PARADIGMS OF ACADEMIC DIDACTICS IN EDUCATION OF PEDAGOGUES AND TEACHERS

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Abstract: The contemporary theory and practice of teaching requires meta-analysis. This applies to the theory and practice of education at all levels, however, it is especially urgent for the training and preparation for the profession of teacher and pedagogue. The basic category of meta-analysis to be conducted may be made by the learning paradigm. The paradigm consists of basic definitions, rules, and models of problem solving accepted at the time by the community of scholars (among them, representatives of the science or discipline). Just like in other areas of research, it allows to see the non-linearity, the bias and allegations contained in cultural and social contexts. This allows the reconstruction of the assumptions and awareness of educators and academics in the field of ontological and epistemological perspectives. The creation and development of consciousness and self-awareness in this field is essential in academic education.

Key words: Academic didactics, Paradigms of academic didactics

The contemporary theory and practice of teaching requires meta-analysis. This applies to the theory and practice of education at all levels, however, it is especially urgent for the training and preparation for the professions of teacher and pedagogue. Such an object of analysis results from the primary role of the quality of education in this area in regards to the quality of entire education. It is also the area of my many years of observation, experience and research.

On the one hand the importance of academic preparation for the profession of a pedagogue and a teacher, on the other hand the changes observed in it, cause a concern for the direction they are heading in both individual and social dimension. More and more critical voices indicate that the changes determined by the government reform of education, as well as the Bologna Process and the Shanghai Index are just “a gigantic plan to submit the university to the competitive logic of neoliberal bureaucratic procedures. This process is also written in the terrible logic of the subordination of the university to meet to the needs of the labor market and the manufacturing sector, but also the introduction of the rules of competition seems to be a goal of itself.” (Kozłowski, 2012, p. 25). Undertaken actions serve that goals by moving away from the classic budgeting model towards the direction of grants for funding research and more flexible forms of employment, introducing of a variety of criteria for evaluating the results of research and teaching, strict and disciplined parceling out scientific work time due to the presentation of the results and the introduction of competition both between the different units of the same universities, as well as between different universities. (ibid., pp.26-27).

From the nineties of the twentieth century higher education, in Poland, like in other countries and other areas of our lives, has been commercialized. Also this area was affected by the belief in “the invisible hand of the market” or like someone called it “the invisible fist of the market”. „Academics decided to deal with a new environment and are part of the academic staff is actively involved in the process of commodification of knowledge” (Żuk, 2012a, p.10). This process is a result of the fact that „universities cease to be a breeding ground for new ideas and a place of intellectual ferment, and become more and more advertising agencies seeking new customer who can be sold a master's degree or can become owners of a bachelor degree at a reduced price” (ibid.). In the perspective of the perceived transformation the answer to the question “What kind of content is included in the knowledge constructed in macdonalized university?” becomes more and more important.

In formulating a response to the above question, Piotr Żuk (2012b) takes into account the fact that since the social changes took place in our country (since 1989) the ruling class continues to consistently preach about and implements the market superiority over other social models. It is emphasized that the the need to adapt to the needs of the citizens of a market economy is a must. This means that universities have to meet business sector, providing the labor force according to the needs of the changing market conjunctures.

What does this mean for academic knowledge? In this situation, knowledge cannot be in any case the way of transforming the social world. It is quite the opposite: it is to ensure a collision-free adaption to existing conditions. "Autonomy in thinking, social criticism, and nonconformity are no longer part of academic knowledge. The universities are expected to be effectively transferring the models of knowledge and visions of the social world of the ruling agendas. There are no questions about the rationality of rules of the game, about the possibility of arranging in a different way the collective lives of people nor the responsibility for one own choices. (...) In practice, this means the creation of highly specialized curriculum, as opposed to "general knowledge" to ensure "market success" and "career" (Żuk, 2012b, p. 32)
T. Szkudlarek (2012) leaves no doubt, the modern university is primarily focused on the needs of business and political institutions and abandons the questions arising from the need to know the world. Author characterizes modern form of ignorance and managing ignorance in academic education. He points out to two issues. The first concerns the restrictions on transmission of educational knowledge created in the process of research. This is due to the fact that knowledge is protected by a patent and is treated as a capital, which makes it unable to be freely distributed to all willing in order protect corporate interests, at least until it loses market value. In this way, mass education is based on academic "textbook" knowledge factually accurate and pedagogically applicable in training of appropriate skills, but lacking asset of modernity and market value. In educating professionals (i.e. psychotherapist) we can see forming system specific (and even accurately named) fields of ignorance. They can be filled, but by an extra paid paid trainings, internships, etc. In this regard, there is also a noticeable reduction in the level of general education at the university level, associated with the inability to study at an advanced level by the "mass" education customers.

