

SCHOOL TODAY, BETWEEN LIMITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Abstract: *School has been, is and will be an essential institution in the future. Particularly three aspects are highlighted: a) education is an important factor in the socialization and formation of human capital, in what concerns the access of people to high social positions, in social development and change; B) each additional school year translates into earnings in the labor productivity plan; C) the level of education correlates directly with the values of the quality of life indicators.*

The learning problems of today's young people are awkward but normal. It's not them who are unusual, but school has become "improper" to their psychology. Young people already have a modified culture of thinking, a way of knowledge already rooted, about which we, the adults from the traditional desks, do not yet have too much data, consequently no recognition.

Today's generation is growing in an everyday culture - one that is not regulated by strong rules, as was the case with our parents' generations. Due to a wider renouncement of tradition, our children's culture is related to personal sensibilities, the feelings and desires of each and every one, to a greater degree of choice, interpretation, action, personalization.

School encounters a growing problem all over the world, because it has to juggle with a dual and conflictual reality, in principle: on the one hand, the school system - as an external environment, with influences, requirements and expectations normalized by rules and scales; on the other hand, the increasingly subjective tendencies of children, their need to be seen and appreciated, with their inner world, emotions, preferences and learning styles.

Keywords: *Level of education, everyday culture, copy-paste culture, cognitive dissonance, educational entrepreneurship*

INTRODUCTION

School has been, is and will be an essential institution in the future. This statement does not need demonstration, yet we invoke its various contributions to people and to society as a whole. Particularly, we highlight three aspects: a) education is an important factor in the socialization and formation of human capital, in the access of people to high social positions, in social development and change; B) each additional school year translates into earnings in the labor productivity plan; C) the level of education correlates directly with the values of the quality of life indicators.

However (or, maybe that is why!), it is becoming increasingly difficult to be a teacher today. To keep children attentive and motivated. To respect them, to make them listen to you. Schools, all over the world, have more and more young people with learning difficulties. Even in primary classes, their inability to stay in balance, quiet and attention, to focus their mind energy on work tasks becomes visible. Until adolescence, many already develop attitude issues and reflexes of abandonment and challenge formal authority.

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According to Professor Thomas Ziehe, well-appreciated in Germany and the Nordic countries for his studies on adolescent minds, today's generation grows into an everyday culture -one not regulated by strong rules, as was the case with our parents' generations. Due to a increased renouncement to tradition, the culture of our children is rather related to personal sensibilities, the feelings and desires of each and every one, to a greater degree of choice, interpretation, action, personalization.

On the other hand, what seems scandalous freedom or carelessness to today's young people lies at the same time inside them as an acute form of insecurity or need for *guidance*. The more you are out of social norms and away of what you "need" or "it would be nice to do," the more you break away from the safety of those who dictate you how to be, the more you have to develop inside a personal compass to give you authority and balance in the world.

The decadent freedom and carelessness of today's young people - as we call them - come with the price of self-seeking, a nmore interior-oriented attention, individual needs, emotions and reactions. Hence, perhaps, the phenomenon of selfies, online exhibitionism on social networks - as a form of obsessive search and spraying of identity, by mirroring in the reactions of others. Hence, the rejection of non-authentic adults from the desk, who just seem to just do their clockwork.

For this reason, of the deregulation, today's young people are not only *sensitive* and *fragile*, but they often go as embarrassing illiterate. Their life is no longer focused on the need to acquire a general culture, a repertoire of ideas and expression from the great classics of mankind. Today, in contemporary art museums, people stop amazed and even solemnly take pictures of a pair of glasses, forgotten on the floor of the exhibition hall. The great culture is no longer the umbrella of our decisions, the academic morgue simply is not *cool*. Even in the past, most of the population did not have access to the great culture - but had tacit recognition for its symbols. The school functioned as a tremendous chance, taken with respect and submission, to join this light of knowledge.

