

THE BALANCE BETWEEN TEACHING AND EDUCATION IN TEACHING PROFESSION

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Abstract

In our modern world, especially as a result of the accelerated socio-cultural structural changes which characterized the last decades, the earlier familiar approaches regarding childhood, education and school socialization lost their validity. This caused fundamental changes in the system of the teaching and education process. The opinion, that the task of a pedagogue is nothing else than to transmit the curriculum content, without the necessity to educate children, becomes more and more popular. In this context the question arises, what is today the task of a teacher, of a pedagogue? Does he/she just teach or he/she educates pupils as well. The contemporary Romanian education policy lays stress on the transmission of the curriculum content and consequently the majority of the teachers have got a so-called knowledge-focused attitude, the overcrowded curriculum, the chase after achievement, leaves less room to education. In my opinion, it depends on the personality of the teacher, whether he/she considers education as an important task beyond the delivery of the learning content. What does actually school education mean? To what extent is it palpable and to what extent is it a conscious activity? What is the matter with the „hidden curriculum”? To what extent do the prevailing education system and the methods of the teacher training influence school education? How can the efficiency of these factors be measured?

Absztrakt

Ma a világ számos különféle gondokkal küzd. Értékválság tapasztalható, ami az emberiség nagy részét érinti, legfontosabb célja a pénzszerzés vált. Ennek kapcsán egyre elterjedtebb az a nézet, miszerint a pedagógus feladata semmi más, mint átadja a gyerekeknek a tananyagot, nem dolgoz a nevelés. A jelenlegi román oktatáspolitikája a tananyag átadására helyezi a hangsúlyt, a pedagógus hozzáállásától, személyiségétől függ az, hogy a tudás átadása mellett fontosnak tartja-e a nevelést, mint feladatot. Mit is jelent tulajdonképpen az iskolai nevelés?

Mennyire megfogható, mennyire tudatos tevékenység? És mi van a „rejtett tantervvel”? A mindenkori oktatási rendszerek vagy a tanárképzés módja mennyire befolyásolja az iskolai nevelés alakulását? Miben mérhető az eredményessége? Egy terepmunka keretében gyakorló pedagógusokat kérdeztem arról, hogy fontosnak tartják-e munkájukban az oktatás mellett a nevelést. Mennyire tartják fontosnak? Egyáltalán mire gondolnak, amikor nevelésről kérdezem őket? Szerintük hogyan jelenik meg a nevelés az iskola hétköznapi világában? Az ő munkájukban? A tanulmány a téma kapcsán, néhány szakirodalmi áttekintés után, a pedagógusokkal készített interjúk feldolgozását, a terepmunka tapasztalatait foglalja össze.

Key words: teaching, education, teacher role, education system.

In the framework of this study I intend to explore a tiny segment of the before mentioned aspects. First of all I am curious to find out, what do teachers in a little town/ village in Szeklerland, who teach pupils in upper primary classes, think about school education. To which extent do they find the aspect of education important? What do they exactly think, when I ask them about education? How does education appear in the everyday life of the school in their opinion? How does it appear in their work? I also surveyed their value preferences in order to get a clear picture of the „current” values, which are considered important by teachers at present. In this way I intended to find out, whether there are any common accepted values in the schools of our days or whether we can observe any differences related to age or professional experience of the interviewed teachers. Closely linked to this issue I present the specifying of the characteristics of the „good teacher” by my interview subjects, which might bring up to surface those features, on the basis of which it is possible to draw the profile of the „good teacher” of a little town/ village school in Romania.

It is well known, that the Romanian education system is largely achievement-driven, it focuses mainly on the measurable knowledge, it lays stress

on this kind of knowledge. According to my hypothesis, the role of the pedagogue is thus more and more limited to the transmission of factual knowledge and through this practice, personal, and social education is pushed into the background. During my research I made interviews with fifteen pedagogues, who teach in upper primary classes. They were quite different, regarding both their age and their specialization.

1. Review of the relevant literature

Socialization is a lifelong process, which is being renewed over and over in particular life stages, being one of the most important pillars of personality development. The scene of primary socialization of children is the family, which is followed by the nursery school and school. School is an institutional place of socialization. Its objective is to help children to acquire the information, the skills and the values regarded important by society through teaching and education. In course of school socialization, children have to learn to collaborate with others, to meet external expectations, respectively to create the new rules of behaviour. School offers ground for practicing new roles and positions and it transmits the requirements, standards and values of the peer group to the individual.

