. This is also available for Romania), persons that can keep in touch with children and families thanks to their job (teachers, doctors, jurists, priests, counselors, psychologists etc.) These categories also need training on family education.

Parents can become themselves trainers, persons with resources in the community, for other parents. Parent associations can organize courses for other parents. Such a program should combine different aspects on physical and medical care, psycho social and psycho pedagogical approaches.

Attracting these kinds of specialists can only be beneficial.

Informing and training for parents in children teaching implies that every parent should know at least the following:

- child's legal obligations;

- his rights concerning child's education;
- the importance of his attitude on the child's scores in school;
- methods of collaboration with school;

To make things possible a dialogue between teachers and parents is very important; teachers should receive training on their communicating with parents and their competence concerning this matter can be considered a professional competence; parents should be prepared to fulfill their role in communicating with teachers; schools must make sure that parents get the proper assistance for this.

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## REVIEW

### *'Enhancing the Criteria of Historicity in Pedagogy'*

*Author – Professor Victor Țvircun, 'Ion Creangă' State Pedagogical University, Chisinau*

*We wish to present a unique publication in the specialized literature of education from the Republic of Moldova and Romania, as well. This work is a real scientific contribution to the field, being written by a genuine historian and philosopher of history, who thus proves to be also an outstanding philosopher of education, university education in particular.*

*This book has three sources at its core: philosophy, pedagogy and history. It was meant to start from a series of questions and to finally offer a number of answers that pinpoint the basic guidelines characterizing the field of education today. Moreover, this work has the merit of making up for the gap of a gnoseological dimension through the theoretical and methodological substantiation of historicity in pedagogy.*

*This book represents the author's contribution to the theoretical substantiation of the educational activity which he has developed throughout the last years in the university, by shedding light on its perspectives. Also, a series of scientific landmarks are being proposed for streamlining university education.*

*Victor Țvircun's book „Enhancing the Criteria of Historicity in Pedagogy” is meant to be read from its end backwards, that is by the small dictionary – or glossary, which the author has placed at the end of his work. Why? Because the list of words contains the keys enabling readers to enter the book's core. Here are just a few examples: 'Historiosophy', 'Historicism', 'Historisation', 'Historiology', 'Historiography', 'Historicity', 'Historiality.*

*In the author's view Historiosophy would represent: 'the philosophy of history which is based on historiology and basic social sciences (first of all political economy). And „Historiology” is defined by the author as the 'science that is based on the nomological knowledge of laws, of repeatable, identical and replayed connections; the reflection on the connections between the actions and thoughts of men from anywhere, at anytime; developing a historical theory that involves a general understanding of history, as part of philosophy.*

*Certainly, the author, who is a scholar in history, is able to make subtle and keen distinctions, which the reader will distinguish only after completely read*

his work. And after extensively polishing a diamond one is fascinated with its brilliance and loses sight of the number of its facets. So that is perhaps why the author is saying that „historiosophy” is based on ‘historiology’. And ‘historiology’ implies general understanding of history, as an integral part of philosophy’. Shortly, it means that logic of history implies a ‘philosophy of history’. And a ‘philosophy of history’ implies logic of history.

But at this stage, you are in the sight of Hegel and of all historians that saw and understood history as a manifestation of a universal Logos. Or, in the sight of Marx, who placed man in a ‘logic of economics’. Fortunately or not, until now, history has proven itself to be more ‘concealed’ and ‘unpredictable’ that man could imagine or understand.

We can only congratulate the author for engaging in this monumental task and wanting to define the ‘logic’ and ‘philosophy’ of history. Still, we afford to suggest that, as ‘historiology’ deals with studying the ‘connections between the actions and thoughts of man from anywhere and anytime, this science should closely cooperate with anthropology, archaeology, genetics, ethnography, cosmology, and other disciplines, which are currently trying to discover man and his mystery.

Terminology as: ‘presentisation’, ‘protensive’, ‘syncrotime’, and others upon which we will no longer insist are part of the efforts the author makes to open new windows, and perspectives upon the pedagogy of history.

Besides, Mr Tvircun’s book is filled with pedagogic wisdom, and it could as well be a work of philosophy of education.

Here is an excerpt from the author’s book, page ninety-five, from the „geomodernity” section, another term searched by him.

‘The main idea we wish to highlight is that everyone must constantly educate himself not only to learn, nor to be all-knowledgeable, but to be, because everyone has a hereditary dowry of uniqueness and originality.’

Page eighty-one: ‘There is education only when the subject has the awareness of entering a specific cultural field not by imitating, but by maintaining a certain distance necessary for reflection, because the human judgment is made by starting from the great human models, models given not for imitation, but to reflect upon them’.

We must note that the author moves with grace and ease inside the great European culture: citing Comenius, Plutarh, F. Schiller, J. Pestalozzi, B. Croce, K. Popper, when analysing the concept of ‘historism’ and ‘historicism’, J. Habermas, who makes us see how a technical development without a target

*'breaks human relations based on sense', and M. Heidegger, who defines education as 'getting out from a hideout', as an action „to come”, and C. Ulrich, who draws on several notes of post-modern education as: 'a life in harmony with nature, inter-human relations of cooperation, a post-disciplinary conception of learning”, and many authors from the Russian literature, to whom the Romanian reader has, unfortunately, a limited access.*

*This is the advantage of the scholar who finds himself at the interference of many cultures and languages. And this scholar bestowed by the gods is Mr Victor Țvircun.*

*Senior Lecturer PhD. Gabriela Pohoățã*