

## “NEW EDUCATION” AND THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

***Abstract.** Change in education is an objective necessity, determined by the transformations taking place in society - at a cultural, political, economic, community level, and these things must be reflected in the pedagogical plan. In spite of tensions and multiple conflicts, the priority objective of mankind is increasingly formulated in the notion of sustainable development.*

*Education is trying to respond to the requirements of social development in two directions, that of educational content – which requires curriculum development by infusion, integration of new education and that of the philosophy of education – which concerns the orientation, sizing and rethinking of educational processes. The problems of the world in which we live: the crisis of the environment, globalization, poverty, unemployment, social failure, equality of chances, human rights, democracy have become problems of the education sciences, which have integrated them in what is called the new education.*

*The school is to be the center of change, a change of mentality first, an equally important aspect, but harder to solve than the economic change and reconstruction and the institutions of democracy. The new generation must not only be educated to adapt to the new, but also to anticipate change, to accept it and to actively participate in the process, thus contributing to the construction of the future. The specificity of our world is that it is changing faster and that it puts us in the face of original, unforeseeable and even unpredictable situations.*

**Key words:** *New education, training, sustainable development, the knowledge society.*

**Clasificare JEL :** *I20, I21, I25.*

### 1. Introduction

Being aware of the problems and values of today's society, mankind knew how to formulate problem-solving strategies, coaching the values within which it is. The most important type of strategy is the one that realizes the change of mentality. And it is known that any change in mentality occurs effectively and globally through the transformative action of education, although it is not excluded that influence on the mentality exerted by economic, political, social realities, etc. Understanding in the most developed sense of this notion, education is omnipresent (so it affects economic, political, social, etc.), universal, imminent to any individual and social group, because it influences any change in economic, political and social change by changing the mentality of those which causes change in these areas.

---

<sup>1</sup> PhD., scientific researcher, Economic Prognosis Institute, The Romanian Academy, Bucharest, e-mail: [bmradu@yahoo.com](mailto:bmradu@yahoo.com)

## 2. Education for change

The curriculum reform launched in 1977–1978 essentially seeks to radically change the conception of the role of the school: “The school was, in principle, the scene of a teaching-learning process, that is to say, assimilation of knowledge. It must become more and more the institution that assures a complete development of personality. The new programs will focus on individual study and the development of the originality of thinking; learning will be centered on fundamental concepts” [6].

Illustrative of this new way of understanding the school's purpose is the program of measures adopted in 1976 by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture of Japan, where priority is not to increase the share of science and technology but to target:

- “Stimulating the students' ability to think independently and make the right decisions;
- A more pleasant and pleasant school life.
- Stimulating students' love for nature and for people, developing sociability.
- Cultivating love for the family, for the natal place conjoined with openness to the contemporary world ”[8].

The curricular design promoted within the modern didactics is centered on the objectives of the instructive-educational activity, aiming at priority “optimizing the relations of pedagogical correspondence between the component elements (objectives – contents – methodology – evaluation), between the subordinate teaching and learning actions” [4] the fines at the system and process level. The development of curricular design involves a pedagogical approach oriented to three types of decisions (Seguin, 1991):

I. Macro-structural decisions of a philosophical and political nature involving the setting of both the fundamental options (the pedagogical ideal, the goals) that define the evolutions of the system and the pedagogical resources (human, informational, etc.) necessary for the educational system as a whole;

II. Depending on (I) pedagogical macro-pedagogical decisions involving three elements: establishing the criteria for elaborating educational plans, establishing the profiles of training / development of the personality of the pupil / student on the different stages of his / her formation, establishing the modalities the overall and partial evaluation of their level of training;

III. Micro-structural decisions that also involve: setting specific objectives on educational subjects or modules, establishing the pedagogical resources needed to achieve the specific objectives, establishing the modalities of partial evaluation of pupils / students.

Curricular design does not exclude but instead relies on the three ways of conceiving student / student teacher correlation at the three levels: frontal, group, individual but should focus more on the individual level. Under the current conditions, individual learning “evolves from the extreme, socially inappropriate

solution ("each teacher works with a student in his own rhythm") to curricular inspirational processes integrated into different front-to-school or group teaching strategies: individual work, homework themes, learning tasks (play, work or creation) practiced in the class but also in the school or extra school environment "[12].

