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**The sense of education. Learning and Teaching through questions.**

In my dissertation I attempt to approach the phenomenon of education – teaching and learning – in the belief that independent and critical reflection on this matter is not only a cognitive challenge for me, but also a practical obligation resulting from working on one’s own pedagogical skills, which will allow me to understand better what we are involved in as researchers, teachers, parents and also as students. I examine the basic teaching and learning issues, looking for ways to enrich our understanding of the *sense of education*. The inspiration for these explorations comes from questions about what education is, how it takes place and the conditions it requires in our schools. However, as opposed to an approach where an empirically explored, didactic or methodical aspect of education is the most important, I attempt to present the problematic nature of the educational experience, interpreted from a philosophical perspective. Thus, I attempt to answer the question about the *sense of education in the perspective of philosophical reflection*.

The approach adopted in the dissertation is partly a form of phenomenological analysis and partly hermeneutic reflection, while its practical complement is the analysis of lessons including Philosophy for Children (P4C).

In the phenomenological approach chosen by me, I shall try to describe learning as a *perception of sense*. In such a perspective, learning is a *process of reduction* and quest for the sense. Examining the learning process is a descent into the depths of the existential phenomenon in which a person involves his entire life. This is the phenomenon defined by Merleau-Ponty as the one of learning kind of *attentiveness*, *seeing anew, uncovering, reflection*. At the same time, however, it is an approach consisting of reflection on practical aspects. It is a phenomenological reflection on everyday pedagogical experience.

The paper also includes the method of hermeneutical interpretation. The Gadamerian presentation of hermeneutics from *Truth and Method*, understood as “uncovering the human experience” shows, I believe, the nature of the learning experience. In this perspective, hermeneutics above all concerns the phenomenon of understanding, which in itself is learning. Learning is more than cognitive process because it consists of extracting understanding from something that in a way has cheated and deceived us; in the context of interest for me here – from *estimations*. In this sense, learning is an interpretative hermeneutical process with joint participation of the education participants in the *movement of meaning,* as well as the restoration of understanding between them where this has been lost.

The third perspective of importance for my considerations is related to philosophically understood Action Research. An analysis of the philosophically oriented lessons that I conducted with students will serve as an exemplification of theoretical considerations and will allow for more profound research. The dissertation is composed of two parts in which by examining both the possibility of philosophical embedding of reflection on education and pedagogical attempts I try to explain the phenomenon of education. In my quests I try to capture the logic that would justify further continuation of the project called “education.” In the first chapter I discuss the conclusions arising from the adoption of the impact of selected philosophical concepts on reflection on education. The three presented thinking perspectives – of M. Merleau-Ponty, H.-G. Gadamer and M. Heidegger – are treated by me here as a point of departure for further considerations that I pursue in subsequent chapters.

The second chapter is a presentation – consistent in accordance with the triadic structure adopted in this part of the dissertation, under the inspiration of the three thinkers – of three dimensions of the educational experience: designated by the category of possibility, then by the category of specificity and by the category of insufficiency. Such an approach to the educational experience makes it possible to show education as a complex process in its essence.

In the third chapter I examine a concept of key significance for my quests – the concept of questioning in the context the three philosophical concepts referred to earlier. Here I focus on showing both the objective and subjective dimension of education. The fundamental categories here are carnality, the language aspect and openness.

In the fourth chapter I present a synthesis of selected concepts of learning. Pedagogical literature is of course very abundant and it is not possible to fairly describe in a short chapter what theoreticians say about education, and particularly learning. In this chapter I only focus on standpoints and publications that have recently raised the interest of researchers and which may, in my opinion, deepen the discussion on the sense of education, to which I invite in my dissertation. Here I present pedagogical concepts, though it must be said that while they are formulated by pedagogues, due to the methodological preferences they have a philosophical character.

In the fifth chapter I focus on the issues of dialogue, evoked by inquiries concerning the place of questioning in the educational experience. Having in view the considerations from the first part of the dissertation, I thought that deepening my reflection on dialogue, or in fact educational dialogue, should notably become the main task in this chapter.

The sixth chapter is particularly important for substantive and methodological reasons. First of all, it is here that I finally attempt to show the link, or in fact the *oneness* of pedagogical reflection and educational activity. Even though the dichotomous approach to theory and practice has been questioned and overturned many times already, in everyday research and educational practice one can still find the strong impact of the dualistic tendency. Referring to the achievements of the philosophers of education, particularly Anglo-Saxon ones, with regard to the philosophical validation of *Action Research* , I attempt to show philosophical inquiries that I have been taking up in my work with children for a long time already. I present two examples of such inquiries, which “happen” in the school environment and which not only change, I believe, the quality of work of the school, but also by generating an *inquiring community*, transform thinking about philosophical research and its community status. This analysis leads me to the final conclusion of suggesting that the sense of education can be understood as community-shared practice of freedom, possible thanks to the educational, liberating role of questions.