

სექცია 4. პროფესიული ეკონომიკის ღარბების განვითარების ძირითადი მიმართულებები

THE BURDEN OF THE “SUPERHERO”: THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN REALITY

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Abstract

The numerous aspects of the future teachers' education have been already discussed by the state's researchers. The aim of this paper is to disclose and decide on the current situation of the existing educators, i.e. to investigate the theory and practice of the existing teacher education. Is it really possible for the full-time specialist to pursue self-education under the framework of “life-long learning”? The paper discusses the “professional edification”, with reference to Jovaiša and Laužackas. The concept “professional edification” refers to the improvement of the already acquired professional qualifications by certain means to gain a greater occupational mobility and versatility. This is a regular, irreversible and purposeful process¹.

Key words: teacher, civil code, self-education, legislation

The relevance of the research – the article is drafted in accordance with the current legal acts and with reference to Lithuanian researchers' publications, which help realistically assess the existing teachers' self-education. Having clarified the current situation, the proposals for law-makers can be analyzed (after more detailed research).

The problem of the research is teacher self-education theory and practice. Is this possible in the modern comprehensive school?

The aim of the current paper is to find out whether it is possible to relate teacher self-education theory and practice in the modern comprehensive school or not;

The methods applied: the paper is drafted in accordance with judicial practice as well as with reference to research publications.

INTRODUCTION:

According to L. Jovaiša, the school is an educational institution, which develops pupils' skills and where various strengths (both physical and mental) are being realized.

1 Laužackas R. (2005) Profesinio rengimo terminų aiskinamasis žodynas. Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto leidykla.; Jovaiša L. (2007) Enciklopedinis edukologijos terminų žodynas. Vilnius

The author claims that the mission of the school is especially important as it prepares a person for both a new life and generation/society (2011)². According to the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Lithuania description, “education” refers to the development of spiritual, physical, emotional or other values through communication and training³. As it is maintained in the definition of the education concept, this makes the entirety of training and caliber presentation. V. Rajeckas claims that the ultimate goal of education (training) is the ability to foster the perfect individual⁴. V. Gudaitis suggests that education (training) is carried out inappropriately unless and until one adheres to both the regulations and adopted ethical and cultural values⁵. As it is maintained in B. Bitinas (2013), „in the reality of education, the pedagogical conservatism is still prevailing, as substantial changes could be traced only at the pre-school and partly at the elementary school levels; the academic freedom is quite obvious at the basic school level.“ This situation is determined by the change in teaching paradigms⁶.

TEACHER SELF-TRAINING THEORY:

It is taken for granted that the school plays a crucial part in the child's life. The school's role in the society is identical. Both taxpayers and parents often see the school as a multifunctional institution: an organization that pays taxes, creates work places, provides services (of a high quality), provides knowledge, is pupil-friendly and is accountable to the society etc.

The following key functions and responsibilities of the

2 Jovaiša L. Ugdymo mokslas ir praktika. - Vilnius: Agora, 2001.

3 Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo ir mokslo ministro 2008 m. Rugpjūčio 26 d. Įsakymas Nr. ISAK-2433. Valstybės žinios 2007, Nr. 63-2440

4 Rajeckas, V. (2004). Pedagogikos pagrindai. Studijų knyga. Vilnius: VPU.

5 Vabalas-Gudaitis, J. (1983). Psichologijos ir pedagogikos straipsniai. Mokslas.

6 Bitinas, B. (2013). Rinktiniai edukologiniai raštai, I. Vilnius: Edukologija.

teacher are provided in the model description of the Lithuanian School Education Trade Union:

1. To plan one's training activity;
2. To prepare for classes and conduct them;
3. To prepare and organize supplementary education activities;
4. To assess knowledge;
5. To handle the documents related with the education of pupils;
6. To be able to independently teach a pupil at home in compliance with the methods provided by the legislative procedures of the Republic of Lithuania;
7. To work with children with special needs;
8. To be able to take the necessary measures in case a child is inebriated or is on other psychotropic substances;
9. To continuously improve their qualifications;
10. To ensure pupils' psychological and physical safety during classes.⁷

The key responsibilities and functions list proves the teacher's importance. Additionally, the list proves that the teacher has to improve their professional qualifications as well as managerial, coordination and interpersonal skills. Thus, it is important for the teacher to have at least one week per month for the continuous improvement of their qualification, which is specified in both the responsibilities descriptions and the Minister of Education and Science order. Otherwise, the educator, who applies the outdated, obsolete teaching/learning methods and tools, is unable to foster the future citizen.

