

CURRENT TRENDS IN THE EUROPEAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract:

Education has long been considered a significant tool for development, with various education initiatives designed to work towards eliminating poverty, increasing the health of a population or enhancing local economies, among others. The recent trends have highlighted the ways in which European education has developed into a means to achieve a range of broader goals, ranging from study abroad to improve students' work readiness, the strategic development of international collaborations to drive up research rankings, to using transnational education to build regional identity. These changes are expanding the nature of education at all levels to include personal skill development, new ways of thinking, and practical job preparation in addition to subject-specific knowledge and skills.

The present paper highlights some common characteristics between the educational systems in Europe, the characteristics and differences related to the economic, social and cultural conditions, aiming to achieve educational objectives.

Key words: *educational systems, strategic development, European trends, quality of education*

Introduction

The European education system represents an integrated component within the framework and general structure of the European society, referring fundamentally to the institutional organization of education and encompassing all the institutions pursuing the achievement of educational objectives. The European systems are diversified and have a general approach in order to provide students with the basic knowledge and skills they need in the future. Although each EU country is responsible for its own education system and subjects, the European Commission supports national efforts to improve the quality of education. Also, the education system has a national and historical character, in other words it evolves and develops in relation to the material development and cultural specificity of each country.

The current and future evolution of education will increasingly be marked by a complex ensemble of trends that is already recorded in all the fundamental components of contemporary societies and civilization. The most profound of these is that of the entry of contemporary society into the era of knowledge and transformation of economic and social systems from systems based on traditional factors of production and labor into systems based on knowledge and computerization, with all the implications of this evolution for the economic, social, political, cultural and spiritual current and future life directions.

The patterns of work, action, organization and development of the social and obvious life of learning are changing more and more profoundly, and faster. The current and future evolution of the world is influenced and will increasingly be marked by the rapid development and expansion of new information technologies, mass communication, which affect the nature of work and cause the replacement of certain types of human work by cars, which will be reflected in radical transformations of occupations and occupational mobility and in the types of skills and competencies necessary for their exercise.

Under these circumstances, contemporary societies are required to create all the necessary conditions and means to be able to prepare their members so that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to participate as actively and efficiently as possible in economic activity and in all the spheres of modern public life, in political and social life, at all levels of local, national and international communities. What changes radically and the position of education in society, it cannot be achieved only as a training course prior to the

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entry of people into work, but as a process that will prove necessary for all people throughout their professional life and not only.

In line with new developments, today's societies have to become more and more inclusive societies, capable of providing equal opportunities to access quality learning throughout their lives for all their members. For this purpose, they will have to act to ensure that all components, compartments and educational social institutions focus and concert their efforts towards the significant development of the educative capacity of each and every one of them as a whole so as to achieve the ideal the completion of the "educational fortress" already proposed in the last quarter of the 20th century.

Simultaneously with this evolution, there are major necessities of reorganization of the educational processes and the institutional systems of education and education, amplified by the emergence and the development of new technologies of the education itself - the computer, the multimedia technologies, the CD-ROM, the video recording, the Internet, the cyberspace etc., which calls for a new organization of learning processes based not on the state in classes and on the passive obedience of teachers, but on the increasingly massive use of new information technologies and their use in "classes with no walls", respectively, at home, away from school.

The European education system is an essential component of the social system, being subordinated and integrated into the overall framework and structure of European society, not only having an internal structure but also having external social impulses. The education system, viewed as a whole, refers fundamentally to the institutional organization of education, in this sense the educational system encompassing the totality of institutions pursuing the achievement of educational objectives. European systems are diversified and have a general approach in order to provide students with the basic knowledge and skills they need in the future. Although each EU country is responsible for its own education system and subjects, the European Commission supports national efforts to improve the quality of education. Also, the educational system has a national and historical character, in other words it evolves and develops in relation to the material development and cultural specificity of each country.

