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Contemporary significance of popular pedagogy

Współczesne znaczenie pedagogiki popularnej

Motto:

“The aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think, than what to think – rather to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory with thoughts of other men” .

Bill Beattie

Introduction

The profound democratic transformations in society and the immanent demand for integration in the contemporary world are inextricably linked to the recognition of spiritual renewal through the development of science and the improvement of the entire education system. To implement these transformations efficiently, the human personality, in its complex activity, must develop and manifest a wide range of qualities which define it as a man of culture, citizen and manager of its own becoming (Buzenco, 2017).

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These current socio-economic transformations require a renewal of the education policy on the basis of democratic and humanistic principles (Sacaliuc, Cojocaru, 2012). The problem of popular pedagogy emerges from the need of accepting innovations unconditionally and from overlooking the traditions, a phenomenon that constitutes the main difficulty of the contemporary society concerning the development of human personality in the context of current requirements. The openness to cultural innovations (spirituality, cultural competence, sociability, and originality) and the valorisation of human personality must start from the openness to national history values, while the openness to universality must start from the openness to national specificity. Family and school ensure the commitment of education in the preservation and effective transmission of eternal values in an axiological continuum to actively promote moral goodness, health, truth, faith, beauty, sacredness, honesty, national values, defined as national treasure.

Popular pedagogy – an imperative of contemporary life

Popular pedagogy extends beyond the school perimeter, penetrating the broadest strata of society. It creates the necessary conditions for understanding popular culture by answering the following questions: how to use, in education, the strong spiritual potential accumulated by the whole society, and how to achieve the harmonious development of future generations. The values of popular pedagogy constitute an inexhaustible resource necessary for the education of preschool children. The theoretical precepts of popular pedagogy serve as models of education in the spirit of popular culture and socio-cultural insertion in the context of intercultural education. The wisdom of popular pedagogy is the source of modern education systems manifested through folklore and folkloristics, and within folklore, proverbs and sayings, alongside riddles and children's toys which are somehow part of the same family, as people of the world have their spiritual roots in folklore (Baciu, 1992). Culture, popular morality, traditions, national experiences constitute the foundations of education sciences (Silistraru, Buzenco, 2013).

Popular pedagogy denotes a certain type of formative education which does not deny or exclude the need and role of information, but assumes it. From the perspective of cultural pedagogy, according to Pâslaru (1999), it is motivated by the fact that:

- the national identity precedes the universal one; first, the child acquires the awareness of belonging to the family, to the group, to the local community and, through this, to the nation, and, later, that of belonging to humanity;
- popular traditions, in general, especially those of a pedagogical nature, are spontaneous and come with formative values, yet provide the content of axiological guidelines for preschool children and, to a very large extent, can be a source of inspiration for educators regarding the methods of axiological education.

Popular pedagogy enables us to learn, be aware of our customs and traditions; it represents the educational experience of various ethnic groups, marked by moral, aesthetic, and civic values, ripened in the popular traditions of the family and nation. Now, that “globalisation” comes upon us like a roller coaster, trapping us in its nets, as argued by Filip (2011), popular pedagogy has the role to educate, develop the human personality and the social norms with the help of popular wisdom, traditions, customs, songs, stories, etc., at the same time respecting the essential principle of popular pedagogy: national education, which at this stage becomes imperative, using ethnic and national tools, adapted to modern conditions and requirements.

The relevance of popular pedagogy outcomes

The complexity of pedagogical activity consists in the fact that the problems mentioned cannot be solved by bypassing the micro-mechanisms of the relations between people, overlooking the small details that form the human personality. Popular pedagogy materialises by involving each member of society in social life (unconsciously and later consciously), conditioning new personal motives, and thus strengthening their consciousness, developing their skills, shaping their ideas and inflicting national feelings. It is through this unconscious education that one gradually becomes part of the intellectual and moral resources that mankind has managed to accumulate. Even the most formal and technical education in the world cannot deviate without risk from this general process; it can only organise or steer the individuals towards a certain direction. In this context, we can affirm that education involves changing the abilities of the individuals based on the requirements of their social situations; it stimulates them to act as members of a social unit, helps them overcome the

minimum of their actions and feelings and use self-assessment considering the wellbeing of their social group.

