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Rethinking Teaching in the Third Millennium. Possible Suggestions for History Teachers

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Abstract: *Our research starts from the idea that evaluating the quality of the educational process in history, in the conditions of the educational process in history, in the conditions of 21st century education, is an attempt as difficult as it is interesting and instructive. In recent years, Romanian educations has undergone numerous transformations, both in terms of curricular aspects, respectively the curriculum, study programs and textbooks, as well as those related to the managerial component. In this process, operations of request and response, analysis and synthesis, evaluation and application have intervened and continue to intervene, all built on the basis of strategies in which all educational factors are involved.*

Keywords: *educational policy, school curricula, history, history teaching*

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1. Introduction

Today we live in a technological world, something already extremely known and felt by all. Television, internet, telephony are just a few elements that have increased the level of interpersonal contacts, because now we manage to communicate in one day more than we have done in a lifetime. Undoubtedly, these changes have repercussions on education because the methods and means are rethought in the current contexts. There are changes in concepts and methodology, changes in interpersonal relationships, material changes. For example, a major issue at the top of the lists of education policies in many countries belonging to the European Community is related to the training of teachers. Certain major changes in the initial and continuing training of teachers not only claim among its goals institutional models, but also focus on issues related to the changing status and professional identity of teachers, articulations and career developments, recall today's researchers (Ciolan et al., 2011). The same authors point out that new professional roles, responsibilities and responsibilities are being discussed in order to become part of the teaching profession. For this reason, our desire for research was born, in which we set out to study educational policy documents and confirm the hypothesis that the current national curriculum does not correspond to today's needs of students, nor the postmodernist perspective of our current society, based on the training of students in the eight key competencies, which aim at a European graduate training profile. It is found today that at the level of pedagogical discourse is permanently supported the fact that the student is in the center of attention, but the reality shows that there is a big difference, which is often argued by the fact that today's teaching cannot enter students' thoughts (Bruner, 1996). In addition to traditional and political or military history, other histories have emerged today, such as the history of ideas or the intellectual history, which are considered new directions of scientific and pedagogical research in the field of history (Manea, 2018). the second world conflagration and the need to rebuild Europe entails an important activity of returning to the feeling of trust between states, so it is not accidental the message sent by Winston

Churchill, the former British Prime Minister in 1946 in Zurich (Wassenberg, 2013).

2. The research gap

The study of history today is based on important documents that have been developed in the European Union, and which emphasize that teaching history today in a Europe of democracy is a fundamental component of freely approved construction, and is based on a common heritage both from a historical point of view, but also cultural, a heritage that is enriched by ethnic, religious, cultural, social diversity. This legacy often includes less pleasant, even dramatic aspects, but it allows the people of Europe to assert their own collective and individual identity.

If we take, for example, the analysis of the European Recommendations, recommendations that are found in the structure of current school documents, we must emphasize that they take into account important objectives, specified in works of history teaching, and not only. Thus, one of these objectives deriving from the above-mentioned recommendation provides for the identification and definition of key competencies necessary for personal development, active citizenship, social cohesion and inclusion in a knowledge-based society (Bercea, 2010). Although this goal should be a priority for teachers and those who are part of the working groups that develop the most important school documents related to the discipline of history, we note with bitterness, not infrequently, that there is a concentration on the contents of a school curriculum, on the eternal questions as well as what we teach, and the question of how we teach is neglected, living with the erroneous impression that it is essential to transmit as much scientific knowledge as possible, while forgetting that access to information knowledge is always evolving, often with a speed we cannot match (Bolovan, 2007).

Today there is a lot of talk about postmodernism and postmodernity, including in the teaching of history, which could be understood by the fact that it is not included in the limits of today, nor in a tomorrow (Lyon, 1998).

The differences that exist today between the definitions of history are caused by the different perspectives of approaching the historical facts;

for example, a positivist perspective is one that presupposes that history be described, presented in the way it took place, chronologically and factologically, without presupposing that the historian intervenes. The discipline of history has known many stages since the events of 1989. It is seen in many aspects, such as the factual, serial or event (Dumitrescu, 2010).

Another perspective, structuralist, is the one that aims to analyze the events through the prism of the elements of civilization. The historian Alexandru Zub summarizes some of the research on these issues (Zub, 2006) recalling that, in the midst of postmodernity, history is fragmented into microhistories, and historical discourse needs to rethink history as an academic discipline and rethink the concept of scientific rationality. Zub quotes Rusen, who states that postmodernism is a challenge for historians, because the presence of the prefix post wants to demonstrate the dissatisfaction marked by those cultural models that are understood as modern.

3. Research questions

Researching and improving the teaching-learning-assessment process we are sure that we can conclude that the teaching of history is a scientific discipline, with useful results in the educational partnership: students, teachers, knowledge, both historical and other disciplines (Manea, 2010).

