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## EDUCATION AND CHALLENGES OF POST-MODERNITY IN THE PROCESS SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

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Education has always been and still is a task of generally social nature since it turns into a source of human capital. Education, in the time of post-modernity, must be based on new challenges connected with civilization-, technology- and information-related transformations. The present paper discusses the latest trends in education to suit the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to meet challenges through which we will develop a creative, transcending and citizen-like human being.

*Key words:* education, challenges, educational change, post-modernity and modernity.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has posed a number of questions and existential doubts in front of contemporary man. We often ask questions about the relationship between man and the world, and the social conditions which have had an impact – on the one hand – on the socio-political and economic changes, but – on the other – have led to a slow disintegration of society, an increase in the unhealthy rivalry and egoism, terror, as well as depriving man of universal values in his conduct and behavior. A worsening state of human beings' sense of well-being has also been observed, which is accompanied by symptoms of growing emotional, moral and spiritual crises.

One of the major characteristics of contemporary world has been accelerated changeability in different domains of life. This world is one where dramatic changes in man's lifestyle, needs, values and aspirations have occurred, as well as one that has seen a rapid growth and development of accomplishments in the field of technology, medicine or economy.

However, changes in the socio-political, economic or cultural systems, and the incredible development of technology and science cause the human being to face various complicated situations, force people to alter their attitudes towards one another, towards the world and different origins of cultures, faiths, or views on citizen's roles. The dynamics of transformations which have been going on in all of the domains of life seems to surpass man's adjustment potential. The human being is made to understand complex situations that develop in an unpredictable manner

and is subjected to flows of masses of incomplete and disarranged information that leaves a lot of room for interpreting and partial analyses.

In old days, the world seemed relatively stable, based on accepted and proved models, traditions and customs. Nowadays, we are living in a galloping history of rapid changes to such an extent that almost each generation live in a slightly different socio-cultural, technological and civilization-shaping realities. A change simply means movement that is unavoidable, and human being must accept it and learn to live in a constantly changing world. The basic indicator, thus, is the skill of adapting to changes, adjustment to new situations, approval of insecurity and complexity of phenomena which have come to characterize our world and affect individuals.

A lot is said about post-modernity today, about something that has been “overcome” in the course of history. Post-modernity denotes a change in society in which we live, as an end to certain modernity, and the era of entering the period of popular communication of the mass media. Modernity is an epoch in which the very being modern itself has become a deciding value. Modernity has altered culture, social attitudes, views, it has made it possible to enter new civilization-related changes. Post-modernity – on the other hand – attempts to make us aware of the significance of the decline of modernity and its idea, this kind of experience that oscillates within the post-modern world and that recognizes it as a possibility of something new, that allows developing a lifestyle of a better understood and more perfect human being [13, s. 7].

Education can play an unprecedented role here. Its role in changing the world is perceived by outstanding philosophers and futurologists like, for instance, Tofler – who claims that education should result from a picture of the future and, while being based on the presence – shape the picture of the world, develop the necessity of comprehending the changeability of the world [2000; 402-403]. In turn, H. Kwiatkowska thinks that “one ought to deal with the contemporary changeability of the world in a different way, not only retrace it in order to understand its genesis and logic, but rather by trying to comprehend it as fast as possible, since thinking in terms of future has become the fundamental condition of development [9, s. 32].

P. Kennedy listed three key elements in the attempts at preparing world’s community to meet the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They are the following: the role of education, position of women and the need for political leadership. He comes to the conclusion that “education – in a broader sense – means more than technological restructuring of workforce or emergence of the class of professionals” [6, s. 395].

The changing world enforces perception of the role of education as an indispensable factor that enables the individual to comprehend the processes of globalization and civilization-oriented transformations which are occurring in front of our eyes. Education, in today’s world, ought to become the most popular

indicator of human capital on which economic, political and developmental success depends to a considerable degree. The Scandinavian states, like Finland, are a perfect example to illustrate that motion. Education can not remain indifferent to the processes going on around, or stick to schematic and encyclopedic traditionalism, but it must be based on tasks and perspectives of future which would liberate possibilities and capabilities for transcendence and adaptation.