Therefore, there are common characteristics between the European education systems, characteristics and differences related to economic, social and cultural conditions. We can say that education, understood as an institutional organization, cannot be considered as having only an internal structure as a result of the interactions between its components, but it is subjected to independent social and interactional pressures, pursuing the achievement of educational objectives.

Research has shown that it is about implementing educational reforms to reset the system and address another direction by dedicating important funds to education, research and technology. A new education system actually refers to equal opportunities for all children, regardless of the socio-economic environment they come from.

In Europe's collective consciousness, education has a strong value. This value has its historical roots in the French nation's consciousness of its cultural mission to the world that returns to the Enlightenment. Indeed, this idea of Enlightenment has a universal range: "the light of reason" must shine to everyone in the same way without distinction. In addition, the French have long been the old language of crowned heads of Europe and are today the language of diplomacy. Thus, cultural consciousness is closely related to French language, literature and philosophy. This particularity is rooted in the history of French education: in the seventeenth century the French interpretation of European humanism in the collections of Jesuit parents was marked by a rhetorical character (while in Germany it was rather the philosophical part that was emphasized).

The special value of language-based education as a preferred expression of national culture is indicated by broad public debates on curricular reforms in mother tongue education

or, as another example, the particular interest the media has at national level in written examinations (baccalaureate) in the field of mother tongue education and philosophy. The high social value of schooling is also rooted in the revolutionary impulse of the principle of equality as one of the three fundamental concepts of French society. The link between school and society is ensured by the meritocratic principle: the allocation of social positions is ensured by personal achievements, originally based on school achievements.

Thus, school, as an objective institution that distributes life chances according to its own criteria, assumes immense importance in the life of society. The fact that, since the 1960s, European sociologists have demonstrated again and again the subtle social mechanisms through which the school serves the reproduction of existing social conditions is not a contradiction, but rather complementary to the first observation. The undeniable value of the school is also apparently based on student awareness, as students in French schools have a significantly higher degree of satisfaction with their schools than German students.

In its vast majority, the European school system is funded from the public budget. In primary education, the central government pays the teachers, while the costs of auxiliary staff - quite considerable in some systems, where the school day ends in the afternoon - are taken over by local authorities. In secondary education, the financial contribution of local communities is diminishing. The Ministry of Education also covers costs for non-teaching staff, although local authorities have to pay for school transport.

At the level of the curriculum, the central structures are almost uninterrupted. Curricular content is defined for each discipline in the national curriculum. Their implementation is supervised by an inspector. The elaboration of the national curriculum was (and still is formally) the task of the ministry to create a wider platform for developing a curriculum tailored to the needs of society. Thus, the new European curricula were developed by a new type of committee attended by several teachers and representatives of education. Only after a long process of discussion of these curriculum projects among teachers, the new curricula were based on students' competences rather than on curricular content.

Quality monitoring is traditionally carried out by the Inspectorate, on the one hand, and national exams, in particular the baccalaureate giving access to higher education, on the other. In the collective consciousness of Europeans, the anonymity of the examination is the guarantee of its objectivity. It distinguishes not only successful students but also their schools and teachers. Another old way of quality control is visiting the school inspectorate during classes. Inspectors must assess the quality of teaching and make suggestions for improvement; thus, they are an important criterion for promoting teachers.

The most important new form of student assessment is the national assessment of student performance introduced in 1990 in Europe. The evaluation consists of national tests targeted at the beginning of each new learning cycle to see if students have reached the educational objectives of the previous cycle. These evaluations should not classify the individual performance of students and teachers, but inform teachers about new classes about possible shortcomings, to enable them to attack these issues through more individualized and modularized teaching. In other words, these are diagnostic evaluations. Moreover, these evaluations have a second function, namely to evaluate the performance of the key elements of the national system of education as a whole.

