HOW TO TEACH THE WHOLE BEING IN THE 21ST CENTURY WORLD THE CASE OF SUGGESTOPAEDIA

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Abstract: The holistic approach encourages students to be confident and independent learners, the process of learning becoming a way of self-improvement that explicitly integrates both the self and the social context of learning and teaching, taking into account the needs of the individual learner in the interaction. Its premise is that the social context of the interaction is significant. According to it, the connections that take place within this social action are the foundation for developing critical learners together with experiential knowledge of learners and teachers who are supposed to improve the quality of the teaching situation and levels of achievement of learners. The case of Suggestopaedia is mentioned in this essay because of its impressive impact on the 20th and 21st century methodology of language acquisition, being a method that embraces the human being in all her/his integrity: body, mind and soul.

Keywords: Holistic learning, education, suggestopaedia, teaching method, learning techniques

1. Introduction

Both education and culture are the first law of a society. Education is the means of building human capacity in permanent progress and also the means of spiritual and material training of a community. This is because people are traditionally trained in arts, commerce, industry, politics, and in vices or virtues.

By definition education means moral psychological formation of the human being and later on intellectual training by transmitting a raw or neutral information. In this sense, our mental and moral life can evolve and progress to infinity. If intellectual progress achieved through training is a learning process, moral progress obtained through training and self-cultivation is a process of unlearning.

Unfortunately, education has turned into a mechanical ritual and a kind of brainwashing ceremonial , of dogmatic limitations, not leading to a recognition of values, to the usefulness and significance of ontological information.

Education should encourage self-education, learners being removed from the state of latency, of uselessness being motivated for the study not only theoretically or mentally, but also emotionally, morally and socially. Why a mechanical ritual? Because it promotes rote learning as an end in itself.

Individualized permanent education principle means that each individual is unique with his own natural tendencies of becoming and the gained knowledge are not definitive but relative, the main aim being both to capitalize at maximum the learner's genetic or spiritual dowry and to shape his personality from the socio-cultural perspective.

The reason of education consists in the formation of strong personalities with self and group awareness, with ethical and social responsibility of individual freedom, independent spirit and creative activity.

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2. Holistic Education and the Present- Day World

Education can not be reduced only to a purely theoretical training, to a handcuffed dogmatic and impersonal thinking, to forms without substance, or false pseudo-cultural values or produced by retrograde socio-political antidemocratic attitudes where science is subordinated to some unilateral enslaving conception. Therefore learners need to capitalize their innate capacity of knowledge, their critical creative sense, both brain hemispheres expressing their own value judgments in one area or another.

In an overturned society where values have become mixed with non-values violating the law of hierarchy and positive selection, most people become a victim of the education system , of information determinacy, especially when education is subordinated to politics, being vitiated by social concept, by collective system of organization and human practice contrary to a deep reform and tributary to a state of inertia, of regression amid the psychology of materialist or defeatist life and of axiological war. In this case it is impossible for the individual values to be promoted.

Despite the fact that many aspects of education theory or methodology, the usefulness of information and really superior knowledge necessary to the transformation of human condition are obscured, every human individual, by his natural inclinations, by social environment and by reference to the family may cultivate his native qualities or capabilities through: 1. saturation; 2. hatching; 3. illumination; 4. creativity; 5. faith; 6.will; 7. conscience.

School is a nation's future and freedom of generations who are born in a society. True information, information theory, theory of knowledge, gnoseology, epistemology,the perception of ontological significance of information are ways to reach the truth of conscience of each individual and, as the Bible says, the truth leads to freedom. Initiatory mysteries and ways of steps of human cognition involving the evolution of conscience remain hidden so that human being become a victim of social indoctrination, of misinformation, becoming a product of the existing socio-political conditions. The conception of good and evil, universal moral precepts, knowledge of social requirements, training voluntary thinking, social behaviour are the synthetic product of school, family and environment.

Holistic education aims at freedom of the human mind. Only by voluntary thinking, moral faith, rational will, productive work, well-targeted socially, human being can raise his/her living standards. Freedom is freedom of the mind. Oppression is oppression of the mind. The mind is the important instrument of human survival. But the mind does not function under duress. Constraining paralyzes creativity and the mind can not be enslaved. When the mind is oppressed, rational thinking is stifled, what follows is the darkness of barbarism. But when people are free to think and to act and the mind is free, rebirth Enlightenment is possible.