2. The teacher role and vocation

The pedagogue (teacher) is the personal mediator of institutional socialization. He/she educates and teaches, being the representative of social values, standards, requirements. The role of the pedagogue is beyond skill development, delivery of knowledge and motivation of children, the education as well. Everybody has got an idea about education or about the concept of education on everyday level, thinking first of all at real actions. On theoretical level there are many different views, but generally speaking everybody agrees, that people always used education, in order to raise the coming generations in a way, that they achieve a certain consciousness. According to Gabriella Baksa (2006) education is a characteristic of human society, through which it maintains and reproduces itself. She observes, that for the society it is vital, the extent to which children, young people, new generations, can exhaust their abilities and acquire

the social rules as a result of education. The overall objective of education should be determined by those values, which prevail in the entire society. She also formulates, that „*education is an interplay between educator and pupil, that is a system of social interactions*” (Baksa 2006:4).

„*The essence of education is the mediation of values or value creation*” (Bábosik 1999:9). Personality development and formation and education are closely related. Aliz Fáyiné Dombi (2011) lays down in her work entitled „Pedagógusképzés, pedagógus pálya, kiterjesztett pedagógus szerep” [Teacher Training, Teacher Career, Extended Teacher’s Role]: „*The personality of the teacher is the source of educational impacts both in general human respect and in respect of the features of this career. These impacts are partially spontaneous and partially they function as parts of a planned educational impact system, anyhow they appear as models. The extent of the efficiency of being a role example for the students depends not only on the competence of the teacher or on his/her identification with his/her career, but on that special relationship, which links him/her to his/her students*” (Fáyiné 2011:5-6).

Mariann Burány (2010) in her essay entitled „Az oktatás és nevelés mint foglalkozás” [Teaching and Education as an Occupation], which appeared 2010 in the periodical Új kép – pedagógusok és szülők folyóirat [New picture – a Periodical for Teachers and Parents] declares, that as a pedagogue it is not enough to have a sense of vocation, a good teacher must feel true calling as well. A committed teacher looks after the „future”! His/her devotion cannot be paid with money” (Burány 2010).

She mentions the following components of this complex profession:

- *Vocation*, which means „feeling a spiritual calling”, conviction
- *Trade*, which covers a special profile, authenticity
- *Profession*: meaning professionalism
- *Occupation*, which means and implies status, position, responsibilities of the role and adequacy of the personality (Burány 2010).

According to Rene Hubert (1965) the most important competency of the teacher is „the teaching vocation”, which manifests itself in the fact, that you feel a calling to the task and you are also able to accomplish it. In his opinion the pedagogical

vocation has three characteristics: the love of teaching, the belief in social and cultural values, and the sense of responsibility towards children, towards home country and towards humanity. According to the author, being a teacher is a continuous creation, which needs much patience, causes many uncertain moments, requires much learning and the result cannot be measured either quantitatively or immediately (Sălăvăstru 2004:151).

According to Dorina Sălăvăstru (2004) in the work of a teacher the classroom teaching is not merely the place of the delivery of the curriculum content as per an academic ceremony, and the teacher is not just a person, who recommends certain contents, assigns tasks and expects certain forms of attitude and behaviour from the students. Pupils should learn in a classroom more than just the curriculum content. They should learn a lesson of life. The teacher should inflame the interest of the children towards new things and should maintain their interest. „*He/she introduces them into the social life, strengthens their self-confidence in their potentions and helps them find their identity*”. These things can only come true, if the teacher possesses all those competences, which prevail in the process of teaching. But which competencies are these? Are they present in our lives since our birth, or we acquire them in the course of our lifetime? Can we learn to be good teachers? According to M.A. Bloch (1968), teaching others is a gift given by nature. Others think that the teaching profession can be learned in the same way as any other profession. (Sălăvăstru 2004:151-152). Emőke Bagdy (1988) emphasizes the two basic functions of the pedagogical role: the teaching and instructive work, meaning the transmission of knowledge, and the personality development and formation function, which is carried out through education and personal example. She considers that pedagogical highschoools should concentrate upon the adequate performance of the above mentioned two basic functions during the training of teachers.

3. The personality of the pedagogue

Many professional essays point out, that is not only the lexical knowledge of the teacher, which matters, but his/her personality is important as well, because it has an impact on the way of how he/she transmits knowledge. A main instrument of the teacher is his/her own personality, because his/

her attitude, behaviour is an example for children. Beside that he/she knows his subject very well – he/she should possess some human features and qualities, which constitute an example for students. According to this view teaching skills are the main factors of success in the educational and teaching process. Many experts define this in quite various ways. Zoltán Istvánfi (2011) writes in his essay entitled „*A pedagógus személyiségének jelentősége és hatása a nevelési és oktatási folyamatban*” [The Importance and Impact of the Personality of the Teacher in the Educational and Teaching Process] about the two aspects of teaching. On the one hand there is the „worldly education”, which manifests itself in the transmission of information and theoretical knowledge on the other hand there is the so called „Educare” which is expressed in the transmission of human values. As the meaning of the word itself suggests, Educare means bringing to the surface those inner values, which can be found in each of us. Justice, morality, love, or the lack of aggression cannot be acquired from the outside, these qualities can only be brought to the surface from inside. Thus Educare is a quite important aspect of teaching, which manifests itself in bringing to the surface and in the practical adaptation of human values (Istvánfi 2011). In the pedagogical work these two impacts should exist at the same time in order that the teacher can work efficiently. First of all the teacher must possess the above named human values, because only in this way he/she can bring up these qualities in his/her students. His/her personality does not only influence pupils at a certain moment, but through his personal example it also determines the way in which adaptability and norm following of children develops.

