

School dimension of upbringing¹ and its role in students' socialization to desirable values

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Summary

As a social institution for upbringing and education, contemporary school performs various social roles or functions: humanistic education and upbringing, enculturation and socialization, selection, allocation etc. The aim of this article is to raise awareness of the relevance of the school dimension of upbringing as a significant factor in the students' socialization to desirable values. Upbringing is a social necessity and an activity by which a particular human being as the being of upbringing is formed, therefore the emphasis is put on humanistic upbringing that nurtures the person's integral being. School is a carrier and a conveyor of personal and social values. Successful socialization of students to desirable values can only be expected if all agents of socialization are acting in the same direction. This article discusses different social roles of school, the axiological dimension of humanistic upbringing, conditions of student's socialization to desirable values and practical implications of these theoretical hypotheses in order to form a democratic and supportive school climate.

Key words: social roles of school, humanistic upbringing, socialization in desirable values, school climate

1 The school system in Croatia has two inherent dimensions: upbringing (transfer of values) and education (transfer of knowledge). These terms will therefore be used in further text.

Sažetak

Suvremena škola kao odgojna i obrazovna institucija društva nositeljica je različitih društvenih uloga ili funkcija: humanističkog odgoja i edukacije, enkulturacije i socijalizacije, selekcije i alokacije te drugih. Cilj je rada podizanje razine svijesti o važnosti odgojne dimenzije škole kao važnog čimbenika u socijalizaciji učenika u poželjnim vrijednostima. Odgoj je društvena nužnost i aktivnost kojom čovjek kao biće odgoja uopće postaje čovjekom te se stoga naglasak stavlja na humanistički odgoj koji njeguje čovjekovo cjelovito biće. Škola je nositelj i prenositelj vrijednosti, osobnih i društvenih, a uspješna socijalizacija učenika u poželjnim vrijednostima može se očekivati tek ako svi agensi socijalizacije djeluju u istome smjeru. U radu se stoga razmatraju različite društvene uloge škole, aksiološka dimenzija humanističkog odgoja, uvjeti socijalizacije učenika u poželjnim vrijednostima te praktične implikacije tih teorijskih postavki u cilju oblikovanja demokratske i podupiruće školske klime.

Ključne riječi: *društvene uloge škole, humanistički odgoj, socijalizacija u poželjnim vrijednostima, školska klima*

Introductory considerations

Within the framework of the theory of school, this social institution is regarded by pedagogical sciences as the bearer of various social functions. However, its primary role is the role of upbringing by which a particular human being as the being of upbringing is formed (Bezić, 1977, Bilić, 2017, Golubović, 2010, Thomas, Vujčić, 2013). Thereby, the upbringing includes upbringing as well as education or training (Vujčić, 2013), and school is but one, albeit important, of the agents participating in a child's and adolescent's upbringing. Contemporary school is a place of humanistic upbringing that develops all the potentials of a child's personality, to what aim all the educational professionals are invited to participate in the development of various activities, such as pedagogical advising, pedagogical workshops and forming a democratic and supportive school climate. The aim of this review article is to raise awareness of the importance of the school's dimension of upbringing as an important factor in the students' socialization to desirable values, for the purpose of positioning of theoretical considerations on the school's role of upbringing as an important factor of contemporary educational policies.

Social Roles of School

The theoretical view of the school's role of upbringing is related to different theories of upbringing. Ledić (1991) starts from the methodological approach in determining the goals of upbringing and distinguishes between physical, anthropological, abstract humanistic and agnostic upbringing. However, in this paper the starting point is the theoretical and conceptual dichotomy between formal and progressive upbringing (Thomas, 2015), with the remark that pedagogical schools and educational ideas cannot be fully categorized into one of the two aforementioned categories, since these are mostly mixed types. Alongside the aforementioned concepts of upbringing, two developmental lines of pedagogy have evolved: a formal and a progressive one.