The philosophical basis of the modular structure of education is holism (from *holus* = whole, totally) "attempt to conceive an informational totality as an integrated unit of elements that lose their sequential traits" [13].

Modular structure facilitates the inclusion of special knowledge in logical assemblies that exceed quantitatively and qualitatively the characteristics of the curricular divisions. Students / students are provided with modular chains or suites depending on their instructional or educational objectives or their interests and skills. Modules can be different in terms of difficulty, level and pace of work. The pupil / student choose or propose to follow a (or more) way that he goes through with the teacher's support, then evaluating the results. In case of failure, it is recommended to go through a lower or complementary module.

Modular learning cannot be fully expanded. As a rule, basic subjects are taught in a mono disciplinary perspective. Modular dimensioning of content "is done for a group of disciplines (this does not mean that the modules overlap over the classical learning objects, but they are novel syntheses, new epistemic perspectives, integrated knowledge accumulations, etc.) that follow differences even for the professional orientation of students" [6].

From the presentation made in the first part of this study, the educational phenomenon is subjected at all levels (conceptual, content, approaches, at structural, systemic, methodological level etc.) to changes of either "natural" or provoked, directed, planned.

The second part of the study is devoted to education for change.

In a world like ours, subjected to permanent, faster or slower, sharper, or more discrete changes to "stepping on", to delay or even to resist going before are harmful or even dangerous behaviors to the contemporary man generally for the school man in particular. Stagnation means condemnation to poverty (material, spiritual), to misery (material, moral) to death, ultimately.

In the field we refer to "education for change should be the pivot around which to change education" [7]. That is why school should be a central place for change, change of mentality first – at least as important (as the hardest to solve) as the economic change and reconstruction and the institutions of democracy.

At the moment, the Central and East European countries are in front of them (some have gone on this road and go faster than others) to changes that are thought to be profound, complete and radical. They want to recover the half-century-long delay that separates them from Western Europe. These societies are going through the reverse, from totalitarian systems to democratic societies, and no one - scientists, politicians or economists – "seem to know the best way, but it is clear that whatever path we choose, it must go through changing mentalities (sub-MM), so changing the school "[9]. The signal for moving to the conception of education

for change was given in 1926 by W.H. Kilpatrick but he was heard much later, after World War II and especially over the past 15–20 years. It is Gaston Berger who (after 1950) puts the issue of education for a changing world in a more optimistic position, promoting the thesis that the future can be predicted in its great evolutionary lines as it can be projected within certain limits and, consequently, we need to work towards developing an education system designed from the perspective of this future.

The young generation must not be educated just to adapt to the new, but to help build the future. “The specific of our world is that it is changing faster and that it puts us in the face of original, unforeseeable and even unpredictable situations” [9] – wrote G. Bergev. For this reason, the main task in the formation of man must not be both instruction and education, namely education that provides the educator with an open behavior towards change and an attitude that favors the use of innovative behavior techniques.

New education, emerging from real needs – education for change, ecological education, modern domestic economic education, etc. are nothing but attempts “to prepare the individual and the communities to solve this complex problem faced by humanity in its entirety” [6].

Life, the experience of modern man, shows that learning to maintain, simply reproducing the values of the past, tradition are not enough to “equip” the man of the future society. The old type of learning, based on a “learning” learning, can no longer satisfy today when the changes are so rapid and complex, causing real “shocks” to the contemporary man.

There is therefore a need for another education, namely “one that can bring about change, reunion, restructuring, and problem reformulation - which we will call innovative learning” [17].

This innovative learning as an essential element of education for change is “a necessary means to prepare both individuals and societies to act concertedly in new situations, especially in situations that have been and continue to be created by mankind itself” [12].

Particularly distinct from traditional learning, the new form of learning is anticipatory, that is to say, in coherence with a vision in which the future is not only expected or welcomed, but also designed and constructed according to a set of desirable objectives in order to avoid undesirable effects. Also, this type of learning is the characteristic and the participatory dimension, thus creating two types of solidarity essential to the survival of the human species: time (through anticipation) and space (by participation).

There are three major directions in which to work in education for change:

- a) reporting and meeting changes;
- b) their evaluation;
- c) the design of change and intervention (control of change) all three aiming at the formation of man so that he can cope with the changes to his environment.

