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Basic motions of human life and innate education

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Abstract

In connection with the concept of the basic motions of human life according to Jan Patočka (a motion of acceptance, a motion of self-prolongation and a motion of self-understanding), solutions of the innate education, which is multiperspective, related to the innate human forces, and which overcomes common institutional education focused on successful life in technocratic and bureaucratic relations of Euro-American civilization, will be expressed. This concept of the innate education also contains a hope for future. Moreover, Rorty's approach is mentioned. This approach emphasizes an importance of solidarity, interpersonal reciprocity and tolerance, face-to-face to this rugged and chaotic world. The result of the article is a depiction of information and communication technologies and their role in the innate education.

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1. Introduction

Information affluence of the current era, the accelerating growth of scientific knowledge, the ever more substantial use of information and communication technologies (ICT) leading to sharing information and knowledge among ever higher number of people secure neither understanding the context of reality nor understanding of oneself and one's position in the world. Education that is based on data develops skills and knowledge necessary for living in technical and bureaucratic civilization is not the innate and whole education emerging from basic characteristics of humanity and humankind – i.e. from the so-called anthropines. Hans-Georg Gadamer (1999) says that:

according to the classical Aristotelian definition of human essence the human being is a living creature that possesses LOGOS. In Western tradition this definition has been understood as meaning that human being is an animal rationale, a rational living creature. The Greek word LOGOS was translated as reason or thought. In fact, this word also and mainly means the human ability to talk - speech. ... Only human being possesses LOGOS, the ability to communicate what is useful and harmful and what is good and bad. ... Human being is the only being that possesses LOGOS and can speak, i.e.: by means of speaking, human being can non-present make evident so that somebody can see it in front of them. (p.23)

In relation to Gadamer's thoughts, development of thought and speech, grasping not only parts but the whole of the world and life, belong to the innate education.

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2. Basic motions of human life

The foundations of innate education can be derived from basic characteristics of human life. According to the significant Czech phenomenologist Jan Patočka, important is the interpretation of three basic motions of human life, those which correspond to the basic opportunities of human life. Patočka (1970) in his “Meditation of the author after thirty-three years” deals with a motion of acceptance, a motion of self-prolongation and a motion of self-understanding. By means of the first motion we relate to the given fact of what is and how it is, what was and what is in the world without us, already “finished”. The content of this motion is finding and in relation to the found another further looking, in which we accept the world how it is and the world somehow accepts us how we are. The motion of acceptance, the motion of embedding is the initial motion of innate education.

In the second motion we are confronted with things and people in order to reproduce ourselves. It is the motion of self-prolongation into the world, whose his basic organized modes are work and fight. It is a way how we secure conditions of our life, it is a way most connected with achieving qualifications and their application. This motion has its limits, we do it in various roles and in relation to other people in their roles. It is a motion in which a human being is viewed and views others in their usefulness, utility and susceptibility. It is a motion in which changing everything into objects threatens to develop into alienation.

The third motion, the one of self-understanding or truth, relates to that what in the previous two motions enables relationships to things and people. The turn to the truth belongs to the essence of innate education and enables the human being to understand oneself not in egocentrism (as a closed soul) but in openness to the world and others. The last motion is very difficult. This means a fair assessment of the state of the world and the marks we leave behind. Information and other affluence of the Euro-American civilization is accompanied by environmental losses, in macro-social sphere by the existence of wasteful societies beside social penury, in micro-social sphere by similar economic, social and spiritual discrepancies. The result of this assessment is to accept “a duty to care and guard”, form ideas of global solidarity and cooperation, to overcome only immanent procurement and to accept transcendental spiritual values. Patočka's pedagogy, which is based mainly on these basic motions of human life, depends mainly on revealing and using opportunities how to develop one's innate strength in the network of interrelationships of this world rather than on revealing these opportunities as means to something, in whose triviality the innate education would be effectively marred.