Our current research has started from recent paradigms in education. The educational policies that have changed have urgently required changes in school practice as well. The new challenges facing history today are related to the status of the history of school discipline, but also to the connection of this discipline with the training and development of skills that are useful for students to continue education or employment (Bolovan, 2007) . By studying history, students should develop certain skills of negotiation, communication, analysis of resources that involve certain opportunities related to the development of critical thinking, which could be achieved only if we use in class active-participatory teaching-learning methods-evaluation of history.

In order to achieve the objectives, we have formulated below a series of hypotheses that will help us, both theoretically and through research, to

achieve the goal we set ourselves. Thus, the hypotheses formulated are the following:

Hypothesis 1- We expect an association between the perception of teachers and students related to the time required by the framework plans for the formation of the eight key European competences.

Hypothesis 2-We expect an association between teachers' perception related to changes in educational policy documents to the history discipline depending on specific demographic dimensions: environment of residence, teaching degree, professional status.

4. Research methods

For our research we propose the initial application of two adapted questionnaires to identify how the history teacher can influence the results on this subject, which methods are more attractive for students. Another questionnaire is intended for history teachers to identify the best methods used in teaching this object. In developing this method, we will be guided by the steps presented by Ciolan et al. (2011) in the chapter dedicated to the questionnaire method.

Both questionnaires were designed by us and aim to check if the modern didactics of history is much different from the traditional one and if it is agreed by the students. The questionnaires were applied to the high school classes, and we hope that their results will be conclusive for the verification of our hypotheses. In the first stage we analyzed the questions formulated in the research and the questionnaires in the field. In the second stage, we proceeded to the elaboration of the items from the questionnaire, keeping or not certain items depending on the concepts of our research. Then I organized the items and set the format of the questionnaire. In asking the questions, we were guided by the saying: "Be simple, clear and concise whenever possible" (Cohen, 2007).

The role of the questionnaires is to test the formulated hypotheses. All questions, even the simplest ones, are asked according to the hypotheses established before. If it does not test the hypotheses, the questionnaire has no value. The questions included in the questionnaire fulfill the role of triggering stimuli for certain verbal or nonverbal behaviors (Chelcea, 2001).

The answers vary depending on certain factors, such as: the framework in which the survey is conducted, the personality of the respondent, the personality of the person conducting the questionnaire, its structure, time, place of residence, etc.

In addition to the research questions, any questionnaire also contains factual questions, with answers that cannot be questioned, unless the subjects intended from the beginning to fill in erroneously. There are questions such as age, background, occupations, teaching degree, status, etc.

The completion of the questionnaires proposed by us aimed at adapting to the existing situation: nowadays it is much easier to apply questionnaires in the online environment. This time in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, the online questionnaire was the only allowed way to apply. The use of an online research tool allowed us to record a relatively large number of responses, higher than would have been possible by solving them face to face. It is also known that there are specific methods to follow the completion of the questionnaire, to follow the participation of respondents. Some of the respondents were contacted individually via e-mail. The e-mail addresses of the respondents were provided by the management of the schools where they worked, and in turn the teachers distributed the questionnaire for students in the classes where they teach, respectively to the 11th and 12th high school classes. Both the questionnaire for history teachers and the one for students was distributed online during the same period-15-31 May 2020.

For our research, as I said before, we proposed the application of two questionnaires, one for teachers and another for students. In the elaboration of this method, we were guided by the stages presented by Ciolan et al. (2011) in the chapter dedicated to the questionnaire method. As the authors point out in the chapter on the questionnaire, it is necessary to consider two extremely important aspects before drawing up the questionnaire itself. These would be, in order of importance, the formulation of the research problem and the establishment of hypotheses and objectives. Then the second equally important aspect is the sampling, the way in which the population that will answer the completed questionnaire (s) is selected.

The final questionnaires were applied online for 15 days, from May 15, 2020 to May 31, 2020. The method chosen, as mentioned above was the volunteer method, more precisely we published in the online environment a standard questionnaire form, together with an invitation to respond to it. Thus, in the sample, the inclusion was made on the basis of the voluntary choice of the subjects to participate in our research. In this case, we could raise the issue of statistical inference, an inference that becomes very difficult to achieve because the method of volunteering involves the existence of bias, and we will not be able to know the representativeness of those who responded. The consequence would be that the results of our research will not be able to be extended to the entire community of history teachers and students in high school.

5. Results

With the passage of time, we believe that the discipline of history can no longer be conceived outside the new tendencies to approach it, tendencies already present in European didactics. Adapting to the diversified requirements of society is extremely necessary, because the school is not and should not be conceived as a closed fortress, on the contrary, it must have permanently open gates to allow connection with existing reality. In the school, the role of the teacher is essential, but he must be in permanent collaboration with the other beneficiaries of education, who are the students, the parents, the community. The formulation of our research hypotheses is closely related to the fact that the teacher must be more than a transmitter of information, that what is extremely important in education can be achieved exclusively through our presence at the department.

