

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF CREATIVE WORK OF AN EDUCATOR

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Abstract: *In Polish system of education, tasks and duties of an educator make him an expert on educational activities, including those of diagnostic and therapeutic role. Mobility and complexity of these actions is based on his creativity. Creative skills of an educator can become real by implementation of the copyright educational programs, initiating teaching and educational activities aimed at eliminating all kinds of internal and external inhibitors which lower students' self-esteem. The effectiveness of this type of activity requires from the educator research skills, creative design and organization of work as well as abilities to anticipate undertaken tasks. Educators create a specific educational order expressed through personal idealism and professional development, creative attitude and an attempt to influence social processes. It is also up to them to shape educational practice. They manifest certain values and act as the critics of theoretical assumptions of pedagogy and contractors of teaching and educational ideas perceived from an individual perspective.*

Key words: *an educator, creative work, a school, a student, creativity.*

Introduction

In educational practice, there is a divergence between understanding the following concepts: an educator and a teacher. Teacher practitioners believe that the scope of their professional competence is dominated by the nature of the subject taught and the performance of their duties which result from the position of an educator. Competencies of an educator are defined in their belief as a necessity of pedagogical but also infrequent psychological supervision. It is not rare in educational practice to assign school curators competences with wider than the teacher's – the area of pedagogical activities.

In Polish system of education, the roles and responsibilities of the school curator make him an expert on educational activities, including diagnostic and therapeutic. These require a very wide range of factual knowledge, broad communication, ethics, praxeological, autoreflexive, interactive as well as creative competences. Among the skills that are components of the school curator competences it needs to be emphasized the ability to see and recognize emotions, empathy, negotiation which means the ability to resolve conflicts, create a ground of mutual respect and understanding. Mobility and complexity

of a school counselor is based therefore on his creativity. It can be defined as a system of individual character, social and educational conditions and appointed by the level of professional competence actions aimed at pedagogical and psychological diagnosis, which consequently lead towards solving educational problems bearing large amount of intuitiveness, efficiency and teaching invention. Referring to the theory of multiple intelligences by H. Gardner it can be assumed that creativity of a school counselor can be expressed by interpersonal and intrapersonal skills of an educator. The latter determine the level of self-reflection and define the level of the educator's identity, setting his autonomous „I“ (Kwiatkowska, H., 2005, p. 39). The autonomy of school counselor's actions allows him to create the character of his own diagnostic activities, construct strategies, organize and implement educational, preventive as well as rehabilitative programs. Such feeling of self-independence implies the character of the undertaken actions, influences innovation and attractiveness of activities, contacts with students, teachers and the parents. Creativity of an educator is also expressed in a relevant organizational and essential selection of partners carrying out educational actions, so frequently found today outside the school. These are the public institutions, as well as numerous foundations and associations and the work indeed requires organizational, communication, praxeological and methodological competences.

The task of the school, and therefore the school counselor, is such organization of the training and upbringing process which will enable an individual to take part in lifelong learning process of self-development in surrounding reality. The school and the counselor must therefore generate such changes in the way of learning, searching for information, and develop skills connected with their verification, in order to enable for a young man to find himself and fulfill in a variety of educational and social situations. Creative possibilities of an educator can be realized in the implementation of own educational programs, initiating teaching and educational activities aimed at eliminating all kinds of internal and external inhibitors, which lower students' self-esteem. The effectiveness of this type of activity requires from the educator research skills, creative design and organization of work as well as abilities to anticipate the adapted solutions. These categories of a school counselor's actions are comprised within the area of creative ways of organizing educational and methodological work.

Creating new quality of educational environment, including psychological and pedagogical support seems to be the most prominent task for contemporary pedeutology, both in theoretical and practical part, including the greatest challenge even for such professional group as there are teachers and educators. The aim is to not thought to support professional and pedagogical inculturation process forced by the dynamics of social life, but also to rebuild a heavily

tarnished image of a modern educator. This is due to the social depreciation of teacher's profession, the decay of pedagogical ethos and significant escalation of upbringing problems. Czesław Banach referring to the results of recent years studies on personality of a teacher and his most desirable features, he mentioned among others: the ability to create own pedagogical talent, awareness of own values (self-criticism), creating own world of values, manifestos and social involvement and finally an autonomy (Banach, Cz., 2004, p. 56–58).