Addressing the educational outcomes in a complex way, we consider that family, school, and the entire society must participate in the educational process of the young generation ensuring the development of all the skills and attitudes of each individual. The above can only be achieved through an educational process that is complete. Folklore, as an ethnographic value, is sensitised to the human psyche and soul; it tends towards human perfection, criticising human vices, behavioural deviations, amorality, etc. Folklore, as a form of social consciousness, generates norms of human consciousness in different life situations, norms related to habits, beliefs, customs, and traditions. The folklore shows how life manifestations are reflected in people's consciousness, how the representatives of a nation think under the influence of inherited ideas and beliefs (Baciu, 1992).

Popular pedagogy cannot remain indifferent to the problems of the environment in which the individual is educated. Given that the latter educates and forms the qualities of human personality that optimise the establishment of relationships in a society, popular pedagogy studies the experience of people, elucidates the possibilities and effective ways to achieve ideas related to human personality and education. Popular pedagogy is basically about social education. The educational experience gained over the centuries in correlation with empirical knowledge forms the core of popular pedagogy.

Principles of popular pedagogy – the milestone of human consciousness

Respecting the principles of popular pedagogy in education is interpreted as one of the specific conditions in the formation of human consciousness. The nation, following the evolution and development of the society, accumulates knowledge about education. True popular pedagogy was based on an educational experience passed down from generation to generation. This empirical experience passed down through generations has been transformed into customs and traditions, into a well-defined educational culture. The nation, based on popular ideas and educational traditions, brings in conversations examples from life as a generalisation of factors, events, and pedagogical phenomena. The norms of coexistence, of people's behaviour towards each

other, as well as towards society, did not appear spontaneously, on their own, but they were elaborated by people throughout history and transmitted to the new generations. Many of the moral norms are set forth in the Holy Scriptures, with the goal of achieving man's likeness to God, confronted with his interests and needs (Avram, 2006).

Today, as never before, it is very important to build and maintain the balance between preserving what the family has built in the past, the cultural heritage, and transforming the behaviours, skills and rules required to meet new needs, the modern culture being shaped by the younger generations and sociocultural changes (Cuznetov, 2008). Culture represents the totality of material and spiritual values created by man in the process of social and individual activity carried out throughout its historical existence. From the perspective of examining the national culture of a nation, the importance of national culture lies in the fact that it maintains and develops a self-conscious nation, opinion in line with Hegel's vision "nations are a reflection of their attainments" (Hegel, 1998).

Popular pedagogy aims to ensure the continuity in time and space of generations, because throughout time it draws its strength from the experience gained by past generations, takes place in the present and forms the human personality from a future perspective, takes place in a concrete educational space, which is usually the living environment of an ethnic community. Popular practices are a necessary treasure of educational values; they represent the essence of popular pedagogy, a component part of the spiritual culture of the nation, being the basis of scientific pedagogy.

Researchers of Romanian pedagogy have demonstrated, since ancient times, the interaction and correlation of popular pedagogy with pedagogical science, which complement each other (Lutenco, Buzenco, 2013). The education of the younger generation is the primary function of mankind. The history of education presents opinions which support the idea that man ensures the progress of the world, which from generation to generation has become diverse and perfect, passing, of course, through progressive changes and education. Gusti (2011) mentioned that "Today, when the world agrees that school is the only way to prosper, it is appropriate that the state be put at its service. Without school, the legal and political organisation of this state is built on sand".

By stimulating the spiritual development of generations, any popular culture aspires to educate each individual based on cultural and historical traditions. In this sense, popular pedagogy is an inexhaustible treasure of popular wisdom, which educates the individual in the national spirit and general-human values, promoting the formation of personality in interaction with other members of society (Avram, 2006). The concrete programme of human personality development appeared and developed based on the historical conditions of each nation. The Education Code of the Republic of Moldova (2014) stipulates that the specifics of human life premises reflect in the individual's national ideal the general-human perceptions about beauty and are characteristic to all cohabiting ethnic groups in the Republic of Moldova who appreciate human dignity, intelligence, diligence, sincerity, bravery, generosity, nobility, and goodness.