In the concept of formal upbringing (Thomas, 2015), education is a lever for the transfer of information. Culture and civilization are warehouses of ideas and wisdom, which are to be handed over to new generations, the key component of this transformation is teaching, while the transformation process itself is upbringing. "While progressive upbringing emphasized a child's development from within, formalists, on the other hand, emphasized the formation from the outside - the formation that comes from diving into knowledge, ideas, beliefs, concepts and visions of the society, culture and civilization" (Thomas, 2015: 27). Even today, the advocates of formal upbringing are liberal formalists. "For the progressivists, upbringing is the development of the ability of critical thinking: it needs to be focused on a child and on problem solving. For the formalists, however, it is the process of importing and acquiring skills and knowledge that are crucial for prosperity and success in life." (Thomas, 2015:18).

Understanding different ideas of upbringing, theories and trends also helps to understand various functions of school in a society, such as the function of upbringing and education, enculturation, socialization, allocation, selection and reproduction of social strata, indoctrination etc. (Knowels & Lander, 2012, Vrcelj, 2000). Through enculturating one “dives” into culture, it is the process of inclusion in a society by learning cultural patterns, values and behaviors (Ellis, 2004, Schiro, 2008). According to Ilišin (2003), school carries a socialization role, since a person learns how to live in a community through organized and deliberate upbringing, but they are simultaneously exposed to unorganized and experiential affective learning of values, attitudes and habits that takes place in out-of-school situations as well. Socialization is thus “integrating an individual into social life through the process of adapting to social requirements and norms, which implies the acquisition of attitudes, values and desirable forms of behavior” (Ilišin, 2003: 10). The important role of school is also the functional one, actually the function of selection and allocation, since the school serves a certain social purpose, and it is there that one acquires knowledge, skills and competences needed for the inclusion in the world of employment. Hence, the school can simultaneously be a place where, according to the concept of *social reconstruction* (Schiro, 2008), the social or cultural capital that the student has not acquired in his family is compensated for and complemented, but also a place where differences are widened in accordance with the concept of *social efficiency* (Schiro, 2008). This question is related to the public interest of contemporary educational policies, which aim at the democratization of the process and system of education, making it equally accessible to everyone and ensuring the vertical and horizontal passage through the system.

Contemporary school supports humanistic upbringing that holistically approaches the child’s personality and supports its overall development: cognitive, physical, social and emotional (Jurčević-Lozančić, 2011). Humanistic upbringing rests on the *pedocentric* educational philosophy, which is directed towards a child and their integral being, unlike the *sociocentric* philosophical orientation, which is directed towards meeting the social needs (2002). *Pedocentrism*, as the concept of upbringing that puts the child in the center, connects all the agents in the humanistic upbringing, whose participants are the family, community and school as the specialized institution that is fulfilling the goals of upbringing and education.

The Axiological Dimension of Humanistic Upbringing

As mentioned in the introduction, nowadays the discussions about the educational system are held not only in the media, but also in our homes on the desirable system for the 21st century, on the outcomes of teaching and learning, on the selection of adequate educational content, and additional discussions on the system of values appropriate for transfer to younger generations. Thus, it is necessary to define upbringing and its axiological dimension, as well as educational values.

Upbringing is the cultivation of a living being, “an activity based on caring, nurturing and respecting its subject, i.e. the human being that is nourished and whose human development is sought” (Polić 1993: 15). For Wolfgang Brezinka, one of the key theorists in this area, upbringing is a deliberate and purposeful action, which can never be fully planned, since then it would not be a productive and creative activity, but a manipulation in upbringing (Gudjons, 1994). The activity of upbringing is also the creative mediation of culture. The goals, purpose and methods of upbringing are determined by dialogue between the three interested subjects: the subject of upbringing, the educator and the legislator. Brezinka thus defines upbringing as a set of social actions that people use, in order to improve, in any possible way, psychological dispositions of others, or to retain desired dispositions, i.e. the personalities of others are attempting to be improved by using social activities. Therefore, Brezinka emphasizes altogether five aspects of upbringing: (1) upbringing is a process that consists of social actions by which the proper behavior of a human being, as the subject of upbringing, is achieved; (2) social activities, which make up the process of upbringing, are aimed at helping other people; (3) psychological dispositions are innate or acquired readiness, inclinations and traits that affect the behavior, attitudes, values and interests that an individual possesses, which are to be further developed or yet to be acquired; (4) the process of upbringing improves, enhances and maintains good human traits, while removing bad ones; (5) social actions or activities of upbringing do not necessarily have to be successful and give a positive and desirable result, since the educator can only try, but not force the child to accept their own positive educational capacities (Gudjons, 1994).

