

Permanent education – priority of educational policies for adults

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Abstract

Permanent education is a specific concept of contemporary pedagogy, which is trying to regulate some specific reality in our century. Permanent education is closely related to the fundamental education “whose object is to meet the needs of basic education, training at the basic level may serve as a support for more intensive learning. Adult education must become a priority element in social policy of Nations, adult education being part of a system of permanent education. Permanent learning grows as an expression and a motivating factor for interior harmony that, connected to flexibility and open divergent thinking, represents a distinctive feature of contemporary civilization. Production and consumption ideals characterizing the contemporary face of everyday life are replaced by evident ideals of “a society centered on education”, with a basic idea that continuous development is part of human existence. This development is a continuous process to surpass the existing reality based on knowledge, where the individual is an actor playing a role in a personal scenario, this being the way to fulfill one’s aspirations to a successful career.

Key words: *continuing education, self-education, learning situations, permanent change, innovative learning, formative autonomy.*

Mere acceptance of the terms “permanent education” has a significant value in individual life, being a continuous, lasting activity. The adult who is learning is different from a studying child because: an adult has social and professional responsibilities in family and

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community, connect education to life experience and manifest curiosity according to professional and cultural interests. Furthermore, adult education is institutionalized together with intensive connections among different national and international institutions or organizations, resulting in large exchanges of methodologies, experiences, models of function. A global vision could be reached this way for the idea that no education level is a “final” one and learning should last for a lifetime.

Today, adult education is closely connected to permanent education and is focused on mature people. Permanent education appears out of the need to distinguish between different levels and types of education so that learning becomes continuous in time and space, representing an “educational continuum”. Every school level is an opening to continuous learning, to self-education. Adult education could be seen as another layer, continuing basic education, resulting in a concise reunion of all types and levels of education. Permanent education addresses especially to third age persons, trying to find ways to integrate these people in the society. Many of the representatives of aged persons have remarkable results in protecting environment activities, in supporting the young, giving assistance to those who are much stressed with their work. Permanent education is a solution to the rapid changes in society and their consequences. The actual alterations of civilization produce intellectualization of work, an explosion of knowledge and a continuous transformation of cultural aspects.

Permanent education represents an “offer” of methods, promoting the democratization of relations and the new conception on life, giving the possibility “to individualize the processes in education according to its beneficiaries”. Combining different methods and experiences to respond the needs of potential beneficiaries makes permanent education a “global” process. It is a mixture of family education, formal basis education and other various types of education from outside school units, preparing the individual to become

“more and more own subject and own tool of personal development using varied instruction methods”[1, p. 45].

Permanent education is present in all its aspects at every moment of human development and at the many social statuses individuals reach in a lifetime from birth to old age. The author thinks that, social environment cannot be projected and directed, any type of education being a better social insertion and a more efficient adjustment to a situation [2, p. 64].

Permanent education is a scientific concept of contemporary learning, covering theoretical and functional principals and trying to adjust a certain specific reality of our century. The researchers in the domain of permanent education emphasize the factors that ask and justify the approach of learning in this perspective: the process of accelerated changes, demographic explosion, science and technical evolution, more free time, a crisis of relational models in life, enlargement of the number of profession, increase of democratization degree in social life [3, p.141].

Nowadays, it is necessary a re-orientation of learning within permanent education concept. Simply the formation is not at all sufficiently, a new person must be created, able to agree self-perfection and spiritual development. To teach, to learn and to memorizes are not actual concepts any more. Permanent education is needed, “a lifelong process, starting in school and continued by each individual motivated by personal interests and aspiration” [1, 46]. The desire to learn more and the wish for self-perfection have to be personal priorities. Knowing how to learn, how to develop the spirit, to cultivate attitudes are of high importance for an authentic progress.

Education must be conceived as an existential continuum, lasting for biological life, which mustn't be limited in time (school age) or space (school buildings). Permanent learning is a particular reaction to life progress, implying self-formation to respond to the many solicitations, “an attempt of individual to free from tension, crisis, from stressful professional crisis. It is a shield and a reliable support for the confidence in future development; it has a predictive

character based on the habit to study and on the idea that in a democratic society everyone is teaching everyone” [3, p.37]. The redesigning of learning on the permanent education principle predisposes individual to a particular attitude towards knowledge and study. It becomes more responsible to oneself and to the others in point of ideas and accomplishments.

Permanent education is closely related to fundamental education whose purpose is to answer to basic needs of education and being of real help for intensive learning. Fundamental education implies formation at childhood level, primary level and the alphabetization of the teenagers and adults, by giving them general information and necessary competences to use in future life.

The objectives of permanent education cannot be separated from those of general education as all the targets of education in schools and outside, of formal, non-formal or informal contents have to be directed and designed to assure formative autonomy with subsequent characteristics such as: inter mental stability, emotional strength, inside desire, responsible option, social engagement, self-improvement, disposal to study, learning how to learn, continuous study, modeling self-education, planned learning[4, p. 407].