A big challenge to the contemporary education in the post-communist countries is to prepare their citizens for the coming changes in their own countries and in the world. This requires not only gaining knowledge, but also skills which are indispensable to adapt to the different conditions, undertaking new tasks, as well as implementing accepted alterations, which demand engagement of a great deal of intellectual, organizational and practical knowledge. It is assumed that a change follows when individuals who implement it carry out transformations in attitudes towards old values and become involved in new ones. It is not enough to get equipped in knowledge of the proposed change in order to achieve a level of effectiveness of the given change [11, s. 132]. Each alteration requires suitable time to obtain new information and acquire skills, as well as proper organizational conditions and social support.

The changing world marks out changes in the preparation of the individual to match the changes occurring in culture, economy, civilization and technology. That entails the necessity of transformation of the educational system.

The Report issued by the participants in the sessions of the Round Table organized by the industrialized states of Europe in 1995 set tasks for education: "The basic task for education is to aid each individual in development of their potential and in becoming a comprehensive human being, not a tool for economy. Gaining skills and competences must be accompanied by formation of the character, cultural openness and awakening of social responsibility, as well as understanding of changes and adjustment to new situations and conditions" [7, s. 26–27].

However, school is still founded on traditional systems that are confined to realization of centrally elaborated programs which often contain obsolete contents, rely on rote learning of many subjects selected by central authorities. Such a school can not prepare contemporary man to live in a world of transformations, does not induce innovative thinking, does not promote individual's effective activity, does not develop skills of adaptation.

J. Koziellecki points to a certain competence of man that should be valued greatly when he says, "man possesses outstanding skills of rational learning, creative thinking and a skill of absorption of a system of values and is capable of adjusting to changes in the world. People who do not know how to use the latter are often fools or scoundrels. It is only the process of educating and wise education which can bring man closer to the garden of wisdom" [8]. Consequently,

contemporary education ought to rest on the following three strategic slogans: “To understand the world”, “To direct oneself”, “To be able to transcend and stay creative”, as well as to carry out tasks connected with society who learn throughout their whole lives, that is education in the European dimension. It means it does not only explore skills of coexistence, but also is consistent in realization of principles of democracy and tolerance. On the one hand, it is to express particularity and identity of education in each national system, on the other one, however, it should be universal to such an extent as to participate in preparation of children and youth for solving problems of Europe and co-create harmonious global community [5, s. 65]. Hence, the growing role of modern and effective education that is wisely composed into the strategy of development of both one’s own country and Europe as a whole.

Education, through contemporary dialogue, is supposed to shape people’s realistic and creative attitude towards life and work, and also that of contemporary world and human being towards information society and peace as a superior value [1, s. 223]. Education is closely connected with the quality of man and challenges of globalization, European integration and socio-political system transformation; it is a process of formation of awareness of citizen’s self-awareness, citizen’s readiness for forming pro-society behavior and entering new, unfamiliar areas of the changing reality. “Education is to become a fundamental right of man and a universal value and economic, cultural and political investment in the future of Europe and the world” [1, s. 223]. Therefore the challenge it poses is seen in a transition to innovative and anticipative thinking, and also in preparation of the individual for changes in all spheres of life and activity, as well as for comprehending the world and other people in order that they should learn more about themselves and be able to better direct themselves. Education is expected to help people find answers to basic questions such as: “Who am I?”, “What can I be?”, “What do I want to achieve in my life?”, “Where will I intend to go?”. “What action should be taken to build a better future?”.

Educating in post-modernity should be based on universal values and oppose the anti-value or negative occurrences and threats posed to human life. Each society subjected to changes experiences the influence of a variety of patterns and values of both positive and negative nature, with the provision that part of them are outgoing, while others are post-modern. The post-modern values are those with reference to the capitalist state: utility, effectiveness in terms of economy, social life, as well as personal responsibility for one’s own fate and that of whole society.

Z. Bauman includes among the post-modern values also pluralism of values, tolerance, justice towards variety, multi-cultural character of nations. It is on those values that education of post-modernity should rely. Educational systems are burdened with excess of knowledge, which – as a matter of fact – becomes obsolete in a rapid way (it is said that knowledge doubles every six years and lags

behind new trends, problems or challenges appearing in the world). In this light, the task set for pedagogy is to:

- learn in order to know,
- learn for the future and through the future,
- learn life-long,
- learn in order to live,
- live in order to learn [3; 1].