The axiological dimension is emphasized in the activities of upbringing. Numerous authors point out that there is no such thing as a value-neutral upbringing or a value-neutral school, since the upbringing always implies values that are transferred to new generations through the process of socialization (Hoblaj, 2005, Jukić, 2013, Miliša, Dević and Perić, 2015, Mlinarević, 2014, Stojanović, 2008; Vican, 2006; Vukasović, 1991). Value is understood as “a relatively permanent belief that a particular mode of behavior or the ultimate state of existence is personally or socially desirable, in relation to the opposite behavior or ultimate state of existence. The system of values is an acceptable organization of beliefs that encompasses desirable ways of behaving or the ultimate states of existence, next to the continuity of relative importance” (Rokeach, 1973: 5). Values can be defined as desirable goals of varying importance, which go beyond specific situations and act as guiding principles in a man’s life (Schwartz, 2006). Therefore, values can be differentiated as general, universal or life values; personal and social values; material and ethical or moral values; religious and secular values; values according to important areas (family values, work, scientific, social values, etc.) (Cifrić, 2011; Koprek, 2015; Krizmanić and Kolesarić, 2007).

From the aforementioned categories of values, the curriculum-building participants are choosing the values preferred in the socialization of students in a school, as a social in-

stitution for upbringing and education. In the National Curriculum Framework (MZOŠ², 2011) those values of upbringing and education are *knowledge, solidarity, identity* and *responsibility*. The National Curriculum Framework (MZO³, 2017) added *integrity, respect, health* and *entrepreneurship*. Such values are generally not the controversial point that would lead to polemics in the scientific and professional public, state bodies, families, ecclesial communities, civil society organizations and other institutions that represent legitimate participants in curriculum building. The points of dispute are usually value orientations as “general principles of behavior and action in relation to pursued specific goals” (Miliša, Dević and Perić, 2015: 13). Ronald Inglehart described them as traditional, materialistic and post-materialistic value orientations (Inglehart, 1997). For example, a parent whose system of values is predominantly traditional or post-materialistic, seeks an upbringing for his or her child consistent with these values. The value orientation of curriculum’s creators, being the traditional, materialistic or post-materialist one, is a sort of a value framework for a curriculum as a national document. The reflection of this value framework will be reflected in a school’s climate and the hidden curriculum of the educational institution itself (Kelly, 2011). When this value system fails to correspond with the value system of a certain social group, polemic tones are appearing in the public space, sometimes leading to a true ideological conflict, as it has happened often in Croatia in the past couple of years.

The principles of teaching and upbringing for values are based on different philosophical, historical, psychological and educational assumptions, i.e. they originate from different points of view on human nature, learning and teaching (Rakić and Vukušić, 2010). In the *prescriptive approach* to values, the character is educated by direct and open teaching of fundamental moral imperatives, values and virtues, common to all people; in the *descriptive approach*, it is preferable to provide indirect upbringing through creative and critical thinking, problem-solving and concluding, in order for children to acquire competences of individual concluding about what is moral and correct. Authors Rakić and Vukušić (2010) offer the merger of these two approaches into a *mixed* one which includes both the cognitive and the affective dimension of value teaching, by developing reflection and critical thinking skills, asking, discussing and direct teaching on universal values. Likewise, Mougnotte (1995) emphasized that it is not advisable to teach about values in the same manner as teaching norms and rules, but to live according to those values, as shown by the entire school staff’s own example through their activities, cooperation and sensibility, which they present towards students and their needs.