It is unthinkable that on average a teacher has to apply all of the above mentioned functions while working with 25 pupils at the same time. It is particularly important to realize that teachers are responsible for pupils' health and life during the out-of-class activities or other events organized at school. The civil code also provides for the responsibility for damage caused by children under 14, i.e. in case the minor under 14 causes damage while under the supervision of the education, fostering, healthcare or guardianship (custody) authority, the supervising authority is liable for the caused damage, unless it is proved that the damage was caused not by the fault of the authority in charge⁸. It is also important to remember that in the course of the last decade pupils have the possibility to actively exercise their rights and freedoms. As in any other case, this is a typical abuse at schools. The judicial practice proves that teachers are sued for violations of the Administrative Code of the Republic of Lithuania (for the unlawful interference with the child in the exercise of their rights, freedoms, or for other infringements on the child's rights). In such a case, the teacher is noticed or pays a fine (up to 28 Euros). In case

7 Lietuvos Švietimo profesijos – pavyzdinis mokytojo pareigybės aprašas, [Accessed on 18 January 2015]. Available at: http://www.svietimoprofsajunga.lt/images/default/source/attachments/pvz_mokytojo_pareigybes_aprasymas.pdf

8 Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis Kodexas 6,275 straipsnis. valstybės žinios, 2000, Nr. 74-2262 (su pakeitimais ir papildymais)

of the failure to comply with their obligations or improper execution of their responsibilities, the leaders, teachers or other persons of the education, fostering, healthcare and other institutions and bodies, which have a child at their disposal (supervision), or in case of the physical or mental mutilation or other violation of the rights of the child, are warned or pay a fine from 28 to 144 Euros⁹.

It is natural that the above-mentioned qualification improvement, which is being disbursed (partly) from a student's basket funding cannot be exploited to its maximum solely due to the lack of time, when the teacher must concentrate on their pupil. Moreover, it seems that the improvement of qualification is solely the teacher's own responsibility, since the financing is far behind both the economic inflation and economic level of the country (the qualification improvement events fees in the market are substantially higher than the sum allocated to 1 teacher for one workshop per the academic year).

TEACHER SELF-TRAINING PRACTICE:

The teacher's position and the burden of responsibility is often equal to (and in some cases exceeds) the duties of the manager at a large organization. Already in the course of their studies, the trainee teachers face a substantial problem - a completely different comprehension of theory and practice. The pedagogical success during the pedagogical practice is one of the strongest motivations to make a competent teacher¹⁰.

The competences the teacher has to combine are often ambiguous and this leads to essential disputes. Pupil's rules of conduct, their learning contracts, general rules of conduct are the documents with lower legal capacity than the child's rights protection legislation or child's rights. However, it has been noticed that the relations among educators, the more creative communication, relations with pupils is more obvious among the future teachers, who had been involved in the social activities at school, had been volunteering etc¹¹.

Often certain situations at schools get mass media coverage: „<...> the principal J. R. said that the teacher of arts has suffered the most as she was afraid to bring down her pupil and after the class had to go outside to bring back the chair the pupil had thrown through the window. The principal told journalists that measures had been taken after an incident when the chair thrown away through the

9 Lietuvos Respublikos Administracinių teisės pažeidimų kodeksas, 181 str. Valstybės žinios., 1985, Nr. 1-1

10 Barkauskaitė, M., Barkauskaitė, M., & Guoba, A. (2015). Būsimųjų mokytojų, atlikusių pedagoginę praktiką, gebėjimų raiška ir jų tobulinimo kryptys. *Pedagogika*, 119(3). & Guoba, A. (2015). Būsimųjų mokytojų, atlikusių pedagoginę praktiką, gebėjimų raiška ir jų tobulinimo kryptys. *Pedagogika*, 119(3).

11 Viršulienė, K. (2014). Būsimųjų mokytojų pedagoginio bendravimo gebėjimai ir jų ugdymas(is). Daktaro disertacija. Vilnius: Lietuvos edukologijos universitetas.

window has almost hit a fifth-grade pupil <...>¹². In this case the rights and responsibilities of the pupil are above the teacher's, who has to put up with the rough behaviour of their pupils. What is more, this teacher is liable not only for the safety of other students but also for the safety of the undisciplined student. The scholar Tijūnėlienė draws the teacher's portrait, in which she combines the everyday teacher's competences: „the full authority of the teacher is expressed by the consistency of both physical and spiritual qualities; the professional competence and factual ability to implement the professional responsibilities; moral qualities - justice, humanity, pedagogical love, the ability to create favorable psychological climate for teaching/learning so that the pupils feel spiritual freedom. The teachers actions that meet children's, as young personalities', needs add to the teacher's authority“ (Tijūnėlienė, 2006, p. 58).¹³