1. LOSS OF RESPECT FOR SCHOOL – A CONCERNING OR A NORMAL PHENOMENON?

This kind of gratitude and respect for the role of the school has been lost largely, with the change in the relationship between the two cultures: the daily culture is dominant; The great culture - without the risk of losing it - remained peripheral and niche. Much stronger is popular culture - one in perpetual motion, integrated into everyday life and capable of fundamentally changing the way in which TV shows are being made today, writing or making politics, for example. But above all, capable of changing dominant cognitive schemes - the way in which the new generations learn and relate to the world.

The rigorous forms of knowledge and social conventions have simplified, the ethical boundaries of decisions or attitudes have been reduced. Our cognitive habits, the solid mental trajectory of attention or analysis, the level of mental energy that we are willing to engage are fundamentally disrupted as a radio channel permanently interfering with other frequencies.

As a result, also in school, the evaluations and scales have been rearranged in the souls of youth, teachers are viewed from totally different perspectives, their speeches are ridiculed, and their prophecies about the book that makes you human are seen in a superficial manner. Why? Because of the lack of education and the poor growth – something that grandmother would call it? No.

The hardest to accept for us - apart from the direct guilt that led to copy-paste culture and administrative corruption of schools - is the assessment system that has been demolished by our children and changed with the subjective standards of pleasure or inconvenience. All of today's children seem to do the job we, the adults hold on to, only if it produces attraction, exaltation, intensity, and fun. The classical culture of learning is based on resilience, obstinacy, discomfort and exhaustion, ambition and overcoming cognitive obstacles. But the young generation has already been baptized in the popular culture of pleasure, comfort, care and immediate satisfaction. How much can these young people engage in school in the "careful-concentrated-resistant-conscientious" mode?

Why don't our children learn? In the dominant daily culture - one in which we have brought them up and served constantly - it is very acceptable to say "no" to any external pressure if it is felt as unpleasant or tense. Parents encourage their children to do this, very they are very young. Learning is a process that involves tension, cognitive dissonance, discomfort, and sometimes inconvenience, insecurity, irritation. The reflex educated in children is that of rejecting or sheltering in relation to this type of energy. They do it unconsciously, they do it because they have seen it around them, because they have been raised in the culture of the individual who is defined by personal reactions and freedoms to norm.

At the time of our parents, the individual had to comply with the norms: duty, self-discipline and emotional self-control were part of early learning. There were classic models of success and patterns of success in life. Today, roles have been redistributed, rules can be adapted, procedures can be personalized, we no longer consider what is allowed or not, but what is "acceptable or tolerable". At the intersection of the two worlds - still present and in natural conflict, our children have to negotiate between the family's ideal of "duty" and the ideal of self about "being free." School itself is the battleground of these two cultural tendencies and the natural place of the most tense conflicts and discordances between what teachers expect and what the children want.

2. SCHOOL - A THEATER OF CONFLICTS BETWEEN TWO WORLD

The school has a growing problem all over the world, because it has to juggle with a dual and conflictual reality, in principle: on the one hand, the school system - as an external environment, with influences, requirements and expectations normalized by rules and scales; on the other hand, the increasingly subjective tendencies of children, their need to be seen and appreciated, with their inner world, the emotions, the preferences, the learning styles.

On the one hand, school has to operate with some planned content, on the other hand, children today tend to reject all the contents felt as unpleasant. On the one hand, the school has a clear management of the roles of teacher-inspector-director, on the other, children have a growing tendency - strongly encouraged in the media - to deal with their own self, to relativize the official power of significant adults in their lives. And last but not least, the school has measurable criteria for assessing performance; children, however, are in a constant quest to validate themselves in the eyes of others through affective reactions, are in a continuous negotiation of inner conflicts, missed opportunities, etc.

