EDUCATION - THE FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THE „RESPECT" LEARNING STRATEGY PRINCIPLES IMPLEMENTED IN HIGHER ECONOMIC EDUCATION

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Abstract
The present article highlights exactly these principles of human capital and economic development and the concept of learning strategy, as representing the initial stage of an educational project that proposes a scientific approach based on designing, experimenting, validating and drafting a learning model in the field of economic sciences.

Key words: *education, human capital, economic development, learning strategy, educational project.*

JEL Classification: *I 25*

I. INTRODUCTION. LITERATURE REVIEW

Trans- modern society, towards which we are heading, a society based mostly on cooperation, not on competition, requires a new approach of investments in human capital and a re- spiriting of the said item from an integrating perspective. This goal can be achieved only through education.

The correlation between the education quality, the economic performances (economic growth) and the institutional environment are shown in numerous papers: Faraq &Taylor (2011), Kawamoto (2007), Yamarik (2011), Wang & Wong (2011), Nastase & Hodoroaba (2010), whereas Khataybeh, Subbarini & Shurman (2010) consider that Education for Sustainable Development is absolutely vital for sorting humanity out of the present system crisis.

In the society of knowledge forming and developing the human capital are correlated to the investment in research- development (Scicchitano, 2009), ever since 2002 Davis & Noland introducing the concept of "Educational Needs Index" whereas Checchi (2006) in the reference paper of the field: *The Economics of Education. Human Capital, Family Background and Inequality*, deals with the demand for education. Its core part is a Ben– Porath type model of education as an investment in human capital, where individuals choose their optimal education by equalizing marginal cost and marginal benefit in an effort to maximize utility.

This transformation cannot be accomplished in the absence of important financial resources, efficiently managed at the level of universities (Creciun, 2013); Sequeira & Martins (2007), Sauer (2002) formulate and estimate a dynamic programming model of optimal educational financing decisions.

Tertiary Education (TE) is a key asset in knowledge-based economies: tertiary educated workers stimulate economy-wide productivity and growth, and are crucial for innovation and the use of new technologies (Aghion and Cohen 2004; Vandenbussche, Aghion and Meghir 2006).

Gil-Galván (2011) highlights the role that work satisfaction offers to the graduates of higher education, in particular for the graduates of tertiary education with economic profile. Larisa Loredana Dragolea (2015) realizes an interesting case study on the intentions and the possibilities of access on the labor market of higher education graduates in the field of economics.

Correlating the competences of economy graduates with the offer on the work market represents a constant research concern of the authors (Minica & Gherghina, 2014), whereas the way in which the investment in human capital has determined the economic growth in Romania, has made up the topic of the authors PhD thesis (Minica, 2005).

II. ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND THE SOCIETY OF KNOWLEDGE

Education represents a system of informative- formative actions, carried out consciously and systematically on the human subject so as to transform him or her according to the pursued educational finalities.

The finalities of education are structured on three hierarchy levels:

- Educational ideal;
- Educational purposes;
- Educational objectives.

The educational ideal expresses the demands and aspirations of a society from a certain historic stage under the form of a human desirable personality model *and has a high level of general validity and is attainable in the long run*, at its accomplishment contributing the educational system in its whole.

Educational purposes represent educational finalities with a level of general validity that are realized in medium time interval.

Geissler (cf. Cucoş, C., 1996) identifies four pair of purposes (contradictory yet complementary):

1. *Material purposes* (centered on assimilating information) and *formal purposes* (following the modeling of aptitudes and the cultivating of personality);

2. *Content purposes* (centered on the acquisition of punctual knowledge) and *behavioral purposes* (forming and hiding some actions or habits)

3. *Utility purposes* (focused on habits and competences demanded by the practical activity) and *non-pragmatic purposes* (targeting the forming of a behavior without immediate practical finality)

4. *Purposes specific to the subjects* (characteristic to each subject) and *purposes that overreach the subjects* (developing intelligence, motivation etc.)

Educational objectives represent anticipative character statements that describe in exact terms the expected results to be obtained at the end of training sequence.

In the knowledge society, economic and social performance is based on higher economic education. If until a few decades ago was to obtain the ultimate goal of education elites and the aspiration to achieve ideals present, postmodernist pragmatism players aimed at creating employment, skills and competences. Student in economics is prepared to look in terms of effectiveness, the merchantability, and profit. Since relativizing truth undermines interest in finding his orientation toward technological progress and increased inter- disciplinarily, trying so creative rearrangement of information, organize reality in a unique way, changing the perspective demonstrating multiple valences of virtual experience.