2 Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

3 Ministry of Science and Education

Socialization of Students to Desirable Values

Socialization includes organized and deliberate upbringing as well as unorganized and experiential affective learning. It also takes place in especially prepared conditions and out-of-school situations and also includes upbringing and experiential learning of values, attitudes and habits (Ilišin, 2003). However, what about the context in which the socialization takes place?

According to Bronfenbrenner's *ecological model of human development* (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), social environment is a multi-layered system that consists of families, peers' relationships, schools, neighborhood, working environment, political, religious and other organizations, informal social networks as well as culture in general. In accordance with this theory, environmental layers that are closer have a larger impact on one's social development, which makes teachers and schools, alongside parents, family and peer relations, important factors in a child's socialization. For Bronfenbrenner, socialization is a way of becoming a member of a community, with three important assumptions: a person has an active role and influences its own environment; the environment draws the person to adapt to environmental conditions and limitations; the environment consists of different entities that interact on different levels of the ecological model of human development (Härkönen, 2007).

This theory teaches us that the cooperation of two social contexts - the family and the school context - is important for the cognitive and overall development of a child as well as for the child's socialization itself. An important factor for successful socialization to desirable values is certainly the same or similar value systems of the family and the environment from which the student comes from, the value system of peers and adults important in the child's life, the school's value system, the value system of teachers and other factors of the child's community. School is a place of dynamic and reciprocal relationships, and even though not all the participants have the same value system, values written in the national curriculum should not be disputed: *knowledge, solidarity, identity and responsibility* (MZOŠ, 2011) and *integrity, respect, health and entrepreneurship* (MZO, 2017). These are also humanistic values, as they assist the child's holistic development and fulfillment of all their potentials.

Declarative advocacy of students' socialization to desirable humanistic values leads to the discussion on positioning the upbringing for values within the curriculum. Value upbringing can be included in the civic education. In the Member States of the European Union, the civic education is in most cases taught as an interdisciplinary topic, and in other cases the content is included into other subjects (European Commission, 2017). The application of the *mixed model* is preferred as a desirable model of teaching humanistic values (Rakić and Vukišić, 2010). Taking into account all the aforementioned theoretical concepts, it is exactly the sciences of upbringing, as an interdisciplinary area, that can offer not only the content and the methods of teaching desirable values, but

also the tools needed for the assessment and evaluation of actual effectiveness of such programs. Namely, the upbringing for values is not part of the curriculum that can be subjected to grading, but it needs to be evaluated and assessed from the point of view of its pedagogic justifiability and relevance as well as personal and social effectiveness, which is not the case these days, and so is the area of upbringing left to the personal assessment of teachers, schools and communities.

Concluding Considerations: Practical Implications of Theoretical Concepts

The starting point of this article is the fact that one of the tasks of pedagogical theory is to improve pedagogical practice by its knowledge and recommendations, which is especially important for humanistic upbringing since “a school should be the central institution in which the growth and development of every student is professionally and systematically stimulated” (Mlinarević, 2014: 143). Contemporary humanistic school is built as a *quality school* that students love, since it fulfills their needs for love, friendship, security and structure (Glasser, 2005). Everyday school life can be further humanized with the help of pedagogical tools: pedagogical counseling, pedagogical workshops, the formation of a democratic and supportive school climate and developing of active free-time programs as successful prevention forms of socially unacceptable children’s and youth’s behavior (Livazović and Vranješ, 2012). These solutions direct us towards the creation of a school curriculum as the curricular version of a particular educational institution which meets the needs of its children and community. The greatest responsibility lies on the school’s principal and the expert team that provides the operational framework for the implementation of the school curriculum, but on the teachers as well, who should be sensitized that, alongside their own subject’s content, they should also teach the civic education content. This can be achieved by incorporating these contents into the initial education and professional lifelong education of teachers, but also of principals and expert team members. The curriculum created in this manner is also the context of upbringing in which humanistic values such as self-fulfillment, respect and self-esteem, freedom, solidarity, democratic relationships, sincerity and loyalty, critical thinking and other values are effectively transferred and this should be the aim of modern educational policies.

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