

TEACHER-EDUCATOR VERSUS TEACHER-LEADER

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Recently, in Lithuanian educational discourse there has been a lot of discussion about leadership. This has become so popular phenomenon that quite often one even does not go deep into the most important parameters of this phenomenon. Leadership phenomenon is not a very new thing, having started to be investigated more exhaustively as far back as the second half of the 20th century, however, over the last decade a lot of attention has been devoted to this in Lithuania. One can reasonably assert, that this is even a matter of fashion. During the aforementioned period, various questions such as teacher leadership, leadership development in schools (as if everyone has to be only a leader), leadership influence on organisation management and other have been investigated in one way or another. On the other hand, quite a lot of attention has been devoted to school managers, having in mind that they should not be just managers, but real managers – leaders. There is no intention to discuss various leadership concepts or to give any recipes how to turn teachers and managers to leaders. Moreover, there exists a vast diversity of concepts. It is obvious, that poor, ineffective and unsuitable management affects the teachers and the teaching learning process itself. It is logical, that this aspect has to be evaluated, and only people suitably prepared and ready for this should become managers of educational institutions. On the other hand, it wouldn't be fair to identify managers and management with leadership.

It is understandable that in a modern school it is not enough for the teacher to know only his professional sphere. Teacher, first of all, is educator. Such a person has undoubtedly huge influence on the other people, and first of all, on children's personality development. This is not only a professional in his own field, but first of all a personality – a man able to educate, practically develop, psychologically and emotionally improve the learner, to develop a harmonious personality from him, a citizen, a perfect humane man. This namely is the essence of teacher-educator. The future is in the hands of such a teacher. Such an educator is responsible for the bringing up of a fully valued person. He is responsible, one can trust him, follow him. I wouldn't agree that teacher-leader corresponds to these absolutely necessary criteria. Teacher-educator is both a professional and a humanist at the same time, helping for the young man to find his place in the world and in the society, to reveal and realise his potential, his essence. Recently, a popular statement that a modern teacher should be known having similar features to a business organisation manager is very doubtful. School is not and will never be a trade organisation.

Despite the fact, that education is being tried to look at differently, the central idea keeping the approach oriented to the child, modern education systems still keep on accentuating knowledge acquisition, specialist preparation. Personality development remains overboard. Both in general education and in higher education systems one can notice two negative tendencies. The first one, information stream is rapidly increasing and this leads towards teaching time lengthening, teaching/ learning load increasing, the second one, increasing the amount of information, the number of subjects, cognition spheres also increase and so on. Multidisciplinarity is being formed, which causes an information dubbing phenomenon, weakens interdisciplinary integrational relations. In this way, quite a narrow, limited technical thinking is formed, the holistic world view is not formed in the mind of pupils and students.

Very much is required from the teacher today. Only the question is how much is reasonable. He/she is both information renderer and consultant, class leader, senior friend and adviser, researcher, innovator and change initiator, psychologist, organiser, catalyser and so on. It has just become fashionable to write about this, discuss and so on. Still it has to be mentioned, that teacher has to be a modern technology “geek”, able “to take a plunge” not only into the real but also into the virtual world. How much logic is in that? Unfortunately, really quite often there is lack of it. As R. Pavilionis (1999) has rightly noticed, material, technological society progress does not condition itself its emotional progress, more sophisticated things themselves do not arouse human perfection. However, in the present technological age it is a rather forgotten thing. It is much more fashionable to speak about competition, settling in the labour market, care about yourself and your well-being. In all possible ways one is asked to get acquainted and master leadership as a new modern life paradigm. And, as it has been mentioned, individual interests are in the centre of attention. One of the leadership propagators A. Havard (2007) states, that leaders are not born, they are made. However, I would like to think contrary.

The educators are born, they do not become leaders by accident. Only teacher-educator can develop a fully valued personality. Education, serving the neoliberal leadership ideology and/or representing it, is a way to nowhere.

Society demands are becoming both more diverse and more complex. The schools find it more and more difficult to satisfy them. However, the incitement to prepare education leaders is hardly the right way. In order to change school and education, first of all, one must prepare the highest professionalism educators. Every teacher is (or can be) a leader in one way or another, because he makes influence on pupils. However, not every teacher is (or can become) a real educator.

References

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