Permanent education has benefic effects on the individual perceived as a sum of states and aspirations. The principle of permanent education has to be correlated to social and individual progress. For the individual, permanent education is an effort to re-conciliate and harmonize different levels of instruction: primary, secondary or academic in such a manner to avoid inner conflicts of the individual [1, p.55].

As for the duration and the multitude of learning situations a quantitative expansion is implied. Being limited in time, education as an institutionalized way to educate has to be submitted to gradual reconsideration, to include a permanent education in point of contents to be taught, teaching and evaluating methods and of the dimension of strong formative objectives. Traditional learning means communication of knowledge, creating skills and abilities and work on attitudes and abilities [3, p.83], focusing on the exigency to product

spiritual attitudes and abilities followed by initiations of skills and competences, eventually communicating knowledge.

Formal education is now resized according the concept of permanent education. If some decades ago, education meant “to be” for the human being, today the guiding idea is “to be and to become” based on an “innovative” learning that help individual overpass new, unknown or not taken situations. Every school has to prove a real contribution to the, good initial education of a person. One cannot become independent without a baggage of values and information which help to discover and understand the new life realities. School becomes important if the educational objectives are reconsidered, the curriculum is changed if the methods to teach and evaluate are modified.

Continuous learning implies self-organization, self-regulations and an increasing responsibility to in order to get independent. Learning is not a sequence of mechanical assimilations of information but can become a permanent self-creation. It will include regenerating methods so as to remain efficient and give benefits to person [3, p. 154].

Permanent education determines the awareness and the choice of external demands in agreement with personal ones. Heteronomous education looks like a form of constraint and loses efficiency if the subject to be educated is seen as an object of external influences not actively implied in the process. Today there is widely spread the idea that there is no education without self-education, education made by the people outside cannot exist without self-preparation and the aim of education is to teach humans to continue life on personal, permanent efforts [5, p.26].

The new perspective of permanent education came to life as a positive answer to specific educational problems and to the external changes as well. A major step in efficiently adopting this concept is to establish foundations that lead to large useful projections and principles in having a decision in education. These foundations don't have to consider narrow ideas on education based on only primary or secondary learning but to look upon education as a long

process, with horizontal and vertical dimensions during the whole life with differentiate methodologies. To cover a larger part of a person's life, interpersonal or social aspects, the basis of permanent education have to examine a large area of relevant subjects: anthropology, ecology, economy, history, philosophy, psychology, sociology and some interdisciplinary elements but respecting the autonomy of each domain and its unique contribution in the process [4, p. 48].

According to these, the idea of permanent education is associated to a compensation of childhood and teenage losses. Adult education could be considered as a process to be started or completed at any moment in life, as a constant effort to organize a form of education for those who couldn't attend school, are not able to read or write, a method to stand for academic studies for those who couldn't go to university because of severe, restrictive conditions. It is a fact that adult education is more and more important. Specialists of different domains made studies on the subject and got to the conclusion that adult education is totally different from children or teenagers one. The fact is even more obvious because of adults' life experience that enables them learn better and quicker. Psychologists observe that mind at an adult age still has the ability to create and understand and in certain areas there is a continuous progress of these qualities, impossible at a small age. Large observations of primitive societies led them to the conclusion that only grown-up people can adopt teaching methods that deeply change life style. The immediate call for adult education cannot be explained by human need to cover gap education existing from childhood or teenage period. Today this necessity has a reason in the fact that, in some domains, the types of skills and learning requires maturity, a characteristic only the adults have. Therefore, the subject of adult education has the value of a lifelong learning [4, p. 48].

Education is a value in itself and not only a way to get higher social status or some material gains, it is a part of permanent education. Education mustn't be limited to a professional development but it has to help a general-human

growth. A modern conception of a "society based on education" must consider that modern civilization is obliged to set the valuable foundations of life and to create the motivation to fully realize all these only by learning. A concept of a "society centered on education" shows the way to get out of the hopeless situation of a "producing society" and of a "consuming one". Preserving the restrictions and the obligations imposed to society by production and consumption, within reasonable limits, this new concept expresses the deep values of human existence, due to the intensification of all human abilities and energies participating in the development of the whole personality.

Reaching individual potential in production or consumption, as well as the activities exceeding these domains, such as social and creative activities, becomes the basis of permanent education. This interpretation of education implies completely new tasks and contents. Related to this, Paul Lengrand's declaration emphasizes that: "Education cannot be simply added to human life as something imposed from outside. There is no other valuable benefit than culture. In a philosophical way, education doesn't belong to that category defined by the word "to have" but to that of "to be". Human existing in a state of "becoming" at every level and in various situations is the true value of education [1, p. 56].

To conclude, it is a reality that permanent education becomes a source of critical review of fundamental concepts in education; it is a process to cover all periods in life, including varied types of experiences as the relation between education, individual and society continues to strengthen. At the same time, the process of education gets more freedom and spontaneity.

According to this idea, the individual can find inner vocation and happiness only by constantly exceeding personal achievements. New horizons of knowledge and new spheres of activity become both sources and consequences of permanent education as a recurrent proof of human loyalty to humanity ideals.

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