Modern understanding and realization of education ought to concentrate on development of different skills and competences within the scope of various functions, and also stress self-teaching, regional, ecological and civil education. One must have the consciousness that beside the theoretical knowledge that is being passed, it is also necessary to develop learning through experiencing and self-reliant solving social problems. It is vital to skillfully join the two types, too. “Traditional cognitive-communicative teaching can and has to be enriched with models of self-reliant, critical study, interactive learning based on dialogue, exchange of thoughts and feelings, models of developing personality and those based on exercising practical skills [10, s. 42]. We mean here the process of learning and developing of individual’s personality, not thoughtless absorption of knowledge based on a particular course-book.

Education of post-modernity must be designed in such a way as to aim at achieving something totally opposite in its intention, so as to encourage the individual to ask questions, offer criticism and question reasons of the dialogue or debate. Its chief concern must consist in liberating learners from the chains of ignorance and apathy, their emancipation, granting them power which would allow them to take upon themselves – to a due extent – the responsibility to influence their own lives and society [5, s. 138]. Education should be perceived as a process to aid development of the individual, not as a means of transmission of contents. “Those who learn must be supported in development of their own knowledge, understanding, and – first of all – values; they must not merely be told to swallow large bites of other people’s ideas, particularly the ones advocated by those whose aim is to control their thinking” [5, s. 141].

A shift is being proposed from education that does not take full care of needs and capabilities of the learner towards education that will look after individual development of every pupil, their abilities to develop skills of directing own development and choosing own course of living, which will, at the same time, highlight the importance of processes of socialization, engagement in the system of values, manifestation of creative and civil attitudes.

One of the most important issues, then, is citizen-oriented education which is expected to prepare the individual to learn about and to understand the world and himself, as well as to make him ready to take part in the process of democratization of different spheres of life, create a new social and economic order, and also to be

open to the values of culture. It is the civil education that constitutes the foundation of democratization of life of “citizen-oriented society” that is characterized by an ability to self-organize, develop self-government, abide by a legal order – education, which is based on an axiological and practical aspect.

Citizen-oriented education is becoming an indispensable element in the post-modernity and a considerable driving force, and therefore should be firmly fixed in the process of changes in the post-communist states. As one can quote Cz. Banach, it is necessary to “search for common targets and learn from contemporaneity and future more than from the past, and also learn from others and for others to be able to reform the reality” [1, s. 401].

Moreover, contemporary education ought to concentrate also on shaping global awareness, which is based on local experience and processes of learning worked out by such communities as: ethnic groups, denominational communities, industrial and financial corporations, nations and regional communities of the world.

The modern school faces the necessity to satisfy new social and civilization-related functions. P. Dalin and V. Rust (1996) claim that education is a service devoted to:

- forming democratic values,
- understanding and respect for different cultures and denominations,
- survival, beauty, work,
- individual development.

Education, thus, is great hope of contemporaneity and future on condition that it follows civilization-oriented and technological changes, makes use of the latest information, concentrates on developing a multi-dimensional individual so that the latter could become a creative and competent (in his own activity) human being.

The problems and challenges of contemporary education, which have been presented in a brief way above, delineate a path of development of man’s personality and prepare for coming changes, as well as for living in a complicated world, for being able to accept and respect all-human values in order to liberate oneself and transcend one’s own weakness of will and conduct in interpersonal contacts. Human nature consists in “constant crossing the limits of animalism inherent in man and growing beyond it with his human nature and man’s role as a creator of values. Without this mission and without this effort of transcending oneself, human being sinks down without help into his own pure animalism, which makes for his death” [4, s. 22–23].

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## **ОСВІТА І СУПЕРЕЧНОСТІ ПОСТМОДЕРНІЗМУ В ПРОЦЕСІ СОЦІАЛЬНИХ ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЙ**

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Розглянуто соціальні функції освіти як чинника розвитку особистості. Зазначено, що освіта в контексті постмодернізму пов'язана з цивілізаційними, технологічними та інформаційними трансформаціями. Обґрунтовано сучасні напрями розвитку освіти відповідно до потреб XXI століття, вимог щодо формування творчої, духовно розвинутої та громадянсько зрілої особистості.

*Ключові слова:* освіта, суперечності, освітня зміна, пост-модернізм і модернізм.

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