Particularly interested in aspect (c). It is not enough for the man of today to only notice, to meet and to evaluate the changes that occur in one area or another of society. As a subject of history, a participant in social processes (not a spectator!), He must design changes himself, intervene in their flow to provoke the desired effects, limit or avoid the undesirable ones. That is why he needs to be educated in the spirit of alternative solutions, in the scenarios of possible future prospects. Intervention for change implies, to a certain extent, the planning of change (limited and precise goals, realistic goals and deadlines).

As far as the means of education for change are concerned, they stimulate anticipatory imagination, choice and initiative, responsibility, using all the resources and processes that create “images of the future”, “alternative scenarios”, “possible world models” “Multiple solution issues” etc.

In front of such a desirable behavior of contemporary man, education must give an adequate, appropriate, response. He should give up on discipline and move on to focus on complex issues, to become an inter-and trans-disciplinary education. He must, among other things, adopt such a strategy that allows the gradual introduction of new education within its “classical” structure.

Different contemplations of the contemporary world were answered with specific education. The achieved theoretical advances are important, but new content is still slowly entering the school structured (yet) on disciplines, in the form of program plans. Progress is unequal (or even absent) when it comes to introducing curricular and modular approaches. It has made demographic, nutritional and ecological education easier.

A notable weight in the development of these new educations also comes from the fact that there are difficulties regarding the training of educators (teachers) able to teach in modular fashion or groupings of interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary content.

### **3. New Education**

New Education – is the approach of today's education society, a suite of strategies and general objectives responding to the imperatives indicated by the problems of today's society, and not educational concepts or theories about educational content [4]. New education stems from the types of education that have traditionally been formed: intellectual education, moral education, aesthetic education, religious education, etc. The new education is marked by the imperative and priority fields of up-to-date education, but their nomenclature does not exhaust the priorities of contemporary education, but it complements them. UNESCO, through the strategies formulated, draws the attention of the world public opinion to some untapped potential for solving the problems of the current society. In this context, G. Văideanu in the Millennium Border Education project refers to certain objectives [12]:

- Environmental education or environmental education;
- Education for Change and Development;
- Education for technology and progress;
- Education towards the media;
- Education in population or demographic;
- Education for Peace and Cooperation;
- Education for Democracy;
- Modern health education.

Effective compatibility of the education systems of the European states would involve a set of activities in each country that accepts the European idea, designed for the correlated realization of all the educational objectives indicated by the term “new education” with the national educational objectives, by a European idea, the concept of economic, social, technical-scientific, cultural and spiritual unity of the peoples living in the European space, each nation retaining its specific identity and color or the unification of Europe, the European integration – the term of Al. Husar [21].

Since 2000, the European Commission has adopted a series of recommendations on the promotion in each European country of an education that includes not only structural, but also educational, coincidence elements. In social reality, however, violence, racism, religious, ethnic and cultural intolerance increase. In response to these phenomena, UNESCO is developing a new educational model, called the new education, which aims to create, on unique principles, a unique pedagogical society and a unique educational environment. The proposed model develops on two complementary concepts: the classical concept centered on objectivity, which is the axis of the rationality of education, and the modern concept, focused on the balance between the subjective and objective, which represents the axis of integrating the differences in the concrete pedagogical actions considered as the educational standard of the world modern.

New education should not be seen only as a source of renewal and reconstruction of content that derives from the traditional dimensions of education. It is the merit of the Romanian school about the preoccupations for the issues of new education, which coincided with the concerns of the Western world. More than 25 years ago Professor George Văideanu and collaborators used the term and described new education. But the meritorious precedents should be cited: The University of Bucharest is among the top 10 universities in the world, who have created computing centers 5 decades ago, thanks to academician Gr. C. Moisil [20].

In a super-technologized society, we should look at new education not as isolated dimensions but in their multiple systemic relationships and from the perspective of the future effect [19]. The ability to master modern technologies from an intellectual, political and social point of view is one of the major challenges of modern man in this century.

The new education, in order of their appearance, would be:

- Environmental education (or ecological education);
- Population education (or demographic education);
- Nutritional Education; Education for new technology and progress;
- Education towards the media;
- Education for Peace and Cooperation;
- Education for Democracy and Human Rights;
- Modern health education;
- Modern economic and modern education;
- Education for leisure;
- Education for a new international order;
- Education with international vocation;
- Education for a quality life;
- Intercultural education, etc.