The teaching skill is according to Chircev „such a complexity of the teacher’s personality, which enables maximal result under any circumstances in any class” (Sălăvăstru 2004:151-152).

One of the most important elements of the pedagogical duties is the promotion of the adaptation of children to the social expectations, respectively the support of the development of a harmonious relationship of children with their fellow humans and with themselves (Burányi 2010). According to the American psychologist Carl Rogers the personality is only then able to develop, if it is surrounded by an accepting atmosphere and confidence. A good teacher needs to have several abilities, which promote the development of children. Rogers points out two of these qualities: empathy and the

love of children. In his opinion the educational and teaching process is only then efficient, if it is based on these two features (Burány 2010). Thus the relationship between teachers and students has got a very important role in the educational and teaching process. This relationship is based on emotions, on the mutual trust and sympathy or on its opposite, mistrust. It is not merely based on an intellectual contact, but on an emotional contact as well. Research results demonstrate that the emotional factor is especially important, regarding the mental capacities of students. Ditulessa Mircea remarks in his essay „A tanár-diák kommunikáció” [Communication Between Teachers and Students], that in order to avoid school failure we need to have a good atmosphere in the classroom. Each class takes place in a kind of personal emotional climate, and the attitude of the students is influenced by the approach of the teacher. In his opinion a teacher should pay particular attention not to hurt, but to promote and develop the personality of the students during the process of teaching. Ditulessa thinks that the role of the relationship between teachers and students is very important regarding the personality development of each individual, it is decisive and it has got its imprints in the self-respect of each child. Therefore he emphasizes that the teacher-student relationship should be built upon collaboration, trust and mutual respect (Ditulessa 2011).

4. The balance between teaching and education, the impacts of the educational system

Benő Csapó (2000) discusses in his writing entitled „Az oktatás és a nevelés egysége a demokratikus gondolkodás fejlesztésében” [The Unity of Teaching and Education in the Development of Democratic Thinking] the connection and close relation between teaching and education. *„Education creates the conditions of the common work, it shapes the frameworks of collaboration, and through the formation of values it motivates learning, gives a meaning to efforts and makes the application of the acquired knowledge more practical”* (Csapó 2000), that is why it is inseparable from teaching.

The specific educational system and its requirements determine to a great extent the work of the teacher, the way and the teaching contents and the process of teaching itself. The functioning of the educational system is determined by those social

processes, which actually take place in a given society. The constitution of the educational system, its structure and operation has got a huge impact on the practice of the pedagogical vocation and on the balance between teaching and education. Sándor Papp (2004) draws the attention upon two alarming aspects regarding public education in his writing entitled *„Az oktatás és nevelés műhelye vagy szolgáltató intézmény?”* [Workshop of Teaching and Education or Service Provider Institution?], published on the homepage of the National Association of Form Tutors. Firstly he formulates, that in our days education tends to become a kind of „service”, a kind of „ware” in the struggle to comply with the requirements of economical-technological systems. This appears on the ground of the approach of the educational system, which considers that its only task is „to meet the labour market needs of the modern economical-technological systems”. Papp thinks that this is a false path. Education is first of all a “common good”, it cannot be considered either a service or a ware (Papp 2004).

He mentions as the second worrying aspect the fact, that the public education system banished from its tasks the social and personal education of students. This thing can have drastic consequences in the long term, because without values and norms the society becomes inoperative. It is well known, that the need of humans for norms is genetically encoded. The author observes, that the education system gets into a special situation also because students do not acquire most of their knowledge from school or from their teachers. The use of IT devices is more widely extended among students. This brings beside the positive impacts also some negative consequences, because with the help of information technique all kind of information can be acquired in our days whether useful or harmful for the security of children. In this context according to Papp (2004) the question arises, whether there is further need for teachers. Is there a need for schools any more? But we also have to ask the question, what happens to the people who are socialized in this way, are they formed to personalities or to „reflexive mechanisms”? (Papp 2004).

Gábor Fodor’s thoughts formulated in his essay entitled *„Ép testben épp, hogy élek”* (2006) [Barely Alive in My Healthy Body] about the situation of teachers in the education system are still actual today: *„Teachers are parts of a power structure, which sometimes considers, that exactly they are incompatible with the system. The system makes their work more*

difficult through its regulations. It undermines their creativity and questions their competence. Teachers are tired of the several reforms and changes, which were settled without consulting them. They have got tired with the responsible education work, when they need to solve educational situations, difficult conflicts without having the appropriate means” (Fodor 2006).