These are educators themselves who create the so called educational order by their own idealism and professional development, creative attitudes and attempts to influence social processes. They are to manifest certain values and they are critics of theoretical assumptions of pedagogy and contractors of teaching and educational ideas perceived through own, personal and individual perspective. The world created by them has a research value because on one hand their work is to observe phenomena and educational situations but on the other hand it is based on the descriptive and appraisingly normative perspective. It is a continuous diagnosis and inference, which theoretical and practical value is determined by the degree of efficiency and the quality of upbringing. Therefore, they may become an important element of an educator's competence in the area of creativity, comprising the recognition and supporting creative attitudes of the students. Influencing students' attitudes, behavior and stimulating their development, requires observation and diagnostic skills as well as changes in existing paradigms. These concern the knowledge of psychodidactics, creativity, research attitude of an educator, exploration within educational sphere and adapting educational solutions to individual student's abilities.

A constitutive factor of the teacher attitudes towards creativity may be however the differences in consciousness of many teachers, the level of their personal and professional identity. It needs to be stressed that school counselors represent different generations which were often brought up in far different social and political conditions. Their personal and professional experience often do not contain the concept of these changes as the condition for personal and professional development. They are characterized by conservatism, rigor and uncritical submission to orders and imposed work styles. Lack of reflection in teacher's work, including the one of a school counselor does not assure to get the knowledge of reality but even limits the ability to master the tools of communication and help to introduce personal and social transgression. An uncreative educator cannot teach and educate their students creatively. He is also unable to plan own activities based on innovative solutions. He also does not appreciate creativity and the need of development of his own students. His activity is comprised within the schemes, fixed and reliable forms of educational and therapeutic activities. Speaking on the achievement of

significant results of an educator makes only sense if he or she consciously respects the principles of pedagogical creationism.

The condition of professional competence of an educator in the field of his creativity it becomes, therefore his pedagogical work, understood here as a research space and the knowledge based on the search for the origins of educational success, diminishing the risks of danger which A. Karpińska refers to as „an education of a deeper level“. It is the „education of a deeper level“ to become a leading imperative of theory and pedagogical practice in the concept of post-modernism (Karpińska, A., 2005, p.193). The way to achieve the above include extended areas of the educators' professional competence, their pedagogical knowledge, social, diagnostic and research attitude towards ever changing educational reality. Its complexity is determined in the cognitive process of testing procedures, which complexity gives a sense of complementarity and makes that the studied aspects of reality become more clear and multilateral.

The work of an educator, having in mind its research nature but also the research methodology applied, can be compared to the rules of educational hermeneutics. It affects, in fact, an invisible in practice sphere of the student's and educator's spirituality, its context of axiological motives, which are the support towards thought choices and actions of educational subjects. School reality cannot be interpreted in relation to previously established fictional models and pedagogical patterns. Hermeneutical approach means analyzing the educational situations from the perspective of personal experience, feelings, personality profiles, behaviors and values represented by the educators. According to the assumptions of pedagogical hermeneutics being a teacher is not an output data, neither it is also the norm obtained from the so-called empirical study. It only reveals or happens in a child-adult relationship (me-you relationship) (Sawicki, M., 1996, p. 11). The assessment of educational situations made by the educators is often based in educational practice on the use of such research tools as the tests, questionnaires, interviews, observation sheets, etc. The results cannot be regarded as an entire knowledge of the educator on the studied case but they need to be supplemented by pedagogical hermeneutics.

Understanding educational reality through the prism of pedagogical hermeneutics praises the importance of an educational reflection. It is very important here to stress the meaning of self-awareness of the educators, their life and professional maturity which set the area of their professional knowledge, the level and depth of professional ethics, intuition and educational „spirituality.“ The point is that an educator should take into account all the symptoms of student's behaviour, his motivation and emotionality, which can fully explain his failures and identify ways of therapy and the types of educational and upbringing actions. Empathy with students' emotional states,

becomes a platform of expanding self-competence. It allows to build own, unique theories and strategies for educational activities which are characterized by an individualism and a personal approach.

Educational meaning of such activities is to create by the educator knowledge, which is characterized to some extent by originality and subjectivity. Being the creator of own pedagogical knowledge requires from the educator absolute responsibility for the shape and image of own educating and upbringing strategies as well as creating own path of a personal and professional development. However, there might appear questions whether teachers, including school counselors are aware of the need for immediate changes involving even personal attitudes? Whether they are aware of their social role in the creation of a new type of personality? Whether they identify themselves with the researcher constantly looking for answers to their questions? Whether they perceive themselves as broad-minded people or they simply bring their professional roles towards a narrow range of specialties, showing the directive and authoritarian behaviors towards students?

