
Educational Sciences and Their Concepts

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Educational sciences have a considerable impact on national school policies as well as on the role that expert activities play in the development of present-day educational systems. Educational sciences engender new concepts that serve as tools and modify frameworks for modelling educational systems and their subsystems within any organised society in the world. These concepts are also defining the most general framework for public debates concerning the development of educational systems. In a more distant past, educators in Slovenia and Poland had been strongly influenced by German or Central European traditions in pedagogy, whereas in the second half of the twentieth century, they were to an extent constrained by some limitations of so-called Marxist pedagogy. However, even throughout those times, educational theories and interesting reflections could have been found, although they sometimes needed to be discerned from their ideological connotations and articulations. Regardless, in most of the former socialist countries, there was a modernist tradition of educational thought, which should not be simply forgotten, especially since it had also founded a relatively successful teaching practice under the undemocratic systems.

In the last two decades educational sciences in both countries (Slovenia and Poland) went through a process of internationalization and thorough rethinking of their role in the context of social changes; nevertheless they are wide open to dialogue and common exploration of new visions of education in the globalized world. However, it is noticeable that research communication and other forms of exchanges between scholars in the cultural spaces of Western Europe are especially intense. The researchers from the University of Łódź and Educational Research Institute of Ljubljana have found common ground, both in the afore mentioned traditions and in the contemporary currents in education-

al research. Authors of this scientific monograph, both Slovenian and Polish, have studied not only the history of educational concepts, but also the conceptual framework within which both countries are making efforts to comply with the common educational standards, set by the European Union.

The content of this issue of *Šolsko polje* consists of two parts. In part one, critical thinking is explored in its different possible perspectives. At the beginning, there is a presentation of a history of pedagogical science from the perspective of the various scientific concepts that were valid in Slovenian and the Polish region of the Habsburg monarchy in the 18th century. This historical introduction, discussing theoretical concepts in educational sciences, is complemented by an in-depth debate on the state of methodological issues in these fields. The critical paradigm as a condition for open scientific dialogue on contentious issues of upbringing and education is brought up by another contribution, followed by a critical insight into the relationship between society and education in the scope of reproduction of a social system as a system of domination. In particular, it is worth reading the contribution on epistemological questions of educational sciences from the perspective of feminist theory.

The second part of scientific monographs entitled “Different Conceptual Frameworks” proceeds with a re-thinking of specific methodological problems of historical and theoretical research of educational associations. The concept of inclusion in education, with a view to socio-cultural theory of Vygotski, brings some of the new insights of psychology in the upbringing of children.

This is followed by a relativisation of the concept of the international comparative research of the educational achievements in the study of TIMSS. An empirical exploration of upbringing and educating is on the move both quantitatively and qualitatively, although this raises new questions, especially when epistemological problems arise exponentially in the context of formulating the “transformative pedagogy.” Finally, the monograph is completed by four contributions, which deal with urban pedagogy, historical changes and reforms of education, Luhmann’s theory of education and religious education.

Despite the diversity of the contributions, there exists the common thought, that only with a thorough theoretical debate and international cooperation, can we follow the great changes that take place in a modern European society and education.