5. The methodology of the research

During my fieldwork I made semi-structured interviews with 15 pedagogues teaching in upper primary classes of a primary school of a little town, respectively of a primary school of a large village. In order to get more comprehensive results I tried to choose teachers of different ages, having different specializations (different years of teaching, different experiences, both human and real specializations).

The characteristics of the target group:

Gender	Women	Men
	11	4

Age	24-29	30-39	40-49	50-59
	4	5	4	2

Specialization	Languages				Natural sciences			Social sciences			Arts
	Hungarian	Romanian	English	German	Maths	Physics -Chemistry	Biology	Religion	History	Civic education	Music
15	2	3	1	1	2	1	1	1 0,5	0,5 0,5	0,5	1

Type of settlement	Village	Town
	4	11

I asked the interviewed teachers five main questions:

1. Do you consider education important as a task in your work?
2. If the answer is yes, how does this manifest in your work? (Please name some situations, in which education appears.)
3. What kind of educational values do you consider important as a teacher to transmit to students?
4. What is a good teacher like in your opinion?
5. What do you think of the education system of our days, how do its regulations influence the education during the classes?

6. Processing of results

The above mentioned question groups constitute the five main dimensions of the analysis of the interviews. Further I discuss the results on basis of them.

- Do you consider education important?

Each interviewed pedagogue considers, that beside teaching, education is important as well, some of them (first of all the Religion teachers) consider education even more important than teaching.

„I think that beside teaching, education is very important, also in addition to my work as a form tutor. As I teach a quite unkind subject 'Romanian language and literature', which students usually place on the periphery, I lay special stress on education in my work. If I could not put my personality to work in the classroom, I think my task of teaching Romanian would be very hard. I try to catch students' attention with my personality, I try to educate them” (36-year-old Romanian teacher, teaching in a village).

Some people consider that teaching and education have to go parallelly hand in hand at school, and a good teacher can achieve this instinctively. „It comes out from me this way, I do not divide them consciously... teaching and education continuously interweave” says a 40-year-old teacher. „Those teachers who do not recognize and do not use the educational situations during the class, are not real pedagogues” – believe most interview subjects. Almost all of them complain, that because of the overcrowded curriculum content there remains hardly any time for discussions with educational purpose in the class, although these kind of talks would have more benefits for children later on. „Although I think, that education is important, I have a sense of loss, that there remains always little time for it” (40-year-old Hungarian Language and Literature teacher). The interviewed teachers think that the practicing of education is rather a matter of personal attitude, than one of competence. „Those who consider education as their task, are also concerned about training themselves further in this domain. And it depends first of all on the attitude of each of us, how we do this. I learn a lot from my older colleagues, I am open-minded and take part gladly at trainings concerning education. I always learn something new, which I try to apply in my work” (27-year-old teacher, teaching in a village).

I found interesting, that among the interviewed persons, the four pedagogues teaching in the countryside emphasized the supporting power of the colleagues and of the good working community in their practice of educational tasks. As they teach in a small community, most of these teachers are familiar with the conditions of their students (their family background) and they know each other well, thus the members of the working community help each other through common discussions to solve the educational problems, situations and conflict situations, respectively they can represent a coherent point of view before the students and their parents.

„When it comes to educational issues, I find it very helpful, that I can work in a quite good and cohesive working community, and that it is possible to discuss the emerging difficulties with my colleagues, whether it is a conflict, or a disagreement with students or parents. This is very important as well, because through these common talks, we can represent a coherent stand-point before students and parents” (27-year-old Biology teacher, teaching in a village).

- Specific educational situations in the work of the pedagogues

The interviewed teachers related interesting situations when I asked them the question: „How do you educate children during your teaching? How does education manifest itself in your work?” Two-thirds of the interviewed pedagogues use educational means while they are trying to solve a conflict situation, when certain students behave disrespectfully in the classroom, when they break certain rules or when they hurt each other. In these situations they think that talking over the problem or having detailed discussions is the most plausible solution. The steps of these kinds of discussions are similar: asking the parties, detecting the problem, recognizing mistakes, finding the correct way of behaviour, apologizing or punishment. The length, frequency, efficiency of these discussions depends on many factors and the personality of the pedagogue is quite decisive here. Some pedagogues emphasize that there is a need for vigorousness, for severeness, for the „determined personality” of the teacher or in some cases they would also find physical punishment necessary. „I think, that if the personality of the teacher is not enough categorical and consequent, there will be chaos around him/her” (36-year-old German teacher). Some teachers rather tend to appeal to the emotions of the students, urging them to be more reasonable, sympathetic, emphatic. „In the 7th grade I sent a boy to the blackboard, and as he was going back to his seat, one of his classmates (a boy) bullied him, telling him, that he is like a girl. The others laughed at him, the bullied boy was crying. We solved the situation together on the spot, I asked the mocking boy to think about, what his task in that given situation would, what should he do ..., after a while, he raised his hand and said, he would like to apologize to his classmate whom he have hurt” (40-year-old Mathematics teacher).