The issue of school failure was considered as a special challenge by all European governments. School failure often goes along with social deprivation. Especially in the suburbs of large European agglomerations, but also in many medium-sized cities, there is a high density of immigrants and people without work - with all signs of social anomaly (vandalism, violence, etc.) and its consequences on schooling.

Currently, European countries have begun to react to this by defining priority areas for education. Therefore, disadvantaged areas or rural areas are usually helped by positive

discrimination. Positive discrimination measures included special funding for special pedagogical measures, special training of teachers in smaller classes, projects, opening of schools in neighborhoods, etc. Thus, special pedagogical measures have served to relaunch young people to go to school and to get a taste for learning.

The new trends of the European education system also focus on another main direction: the workforce. This goal is addressed by improving education and training in society. For this purpose, the new education curriculum creates a new kind of vocational school that includes different levels from basic vocational training to higher education and which has a special partnership with various fields of activity. Introducing such a systemic career education should serve to better integrate young people into the labor market.

As far as the Romanian education system is concerned, the benefits are from the free of compulsory education and the provision of textbooks to the scholarship system awarded, the scoring system and the final examination, as well as the organization of the classes. So if in Romania, all the way of the compulsory education period, the bibliographic resources are distributed free of charge, in Italy, even in primary education, school textbooks are not provided so that the acquisition of these tasks is the responsibility of the parents. A big difference between the system of organizing classes in Romania and Italy is that although the pupils may have seven hours, they have only one 20-minute recreation and the lesson time is 55 minutes, whereas in Romania course classes last for 50 minutes followed by 10-minute breaks. A small advantage for Romania and the Bacculaureate Exam, as compared to other countries, has a degree of difficulty in increasing subjects so that it can be taken not only by those with high school performance. Compared to other European countries, Romania's scoring system is more permissive, the pass mark being 5, both for the subjects during the year and for exams, except for the Bacculaureate, where the average grade should be higher than 6.

Conclusions

The European world of learning and education is moving with the times – and so it should. Thanks to many significant improvements in mobile and cloud technologies, digital transformation has invaded virtually every area of life and work – and the 21st century classroom has not been passed by. Schools at all levels are in need of modern, tech-savvy graduates to take on leading roles. The future of education is set to become even more personalized, mobile and hands-on.

European schools in increasing numbers are implementing new electronic programs and allowing students and staff to use mobile devices on the Wi-Fi network and it's not hard to see why. These programs come with many benefits, including greater student engagement, more opportunities for personalized learning, access to a host of uber-trendy pedagogical apps – not to mention the savings on tech, free-flowing information and data, and greater independent learning. While digital transformation comes with many benefits, it also presents schools with a challenge: how can we foster a love of books in an increasingly digital age? To tackle the challenge, some schools have begun rethinking their libraries as open spaces, or learning hubs conducive to rest, independent learning and creativity.

While many schools continue to use outdated phonics-based methods to teach students suffering from dyslexia, the picture is looking better than it did only a few years ago – thanks to the rise of computer-based assistive technologies such as text-to-speech programs and predictive spellers, as well as changes in attitudes surrounding dyslexia and improved awareness of dyslexic brain processes. In the years to come, teachers will be focusing on new ways to support children.

Teachers are increasingly becoming the facilitators of their students' education and learning experience. Schools in our mobile age are moving away from rote learning toward valuable skill-based wisdom. It is not just about *what* you know, but rather *how* you know it,

and what you are planning to do with that data. By presenting students with deeper-level questions and instant access to almost infinite data and information, teachers are able to encourage children to become inquisitive problem-solvers and innovators.

In today's global economy, it has become a basic requirement for those working in the education sector to have cross-cultural skills and perspectives. Educators can access various programs in education that could prepare them for all the challenges and opportunities ahead – providing an invaluable global understanding of education, access to jobs abroad, and an international community of passionate educators from all four corners of the world.

The European trends in education are of growing significance, with economic, political and social changes driving an increasingly global knowledge economy.

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