

## ORIENTATIONS AND TENDENCIES IN THE DIDACTIC METHODOLOGY FOR THE INITIAL FORMATION OF THE TEACHING STAFF

Alexandrina Mihaela POPESCU<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** The training centered on the pupil gains ground in the theory and the Romanian educational practice, fact that determines the formation of the professor in this sense. In these conditions of the change of the paradigm, the initial preparation of the professor acquires consistency and quality by means of the cognitive and constructive methodology.

**Key words:** the initial formation of the professor, cognitivism, constructivism, cognitive - constructivism methodology.

The present reality of the training is still powerfully dominated by the experiences of reproductive education. But the limitations of the didactic staff at the exact answers given by the pupils are frequent. This reality, of behaviorist essence is till present in the context of a permanent curricular reform that claims however the priority of the formative character for the instructive-educational process, the direct participation of the pupil to his own formation. This contradictory situation is essentially maintained by the manner and level of didactic staff preparation in this matter and from here the accent that they put on the transmission of knowledge, rules, models. The constant advance can find its solution at the level of the didactical staff for the formation of a new concept upon teaching, a concept that does not exclude a behaviorist paradigm, but it progressively combines it with the constructivist one, so as to gradually pass from the paradigm of „teaching –transmitting" to the paradigm „teaching -constructing", as a sign of their didactical professionalism.

### THE INITIAL PEDAGOGICAL FORMATION OF THE CONSTRUCTIVIST PROFESSOR

After 1980, in USA, there have been presented two paradigms – the cognitivism and the constructivism - as answers to the excessive use of the behaviorism, by correlation with postmodernism, with research from the cognitive psychology, the epistemology of the scientific knowledge, but also on the ground previously created by the Active School. But, in Romania, at the level of the theory and of the educational practice, these paradigms have not found a fertile

---

<sup>1</sup> University of Craiova, Didactic Staff Training Department

land for the study and for the explicit implementation, and as we have already mentioned, the behaviorist approach in the elaboration of the curricula, in the training methodology, inclusively in the preparation of the didactical staff being however powerful. Some general ideas about the "new orientations" have spread on the background of awarding a priority for the formative, but without concretely experiencing them at the level of the initial formation of the student – the future professor, so as we could produce then the change of background in the training methodology centered on the pupil.

*Cognitivism and constructivism, new paradigms in education. Consequences upon the initial formation of the professors, as future actors in the European educational space* is the title of the grant project proposed and coordinated by the professor Elena Joița. This project has been carried out during the 2005-2007 period within the Department for the Preparation of the Didactical Staff (DPDS), the University of Craiova, the research team made up of staff of DPDS. Since it was a research-action-formation, applicative and ameliorative, the sampling for the research had been made up of students that had chosen a didactical career, from some faculties (The Faculty of Letters, The Faculty of Mathematics - Informatics, The Faculty of Physics, The Faculty of Biology). From the perspective of the increase of the quality for the pedagogical preparation of the professors, the project's aim was to give an answer to the present problems: the adaptation to the methodology for their formation to the new paradigms of the education, such as the cognitivism and the constructivism; their use in outlining the competences, that should be professionally manifested in the future school practice, by exceeding the classical one.

Within the project IPFCP (The Initial Pedagogical Formation of the Constructivist Professor) the following research directions have been outlined :

- there is necessary a qualitative reconsideration of the pedagogical / didactical scientific professionalism for the teacher, as a possible solution for the formation of the didactical staff, even in this initial stage of the preparation, with an accent on the formation of the competences and by using the constructivist methodology;
- the scientific research required by the putting into practice of the project has been represented by the research – action - formation, not so well promoted in the Romanian pedagogy;
- the realization of the research has imposed the revision of the problem for the curriculum of pedagogical preparation, the reconsideration of the present specific curriculum, at the level of the Department for the Preparation of the Didactical Staff, for the BA cycle, under the aspect for the constructivist approach of its elements: objectives, contents, strategies, projection, evaluation;
- the IPFCP project can open a new research direction in the field of the Romanian education: the outlining of the arguments for a constructive didactics/pedagogy.
- the conceiving, the experimental verification and the capitalization of strategies, models, cognitive and constructivist instruments in the initial pedagogical formation of the professors.

The reconsideration of the finalities and of the contents for the initial formation of the constructivist professor has been doubled by the revaluation and by the perfection, the experimentation of a methodology according to this one.

### **THE ROLE OF THE CONSTRUCTIVIST METHODOLOGY IN THE INITIAL FORMATION OF THE STUDENT- FUTURE PROFESSOR**

The importance that is given to choose the methodology used in the initial formation of the didactical staff is also due to their transfer of these methods to the pupils and to prevent the situations mentioned by JR. Kidd (1975, p. 338) where "the didactical staff expose a model of efficient teaching, but not of efficient learning". The choice of the methods for the formation of the didactical staff should accomplish the additional exigencies of the transferability for the formation towards the pupils.