Between the two poles those pedagogues are situated, who take more or less time to educate the students or to clarify the cases depending on

the gravity of the educational problem, regardless of the subject, which they teach. We may say that Religion teachers are exceptions in this respect, because as we see from the interviews, they already have a greater variety of educational instruments in their hands. They approach the topics to be taught from an educational point of view. One of the Religion teachers believes that education and teaching have to be present equally during the classes. She says: „*I subordinate the topic to education...*” she also considers it important, that the learning content is perceived both mentally and emotionally by students. The interviewed Religion teachers mentioned some methods and games, through which they could efficiently create situations, in which education was present unnoticed. „*In a class there was following situation: a girl repeatedly fibbed, when I asked her about her homework or about school tasks. Her form tutor spoke with the mother of the girl and mentioned to me as well, that the classmates of the girl dispise her, because of her little lies. So in one of the following classes I decided not to deal with the usual lesson but to play a game with the magic chair. The classmates had to say nice things about the student who was sitting on the magic chair. My purpose with this game was to strengthen the self-confidence of the little girl, because as she was sitting on that chair she heard a lot of beautiful things of herself. At the same time her classmates were also placed in the situation to think over her in a positive way and look for her qualities. I also talked with the girl personally. Since then, there are no complaints about the girl, she does not lie any more, and I believe, the game I related before, contributed to this, too*” (24-year-old Religion teacher).

“*I try to choose from the framework curriculum such topics for discussion and procession in the class, which serve the education. We begin the Advent period by learning some Advent hymns like "My Soul in Stillness Waits"; "The Day of Peace is Near". At the beginning of each class we light a candle on the Advent wreath and we sing hymns gently (while I play the tunes on the guitar). After singing, we speak about what students usually do at Christmas time, what does silence and peace mean to each of them....*” (33-year-old History and Religion teacher).

The person teaching Civic Education and History pointed out, that his subjects let more room to educational issues, and he uses these opportunities gladly. “*To give an example: when dealing with the lesson 'The Uniqueness and Dignity of Man' we discuss real situations or we interpret such films, which inspire the students to create their own opinion, to*

talk over that topic. He believes that „we do not only teach different subjects, but we form characters. We try to give the children norms, courage, self-esteem” (38 year-old teacher of History and Civic Education).

Fifty percent of the interviewed teachers highlighted their roles of showing an example to students in the education process, which may be more efficient than „preaching”. One of the teachers pointed out the educational influence of common activities, when „*students take over good examples spontaneously, through imitation, at the same time in these cases we also motivate students to participation and collaboration.*” (45-year-old Physics and Chemistry teacher).

One of the Religion teachers pointed out, that in course of dealing with conflicts and solving problems the teacher should personally show example, otherwise his/her message will lack credibility. „*If I shout at them, they say, why should they forgive each other, if I myself do not forgive them*” (33-year-old Religion and History teacher).

7 of the 15 interviewed teachers are form tutors as well. I was curious to find out, if there is any difference in the approach of form tutors and teachers who do not have this role, when it comes to the question of education. Do form tutors consider education only as a task restricted to the Personal and Social Education class or they find it important and practice it also during other classes. Form tutors try to educate the children in their class during the Personal and Social Education class one hour per week on basis of their competence and personality, complying with the relevant curriculum regulations. To mention some examples: these classes include education to environmental awareness, to a healthy way of life, to managing disaster situations, to orderliness, respect, self-knowledge and proper attitude towards mates. Yet several of the interviewed teachers mentioned, that in the majority of the Personal and Social Education classes they deal mostly with the specific conflict situations, school results, rulebreakings, behaviour problems. There is little time for the topics provided in the curriculum. It is also interesting, that form tutors did not recall educational situations linked to their tutorial tasks in the first place, but they spoke rather about the problems occurring during their other classes or during the breaks.

Some of the form tutors intend to steer the behaviour of the students in the right direction, by reading different stories during these classes and discussing them afterwards. Others consider that

telling personal or less personal examples can be quite efficient when solving problems and conflict situations in a class community.

One-third of the interviewed pedagogues also mentioned the shortcomings of family education as being factors, which reduce the efficiency of school education. *”I find, that many children do not have their safe backgrounds brought from home, where they can feel themselves secure and thus they search for reference points at school. There are many emotionally neglected children, who behave provocatively and are constantly pushing the boundaries, because they need attention and appreciation. This is the source of many conflicts in the teacher-student relationship”* (40-year-old Hungarian Language and Literature teacher).