The second issue is related to the expectations of the students joining the university. The point is that they are oriented mainly on the acquisition of skills which are as much practical as possible, ones that will be giving them the opportunity of employment in a very shallow labor market. They are not much interested in the systematic transfer of knowledge. Because they recognize pretty well the needs of employers, and if are interested in knowledge, it is only one which is operational and shows "how" to do certain things (pp. 225-228).

It should be emphasized that both the knowledge and skills are subjects of the work university, but they are subject to separate initializations. Knowledge associates university with business and political spheres, and it is not created from the need to know the world, but rather the need to maintain the university. However, the skills associate the university with the labour market that is with those who hope to find their place in it. The essence of the new shape of the university according to T. Szkudlarek is separating these two functions by subjecting them to a separate management logics - and a separate training procedures (p. 235).

By considering the above statements, the question arises: to what extent the changes happening in the universities and the university education describe the academic preparation of teachers and pedagogues? How far are they specific to that implemented in the academic didactics? Answering these questions requires - as I have indicated in the beginning - analysis and meta-analysis. In relation to the general didactics and specific didactics especially at the first level of education this has been made by Dorota Klus-Stańska, as well as other authors of the publication Paradigmy wspólczesnej dydaktyki (Paradigms of modern didactics) (2009). The holistic approach of teaching today is also presented by Dorota Klus-Stańska in Dydaktyka wobec chaosu pojęć i zdarzeń (Didactics in regards to chaos of concepts and events) (2010). The main category of these analysis and meta-analysis is a paradigm. Stańska stressed, the need (probably felt by many educators) for the reconstruction of the current didactics moving it from the methodological postulates towards the study of the goals and the results of today's educational process as a state of mind of its graduates. The author rightly emphasizes that educators have gone away from the broad understanding of the curriculum. In practice, the concern is: "Deepening theoretical ignorance of teachers and their mental enslavement, naive-receptive and non-critical level of numerous studies on teaching, cutting off from the achievements of other social sciences, and even from branches and sub disciplines of pedagogy" (Klus-Stańska, 2009a, p.13). Above all, it is necessary to demonstrate that "the idea of "effective didactics", still present in the commonly understood (and not only) social dream, may be subjected to critical analysis, through which learning processes will reveal their dependence on the game of social and political forces, the conflict of interests, bureaucratic and administrative influences "(ibid.). It is necessary in this situation to try to reconstruct the assumptions of teaching and self-awareness and awareness of pedagogues, as well as teachers, including (and perhaps especially) academic teachers.

In overcoming of the theoretical inertia and methodological didactic the term “paradigm” has been proposed. Indicating the usefulness of the application of this term, previously considered author considers two obstacles in its usage in the field of didactics. The first is the ambiguity of the term "paradigm", the second - the uncertainty, whether in relation to didactics one can claim the paradigmatic stage of development. By analyzing the meanings and contexts of the used term the author argues that "imprecision of the meaning of paradigm" is not a good enough argument to omit is while discussing the status and identity of didactics. On the contrary - its use could lead to diagnosis of both the development, as well as maps to identify the assumptions system (or to use the terminology of Kuhnowska maps of „disciplinary matrix” or specimens, the standard examples of problem-solving research) built within it.

Regarding the second issue, she notes that the concept of paradigms, the meaning of the emergence of the first consent among scholars to the start of the development phase of a given scientific discipline, as well as the specifics of the social sciences (reconstruction and interpretation, rather than discovering and clarifying), opens the possibility for the scholars of didactics to use this category and that this possibility exists regardless of whether, in the opinion of some people didactics is more of a practical field operations and among others it is a discipline of theoretical, or for another group it can be both. In all of the cases, reconstruction of its consciousness and key assumptions becomes essential, as well as areas distinguishing theory from practice are a condition of the development of didactics as a branch of pedagogy. In the summary of her analysis of the
problem, D. Klus-Stańska uses the category of paradigm to the area of didactics, she states: "If, therefore, didactics is (also) a science that examines what happens in the classroom, and how the student learns in an environment offered to him, who he or she becomes and what is his or her knowledge, and not just an attempt to realize the associated practice (as a kind of teaching prowess that is clearly distinguished here from - always sterile educationally and incapacitating teacher – application of instruction), it is the unveiling of a possible hermeneutic understanding of reality school, while openly describing the ontological and epistemological perspective, leads us in the direction of exploration and reconstruction of educational paradigms” (ibid., pp. 19-20).