Popular pedagogy provides valuable information about life, our worldview, and the life of our nation, about the problems of education and training, family, parents and children, friendship and love, reflecting a rich practice and concern about raising children. There are rules of education, which are inherited from generation to generation and, when viewed from a long-term perspective, appear to us as a whole in the life system of a nation and an era. This is, indeed, the pedagogy of the people, of all people, of any people. As long as it ensures the growth of a (privileged) minority, popular pedagogy preserves the conditions of human existence. As vague and rudimentary as it seems to the modern scientist, popular pedagogy, however, has a system of principles and an evolution (Avram, Silistraru, 2003).

The inter-correlation of popular and modern pedagogy

Popular pedagogy encapsulates an obvious formative character representing the grounds for teachers to assume the responsibility of ensuring educational influences in this regard and thus to direct the learners to assimilate the national values and be aware of their moral obligations, to preserve and pass them on to future generations. The essential foundations of popular pedagogy, which also constitute its significance as a science, aim at national salvation. No nation, despite its complicated history, persecutions, anti-national policy, etc., has ever disappeared. It is of great importance to pass on to the younger generations all the preserved traditions, to familiarise children with the history of their

people. It is necessary to use popular pedagogy elements for this purpose, not only within an educational institution, but also within each family, thus increasing its role considerably. The entire process of education is based on love for the child and due to this fact, the instructive-educational tasks are achievable. Popular pedagogy opens the way to the hearts of nations and people. To know a nation, it is necessary to know its original culture, customs and traditions used in education. It is the popular pedagogy that unites and strengthens people among themselves. The methodology of capitalising on popular pedagogy starting with early education refers to the combination of educational efforts for the formation of children's national consciousness and identity.

Conclusions

Popular pedagogy promotes the awareness of a nation's educational experience and the complex capitalisation of the folklore and the popular culture. To this end, the commitment of teachers' professional culture through educational outcomes, methodologies, and forms of education aimed at forming national consciousness and dignity, employs a system of ideas with a deep pedagogical connotation generating premises for their creative activity in the educational process. Education, in the spirit of popular traditions, is the eternal and general category, stimulated by the need to preserve the axiological system of future generations and to establish continuity between generations. Today, popular pedagogy contributes substantially to the raising of generations with a high potential to promote popular culture. From this axiological perspective we acknowledge that humans are the only beings who can transmit and create new values to ensure the continuity and uniqueness of a nation. This is due to the fact that popular pedagogy aims at preserving and strengthening the identity of nations, and thus enriching the global civilisation. The goal of modern pedagogy is not only to preserve the educational traditions of each nation and use them in the educational process, but also to familiarise children with the traditions and customs of the people of the world. This, in turn, will contribute to instilling in children the respect and tolerance towards other nationalities and ethnic groups. Ethnic groups, united by a single common goal, are able to rise to a higher level of culture and morality, thus expanding intercultural boundaries.

Abstract: This article mirrors the contemporary significance concerning the essence of popular pedagogy and the importance of this science of education for the formation of human personality. The profound democratic transformations in society and the immanent demand for integration in the contemporary world are inextricably linked to the recognition of spiritual renewal through the development of science and the improvement of the entire education system. The arguments evoked in this article attest the need for pedagogical implications in the personal identity development in line with the national culture. The use of folklore for this purpose can bring real benefits for the harmonious personality development in the context of educational partnership.

Keywords: popular pedagogy, education, folklore, culture, society

Streszczenie: Artykuł odzwierciedla współczesne znaczenia dotyczące istoty pedagogiki popularnej i znaczenia tej nauki o wychowaniu dla kształtowania osobowości. Głębokie przemiany demokratyczne w społeczeństwie i immanentna potrzeba integracji ze strukturalnym zespołem współczesnego świata są nierozzerwalnie związane z uznaniem duchowej odnowy poprzez rozwój nauki i doskonalenie całego systemu. Przywołane argumenty świadczą o konieczności pedagogicznych implikacji w kształtowaniu tożsamości osobowości ludzkiej w duchu kultury narodowej. Wykorzystanie folkloru w tym celu może przynieść realne korzyści dla harmonijnego kształtowania osobowości w kontekście partnerstwa edukacyjnego.

Słowa kluczowe: pedagogika popularna, edukacja, folklor, kultura, społeczeństwo

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Date of the submission of article to the Editor: 13.08.2022

Date of acceptance of the article: 20.11.2022