According to some of the interviewed persons, both the authority of the teachers and that of the parents has disappeared and the situation *„becomes worse and worse, because all educational instruments has been taken away from teachers. It is not allowed to hit disobeying students, to send them out from the class or to humiliate them or to give them a bad mark (three)... Nothing is allowed!”* (36-year-old German teacher). Some of the interviewed teachers think, that many parents cannot fulfill their educational tasks because they are busy working, that is why the school and the teachers need to take over this responsibility. *„Children long for education, they absorb it, it is a framework, something secure for them”* (40-year-old Maths teacher). One of the pedagogues also observes that teachers usually speak little about „the great things of life” with their students, although children find these things perhaps far more interesting than Mathematics and they could benefit from these kind of talks more.

- Values, which the interviewed teachers consider important to transmit

I received a great variety of answers to the question, what kind of values would teachers like to transmit in course of their teaching and educational work. Acceptance and tolerance were mentioned by six of the interview subjects (quite many), while mutual respect was mentioned by four of them.

„I try to present the lesson in a way that my students find in it a solid system of values, which I believe in. What does this system of values contain? First of all, I would highlight here honesty, solidarity, experiential learning, willingness to active work, mutual appreciation and respect” (48-year-old English teacher). Most probably the lack of the above listed values causes the most problems in the changed

world of the schools of our days. Along with the deepening of the social inequalities the children of the richer and poorer social strata come together in the universe of the school, where they should learn to accept and tolerate each other’s situation. This process is not a smooth one, expulsion, scorn, mocking cause a lot of problems for teachers. At the same time, due to the changing educational attitudes, and intensified child-oriented approaches, the traditional teacher-student relationship, the old authoritarian education is in transition, but along with the freedom appears a kind of libertinism as well. Many pedagogues can cope with this new situation with difficulty, because education to respect is a key issue to them.

Comparing the values we can see, that the old classical values (such as punctuality, honesty, ambition, diligence, knowledge, cultivation, endurance, consequent attitude, rightfulness, integrity, community values) are still prevailing in the value preferences of teachers, but at the same time „more modern” values appear, which highlight, that children should feel good at school. Such values are: experiential learning, open-mindedness, correct self-assessment, ambition, participation and collaboration.

“I believe that it is important to be open-minded towards students, to be kind, to give them chances, to educate them to endurance and correct self-assessment” (24 year-old Religion teacher).

- The features of the good teacher

Concerning the question about the features of the good teacher, I found interesting, that the more traditional values (the teacher is versatile, reflective, severe, consequent, able to develop, participates at further trainings, is capable to self-examination, creates order in his environment and in the mind of the students, respects children and is respected by them) appear parallelly with the more „modern” ones (open-minded, creative, flexible, funny, with a positive aura, caring, teaching in an enjoyable way) on the lists of the interviewed pedagogues. I tried to search for connections between the ideal values, the features of the good teacher and the age or specialization of the interviewed teachers, but I could not create any clear-cut categories along these aspects. We cannot declare unequivocally, that younger pedagogues would prefer the values and features considered „more modern”, or, that those, who teach human subjects, would be more children-oriented. In the answers of several interviewed ped-

agogues the characteristics of the traditional and modern teacher appear in the same proportion. This demonstrates, that we are witnessing a process of transition regarding the value preferences and approach of pedagogues, at least on a declarative level. Although the education system can hardly show any obvious directions to teachers with its rigid requirements, with its permanent unpredictability and uncertain reform initiatives, schools are trying to adapt themselves to the „new winds of new times”. „I try to plan my lessons in the way, that they serve children and not the rigid system” – says a 33-year-old Religion-History teacher.

- Opinions about today’s education system

In the last section of the interviews I asked the pedagogues, what do they think about today’s education system, to what extent does it help or hinder them, to educate children beside teaching them. Concerning this issue there was a quite obvious accord between all of them: this education system does not promote educational issues at schools. The interviewed persons mainly spoke about the shortcomings of the Romanian education system. They mentioned as the biggest deficiency the performance orientation, they complained about the overcrowded curriculum, the chase after achievement, the examination system. Two-thirds of the interviewed teachers cannot find stability in the school system, many of them mentioned that the quantity of the curriculum required by the system is almost impossible to be learned by students. That is why a lot of pedagogues are struggling to steal conscious education into the everyday of school activity and parallelly teach the huge quantity of curriculum content as well. „School is a very closed system, the Romanian education system is mainly knowledge-based” (45-year-old Physics-Chemistry teacher). The following interview fragment reflects the opinion of most of the interviewed teachers, their disappointment and outrage is quite palpable in it. *“I think that the Romanian education system is dead end. Everybody is only waffling about but the measures, which are taken, do not address essential problems. They speak of decentralization, but instead they centralize education even more, they talk about open framework curriculum, flexibility, but at the same time, they require even more paper work and documentation from the pedagogues, they speak of open-mindedness, digitalization, while we are working with textbooks printed in the nineties, which are full of errors ... these are not only typing*

errors or inaccuracies resulting from bad translation, but extremely blatant content errors. How do they expect open-mindedness, consistence and development, if their concern in course of inspections is to find out, how I thought this or that particular lesson from a 15-year-old textbook and how I documented it. They say one thing, but they do something else. Instead of making the curriculum easier, more transparent, more relaxed and more results-oriented, they make it more cumbersome and impenetrable” (38-year-old History and Civic Education teacher).

