

Pathology in secondary and higher education -neglected areas

Introduction

The rapid technological development of telecommunications, media and industry gives rise to new social and economic conditions, which schools and universities have to take into account in defining their roles. Institutions specializing in the development and training of young people should therefore redefine their objectives and tools, which until now have not encountered much opposition within the ranks of new generations of students. It is not, however, IT solutions that will effect change, but the ever so remote and not yet fully understood aspects of self-education. Nowadays, young people acquire computer skills intuitively and adaptively thanks to their constant contact with new technologies. There are, however, such areas of education, where lack of prior planning, implementation and coordination on the side of educational institutions will carry much more long-term damage, than underdeveloped IT skills.

A new approach to pedagogy

Let me ask the reader a few intriguing questions at a time, when our institution of education is gradually but constantly deteriorating. Should schools and colleges give students an idea of how to find their place in the job market? Should the knowledge they convey be relevant for life and work or for school? Should university provide information or skills? Does the contemporary job market still need a plethora of people possessing impractical knowledge? Or maybe university education does not help in preparing the prospective employee for future work? If the answer to the last question is affirmative, one may ask oneself then what is higher education for (since it does not prepare nor guarantee work) and why do young people choose to study in that case?

The problem of Polish education at every level is not that it does not prepare one for life in specific ways (i.e. that secondary school does not teach how to fill out a tax declaration, or that college does not teach how to find a job), but that it does not teach

something that is useful anytime and anywhere-i.e. learning, acquiring new skills and knowledge. School and university does not teach how to learn, but only how to remember. This is definitely not enough in our rapidly developing world. Worse still, these institutions are not able to help the young job seeker to find a job nor do they support the market in developing new specializations, since it fails to create ones itself.

What should education be enriched with for it to be able to provide the minimum universal knowledge, which has the capacity for creating a new quality of social and economic life? The answer is emotional intelligence, financial intelligence and teleology.

The objectives of the theory of education

The basic objectives of the theory of education include: analysis of psychosocial factors, designing educational and self-educational activity and formulating educational objectives¹. We can assign the missing element of education, which has appeared as a result of the evolution of other scientific disciplines having a significant impact on human development, to each of the above-mentioned factors. The constituents of psychosocial factors can be correlated with problems relating to emotional intelligence. Poor educational and self-educational activity can be attributed to a lack of educational and financial intelligence, whereas the formulation of educational objectives to their corresponding teleology, or rather lack of it in our educational system. The order in which the author has made the division is very important, because without the fundamentals it is difficult to go any further.

Let us try, therefore, to develop on the legitimacy of their interconnections and their key role in the development of a young person. Let's discuss emotional intelligence first.

Emotional intelligence

It is no surprise that the current rate with which communication media are developing promotes a deterioration of psychosocial relations. Self-expression and active participation in a community is becoming increasingly hard to come by due to a wide variety of other means of communication such as online messengers. People are able to spend a lot more time learning how to operate their new home theater system

¹ M. Łobocki, *Teoria wychowania w zarysie*, Kraków 2006, s. 4-6.

than on fixing their social and emotional relations, which are fundamental to a healthy social system both in the areas of life and work. A strong emotional backbone is essential for the further development of a person, which has been presented on numerous occasions by David Goleman in his book "Emotional Intelligence"².

Based on how well developed one's social intelligence is, we can divide people into two groups i.e. those who are inner-directed and outer-directed. The first feel they are masters of their domain, are confident in their actions, beliefs and feelings, while the latter feel helpless, trapped and manipulated by life.

Taking control of life begins with one's own thoughts and emotions, which people have actual control over, the rest is only an outcome i.e. taking action or remaining passive. The Polish film *Suicide room*³ cleverly depicted how contemporary young people can't cope with their emotions and how their lack of control leads to pathological social behaviours that are manifested on social networks.

Emotional intelligence, besides the social and emotional aspects that go along with it, also carries another very important element, namely that of cognitive subjectivity, which takes a prominent position in psychology research of today. The foundations of cognitive subjectivity have been created by George Berkeley, an Irish philosopher and bishop. He noticed that people are in fact given only two things, that is stimuli and the ideas or beliefs they generate. If someone provided us with specific stimuli regardless of the real characteristics of an object, we would not be able to tell that the object is different than what we have been suggested it is. In other words, things are not completely what they are in an objective sense, but only an imagining and what we would like them to be⁴. Many modern psychologists, among others Janusz Czapiński, sets this psychological dependency out based on the analogy of "terrain" and "map". Terrain is an objectivity which has been with us since the moment we were born, and include things like the Earth, the air, the solar system, gravity. The existence of these things is hard to question. The concept of the map, which basically involves adding meaning or materiality to an object, develops in a completely subjective way in each separate individual psycho-reality, whose emotional value and importance exceeds, modifies and often annuls the meaning of the more objective features.