Aristotle, John Locke,Thomas Jefferson, Adam Smith, Ludwig von Mises, Ayn Rand, William James glorified education and free thought.

The drama of education is that we do not have an objective knowledge of the subjective reality. Knowledge was directed more outward onto the surface of life and less towards the human subject who is the transforming factor of social realities.

Subjective qualities, everything that is exceptional from an individual, is not quantifiable by education system, on the contrary, any affirmation, beyond the restrictions of pedagogical practice is considered lack of conformity to the teacher and source of instability to collectivity.

With holistic education the education system changes , promoting the opposing ideas as part of the creative process of spiritual democracy. It is therefore necessary to encourage communication, self-definition and psychological self-knowledge of the learners.

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The future society is the society of the great artists and people with moral sense. Holistic education will form people responsible for the information they hold, who are able to produce useful knowledge to improve human activity leading to a rebirth of humanist order. The true Man is the rational human man, harmoniously developed spiritually and physically. The true humanism has degenerated into a nihilist, hedonist and relativist humanism. The more rational human being is, the higher the improvement of his morality should be, the science of equilibrium being the science of life.

Human being must develop traits of kindness and altruism, eliminating aggressiveness and selfishness. Although today's modern civilization demands a more technical partial education, it is only a general humanist education that can form workers and technicians able to "recycle" themselves at all times, in accordance with the unceasing processes of technology and with the transformation of the modern world.

Universities must become true scientific communities based on communication and generalized competition of ideas, fostering creativity, heuristics, innovation, ability to work with private information and high precision, while having a holistic inclusive view of reality. By developing both brain hemispheres we will give birth to complete multipurpose personalities, to some scientists and cultivated people capable to unify and understand the various branches and scientific conceptions. In this order, the purpose of knowledge is the creation of a unitary science about man, by means of holistic education from which will be removed the existing dualism of natural and sociological sciences methods taking into account his biological nature as well as his social dimension.

A unified science of man will have to include all the special sciences through creative synthesis which should study all aspects of man and especially the existential human condition in society. Philosophy, sociology,ethics, aesthetics, education, psychology, political science, social rights, etc., should be combined with researches in the domains of medicine, psycho-physiology, neuroscience, genetics, etiology, trying to identify everything that is new without any individualistic preconception.

We affirm that the purpose of true, cultured, democratic, ethical participative education, i.e. holistic education, is the formation of the new man who has the following qualities:

- Scientific concepts about society.
- High moral individual and group conscience.
- The vocation of totality.
- Creative activity.
- The responsibility of using information.
- The rejection of nihilism, universal human cultivation.
- Cult for value, virtue, symbol and ideal.
- Knowledge based on the belief in a higher reality.

The old teaching style transmitted a totally different way of learning called rote memorization. When students apply this, they tend to organize ideas into boxes, keep subjects and concepts distinct, view concepts through one perspective aiming to learn through repetition, following few neural paths to the same idea.

In opposition with these learning attitudes what should a holistic teacher teach in his students? What is the student supposed to get as a new way of learning? He is going to be taught to organize ideas into webs, to interrelate subjects and concepts, to view concepts through many unique perspectives and senses, aiming to learn by relating, following many neural paths to the same idea.

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Holism (Holos - in Greek- all, totally, whole) supports the idea that the properties of a system (biological, physical, social, economic, mental, linguistic), as a whole, can not be determined or explained individually. Instead, the system, as a whole, determines to a large extent how its constituent parts will behave. The principle of holism was synthesized by Aristotle in the Metaphysics thus: "The whole is more than the sum of its parts."

Johann Pestalozzi, the American Transcendentalists, Thoreau, Emerson and Alcott, the founders of "progressive" education – Francis Parker and John Dewey — and pioneers such as Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner, among others, all insisted that education should be understood as the art of cultivating the moral, emotional, physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions of the developing human being. During the 1970s, an emerging body of literature in science, philosophy and cultural history provided an overarching concept to describe this way of understanding education — a perspective known as *holism*. A holistic way of thinking seeks to encompass and integrate multiple layers of meaning and experience rather than defining human possibilities narrowly. Every individual is more than a future employee; every person's intelligence and abilities are far more complex than his or her scores on standardized tests.

