



The Pragmatism of Learning Versus the Excess of Theory

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Abstract: Learning the theory is the cornerstone of the school since school days. Today's school problematizes the excess of theory and seeks alternative solutions to what is a negative tradition that the teaching staff does not want to give up to, as it is extremely convenient. The dose of pragmatism we are proposing is a drop in a strategy that we see as important in the long-awaited reform of the education system.

Keywords: motivation; education system; technical education; internships

Introduction

The principle of integrating theory into practice, enunciated by the Czech pedagogue Jan Amos Comenius in the 17th century, shows that instructive-educational activities must lead to a valorization of the theoretical knowledge acquired through practical activities. Knowledge must not be limited to cognitive notions but also to the ability to adapt to the labor market.

The educational process is a process of knowledge, the student is not just a receiver of information, he participates directly under the guidance of the teacher in the assimilation of knowledge following the path of knowledge to science, art, technology.

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Galperin (1975) pointed out that training is the effective application of knowledge, experience and pedagogical, psychological, logical, philosophical, ethical, psychosocial skills (both of the teacher and of the student), for the organization of an environment to generate or facilitate learning”.

The main aims of European education are:

- to form the knowledge, skills, basic skills necessary for social and professional integration;
- to ensure real equality of opportunity, without discrimination, for all students;
- to ensure basic education for the whole population;
- to promote both stability and social change, improve education to gain cognitive and attitudinal tools;
- to prepare students for adult life, leisure, family, society, democratization;
- to train motivation to continue learning and preparing for a changing world, to assert initiative and creativity;
- to create the conditions for the comfort of the students in the school activity, in the active learning, for the development of the psychological counselling assistance.

The learning pyramid is a proven method of science in which practical learning is on top - 75% of what we learn comes from practical experiences, 50% from group discussions, 30% from demonstrations and only 5% from theoretical learning.

There must be an interdependence relation between technical education and a country's industry. A successful education system must ensure and sustain a permanent collaboration between private or public companies wishing to hire specialists and the technical education that will train them. These companies can support by providing internships for students, provide support or merit scholarships to motivate them, and intervene in a curricular approach that meets their employment needs. Direct contact with the environment of the future job, meetings with specialists in the field, volunteering, internships, specialized practice, are solutions that support the student, but also the employer. In addition to pupils and students, we can say that economic operators also benefit from the relationships they can develop in partnership. They get to know the future employees, with students who prove excellent practical skills.

In Germany and Switzerland, being a student of a technical institution is a real pride. In Switzerland, vocational education is the place of practical and less of theoretical study. In Germany, more theory is done only in the first year. It is about 80% of the time. From the second year, the ratio is significantly reversed: 60% practice, 40% theory, and in the last year it is 75% practice and only 25% theory. In the end, they get about 2,000 hours of practice. Certainly, theory is never more interesting than practice. However, the border between the two is very sensitive. In order to move easily from one place to another, you need a series of methodical teaching skills but also a high degree of involvement and concentration from the students. During the internships, the mentor provides them with the application support of the information, giving them the chance to develop their professional skills. In school, theory and practice must be intertwined in a harmonious synthesis; without it, the results can be disastrous.

Theoretical information can only be assimilated by putting it into practice. Any reading will be quickly forgotten if the stored information is not applied quickly. The combination of theoretical study with practical activity determines the fixation of knowledge and transforms it into behaviours.

The transition from theoretical knowledge to practical activities involving the motor component is not a linear process. Usually, the practical activity includes a series of motor details that are not included in the theoretical knowledge. The aim is to capitalize on theoretical knowledge by solving practical problems, about life, work and products. The teaching methods applied in vocational and technical education are chosen so as to lead to the achievement of the proposed goals for the educational level, to the achievement of the objectives proposed for each module and, in particular, to correspond to the age and individual peculiarities of the students. The teacher is entirely responsible for choosing the methods, considering the structure of the class, the teaching materials existing in the school and following the methodological guidelines offered in the National Curriculum and the materials published for teachers. Studies have shown that methods such as case study, learning through discovery or making projects are much more effective than traditional methods. There are a number of forms of carrying out the practical activities (examples, arguments, exercises, design, research), activities in specialized circles - such as technical-scientific ones, addressing current or perspective topics with applicative character, visits and didactic excursions in profile units, exhibitions and many others.

It is absolutely necessary for the teacher to understand how the information taught will help the students to do their practical activity better and to integrate more easily in the labour market.

The concrete forms of combining theory with practice differ depending on the aspects of education, the educational objects and the age peculiarities of the students.

Education based on the development of emotional intelligence is one of the methods we can choose to give up the outdated and dysfunctional patterns in which we have been trapped.

On the other hand, the Romanian state does not have a clear strategy to identify students with certain technical skills and their professional orientation. Often professional guidance and counselling services are provided by teachers in a very subjective way. Schools no longer arouse the interest of students, performance is declining and students and parents are dissatisfied with excessive theorizing of content that relies heavily on memorization and less on the applicative side of learning.

In other words, the graduate leaves school with a heavy mind, knowing too little about too many areas and having no idea how to use the information he holds.

In the same vein, Comenius pointed out that “the student's work is made easier when he is shown how useful what is taught to him is in everyday life” (1970).

In conclusion, “tell me and I'll forget, show me and maybe I'll remember, get me involved and I will understand” is a common quote but too little applied in today's school.

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