7. Teacher training as „optional module”

The joint opinion of very many pedagogues is that finding the balance between teaching and education is quite a big challenge in today’s education system. In course of the talks, almost all interview subjects complained about the general lack of time, the overcrowded teaching contents, the obligation of complying with the regulations of the curriculum, which have as a result that education is pushed into the background. There are very little teachers, who believe and declare that education is of prime importance. This makes us draw the conclusion, that for most teachers the main component of their work is teaching and following the required curriculum contents, the rest is a „secondary task”, if “it remains time for it”. Conscious social education is present only in some „secondary” subjects, which are „not exam-subjects” (Religion class, Personal and Social Education class, Civic Education class). The question, which factors determined this kind of approach of the teachers, would go beyond the frames of this study. In my opinion this fact is mainly due to the present process of teacher training. The fact is, that teacher training appears as an „optional module” beside the basic specialization. I made an interview with the deputy director of the Teacher Training Institute of Babeş-Bolyai University concerning this issue. In course of the interview I found out some useful information about the structure, content and difficulties of teacher training at present. The deputy director reported, that students from all sections of the bachelor- and master courses can choose teacher training as an „optional module” and they can accomplish it parallelly with their professional training. Students can choose teacher training in three languages: Romanian, Hungarian and German, so that everybody can take part at this training in his/her own mother

tongue. The students, who candidate for the Bachelor or Master Degree, can choose the teaching module already at the entrance examination. In this case there is an extra admission requirement: candidates have to hand in a one page cover letter along with the personal official documents, in which they motivate, why they intend to be teachers, respectively they also enlist their skills and competencies in order to become good teachers, pedagogues. Then a committee decides about the acceptance of students to the teacher training on basis of their cover letters. The deputy director also related that earlier, before the Bologna Process, the subjects of teacher training appeared within the framework of the curriculum of their specialization courses as optional subjects. He informed me as well that in the first semester of the teacher training students learn Educational Psychology, in the second semester the basics of Pedagogy, in the third semester Curriculum and Assessment Theory. Beginning from the fourth semester, they learn the professional Methodology of their own specialization, in the fifth and sixth semester they do Pedagogical Practice. In the fifth semester they only „simulate” teaching among themselves with the guidance of a Methodology teacher of their specialization and they attend classes at different schools only as observers.

The sixth semester is about the actual teaching practice at schools, which ends with the teaching four-five lessons by each student. If we look over the „curriculum content” of each semester, we can state, that education is present in each of the above named subjects theoretically, that is, students learn about education from many aspects. But this fact does not assure in any way, that further on, in real situations they can manage the problems and conflicts, which arise in a specific class community (that is: we may know everything about bicycles, but that does not mean, that we can ride a bike). The deputy director himself considers, that teaching four-five lessons in the sixth semester is quite little, the main cause of it – as he adjudges, is, that teacher training and bachelor training in a certain specialization take place parallelly. Although there are some professors, who require pedagogical and methodological knowledge from their students as well, in many cases this is not a priority. At the same time *„as we usually work with a high number of students, it would be very burdensome for the secondary schools in Kolozsvár / Cluj-Napoca, if we required more teaching hours from our students”* – the deputy director mentions as a further obstacle. That is

why they try to find some solutions, which make possible a practical teacher training of students at schools. Many methodology professors demand from their students to participate at pedagogical practice in schools near their home. Students document the practical training on observation sheets, they make up a pedagogical portfolio, with which they demonstrate their participation at the practical training. If somebody has not chosen the module of teacher training during his bachelor training, he/she still can make this training in the framework of a postgraduate course, in the framework of a condensed training program, which lasts one semester, takes place at weekends and is tuition free.

On basis of the above related information we can state that at university students learn first of all professional knowledge, so they become „experts” of a specific domain. They learn certain subjects from the domain of teacher training only in the second place, additionally. Later on, when they already teach children at school, they want to teach their specialized knowledge again as „experts” of their subjects. All problems, conflicts which arise in a class, distract teachers from their original purpose, thus they try to solve the problem within the least possible time and with the least possible energy. Very often the learning content is primary and the child is secondary in this process. Exceptions are the „problematic children” and „problematic classes”, which do not „swallow” the learning material as it would be proper. In these cases it comes out, what kind of pedagogue is that certain teacher, if he/she is really child-oriented or is just a „specialized teacher”, who knows his subject very well, but is helpless, when he/she is confronted with educational problems.