It seems that teachers, including educators are fully aware of the surrounding changes. The degree of such consciousness determines the need for professional development, creating a new style of work characterized by flexibility, autonomy and innovation. Meanwhile, the social evaluation of teachers and educators often carries a negative tinge, which is due to the fact that it takes place in an isolation from the real or individual causes or the source of educational attitudes. These include difficult working conditions of the educators and increasing behavioral problems. The latter result from the spread of axiological relativism, which becomes so difficult to convince students about, with reference to the limits of tolerance. This state of reality is emphasized by the lack of psychological and social support of the teachers. The source for such attitudes are also organizational in nature factors, an increased bureaucracy of school life, lack of time to build a proper and deep relationship with the student. It is increased by the time pressure connected with the implementation of the program content and standardization referred to knowledge, skills and competencies required from the students.

A modern educator should implement into his work a few strategic ideas of education. First of all, it should mean the realization of self-development idea and ability to manage over yourself. Its implementation should be expressed in lifelong learning and the ability to prepare young people to adopt such an attitude. Another idea should be the research work but also independent and individual creation of pedagogical knowledge. It only becomes real in the case of full awareness of the profession and adopting creativity towards social issues, including those referred to education. The third idea is the teacher's

attitude towards the problems of the future. Preferred by the teachers educational values cannot not only refer to the actual cultural order. The flow of time, volatility of the world, and thus the change of axiological order require a creation of new values in education and creative training.

Talking about creativity in axiological sphere comes from a new approach towards historical and existential nature of work. It results from intense social and economic changes, where money becomes the value, widespread merkantilization and consumerism in all spheres of human life. That leads to a depreciation of the value of work which has a serious personal and social dimension. In the case of educational values, their classification, educational practice suggests significant differences and concerns of the teachers themselves. They are characterized among others by uncertainty, ambivalence, inaccuracy, instability, anxiety, which can be fraught with consequences within practice-oriented education, because the consequences of practicing this discipline are directly related to children and adolescents (Palka, S., 1989, p.68). Thus, the activity of school counselors require clarification of what creativity is and how to create situations for practical ratio on the basis of a relationship with the student, while maintaining a socially desirable its axiological dimension. Developing specific students' attitudes, including creative approaches based on cognitive values becomes a responsible educational process, based on the truth, novelty and creativity understood as a constructive transformation of reality and self-image.

Axiological dimension of creativity in educational work shows specific direction towards educational activities. Interwoven values and axiological relativism become a powerful challenge referred to modern education, including the implementation of an educational value which is a creative attitude of the educator and the student's creative attitudes shaped by him. In order to meet the demand it requires to determine the hierarchy and relationship between the values, submission to their selection and pedagogical practice. Clarification of the values allows during the educational and upbringing work to locate creativity among the key educational values, which may result in a positive self-esteem, a strong need for self-realization and responsibility for own actions.

The question arises whether creativity as the value and the model of educator's work is a consequence of professional experience, personal characteristics or is due to creative education of teachers? The question seems to be difficult. It can be taken for granted that modern approach to education enforces changes in the system of teacher training. An increased complexity of an educator's work, building interactions with others requires creative activity. The model of contemporary academic training provided for educators should therefore, take

into account not only the substantive issues regarding pedagogical and psychological knowledge. It requires to shape in the mind of a modern educator the need for continuous, long term studying process. The development of his creative abilities becomes the basis for his own professional development, which cannot be determined by the mechanisms of the school administration, but results from personal motivation. Moreover, due to school counselor responsibilities, the fact to support the student providing various forms of psychological and pedagogical help, the diagnosis of individual needs and analyzing the causes of school failures and support provided for gifted students, imposes a duty on the educator to know and respect the rules of psychodidactics in educational practice, including those referred to psychodidactics of creativity. The knowledge about these issues has certainly got defined implications for educational practice, recognizing in it and creating conditions favourable for the development of creativity.