This list will remain open, and may be completed at any time.

These precepts obviously enrich the axiological content of education, making it more dynamic and at the same time orient the sense of education from the classical multidisciplinary model to the interdisciplinary model. One of the new education is also considered the education for freedom [1], whose general significance is defined as the synthesis and finality of all new and traditional education, for human freedom should not be understood only in a political sense, but especially in a spiritual sense, and this is only possible through a complex education that articulates all types of education.

- a) Environmental education or environmental education is the field of education responsible for the formation of environmental consciousness or environmental consciousness, understood as an existential environment – geographic, natural, cultural – the awareness of the primacy of the environment in relation to the individual and his / her organic belonging to the environment.
- b) Education for change and development has the goal of forming homo faber (literally the man who does it). Congenitally devoted to forming the ability to make an option, man becomes a subject of change and development of both the outer existential universe and his intimate universe. The action of change is also congenital. But any prerequisite to becoming an entity only gets status as a factor of change and development through education and self-education.
- c) Education for technology and progress shapes man's ability to technology and activity in various fields. It is the type of education that answers the question of how to become one. The second term indicates the quality of change: progressive. In the daily, however, this type of education is understood at the surface level: education for the acquisition of modern technologies for the production of material values and for technical, economic, scientific progress.

- d) Media education is the first type of really new education, because the mass media has become massive in social life only in the X<sup>on</sup> century, today their role in society is extremely large, that they have been called the fourth power in the state. However, the use of its products requires special training, which is not limited to reading newspapers, listening to radio and watching TV shows. Media education involves knowing the language of publicity, TV shows and Internet portals, which is particularly sophisticated, as well as the action they have on the formation, development of human personality.
- e) Population or demographic education implies the ability to regulate natality, geographic distribution, population structure and density, composition of age and gender, etc.
- f) Education for Peace and Co-operation subscribes to the concept of peaceful cohabitation of people and peoples. It is, in fact, a desideratum of a moral nature, because until now the role of wars has not yet been demonstrated in the history of mankind, as the possibility of peaceful coexistence has not been demonstrated either.
- g) Education for Democracy, although it has its roots in the Greek antiquity, is one of the new types of education, X<sup>on</sup> century mankind has reached a degree of development conducive to the establishment of a democratic society. The essence of education for democracy is in forming democratic consciousness and the ability to attain attitudes and behaviors that allow each one to manifest himself as fully as possible in his self-fulfilling without harm to others. Democracy is not a given, the modern man is responsible for his formation as a being with democratic consciousness and the only real force that can build a democratic society. In turn, democratic society has a positive influence on the formation of democratic consciousness.
- h) Modern health education consists of the formation of knowledge and abilities for proper body care and the creation of a healthy environment and way of life. New education is not only a response given by educational policies to the great problems of today's society, but also an extremely important value in the cultural-spiritual unification of the modern world, a fundamental aspect of the globalization process.

#### **4. Design approaches to the content of school disciplines through new education**

New education can be adapted to the context of each dimension of the formation of the personality culture bases (for example, ecological education can be addressed in the context of moral education programs and economic education issues can be examined from the perspective of ecological education) [18].

In the literature some possibilities of introduction of “new education” are mentioned in the curricula.

1. Disciplinary approach – addressing new education within distinct school disciplines (for example, environmental education appears as an integrated school subject in the curriculum, with institutionalized objectives at the level of school curricula).
2. Modular approach – creating specific modules within traditional disciplines with an interdisciplinary character, approaching new education within school curricula, integrated at different levels of education, but also in the dimensions of education (for example, environmental education addressed as a way of biology, in high school education, with specific objectives of the dimension of intellectual education).
3. Infusional approach – integrating the messages about new education into traditional subjects, approaching the issues of new education in school subjects (e.g. the issue of ecological education is approached simultaneously in biology, chemistry, geography, physics, etc., but also at level of education: intellectual-moral-technological-sanitary, etc.).
4. Transdisciplinary approach – approaching new education at the level of scientific summaries proposed annually or quarterly / semester by teams of teachers (e.g. addressing the global issues of ecological education from the perspective of a team of biology, chemistry, physics, geography, economics, sociology, philosophy, etc., in the framework of synthetic lessons, ethical seminars, thematic debates, school competitions, etc).