The above indications refer to academic didactics, both in its theoretical and practical dimensions. I see the opportunity and the need for reconstruction of so understood didactics although the implementation of this task is primarily concerned with the future; it's now possible to paradigmatically read the subjective concepts of educating academic teachers. They may, in the construction and reconstruction of their awareness use the characteristics of the educational paradigms developed by many teachers and pedagogues. They include specimens previously published under the names of models, orientations, approaches to pedagogues’ education. In regards to reading their ontological and epistemological assumptions, as well as the appropriate model for practical implementation of the academic education of educators and teachers, one can sees and adapt and implement academic teaching paradigm realized by an academic teacher.

At this point, it should be noted that additional consideration, additional research and analysis is required from real possibility of a clear and explicit recognition of a particular paradigm, covering the activities of a particular scholar. The same difficulty, in perhaps an even more severe and complex forms refer to the educators who are also academic teachers educating future teachers and pedagogues. The diagnosis of the problems in this area requires answering the question: what in the multi-paradigms situation in teaching is the relationship between existing paradigms. At the same time it's not just the outline map of paradigms and relationships within our sub discipline, but the terms and conditions of their existence and functioning of in an individual consciousness. I think the fact of existence and coexistence of paradigms is particularly important for both an academic teacher and (even more important) for a scholar of didactics. Consciousness and self-awareness, establishing one's own identity and recognition of his or her theoretical beliefs and ways of understanding in this area, is a prerequisite for any further discussion, analysis, research, and constituent is a condition of all scientific activity. It is also the basis for responsible participation in the training of teachers and pedagogues to participate in any form of education.

In a possible complication in the diagnosis of being (or not) in the group of "followers" of a given paradigm the considerable difficulty is not so much a multiplicity of existing types of paradigms but the ambiguity of their co-existence of. Types of paradigms seem to be generally beyond doubts. One can accept the fact that in today's didactics various paradigms can be observed like: functional and behavioristic paradigm, humanistic and adaptive paradigm, constructivist-psychological paradigm, critical-emancipatory paradigm. (Klus-Stańska, 2009b). One can also point out that, in practice, education is dominated by the first one. What's more, it should be noted that is has a dominant nature, determining the need for emancipatory action (Potulicka, Rutkowiak, 2010).

In this picture, however, one must also take into account the fact that paradigmatic occurrence of many concepts (as well as those regarding different paradigms) is accompanied by the reduction of the polarized system, presented as competing, treated with signs of valuing. This procedure has to some extent ideological characteristics and indicates two opposing ways of thinking about education: as coercion or emancipation. Their seemingly not contradictory existence makes the reality of life more problematic. It is because - as the J. Rutkowiak claims it is "an actual field of operation of the paradigmatic communities or followers aspiring to that name, place of engagement of people and institutions, and the creation of corresponding educational situations” (Rutkowiak, 2009, p.29). It is the reality of life, especially in its dimensions of certainty and uncertainty being deep rooted terms, remaining in connection with human paradigmatic and philosophical orientation, a platform actuality is the field of education and movement paradigms. This movement does not have the character of revolutionary change, but it can create a "field of translations," commensurability their field, and can carry on teaching the need to take account of the cognitive learning theory of relations "translating - understanding - interpretation" (ibid., p 39).

Given the complexity of the coexistence of paradigms, difficulties in reading the proposed process of their translations can be assumed. However, I think that taking effort in this area is extremely important in the process of cognitive restructuring our theory and practice of education. Less complexity and difficulty seems to be characterizing belonging to a group of followers of a particular paradigm. However, if we take into account the nature, functions and mechanisms of formation, and particularly changes in human consciousness it is difficult to remain an optimist.
Bibliography