The construction of the self - once made in firm lines drawn by society and the norm of the external need imposed, today has the fragile route of uncertain search, introspection, fear of being inadequate. That's why school has an almost impossible role, especially when it comes - as the public system does - from the positions of a giant, bureaucratic, ossified and guided system of own interests. So what chances does a school have, when "the work material" consists of anxious minds, in search of pleasure, intense things, exaggerated reactivity, impulsiveness and disregard of formal authority?

It seems that all traditional pedagogy will be reduced to the chapters of special pedagogy, interventionist, the one written for "special classes" or "problem children". Is that so? How can you get out of the conflict of a reality, where both trends are normal or the natural product of mental and emotional evolution of mankind? Does it make sense to blame someone? Does it make sense to sum up to being right that today's young people are illiterate, uneducated and without values? Are we uncomfortable with our beliefs of respect, norm and success in life? No, it does not make sense to abandon the search or modeling of school, just because our frustration as a teacher or parent is based on the comfort of being right.

To restore order, we no longer need rules first, but we need meaning. Learning is sometimes a painful and unpleasant experience. How do we make the children not back in front of her? We are convinced that public school systems in the West are already bankrupt, mostly. They are, however, in relation to Romanian education, in a perpetual restructuring and search - one, however, one step behind the pace of perpetual reconfiguration of the future. A system that has already developed its own interests, beyond children, can not adapt to the needs of today's minds. In our country, this conflict is based on a 1 000-step gap of 50 years - one that is maintained by the lack of political will and sleepwalking of parents.

Small spaces, community schools, experimental projects, pilot schools, social entrepreneurship in education can make a difference. Even the best results of the elite Romanian public schools are not the merit of the system - but of groups of established professors and parents involved, who have developed over time a way of approach that is parallel to the system. These are the communities that, before complying with the rules imposed by the above, have created their own meanings: the children who go to the Romanian elite schools - high schools and good neighborhood schools, who make preselections - go on their way, in learning, with other meanings - those belonging to a standard that validates them from the start as individuals.

3. REVOLUTION OF LEARNING: CHANGE OF THE LEARNING FRAMEWORK

For any attempt at a school project, the most important thing is to set the framework for the learning process. To learn to resist the "pop" cultural impulses to withdraw, to yield and to avoid discomfort, you must as a pupil be content: someone to assume for you a sense of belonging and a clear picture of how it must show your success.

In special pedagogy, in the case of children with learning disabilities, progress is being established - as many studies say - only after the child views the book he will be able to read after 2 months of planned work - let's say - a bet on which the teacher makes, as in an emotional contract, to support and engage with his student.

Until you actually sell the benefits of their efforts, today's children are not in the game. Besides those for which families have still managed to keep the "must" along with punishment and reward.

The environment in which the child grows is the source of his success. It has to be a supportive one, to generate meaning and motivation. It must contain rituals of awareness, modeling the road to success, visualizing the image of success. Today's child's mind needs rules explained and assimilated from the perspective of "what is acceptable", "what is socially appropriate at a time", not the "must" or "I said so" category. The school framework must respect the individual, make the child feel serene, but at the same time help him out of his comfort zone, helped to consume cognitive energy with satisfaction, refine his reasoning.

In our society, there is a visible tendency for families concerned about transforming education, to slip into the emotional area of the comfort of their children, and neglect the skills, intellectual habits and cognitive traits that the mind must acquire at one age or another. Recently out of the age of constraint, control, and swallowing of emotion, we have the reflex, when we talk about reforming the school, to approach the problem in dangerous and superficial syntagms, such as: "less," "smoother," "simpler, children should have a childhood "etc. Hence, a visceral and hateful reaction from traditionalists who know well and are right in their own way that school was doing better, under the rule of time and outside control. What they do not know is how to stay in class today with 20 minds totally resettled emotionally and cognitively toward intense stimuli and seeking pleasure.