² D. Goleman, *Inteligencja emocjonalna*, Poznań 2012, s. 4-20.

³ *Sala samobójców*, reżyseria, scenariusz J. Komasa.

⁴ G. Berkeley, *Traktat o zasadach ludzkiego poznania*, przeł. Janusz Salamon, Kraków 2005, s. 30-34.

We can perceive the life and development of every human being from two emotional levels, i.e. a positive and negative one. The development of these relations and their consequences has already been described by Arthur Schopenhauer. Today's popular science literature gives increasingly more frequent mention of positive thinking⁵, or rather the tendency of an individual to manifest one, i.e. gloomy or cheerful, prevailing form of personality. Schopenhauer divided the human character into two types, that is a gloomy and cheerful character⁶. The relation between the two is, according to the philosopher, perceivable based on the level of sensitivity to pleasant and unpleasant sensations, which an individual experiences.

By making this constructive distinction, Schopenhauer tries to show us a well-known psychological issue: that of a "glass which is half full or half empty". This is how he formulates the concept: "If a sad personality is successful in nine out of ten attempts, he will not rejoice but worry about the one failed attempt. The cheerful personality however, will be the exact opposite, that is manifest joy at the one successful attempt⁷. Schopenhauer tries to prove that these two extreme approaches are the foundation of our good or bad mood, of the development of our personality, our action or inaction. Bad fate as such, good luck or misfortune have always been present in the life of every human being, while the approach to a specific situation in two different ways makes has the potential of turning things completely around.

The last of the components, which is closely associated with emotional intelligence are expectations. Expectations have a powerful, unperceivable impact on people and situations, they initiate such behaviour, which we anticipate to be correct in the future or at any given time. Psychology distinguishes between four types of expectations which have an impact on the evolution of the nature of a person. The first are the expectations of the parents. They constitute permanently formulated patterns of conscience, responsibility, trust, etc. The second type constitutes expectations of the surrounding environment and the employer. The third type constitutes the expectations of our surrounding environment. The last type are the expectations we have towards ourselves and they constitute the most powerful reflection of our actions and our understanding of

⁵ T. Koczyński, *Współczesne tendencje ku szczęściu a filozofia Artura Schopenhauera*, [w:] *Człowiek ponowoczesny wobec wyzwań globalizacji – studium interdyscyplinarne*, red. A. Wąsiński, Bielsko-Biała 2008, s. 319-329. Zob. L. Anolli, *Optymizm*, Poznań 2008.

⁶ A. Schopenhauer, *W poszukiwaniu mądrości życia. Parerga i paralipomena*, t. I, przeł. J. Garewicz, Warszawa 2002, s. 408.

⁷ A. Schopenhauer, *W poszukiwaniu mądrości...*, t. I, s. 409

what we are capable of⁸ David Goleman invariably argues that in order to develop other forms of our intelligence such as linguistic intelligence, logical and mathematical intelligence, visual and spatial intelligence, musical intelligence, kinesthetic intelligence or interpersonal intelligence, emotional competencies are key.

Financial intelligence

An old Jewish proverb says: *It is not worth living for money, but you need money to live*. It's difficult not to appreciate the triviality of the entire proverb. The above can be paraphrased by another proverb: *not many remember that money cannot be a means in itself but a means to an end*. One of the biggest flaws of our educational system is the lack of financial education in schools. Schools do have the subject *entrepreneurship fundamentals*, but it teaches neither the right skills nor behaviors and even worse, good financial habits e.g. saving. Teachers seem to believe that money has the features of a quasi-religion or is similar to a cult, and they believe that the love of money is the root of all evil. In part, this is true as is any generalization, but lacking elementary knowledge of financial mechanisms sooner or later leads to pathology such as debt adjustment through loan consolidation, which is much more harmful⁹.

If we take a closer look into the assumption that money is bad, then we can conclude that love of money in itself is not a good thing, but lack of it is the source of much evil in society. What is bad is hard work and the inability to make enough money to maintain a family. Arguing with people we love about money is bad too, such as is engaging in immoral and criminal activity in order to gain money. Money in itself is not bad. Money is only a means of payment.