Holistic education is a philosophy of education that starts from the premise that each person finds identity, role and purpose in life by connecting to community / society, nature and spiritual values.

What does a holistic approach to education involve?

1. Transformative training rather than the transmission of information ;
2. Making connections at the expense of knowledge fragmentation;
3. Cooperation more than competition;
4. Transdisciplinarity and multi / interdisciplinarity as curricular approaches;
5. The community as a time resource-saving solution for searching and research;
6. Collaborative training or metaeducation i.e. "I learn (student) by teaching others".
7. The significance of things ("big ideas") in contrast with the dissipation into "petty" issues

(it is not about those aspects of life that give charm but about approaching contents in curricula).

But holistic approach involves the achievement of a goal from emotional domain -the change of attitude - by switching from "perfection" to "best", from the educator's attitude of management and dictation to that of a facilitator of training and education processes and to the optimistic approach , hiding pessimism.

3. Suggestopaedia

As an extremely fast and thorough learning method Sugestopedia was drafted by the Bulgarian doctor and psychiatrist Gh. Lozanov in Sugestologie Institute in Sofia, in 1960. It allows the assimilation of factual material (static and descriptive words: phrases, numbers, dates, formulas and also broad idea systems) in any field. In dozens of mainstream schools in Bulgaria students learn in just two months the subjects of a school year, classes achieving spectacular "acceleration of studies." In the former Soviet Union the centers of sugestopedia are a current fact: the programs of language learning, based mainly on the manuals written by Alexo Novacovici, musician, actor and teacher, are completed in three months, four hours a day, during which students assimilate 6000 lexical units and structures of language, which is twice the active substance of a language.

The most noticeable characteristics of Suggestopedia are the decoration, furniture, and arrangement of the classroom, the use of music, and the authoritative behavior of the teacher. The

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claims for suggestopedic learning are dramatic. "There is no sector of public life where suggestology would not be useful"[1].

Lozanov acknowledges ties in tradition to yoga and Soviet psychology. From raja-yoga he borrowed and modified techniques for altering states of consciousness and concentration, and the use of rhythmic breathing. From Soviet psychology Lozanov took the notion that all students can be taught a given subject matter at the same level of skill. Lozanov claims that his method works equally well whether or not students spend time on outside study. He promises success through Suggestopedia to the academically gifted and the ungifted alike.[2]

The suggestopaedic teaching-learning activity has also a very special structure:

1. Preparation: It refers to the arrangement of the room and to giving students information about what to expect in the course of the teaching.

2. Presentation: The students receive the materials for the first cycle. They are usually organized in dialogue form, with some explanations of vocabulary and grammar. From time to time are presented other materials, such as prose texts, songs, poems or grammar. After the entire text has been introduced, the *concert session* follows. This session has two parts: the active and the passive concert. During the active concert the students sit in their chairs with the texts in front of them. The teacher who is standing reads the text in the target language while an entire piece of classical music is playing in the background. During the passive concert, the students and the teacher are seated. The students have no texts to refer to. Only the materials presented in the session of the active concert are read in this stage.

3. Review and elaboration: Then the first revision of the materials takes place. Dr. Lozanov points out that the material must be read on the next day or at least within 48 hours after the passive concert. A "suggestopaedic" teacher requested by Suggestopaedia needs to have a special training as he is supposed to acquire a multitude of skills .[3]

5.Conclusion

The 21st century represents the century of the most impressive progress both in the psychological field and in the educational psychology field giving birth to the holistic approach of education together with the ideas of freedom and activism. The teaching methods have revived because of the discoveries in the neurological field as well as the connections with some spiritual techniques, one of them being Suggestopaedia.

It takes into consideration simultaneously, the biological, psychological and social aspects of the learner i.e. the reality of the global functioning of the human being. Scientists and international institutions confirmed its exceptional results in learning foreign languages and, as a result, it should determine changes in the world educational strategies.

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