The key to Romanian education reform is not in the syntax of "deforestation" of matter, ie content. Nor in the pompous invocations of emotional comfort of children, friendship between teacher and student - if at its base there is no rigor of planned scientific cognitive trails with visible results. The freedom that Finnish school gives to her children - for example, to climb trees in Biology - is a well-planned one with a routine observation, with a prescribed questionnaire of the child's observations. There is, after the exotic act of freedom, a more thoroughly didactic approach that systematically drives thinking, in its ability to produce comparisons, sorting, classifications, estimations, decision making, constructing explanations and alternative motivations.

To produce this kind of stimulation in the mind of today's child-a thing that was fairly easy in the face of an encyclopedia followed by a pencil, disciplined, in desks lined up under the threat of whip - we need exploratory tricks, Controlled and mind-feeding at the rate at which society - we want-we do not-has already modeled it. This does not mean, by far, the abdication from the principles of learning and the creation of more rigorously science-based pedagogues. As a country, this is exactly what we lack:

1. The empathic understanding of the predispositions of today's minds, as they are determined by the culture in which we participate;
2. Understanding the freedom-constraint ratio;
3. Understanding the need to create meaning, not rules;
4. Understanding the difference between "keeping the space" for our children, containing and "keeping" simply captives of a good paradigm in its time - today, no worse, no better, but clearly, outside validity.

4. TRADITION AND INNOVATION

In our debates so far, we have missed the sense of reconciliation between tradition and innovation. Captives of our professional disappointment with children who simply do not gather in class, miss the intelligent reasoning that makes the right intersection between the constraints of the need to develop the operations of thinking and the freedom or the need for pleasure on which the student's reactions depend.

We now have the same extremes: rigid and deficient schools that continue to play rules as much as they can but do not produce learning; And a frail community of parents - who want something else, but that replace cognitive and emotional needs. I do not understand that you can not interfere with the transformer, the intellect and the reasoning of children, amid a parental attitude of care and hyper-protectionism. Or who do not understand that the child's well-being does not exclude little intellectual "torture."

To reform the Romanian school; We need the intelligence of a reasoning that places the two cultures in the center of our teacher's practices: the classical-academic and the pop, the everyday, the everyday. The same "products" of the thought that our harsh professors celebrated are still valid today. Thought of good quality always remains fashionable. In the past, it was acquired on an emotional self-control background, today, on a practical, explicit emotional background, of the celebration of the personal elections. Ingredients of a good school today include:

- teachers who know how to produce learning under the pretext of climbing into the tree;
- model mentors who manage children's emotions or mediate conflicts and internalize rules;
- a rigorous scientific picture and a shared general philosophy about how our children learn today;
- a method of marketing on the benefits of learning - children need to know how success looks and who contains them to go to it;
- a system for measuring the impact of each teacher.

In other words, a school that has not given up on content or standards, but has changed the framework of learning: the way of addressing, the teacher-student relationship, the relationship of the teacher with the content of the subject he teaches.

5. CONCLUSIONS

At this time, Romania has neither classical academic standards nor culture of nonviolent communication in schools or recognition of the individual's needs. We do not practice either the traditional or the modernist scheme. We are between two waters, from which we have chosen a useful and dissociated mentality of the individual towards knowledge - in the sense that we learn to take a diploma. Of the four types of learning, we practice the one which involves the addition of information and context-assimilated assimilation and completely ignore the adaptive and transformational value of knowledge. The latter two involve the training of teachers in the spirit of teachers who re-enter the contents of textbooks on schemes that produce pleasure and curiosity to the child.

We do not seem to have clear thoughts or insights about our children's minds, no malicious judgments, or well written pedagogues about how cognitive trails can take through trees without losing the depth or volume of knowledge. Hence, a market of strongly polarized pardon - among those who praise the Romanian Olympians and accuses the instigation to superficiality from the reforming voices - and those who are experimenting locally in schools and projects that, while producing results, are still isolated and incapable of producing a current.

We are, in other words, a society almost completely swallowed by the "pop" culture of our children, with hypocritical claims of exigency and academism from adults, either indifferent, or scared of what is happening.

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