The lack of financial education in our system of education is definitely a serious shortcoming. In today's world, financial education is absolutely essential in order to survive, regardless of whether we are rich, poor, intelligent or not. We currently live in an information age. The problem of our era is that we are surrounded by an excess of information. There is too much of it whichever way we look¹⁰.

Financial education plays an important role in helping us make the right financial decisions in the deluge of financial proposals surrounding us. Without this knowledge,

⁸ B. Tracy, *Maksimum osiągnięć*, tłum. W. Biliński, Warszawa 2008, s. 49-51.

⁹ R. Kiyosaki, *Bogaty ojciec biedny ojciec*, Warszawa 2010.

¹⁰ R. Kiyosaki, *Mądre bogate dziecko*, Warszawa 2010.

young people are encouraged into buying cars and treat them as one of their assets. They often also save money, unaware that cash is for many years now only a piece of paper with no coverage, unlike the situation years ago, i.e. when the value of money was reflected in the value of precious metals, such as gold and silver. Young people do not know the difference between good and bad debt either. They are also unable to understand why the rich, despite making more money, pay lower taxes. Lacking sound financial knowledge, people wait for advice on their financial issues. Most financial experts say that the best thing to do is to work hard, save money and put it in lousy bank deposits or open investment fund accounts. Like lemmings, who without criticism follow their leader, these people jump off the cliff into financial instability in the hope that *things are going to be alright*. The problem of financial education also involves finding the right balance between one's own life philosophy of *being and having*, which is, however, a topic for a separate discussion. Young people are overwhelmed by the present day culture of *having it all right here right now* and as a result are easy prey for banks, which provide for immediate pleasure at the price of interest rates paid over a long period of time.

Teleology of education

Teleology has a rich tradition if not the oldest in all of philosophical history. It is without a doubt that humans live for a purpose. Everything that happens in life from birth until death has a general or detailed purpose, and even when it seems to us that there isn't one, it is deeply hidden and only after some time does it sometimes become noticeable. Ninety percent of our actions are done for a purpose. Women care about their appearance to impress males. The latter, on the other hand, try to achieve good social standing to impress their future partners. We buy cars to travel more comfortably, we study in the hope of a better job. Focusing on objectives and purpose is a feature of all prominent people. One of Seneca's old maxims reads: *If one does not know to which port one is sailing, no wind is favourable*. It's impossible to know if you are going in the right direction not knowing where you are going in the first place.

In a famous study carried out by American students in 1952 at Yale University, it was demonstrated how important it is to keep a record of your goals and to plan them. The students were then asked if they had written down their future goals. It was found that only 3% of the graduates kept note of their goals, 13 percent had goals, but did not

write them down, while 83 percent did not have any goals set at all. After 20 years, it was discovered that the 3 percent of those who kept note of their goals had more money than the remaining 97 percent taken together¹¹. The experiment was repeated numerous times at other universities. Every person has an automatic drive to achieve one's own goals and aspirations. The problem is that you need to have goals and aspirations to start with.

The development of information and communication technologies and, in particular, the Internet, which makes it possible to easily organize courses and training (step by step type courses) moves the focus away from school information to developing skills and competencies related to the labour market¹². The most important competence in the learning process is the ability to seek practical knowledge on one's own, followed by the ability to plan one's own development as well as short- and long-term goals. New developments in the process of communication provide fantastic opportunities for the accomplishment of self-development goals. Establishing goals also involves the very important aspect of critical thinking, without which the setting and designing of goals would not make much sense since it is crucial to optimizing our actions. With the overwhelming amounts of information that surround us, it has become relevant not only to 'know how', but above all to 'know-where'. Critical thinking combined with an ability to access the right kind of practical knowledge will open new doors in our personal development.

Summary

The development of industry and technology has generated unprecedented amounts of information and has modified the world to such an extent that reinvention of the educational reality is an absolute necessity. School has always been underfunded and has found it difficult to keep up with the changing economic realities. Recent years have given us much longed for research on emotions (*neuro science*), communication technology (IT) and cognitive science. Ignoring the need to introduce new developments is like ignoring a very important part in the life of the contemporary student and human being. Further disregard of schools towards issues related to emotional intelligence,

¹¹ B. Tracy, *Maksimum osiągnięć*, tłum. W. Biliński, Warszawa 2008, s. 56-60.

¹² G. Dryden, J. Vos, *Rewolucja w uczeniu*, Poznań 2003, s. 3-5.

financial intelligence and teleology will only deepen the already existing gap between these two worlds.