The pragmatic and methodological change, in its complexity, can come from the approach of the issue by means of a new epistemological paradigm, with applicative consequences in education, training - constructivism. If as a student someone is taught as initial constructivist, then he will proceed as a professor in the same sense. But this does not mean the total elimination of the classical methods, because they are useful in many situations, but their optimization according to the new approaches of the knowledge, as well as their completing with new strategies, methods, proceedings and learning techniques derived from the logics of the science is also necessary. A lot of them have also been previously used in certain situations of school teaching, but the context in which they are applied intensively capitalize them for the understanding and the own construction of the knowledge, for the solution of different problems and real situations.

By realizing a comparative analysis on criteria for the constructivist procedures that have been identified in the specialty literature, we can mention the following categories, more or less outlined, of strategies, models and methods, reported to their approach and to their practical development (E. Joița coordinator, 2005, pp. 11-12):

- models that capitalize the essence of the constructivist education by research, with the aim of formation by the scientific knowledge, starting from solutions for problematic obligations, authentic situations, new cases, concepts: the model of the empiric initiation in the scientific knowledge, the model of "the approach by research", the model for the solution of the problems in a constructivist style, the model of the apprenticeship in the expert scientific knowledge, the model of the critical thinking, the model of the conceptual fields;
- models that have been outlined by observing the stages for the construction of the knowledge, of the succession for the mechanisms of mental processing, of formulation of the own interpretations, till the decisions and the reflections: models of the learning by multiple interpretations, the model of the 5 E, the model of the epistemic plans, the model ETER, the model of the procedural facilities, the model

of the cognitive processing of the information, the model of the generative education, the model CETP/SIS;

- models that integrate the external conditions for the construction of the knowledge: learning in authentic situations, by case studies, by anchoring in reality, the realization and the solution of the projects, by the capitalization of the collaboration and of the cooperation;

- models that integrate the inner conditions: the formulation of questions and hypotheses, the personal reflection, the affirmation of the metacognition, the motivation by success, the mental organization of the representations for the concepts;

- models that capitalize more intensively the informational and communication technologies (TIC), massively introduced as some indispensable instruments for the scientific knowledge.

In constructivism the methods, procedures and teaching /learning means are characterized by the diversity and the flexibility with significant possibilities of enriching and differentiation, tinting and particularization. The specific variety for the constructivist methodology in the initial formation of the didactical staff represents a manifestation manner of the methodological abilities necessary for the exercising of the didactic profession.

Taking into consideration the central role of the student - future professor in the construction of the knowledge of the learning those methods that support the formulation of the own hypotheses become important in the application of the ideas, of the solutions in other situations, by motivating him to understand the direct contract with different primary sources for a direct information and investigation, by orienting him in the formulation of reflections, interpretations, for the understanding and for the solution of the cognitive conflicts, by guiding him in the formulation of alternatives and arguments, by supporting him in the construction of the staging of knowing by the elaboration and the use of procedural instruments.

In education a rich methodical (procedural) repertory increases the capacity of acting in a creative manner as a technical luggage with deficits can only stop the creativity (Glasser, 1975). The preoccupations in this direction can only increase in a significant manner the possibilities of action, in the sense that the pupils /students will be able to dispose of many education instruments, and the professors of teaching instruments. So, by its nature, the didactic profession is based on methodic differences (Cerghit I., 2006, p.63).

In order to avoid the exaggeration in the use of the constructivist methodology, the traditional methods are not excluded, but they are not exclusive anymore, and their creative combination sustains the development of a methodology centered on the pupil. A teaching or learning method can have constructivist valences, if it draws and maintains the pupil/student's motivation and attention during all the period of construction of the understanding and of the solution for the given responsibilities, so as the traditional methods could also attain some constructivist valences, if they have a mental, affective and motional

echo upon the person involved in learning. From here the important mark assigned within IPFCP for the procedures of updating the classical methods, only exceeding the passive reception, the memorizing, without any personal contribution of the student-future professor. Siebert too (2001) argues that, in constructivism, there is not necessarily "a new teaching methodology, but rather a specific pedagogical attitude". From this perspective, we should focus on the issue of the initial preparation of the didactic staff for a new attitude that could facilitate the understanding and the solution of the problems, of the situations in a constructivist sense. If the professor himself will present to his pupils how to interpret the content of the given curriculum, how to proceed, how to tackle the problems - the hypotheses and the solution variants, how to present other interpretations, inclusively by outlining the typical errors and mistakes, that could provoke a new search, if he manifests his satisfaction/dissatisfaction against these facts, he will become a methodological model of constructivist knowledge (Joița E., 2006, p. 132).

The constructivist formation of the professor even since the stage of the initial formation represents, in the context of the formative education, centered on the pupil, a possible solution, with the advantages and the limits implied by the implementation of a change.

## REFERENCES

- CERGHIT, I.**, (2006), *Metode de învățământ*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București
- JOIȚA, E.** (coord.), (2005), *Strategii constructiviste în formarea inițială a profesorului*, Editura Universitaria, Craiova
- JOIȚA, E.**, (2006), *Instruirea constructivistă-o alternativă. Fundamente. Strategii*. Editura Aramis, București
- JOIȚA, E.** (coord), (2007), *Formarea pedagogică a profesorului. Instrumente de învățare cognitiv-constructivistă*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București