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EDUCATION FOR THE TRANSITION TO SCHOOL LIFE

(Results summary from historical-pedagogical research)

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In the history of pedagogical theories the understanding dominates, that happy childhood must be connected with the elevating functions of knowledge and with the well-timed reasonable introduction of the child to school. Therefore, the successful transition of this “little person” to life at school is defined as a strategic goal of preschool education. A number of different pedagogical means are recommended, although most common are the forms of social preschool education – mainly the kindergarten.

In the pedagogical theories historically an idea is outlined – that in the peculiar manner of the process of development, which is defined by its own patterns, is necessary to include a time of transition from one status to the other (different by its quality and quantity characteristics) – Hegel, Kant, Froebel. This research is about the quality changes of the child’s personality and his or her social life. During the transition from childhood before school to school life, the child loses some of his/her inherent abilities, but has not yet acquired the abilities required for school. Exactly in this social and personal space lies the main role of education, or in other words to obliterate the signs of preschool childhood (Piaget, Binet, Uznadze).

Accordingly the analyzed ideas from the history of pedagogy an assertion can be brought out, that the education for the transition to school life has originated from human imperfection, it is constraining as a form and according to the law of evolution it develops to be able to adjust itself to changes in society, accordingly in school, kindergarten and family (Comenius, Decroly, Montessori).

Throughout the studied pedagogical theories and experiments dominates the understanding that the education for transition to school life is a continuous process throughout the life of the child in which some special school knowledge, abilities and qualities are activated. That is why the classics define the purposeful education of the child for the requirements of school as an element of preparation for life and focus the educational activities towards the development of the general abilities of the child, its human qualities and social knowledge and abilities. The understanding that education for school life has to start as soon as possible is generally acknowledged, but the beginning of this dynamic process has to correspond to the individual abilities of the newly-born human individual and with the specialty of the age period (Comenius, Pestalozzi, Piaget).

The psychologo-pedagogical formulation of the dynamics of the processes of age alteration through which the child reaches its readiness for school and goes through a state of transition is considered classical. The current historical and pedagogical research proves that the reputable scientists accept the possibility every normally developed child between the age of 5 and 8, if needed, acquire a set in advanced norms and rules of education for the transition to the primary school years. The individual rates of mental and physical growth of the child in the preschool age foreordain the understanding, that starting school has to be decided individually and that students of different ages but with equal level of school readiness can start together first grade. With this approach of school reception the preliminarily *school-education* of children becomes the most important condition enabling the tutor to begin teaching all the students – Comenius, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Ouchinsky, Dewey, Montessori, Key.

In the history of pedagogy every significant scholar – in the field of theory or practice accepts indisputably that education for the transition to school is a cooperation between the child and the adult (teacher, parent) resulting in mutual exchange of energy. The inference from the Classics here could be that pedagogy – on one hand has to examine simultaneously both subjects of the educational environment giving them equal social positions guaranteeing the natural harmony of their interaction, and on the other hand has to develop the conditions for rational organization of the freedom and work of the child and of his teacher (Locke, Montessori, Decroly).

It is useful, in the general process of education for the adult to distance him/herself and with a discrete intervention to guide the child in its self-awareness and self-study. According to the history of the pedagogical theories the main educational goal has to be *teaching* the child how to control the factors in the processes of its self-development – the better the young human being and future pupil can control him/herself (active *self-discipline* in freedom), the higher the level of school readiness. To back up this understanding, comes the conclusion of this study that most of the classical pedagogical theories stated ideas in which the meaning of human life is defined by *self-study* while *communication* is accepted as the most important skill in life. From a pedagogical perspective communication could be seen as the “atom” in the educational process, which defines most of its characteristics and the organization of its elements.

Despite the fact that culture always threatens freedom, it is the thing that makes life possible by developing means of communication – enriching us with basic knowledge and key skills, forms an independent, critical personality, develops solidarity between people and teaches people to take care about others. In the same context in pedagogical history the culture of transition to school is accepted. That is why it is possible to assume that the art of communication is “the secret” for the successful transition of the child to the requirements of school life.

Analysis of philosophical ideas of the Antiquity and of pedagogical theories until the middle of the 20-th century leads to the general conclusion that the human being is most of all a unity and harmony of will and senses, which in reality are the main factors in the work of the adult as well as in the games and study of the child – Comenius, Froebels, Montessori. That is why in the education of the child for school life, the following three possibilities for pedagogical assistance in its subjective-personal growth has to be considered:

1. The child has to acquire the ability *to wish* to notice the other person – the child next to him, the parent, the classmate, the teacher.

The method formulation has to be aimed at the efforts of the adults to help the young person to master its will and to achieve certain “tuning” of senses to render attention and care for the others – to find a word of encouragement, to try to appeal to others, to want to give them pleasure and joy, to show his/her best qualities and abilities.

2. The child has to learn *to wish* willingly to tune his/her senses to a “positive wave” when apprehending others.

The care of the teacher has to be aimed at activating the abilities of the child which allow feeling and perceiving the other human (especially the classmate) with the best feature of its character, in a moral light, with his most pleasant forms, colors, smells ect.

3. The child has *to want* to carry out its active transformation role in the life of others – parents, classmates, teachers.

The pedagogical aspect of this ability is to help the child to preserve his/her inborn moral purity and humility, to help the child to be useful to himself and the others.

In pedagogical history the same ideas for the organization of the educational environment and for the methods of introducing reading/writing/reckoning are preserved and their pragmatism is indisputable:

1. According to the classics of pedagogy it is useful to create conditions for self-organization for the children in a group containing children at a different age to create harmony between personal, group and common goals. It is accepted that the major element of an organization is the climate of agreement and the quality of the relations determined in it – the freedom of opinion, to be able to accept or reject other ideas, to share thoughts and feelings. The right of the children to do everything themselves in a natural environment and as often outdoors as possible is defended in these theories. Common life is a concept – a mechanism of self-government, personal self-improvement and strong socialization of the child's personality. In the history of education the great scholars demand from the teacher to communicate with his/her pupils obliging, with love and sense of humor, to observe tactfully and to act intuitively and thoughtfully often with the effect of surprise. The teacher is advised to see the concrete child, to create general rules and customs, to use an image in the beginning of the educational process as it brings much more information to the student than logical reasoning. The attempts to break the conservative forms of teaching and communication and also the organization of the material environment are very positive.

2. The classics of pedagogical science declare that the human being has a natural affinity towards knowledge that is why the child seeks ways and reasons to learn through actions. That is why most of the classics define pedagogy as practice and school as an educational mediator. Their requirements towards the organization of education for transition to school life can be generalized as:

- Education has to have practical value for the child preparing it for the basic school activities and the teacher should rely not only on books but on the natural abilities of the child to learn straight from life and nature.

- Education has to have an experimental character, giving the child the chance to examine, to make personal conclusions and to learn the way to discovery of knowledge.

- The process of education has to teach the child to an active life, involving him/her in enjoyable activities and on the other hand equipping him/her with a sufficient amount of information about school and the study.

3. The history of pedagogic kept certain demands for practical and intellectual repertoire of the teacher in the state of transition to school life:

- The teacher has to remember that he is facing a future student and to balance education with his abilities, to encourage the child's initiative in self-dependent experiments and exercises.

- The teacher has to be able to express with simple words even the most profound and most important concepts, speaking with competence, intelligibly, with enough detail and examples taken from everyday school life.

- The teacher has to encourage the indefatigable efforts of the child to learn how to gain success at school – because learning is a natural process the child slowly and gradually advances and the teacher has to harmonize the tempo according to the achieved level of knowledge and abilities, collaborate with methodical know-how and resources.