REFLECTION OF SOCIOLOGICAL CONCEPTS IN TEACHING PRACTICE

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Each new era – political administration, economic trend, global crisis – brings new suggestions for changes in education processes. To understand how education systems work – or don't work – social scientists develop theories providing logical explanations to better understand educational systems. These theories inform research on education and provide valuable insights into classroom interactions and methods of teaching students. Some theories have limited value, but others stand the test of time and have relevance beyond the immediate circumstances that generated them.

The aim of this study was to find the basic sociological concepts and their reflection in their teaching practice.

Materials and methods.

On the basis of the literature can be identified ten major sociological concepts applicable in the learning process: symbolic interaction theory, labeling theory, rational choice theory, the credential society, functional theory, socialization, conflict theory, reproduction and resistance theories, failing at fairness, symbolic interaction theory.

"Symbols," defined as the concepts or ideas that we use to frame our interactions from words to gestures, affect children's sense of self and shape social hierarchies, including their relationships with teachers. Children are active in creating distinctions between one another and are therefore agents in creating the social reality in which they live. Teachers create these distinctions in various ways. For example, no matter what teachers call their reading groups, students quickly learn whether they are "good" or "bad" readers. Children's relationship to the classroom and learning is also shaped by their relationships to peers. Popularity, an especially powerful issue in middle-school years, is mostly a function of being visible and having everyone know who you are. The "popular" student, regardless of what year in school, has a more powerful position in teacher/student interactions.

Considerable inequality occurs in the symbols students bring with them to school. Children from families who cannot afford to purchase the desired clothing or other status symbols or even essentials for school, such as paper, are likely to be treated differently [5]. In essence, these children become the "losers." Those who "win" and have access to symbolic resources, including language patterns and social experiences, are highly visible and given special privileges in the classroom or school. These students, who exude privilege in the symbols they bring with them, are more likely to develop leadership skills and generally feel good about them-

selves, enjoy being in the classroom, and be treated quite differently by teachers [4].

Symbolic interaction theory has its roots in the works of G. H. Mead and C. H. Cooley on the development of the self through social interaction, whether in school or in other areas of life. "Individuals sharing a culture are likely to interpret and define many social situations in similar ways because of their common socialization, experiences, and expectations" [2]. Students look to others, particularly their teachers, to understand their "place" in this culture. Common norms evolve to guide behavior. Students learn through interaction how they are different from others based on individual experiences, social class, and status.

Erving Goffman proposed the process of "labeling theory". If somebody is told often enough that he is stupid and can't do the work, Goffman argues that the label becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy for him and the student comes to incorporate the label into his sense of "self." Using labeling theory we can better understand how teacher expectations of students' race, class, ethnic background, gender, religion, or other characteristics affect student's self-perceptions and achievement levels.

Functional theory explains how education systems work by focusing on what purpose education serves in societies [1]. This theory starts with the assumptions that interdependent parts of an education system work together to make a functioning whole and that there is a relationship between schools and other institutions in society. Each part of society – education, family, political and economic systems, health, religion – is interdependent and works together to create a functioning society. Another key component of functional theory is the focus on questions concerning the structure and functioning of organizations.

Socialization: Teaching Children to be Productive Members of Society. Societies use education to pass on essential information of a culture – values, skills, and knowledge necessary for survival. This process occurs in formal classrooms as well as in informal settings. In industrialized and developing countries, elders and family members cannot teach all the skills necessary for survival.

Institutions of higher education are expected to generate new knowledge, technology, and ideas, and to produce students with up-to-date skills and information required to lead industry and other key institutions in society. In our age of computers and other electronic technology, critical thinking and analytical skills are essential as workers face issues that require problem solving rather than rote memorization. Thus, the curriculum must change to meet the needs of the social circumstances. Familiarity with technological equipment – computers, internet resources, electronic library searches, and so forth – become critical survival skills for individuals and society. Differences in training and knowledge supports a social hierarchy

by reducing chances for social mobility, yet may also function to fill jobs that require little advanced training and are otherwise unappealing, such as collecting trash.

The following section discusses the conflict perspective, which proposes a view of why some students "make it" and others don't [6]. There are several branches of conflict theory, all of which assume a tension in society and its parts created by the competing interests of individuals and groups. Educational systems play an important role is sustaining the hierarchy of inequality. In contrast to functional theory, conflicts occur even when teachers, students, parents, and administrators follow the rules and society is stable. Each group may obey the rules even though they do not always agree because they may not see alternatives or follow the rules for fear of consequences. However, conflict theory includes different explanations of the role of teachers and the process of teaching in education systems and conflict theorists disagree on whether participants in the education system always conform or have no choices. The roots of conflict thought are outlined below, and contemporary conflict theory, originating in the 1960s, is discussed. Recent theories integrate ethnicity, race and gender issues and add politics and culture to the traditional Marxist class and economic issues. In addition, issues of "reproduction and resistance" are recent threads in the conflict tradition.

Feminist theorists have echoed the need to "hear" other voices in the education system, in particular women's voices, and to pay more attention to the situation of women [3]. Much of the history of social science theory is a history interpreted by men, generally white men in the European tradition. Feminists see the world from a different perspective, one that represents a sometimes forgotten element in past theoretical interpretations of education systems as well as the curricula that are presented, one in which women were essentially denied a place for most of the history of the Ukraine.

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