The research conducted in 2012 on the attitudes found among lower secondary school teachers and school counselors towards creativity, diagnosis of creative attitudes of students, including support for the development of these attitudes, knowledge of the rules referred to psychodidactics of creativity and atmosphere supporting creativity at schools, revealed that the competences of teachers and educators in this area of pedagogical work leave much to be desired. The analysis of the answers given by 160 teachers and educators examined with the use of a diagnostic survey allowed us to draw the following conclusions. The most important in the development of creative attitudes of students, the respondents agreed on the student's stimulation towards self-activity, a creative attitude of the teacher and the knowledge of natural student's talents and the ways of their emphasizing. Stimulating the student towards his own activity takes place with the use of educational and upbringing activating methods, students' emotional stimulation, providing atmosphere towards creative work. The examined teachers did not express a clear opinion on their own creativity. Only 9.3% of the teachers claimed that they expressed own creativity at work. That may indicate a lowered self-esteem or avoiding to respond the questions referred to their own creativity. In addition, the examined teachers had difficulties in determining changes found in student's behaviour in cognitive, emotional and motivational and behavioral spheres, which may denote a lack of diagnostic competence in recognizing and supporting creative attitudes of the students. More than 39% of the examined teachers found a school as an educational and upbringing institution supporting to shape creative attitudes. However, a similar percentage of respondents disagreed on the above conclusion. That means that the evaluation of a school in such terms is not homogeneous. The factors in favour of the formation of creative students' attitudes the responded teachers appointed to: stimulating the development of interests and abilities, their attitude and approach towards creativity.

They also expressed their opinion on creativity as educational value. Applying the principles of creativity as the basis for success in the field of education (expressed by more than 80% of the respondents) on one hand proves about the knowledge of psycho-didactics, including those of psycho-didactics of creativity as well as the need to apply these principles. On the other hand, it does not confirm real and substantive sphere of knowledge about the rules. Nearly 89.3% of the respondents shared their opinion of the need to respect the principles of individual education which prove that uniqueness and individuality of a student, apart from creativity determine their unique educational value. However, it can be admitted that such opinion is not always relevant to applying these principles in educational practice. The respondents agreed that the identification, which also means the assessment of creative attitudes of the students require from a teachers special skills and knowledge of the problem, which again confirms the need to consider, while creating a teacher training syllabus and include content referred to pedagogy of creativity. However, not all academic centres for training teachers seem to perceive such a need.

Generally, the responded teachers did not demonstrate their knowledge which might prove their wide competences towards the assessment of student's achievements and to foster his creativity. The analysis of data collected during the study allowed to formulate the following conclusions: the lack of knowledge on the stimulation of a student's creative activity leads to applying in school measures imitative actions which prevent or even restrain from development of creative attitudes and students' abilities. The lack of knowledge among teachers towards support during the development of creative approaches and creating conditions for creative activity is synonymous with keeping pedagogical routine, unfamiliarity with the student's needs and therefore not complete consciousness of own goals within pedagogical action. Creating educational situations by teachers, which allow to test the student himself in relationship with others, does not denote a complete social and emotional stimulation. Pedagogical and psychological knowledge examined among the responded teachers concerning social and emotional support in the development of creative student's attitudes seem to be incomplete, which defines new areas of knowledge for theory and educational practice and creates the need for new approaches to educating and upbringing referring to emotional development of a student. The competence of the teachers in relation to recognition and support of creative student's attitudes are conditioned by their theoretical knowledge in psychological and pedagogical diagnosis, associated with learning about the student, defining his ability profiles and integrating of educational and upbringing activities, allowing for careful design of the content and the methods of education according to individual needs, abilities and interests of the students. A background for creativity according to the teachers is created, first of all by economical factors (properly prepared and equipped school) and the human factor (personality traits of a teacher, his

motivation to undertake creative efforts, support and strengthen the development of an individual student). In addition, the responded teachers were aware of a social impact of creativity in educational activities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be noted that the implementation of the educational value reflected through creativity and creative attitudes cannot be done through the angle of fictional pedagogical actions marked with instrumentalism and the culture of illusion, but it requires re-evaluation and treating work, as a permanent element of life attitudes. In order to implement the ideals of Polish education, including the one to shape attitudes and encourage student's creativity in his development, educators should be provided with proper conditions for effective, creative pedagogical work, which give sense of professional security, enable professional development, unforced by any administrative procedures for career advancement, and supported by a current system of evaluating and verifying teachers' achievements.

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