In the countries of Europe, a series of projects have been carried out and are still being carried out in order to promote new education, which are effective strategies for implementing types of education adapted to the current society.

## 5. Conclusions

Besides some traditional techniques that maintain themselves because they are good and others that persist because of a devious routine, modern school offers a different look in some aspects than in the past. We are witnessing a complex movement of extraordinary magnitude, too strong to be a treacherous fashion. What we are expressing through the expressions “active school”, “new schools”, “progressive education”, shows this movement globally. They are names more suggestive than descriptive, evoking not only general aspects of the educational technique but expressions and certain pedagogical principles.

The “new education” movement begins practically at the end of the last century, which shows that the adjective “we” is not fully justified.

New education is new objectives and new types of content generated by “contemporary world issues”. They correspond to childcare needs being integrative and cumulative. They also appear to be the most pertinent and most useful answer of the educational systems generated by the problems the contemporary world.

Permanent education – education begins with the birth of the human being and becomes an alignment of its existence throughout its life: “it involves a

complex, cohesive and integrated system, offering its own means to respond to the educational and cultural aspirations of each individual, its faculties, it is designed to enable everyone to develop their personality throughout their life by appointing them or their activities”

If some of the new education is well-rounded, others are being discussed in order to clarify and delimit them; however, addressing new education or new content remains an open issue.

New education is still a matter open to their specification and delimitation, to the establishment of the implementation methodology. At present, specialists in the field highlight the fact that they are capitalized and have profound implications in the five dimensions of the personality training and development process, which means that the education approaches as an intellectual, moral, aesthetic, technological and physical approach.

### Bibliography

1. Albu G., (2002), *În căutarea educației autentice*, Ed. Polirom, Iași;
2. Albulescu I. (2003) *Educația și mass-media*, Ed. Dacia, Cluj-Napoca;
3. Apostol Stănică L. (2008), *Educația pentru sănătate în contextul noilor educații. Dimensiuni și strategii* Studia Universitatis Moldaviae. Revistă Științifică a Universității de Stat din Moldova, nr. 9 (19);
4. Cemortan S. (2007), *Oportunitatea dezvoltării curriculumului preșcolar în conformitate cu teoria noilor educații* Centru educațional PRO DIDACTICA, nr. 3–4;
5. Cerghit I. (1972), *Mass-media și educația tineretului școlar*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, Bucharest;
6. Cojocaru V.M. (2003), *Educație pentru schimbare și creativitate*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, Bucharest;
7. Cucuș C. (2006), *Pedagogie* Ediția a II-a, Ed. Polirom, Iași;
8. Cucuș C. (2002), *Timp și temporalitate în educație*, Ed. Polirom, Iași;
9. Marks D.F., Myrrey M. (2000), *Health Psychology*, Sage Publications, London;
10. Minder M. (1997), *Champs d'action pédagogique*, Ed. De Boeck, Paris;
11. Narly C. (1996) *Pedagogie generală*, Bucharest;
12. Nedelcu D., (2007) *Educație democratică, incluziune și interculturalitate* Ed. Didactică și Pedagogică, Bucharest;
13. Szebenyi P., *The Evolution of the Content of General Education Over the Next Two Decades*, Hungary, UNESCO, 1983;
14. Liviu Antonesei, *Fundamentale culturale ale educației*, Editura Polirom Iași, 1996, p. 74;
15. Idem, p. 72;
16. G. Berger, *Omul modern și educația sa. Psihologie și educație*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1973, p. 42.
17. Hopkins, D.; Ainscow, M.; West, M., *Perfecționarea școlii într-o eră a schimbării*, Chișinău, Ed. Prut Internațional, 1998.
18. L. Antonesei, *Orizontul fără limite al învățării*; Antonesei, București, Ed. Politică, 2002
19. \*\*\* Tous différents, tous égaux, Conseil de l'Europe. Strasbourg, 1996;
20. \*\*\* <http://www.elearning.ro/educatia-la-distanta>;
21. \*\*\* <http://www.scrigroup.com/educatie/sociologie/Noile-educatii24558.php>