

Chapter 9

A Multi-Level Analysis of the Change in Teaching Methods in Post-Communist Romania

Oana Gauca

Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

ABSTRACT

The chapter provides an overview of the changes suffered by the secondary and higher education systems in the communism to post-communism transition and discusses the transformation of the teaching methods and the impact of these transformations. Most teachers aspire to make critical thinking the main objective of their instruction; most of them do not realize that to develop as thinkers students must pass through stages of development in critical thinking. The conclusions point to the fact that most teachers are unaware of the levels of intellectual development that students go through as they improve as thinkers. The research shows that significant gains in the intellectual quality of student work will not be achieved if teachers do not recognize that skilled critical thinking develops only if properly cultivated and only through predictable stages.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the 1960s and early 1970s, analytic philosophers of education were engaged in trying to find a definition for teaching. Much of the debate centered on the question of whether teaching implies learning or merely resumes to the act of sharing knowledge. John Dewey had set the stage by writing:

Teaching may be compared to selling commodities. No one can sell unless someone buys. We should ridicule a merchant who said that he had sold a great many goods although no one had bought any. But perhaps there are teachers who think that they have done a good day's, teaching irrespective of what pupils have learned. There is the same exact equation between teaching and learning that there is between selling and buying (1933, pp. 35–36).

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-4325-3.ch009

This may appear as teachers are to be blamed for student failure and lack of learning. Aristotle pointed out that teaching is an activity finding its results in the learner, not in the teacher. Were there no need for learning, there would be no need for teaching. This does not mean, however, that teaching must always produce learning but it must be constructed around the perceived need for learning.

More important, however, is what we mean by learning. Discussion of the meanings and types of learning would be somehow superfluous as they would go on forever, but we should note that some spend perhaps too much time defending one form of learning (e.g., constructivist learning) over all others.

A potentially more fruitful approach would study what the best teachers do to answer the question: what form or level of learning is called for by *this* topic, for *this* student, in *this* situation? Furthermore, learning may occur without (or even contrary to) the teacher's intention (Jackson, 1992), and this possibility suggests that teachers must be aware of and reflective about what they are conveying to students through their manner. Scheffler's criterion of manner has come to be known as the 'rationality' criterion. He wanted to preserve a significant place for human teachers in an electronic age, and he hoped also to exclude indoctrination and other scripted forms of producing learning from the category of 'teaching.'

Teaching, for Scheffler, must display respect for the student's rationality. This take on teaching seems to capture teaching at its deepest and best. The rationality criterion should be met when we look at a teacher's overall performance. But surely, even teachers who are dedicated to 'rationality' in Scheffler's sense sometimes use methods that are not clearly marked by the criterion. Should we say that, at these times, they are not teaching?

And suppose that a given teacher rarely meets the rationality criterion but, through methods such as direct instruction (telling), conditioning or even indoctrination, secures a considerable amount of learning. Is he / she not teaching? It might be better to include all of these activities on a 'teaching continuum' (Green, 1968) and give our attention, as suggested above, to matching each to appropriate learning goals.

As Martin Buber said, students learn from teachers with whom they work closely something about 'the mystery of personal life' (1965, p. 90). This sort of learning is not usually recognized as the learning for which formal schooling was established. Yet it has always been involved in teaching— both formal and informal, and it may be inherent in the teacher-learner relation. It does not have to be intended.

However, the teacher-student relationship has evolved over time and has been affected by various conceptions, by the society as whole, by the political systems and by individuals. Therefore, we shall capture the main factors that lead to change of teaching methods in Romania, whether they existed in the past or not and what type of impact they have, as well as at what level.

Assessment of this relationship can be done on more than one side, taking into consideration every link of the relationship. A different approach to it could be the evaluation of students' attitudes, perspectives and personality traits and objectives. Furthermore, the political systems and reforms can be evaluated so as to indicate the path and objectives they set.

Kugel's (1993) speculative account of how teachers develop focuses on separate stages, where a focus on the content precedes a focus on students as individuals and then on students as learners of the content. Alexandersson (1994) dealt with this by claiming that for

21 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:
www.igi-global.com/chapter/a-multi-level-analysis-of-the-change-in-teaching-methods-in-post-communist-romania/97287

Related Content

Effect of Online Second-Hand Shopping Experience on Repurchase Intention: Evidence From Indian Shoppers

Murali Swapanaand Chandrasekaran Padmavathy (2018). *International Journal of Asian Business and Information Management* (pp. 36-47).

www.irma-international.org/article/effect-of-online-second-hand-shopping-experience-on-repurchase-intention/221902

Mentoring and Empowering Employees: How to Develop Management Skills Through Mentoring

Maria-Carmen De La Calle-Duranand Irene Campos Garcia (2025). *Developing Managerial Skills for Global Business Success* (pp. 121-132).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/mentoring-and-empowering-employees/362019

Building and Maintenance of Social Capital in Rural Farming Community of the Western Hills of Nepal

Ram Krishna Shrestha, Donald Charles Cameron, Jeff Couttsand Jim Cavaye (2015). *International Journal of Asian Business and Information Management* (pp. 28-41).

www.irma-international.org/article/building-and-maintenance-of-social-capital-in-rural-farming-community-of-the-western-hills-of-nepal/127627

The Hidden Drivers of Youth Unemployment: A Modern-Day Crisis

Kok Meng Ng, Philip Tan Hock Guan, Rui Huan Tanand Andrii Kushnarevych (2025). *International Journal of Asian Business and Information Management* (pp. 1-19).

www.irma-international.org/article/the-hidden-drivers-of-youth-unemployment/388564

Coping With the Changes That Challenge Business and Education Sectors in Thailand 4.0

Kannapat Kankaew, Ekachat Tansiri, Rojanard Waramontri, Nisara Paethrangsi, Korawin Kungwol, Bussaba Sitikarnand Kanittha Charernit (2022). *International Journal of Asian Business and Information Management* (pp. 1-11).

www.irma-international.org/article/coping-with-the-changes-that-challenge-business-and-education-sectors-in-thailand-40/287588