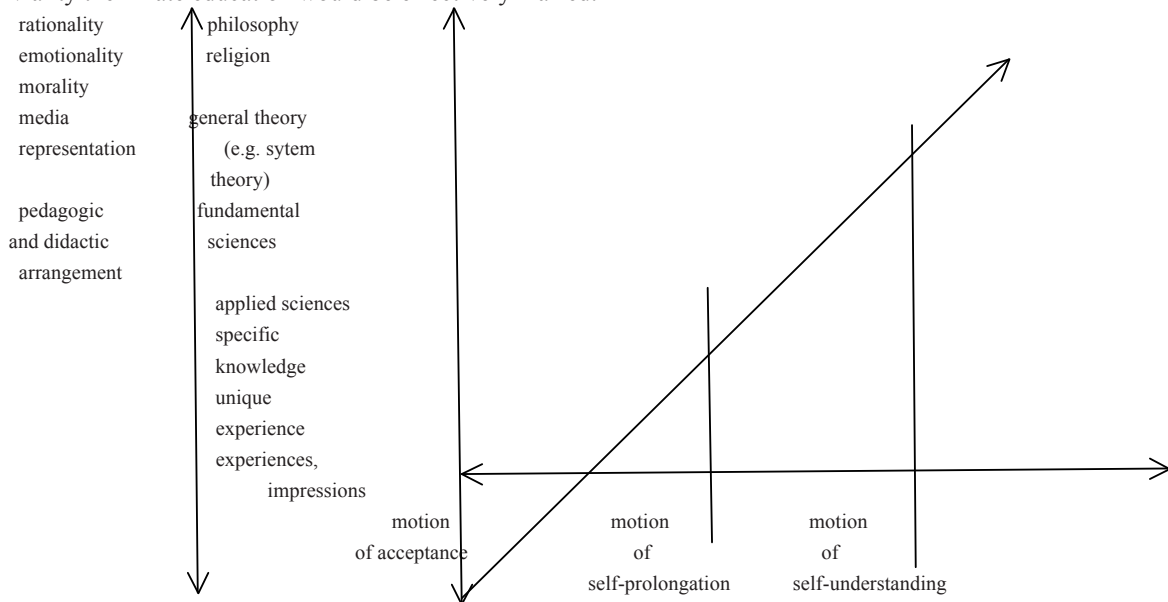


Figure 1. Basis of innate (essential education)

Parallels of such relationship to the world, life, values can be found in foundations of philosophical and pedagogical systems in various parts of the world, which tend to reflection and self-reflection of pedagogical efforts. Our hope for the future is grasped, for instance, by Rorty (Peregrin, 1994), who relies on solidarity. He talks about human reciprocity, freedom, politeness and tolerance face to face to to this rugged and chaotic world. Transversal reason is able to formulate a common vision. However, there is a more difficult problem, namely, how to make this vision a part of common knowledge, how to get people interested in it and how to persuade people around that by sharing the idea (the most frequently that of environmental society and innate education) they can experience feelings of longer-lasting satisfaction, joy and happiness.

Cyberspace creates a lot of opportunities how to present, comment, illustrate, discuss, share etc. the above mentioned ideas by means of social networks or in a structured form of educational contents, study materials and tasks and their assessment in e-learning courses.

3. ICT in innate education

The way to sharing is linked to continuous developing dialogues and to the fact that passive consumers of information become active participants who make their versions of understanding available to further development and to reflection that makes it possible to create knowledge and to make links in cognitive and well as experiential and applied spheres. Adoption is then understood as an active performance (selective, interpreting, contextually conditioned) and not as mere acceptance of clear contents. Pedagogical disposition is developed by willingness, ability and possibility to articulate and accept different ways of articulation, other modalities of relations to the given topic. We, teachers, should of course understand our field very well but we also ought to be aware of the fact that our neither our students nor we ourselves study and are interested only our field of study. We live permanently in plurality of our mind's efforts, which poses great requirements on everybody. It is very important to cultivate one's own integrity and identity, which is one of the most significant objectives of innate education. The role of communication is irreplaceable in this.

We understand here communication as an interpersonal process of picking up the message of other eras and cultures, as a process of ICT networking as well as a process of inner dialogue, in which we may become disconcerted, “stop” for a while and view the same thing from another standpoint. To transcend the original (e.g. banal) understanding, to take into account both unique and general, simple things and complex wholes, to transcend mere utility, these are necessary steps of the motion of self-understanding. Transcending means breaking the achieved horizons, it means connecting oneself with the global as well as local perspective, it is based on looking into otherness, it is conditioned by communication in real as well as virtual environment.

4. Innate education from students' point of view

In the academic years of 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 we addressed the issues of innate education in optional seminar course of hermeneutical ethics in relation to the topic of understanding. Eighty seven students participated at these one-semester seminar courses. Discussions, presentations and collected essays proved that students clearly realize that education leading only to qualifications is not innate education because human life cannot be reduced to one's profession. Most students recognize the significance and role of ICT in education but at the same time they are aware of its dangers. The most significant risks are from their point of view the following ones: depersonalization, alienation in respect to other people and possible thriving of unreserved individualism and extreme egocentrism, which impede interaction and thus disrupts the use of potential hidden in the three basic motions of human life – the motion of acceptance, of self-prolongation and of self-understanding.

These opinions resonate with analyses of essays that had been written in previous academic years by students attending subjects of professional ethics in relation to the topic of ethical aspects of ever more ICT-assisted education.

Let's quote some of the students' opinions:

“We are stressed and neurotised by the amount of information and an excess number of stimuli” (a 21-year old female student).

“I am annoyed by information arrogance” (a 22-year old female student).

“I am worried about uncritical acceptance of e-learning. Although it is undoubtedly possible to use this technology in education, it is necessary to analyse it. Students are given a construction of communication about the world and topic as it is seen by the author, teacher” (a 23-year old female student).

“Since the 19th century the human being has been moved in “speedy” virtual sphere of the world, which unstopably expands and threatens to capture precious intimate space. This state of “omnipresence” (distances are being shortened), these unprecedented technological opportunities do not lead to the expected expansion of communication potential but to its closing. Dialogues are led in virtual (media) environment, where the participant is passive and s/he is, without noticing it, deprived of the authentic way of living” (a 22-year old male student).

The ambiguous character of using ICT, which is reflected also by students, should be thoroughly and consistently reflected in education which strives to be innate.

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