

Pedagogy Today: Orientations and Challenges

Thesis:

Despite a certain level of **convergence** over its aims and methods, education and pedagogy are always pervaded by **antinomies**.

Pantelis Kiprianos

Consensus

For instance, we generally accept Pestalozzi's idea that education should simultaneously cultivate the head, the heart and the hands, i.e. the human being in its totality



Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827)



Antinomies

Jerome Bruner defines them as “pairs of large truths, which though both may be true, [they] nevertheless contradict each other”.

Antinomies are not necessarily obstacles to the progress of educational and pedagogical thought.

On the contrary, they provide fruitful grounds for acquiring a global and dialogical view (a synthesis) of what education is about and thus offer possibilities for reflection.

Bruner identifies “three of the most baffling of these antinomies”:

- a. the individual-realization versus the culture-preservation antinomy;
- b. the talent-centered versus the tool-centered antinomy;
- c. the antinomy between particularism and universalism.

I set forth two propositions:

1. We may or may not opt for one of the pairs of the previously mentioned antinomies, depending on circumstances and on personal preferences, but we can neither resolve nor escape from them.
2. Antinomies are weakened or strengthened according to variations in the social context.

Two examples

(a)

In the past, the main factor evoked against personal development was the so-called 'national interest'.

Today, for reasons linked to its weakening, the nation is largely replaced by the quest for economic efficiency.

(b)

After several decades of broad consensus over the priority of 'education for all', the accent has been, for some years, increasingly placed on the more 'gifted' kids

Let us focus on another more recent pedagogical antinomy

This antinomy emerges between two divergent trends:

1. Today Pedagogy appears to have become more scientific. To increase its own credibility it draws increasingly from a diversity of disciplines and incorporates knowledge about the child, the learning process, teaching and the pedagogic relationship.
2. By contrast, however, pedagogical practice is becoming an increasingly more complicated process connected to factors other than the teacher: the child, its peers, its family environment and the community.

The rationale behind this turn
is well known so I shall not insist...

But the main result is that:

The educator, on the one hand, needs to have
more and more scientific knowledge

....

but on the other hand, has to act more as an
observer and administrator, both in the
classroom and over relations between the school
and its social environment.

What does this mean for pedagogy and for educator?

While pedagogy aspires to become more scientific, it is in fact becoming more an art in the sense that it increasingly depends = on the practices of the teacher.

At the same time, as pedagogical practices integrate the new scientific, the scope for action for teachers, instead of becoming reduced, grows further.

This is the case because teachers are expected to listen carefully to their pupils and to resolve through creative strategies the tensions between the school community and its social environment.

Ευχαριστώ

Thank you

Danke
Tack
Kiitos
Ačiū

Merci
Gracies
Muḡumi
Obrigado