8. Conclusions, summarizing thoughts

The interviewed pedagogues consider unanimously, that along with teaching education is important as well. In spite of this, in their actual school work, educational occasions are quite rare and less diverse. Most of them mention education in the context of those situations, when they had to have discussions with educational purpose with students for disciplining them. All teachers complain that because of the overcrowded curriculum content, the strict examination system and the chase after performance, they have hardly any time for education, although children would need it. There are

only a few teachers (Religion, History, Civic Education) who „can afford” to subordinate the topic of their lessons to education, to discuss with the children at large about certain topics, to gain common experiences. However, it also becomes clear from these interviews, that the interviewed teachers also apply more diverse methods and instruments in their lessons, than those which are required, which bring them more sense of accomplishment. The one single Personal and Social Education Class per week has to meet the requirements of the curriculum as well, its topics rarely overlap the actual problems, which preoccupy the students of a class.

It is also a conclusion of the interviews, that in the universe of school traditional and modern values are present at the same time. Beside honesty, punctuality, work, diligence, knowledge, steadiness, righteousness, also the values of children-focused education appear: experiential learning, open-mindedness correct self-assessment, ambition, collaboration. It is hard to draw the profile of the good teacher: beside the more classical features (versatile, steady, cultivates, severe, respectful, righteous) there also appear some other characteristics which lay stress on a children-focused attitude.

On basis of the interviews the Romanian education system appears as a „negative element” in the life of teachers, they point out the rigidity of the system, its unreal expectations, its hesitating manner, which gives little room for teachers to educate their students. It is no wonder, because if we look back at the past two decades, we can witness a series of changes, which introduced rules, that protect rather the rights of parents and students but do not protect those of the teachers.

It is well-known, that the development and formation of personality and the education are closely linked. The main goal of education is to help children become humans in the most noble sense. Due to the changed economical circumstances, education loses effect within the family as well, yet without education there is no fulfilling and intact personality. That is why the role and responsibility of school and pedagogues in the education of children grows. I think, that when we discuss the responsibility and actual tasks of teachers, both in the process of teaching and education and in the process of the healthy formation of personality, we should emphasize, that the psychological and educational training that they receive at university is neither enough for the everyday „good teaching”, nor is enough for meeting the expectations

raised towards them. I believe, that the thoughts of Emőke Bagdy concerning teacher training in Hungary from 1988, are still valid here and now: „*Teacher training systems do not prepare pedagogues properly even for the accomplishment of the two basic functions (teaching-educating function and personality forming function). The practical formative knowledge is missing, which would root in the self-awareness of the teacher and would imply, that the teacher is skilled in psychological work, helps her can use the psychological instruments of producing effect, influencing, recognizing and managing conflicts and can properly guide the teacher-student relationship*” (Komlós Antal 2004:12). This reflection makes the search for competency developing teaching methods and procedures necessary both in teacher training and in the teaching process, so that teachers can notice in the abundance of curricula, textbooks, teaching materials the children who long for the „good word”, for the education.

Summarizing: Based on the experiences of my field-work in this study I made an attempt to sum up what grammar school teachers in a little town/village of Szeklerland think about school education. To what extent do they consider, that education is important? How does education appear in the everyday life of the school, respectively in their work? In their quality of teachers which values and ideas do they consider important to be transmitted to the children in course of the teaching process? I also questioned my interview partners about the values of a good teacher, respectively about their opinion about the actual Romanian education system. To what extent does this education system help or on the contrary set back the role of education in schools? During my research I made interviews with fifteen grammar school teachers belonging to different age groups and teaching quite different subjects.

Összegzés: Jelen tanulmány keretében egy terepmunka tapasztalatai kapcsán arra tettem kísérletet, hogy összegezzem, mit gondolnak egy székelyföldi kisvárosban/községben az iskolai nevelésről az általános iskola felső tagozatán oktató pedagógusok? Mennyire tartják fontosnak? Mit gondolnak, hogyan jelenik meg a nevelés az iskolai hétköznapi világban, saját munkájukban? Milyen értékeket, elveket tartanak fontosnak közvetíteni tanárként az iskolai oktatás során? Interjúalanyaimat a jó tanár jellemzőiről is kérdeztem, illetve

arról is, hogy a jelenlegi román oktatási rendszer mennyiben segíti, vagy éppen nem az iskolai nevelést. Kutatásomban tizenöt, az általános iskola felső tagozatán tanító pedagógussal készítettem interjút, akik mind az életkorukat, mind a tanított szakterületüket tekintve különbözőek.

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