Nowadays, it is being expected much from teachers and school principles. The prevailing opinion in the society is the following: if a person gets a big salary, they unavoidably deal with great responsibility. It is somewhat paradoxical that comprehensive schools, their teachers or principals strongly do not comply with this public norms. It seems that a teacher of comprehensive schools has to be a „superhero“, who fosters and differentiates or personalizes the study programmes, handles the fostering related documents, supervises and is liable for the pupils' behaviour. Moreover, the teacher may be fined for the inappropriate implementation of their tasks. Thus, the question is whether the teacher, who accepts all the risks, is assessed and evaluated appropriately or not. The teachers' salary topic is today's particularly sensitive issue still unresolved. As mentioned above, the school today may be compared with an organization: with the constantly growing supply and the decreasing demand, schools do literally everything to attract new pupils. In the author's opinion, the academic group may be compared with a small business - a group of thirty individuals with different needs, their own opinions and different characters. The question is: why teachers during their classes cannot be equaled to managers or even directors, especially due to the great responsibility they have. The common practice at various enterprises is that the employees with great responsibility are evaluated accordingly. The foreign practices are quite different: the risks and responsibilities of teachers in the Scandinavian countries, Great Britain have been evaluated long time ago. In Lithuania, however, this area is still forgotten.

In the article „The trainee teachers' skills expression and improvement directions after the pedagogical practice“, the authors claim that „the problems pointed out in various stages of pedagogical activities demonstrate that a

12 Lietuvos dilema: kur dėti „bloguosius“ mokinius? | Alfa.lt [Accessed on 18 October 2016]. Available at: <http://www.alfa.lt/straipsnis/15081810/lietuvos-dilema-kur-deti-bloguosius-mokinius#ixzz3OtigxFnd>

13 Tijūnėlienė, O. (2006). The problem of the teacher's authority as a positive factor in education: theory and empirics. Teacher education, No. 6, p. 45-59.

few aspects are important in the process of teacher education: the versatility of the future educator's spiritual values, the educator's ability to assess their own achievements and challenges, the ability to reflect on the current situation and envision the positive change; the professional assistance of mentors and teachers in rendering additional theoretical and practical knowledge, in the search of new methods, approaches and forms for solving issues and conflicts, in predicting of new possibilities, in forecasting situations and adapting them in pedagogical activities“¹⁴

Paradoxically, however, A. Hargreaves maintains that training of the future teachers has to be aimed at leadership development (the ability to convey knowledge not only formally, but also, taking into consideration the real life and pupils' needs, the ability to work in teams, problem solving skills, the ability to involve each student and believe in their abilities.¹⁵ the above-mentioned situations practically prove the importance of the leadership in class - the only tool to reach pupils' consciousness.

CONCLUSIONS:

It is not surprising that in different countries around the world the teacher is considered to be a part of the group of very special people, who work by vocation. We believe that teacher education (training) depends on individual motivation, as it is obvious that the present-day context presents numerous obstacles for the natural self-education that meets the highest standards. Motivation leads to a truly personal development, skills improvement throughout life¹⁶. The dictionary of Psychology defines motivation as „entirety of motifs, which are determined by needs. Motifs are defined as stimuli for actions, which are related with the individual's needs satisfaction: the external or internal factors that promote the individual's activities and their directions; both tangible and spiritual goals; the reasons for individual's actions and deeds, realized by the individual“¹⁷. Thus, each teacher has their need - to learn in the ever-changing modern environment; however, the needs differ among specialists: financial benefit (the necessity of qualifications improvement leads to higher wages, friendly relations with students, personal professional growth, etc. According to the classics of Lithuanian pedagogy, such as J. Vabalas-Gudaitis, the higher education institution has to prepare the future teachers as well as possible in both their

14 Barkauskaitė, M., & Guoba, A. (2015). Būsinių mokymų, atlikusių pedagoginę praktiką, gebėjimų raiška ir jų tobulinimo kryptys. Pedagogika, 119(3).

15 Hargreaves A. (2006) III tarptautinė Europos ir Centrinės Azijos šalių konferencija „Švietimo kokybė ir kontekstualumas“, [Accessed 2008-06-09]. Available at: <http://www.lyderiulaikas.smm.lt/II/index.php/nuorodos/autoritetai.html>.

16 Urnėžienė, E. (2012). Profesorė M. Barkauskaitė apie mokymosi motyvą kaip ugdymo proceso sėkmės sąlygą. Pedagogika, (108), 38-42

17 Psichologijos žodynas. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla, 1993. 560 p.

speciality and pedagogy. Thus, the studies process has to be organized so that the future educator is able to teach forcibly and make pupils interested in gaining knowledge¹⁸.

After long discussions about teacher training as an ongoing process, the researchers have drawn positive conclusions that both scientific and technological change, a huge impact of globalization, high mobility lead to the individual's desire to study/learn, which means that the ability to learn/study is very important to everyone¹⁹. Taking the above-mentioned fact as well as the current situation, it is very important to pay great attention to teacher training as entirety, i.e. not only the development of certain competences, but the teaching of lifelong learning skills. As maintained by V.Zuzevičiūtė, learning people change the world, which makes them learn even harder²⁰. The continuous spiral of life leads to lifelong learning skills. Although specialists of the twenty-first century face various daily issues, which often demotivate to learn or improve their qualifications, the author suggests that the acquired ability to learn and share information could make this process clear and uninterrupted.

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