Most of the time, the conditions that a teacher has at his disposal to carry out his activity are precarious, which leads to dissatisfaction, and only conscience and good faith determine us to continue our daily activity. The teacher is the one who must continue to educate his students, even the current conditions, in which the pandemic has totally limited the possibility of taking face-to-face courses. During our research, the formulation of the hypotheses also took into account this fact, and the final conclusions will be under the influence of this difficult period we are going through.

6. Discussions

The questionnaire for students considers the importance of the fact that it should be involved in its own training, in order not to obtain only short-term results, because history means not only knowing the event itself, but also understanding certain consequences, how certain social-political currents were born, the argumentation of a point of view on the respective events, etc.

As pointed out in recent research on the teaching of history, its purpose must no longer be limited to its knowledge so as not to repeat the mistakes made, but this does not mean that the past will be minimized, only that the role of history as a school subject must be expanded. , by promoting what important pedagogues call "new educations", which can be capitalized through the school contents of each discipline with the help of specific messages (Cucoş, 2002). In the research on the didactics of history we aimed at both the qualitative and the quantitative methodology, thus, during the theoretical chapters we approached the qualitative research, and during the empirical chapters we considered quantitative research.

Regarding the quantitative methods of data analysis in our thesis we applied methods that are specific to the various statistical analysis. This type of analysis envisages the use of several statistical-mathematical methods to simultaneously investigate the associations that may exist between two or more variables. It is necessary to know that these multi-varied methods involve making a case-variable matrix, where all rows of the matrix contain all measurements for each case, and the matrix columns include all measurements for each different aspect of these cases (Jupp, 2010).

7. Conclusions

We can thus see that, at least at a theoretical level, we are trying to form a realistic school model, adapted to the new requirements at European level. Today's theorists (Bolovan, 2007) consider that contemporary concerns about values in school are influenced by the tendency to go beyond education based on a traditional foundation. This concept of "traditional school" is no longer appropriate for today's situation and, as a

result, is permanently associated with the concept of "communist school". Without denying its importance, we must accept that the traditional school leads us to major problems: the very large volume of information, for example. Today's school is looking for ways to transmit them as efficiently as possible, but what today's teachers emphasize is that the information is now ephemeral and that what we transmit today, tomorrow can be surpassed, or we, teachers we should prepare students for the future, so our focus should be on what we know how to do, not what we know.

At the level of education today there are important currents, which are based on the fact that it must be student-centered, but also that it is necessary to achieve integrated learning. It has been shown that there must be an intellect specific to a field of knowledge, but also to a way of thinking that is specific to a certain group of disciplines. For each of these areas there are certain methods of knowledge, but also certain methods of research that help the human mind to understand reality, to simplify it (Gruber, 2016). Each of these cut-outs is based on certain codes of symbolization, which, along with certain procedures are characteristic of the disciplines, and which, in turn, are perceived as forms of organizing the gathered knowledge. Any discipline is a field of knowledge (Ciolan, 2008).

School documents, the history curriculum, set ambitious goals, we believe, because, often, in an hour or two a week, the history teacher assumes the task of arousing interest in the study of history, national and universal, to prepare to become good citizens, to know the past in order to understand the present (Stradling, 2014). Here, too, we resume the question posed by Robert Stradling (2002) in his paper: "What would you like the young man to remember from history classes five or ten years after he left school? It is a very important issue, which has aroused the interest of today's teachers, and which considers it an issue that we must reflect as responsibly as possible, regardless of the environment in which we operate, urban or rural, teachers which I acquired, by specializing in gymnasium, respectively high school.

Thus, based on what Robert Stradling (2014) summarizes and on what the didactics of history have analyzed, but also on the results of our questionnaires, we could make some suggestions on what is necessary for a

student to be able to form a historical education. Thus, based on what Robert Stradling summarizes and on what the didactics of history have analyzed, but also on the results of our questionnaires, we could make some suggestions on what is necessary for a student to can shape historical education:

1. The acquisition of the tools of knowledge by the students so that they will be able to research new information when needed, and the formation of a more comprehensive conception about history, both from the thematic vision and from the chronological one.

2. Analyzing historical events from multiple perspectives, operating and understanding important concepts of history, such as chronology, cause-effect relationship, basic features of historical periods, etc.

3. Awareness that history is not just about personalities, battles, peace treaties, and that changes over time are due to other factors in society.

4. Training critical thinking skills to understand how events thought different social categories, but also attitudes and values that involve accepting diversity.

5. Awareness that history is not just about personalities, battles, peace treaties, and that the changes that have taken place over time are due to other factors in society.

6. Training critical thinking skills to understand how events thought different social categories, but also attitudes and values that involve accepting diversity.

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