"Modernity antinomy is given economy: material modernity (technology) and modernity spiritual emancipation. The view that human resource is a mere expense and- homo oeconomicus, devoid of feelings and having only pecuniary motivations, is part of the theory that the economy is a perfect mechanism, the synthetic and artificial endlessly dilute the living, feeling reasoning deleted, aims and prospects artificial thinking that will create a virtual world in which man is a symbolic place" (Bretcu, 2013).

Technological ubiquity - life has become impossible without information technology, involving major changes in higher education system, both in terms of relational and educational technology arena, in support of education, both remodeling complex act of learning. The open and flexible frequently changing rules of the game in society and economic education should enable students to facilitate and build options for the future, "exploration, not indoctrination and formatting each individual illuminates another facet of reality, as entitled as all other facets, any hierarchy being overkill" (Stan, 2004).

There are several postmodern principles that sit at the basis of actual education: (Ispas, 2013)

- Respecting diversity, the student is unique, has his or her own potential and specific needs;
- Active learning by developing the students own capacities, the professor being a facilitator of this process;
- The importance of the interpersonal relationship, beyond the act of learning, the student must be seen as a human being, with whom a specific relation is built;
- Lifelong learning, the social, economic, technologic dynamic is so great, that lifelong learning is a necessity.

So, knowledge is now fragmented and individual personal self-reflexive tendencies, in different ways skeptical attitude configuring and customizing students' conceptions of the universal, without abolish or contradict. At the same time "is deconstructive, that postmodernism denies scientific methodology and experimental modern type of its fundamental assumptions; it proposes reconstruction of historical perspective and hermeneutics without authority or disband result in removal of the teacher" (after G. A. Rosile and D. Boje cited by Stan).

OECD studies frequently ask: *How well do today's schools prepare for tomorrow's world?* (Andreas Schleicher, 2015).

Recent studies of the European Union highlight the need to invest in a higher education adapted to labor market needs and the needs of the current generation of young people and the Europe 2020 Strategy has as major objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. It provides quantitative growth target to 40% the share of graduates among the population aged 30-34 years.

The "UNESCO" program "Teaching and learning for a sustainable future" highlights the experiential learning, storytelling, values education, enquiry learning, appropriate assessment, future problem solving, learning outside the classroom, community problem solving.

In this complex economic environment, human resources becomes increasingly the pillar on which management is based. They are tangible resources, adaptable, able to mutate over time, creating value and at the same time generating productivity, while the results obtained are directly proportional to their level of training (Demyen, Lala-Popa, 2013). The University is required to become a vector of the knowledge society, to adapt the characteristics of postmodernism applicable to each generation.

Higher education in Romania is facing numerous problems concerning the quality, access, relevance, efficiency and fairness, which is major causes, can be synthesized funding and credibility.

Despite frequent changes in the education system superior economic change in education is formal, without consistency and relevance act of knowing, postmodern principles being applied and the benefits of the knowledge society is underused. Such informal information technology is applied, static, exterior knowledge, it merely an instrument and not a means of developing and knowledge, a simple classic medium for transmitting information. Regardless of the complexity of the technology arena used, the teacher is "an informant", its role being to transmit much data, knowledge, and confidence, information, clear, prioritized, and sequenced, to be learned regardless of opinions, options, capabilities and potential. The form in which this amount of data is transmitted varies depending on the technique used generation, the teacher's style, but essentially, the learning system is limited to the flow of information from teacher to student.

In the paper: *Implementation model of the student centered education in a university in Romania* (Rosca, 2015) there are highlighted the main categories of educational beneficiaries: the student, their family, the employers, the society and the employees of the High Educational Institution (HEI).

III. THE PRINCIPLES OF THE R.E.S.P.E.C.T. STRATEGY – AS AN APPEAL TO THE ETHIC AND QUALITY OF COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

The main purpose of this paper is to highlight educational strategy applied economic sciences, representing a methodological model of teaching- learning- evaluation, and the foundation of an experimental project to identify the best teaching methods tailored learning styles of students.

Learning is a cognitive process that supposes *a tutoring activity* (teaching) – a directional emitting of information, *an assimilating activity* (learning) – the structured reception of the transmitted information, followed by *evaluation*.

Carrying out learning, as a process, supposes the implication of three components: psychological, social and biologic.

From the complexity point of view, learning can be differentiated after a hierarchy that comprises the following stages: sensorial - perceptive learning; movement learning; verbal learning; affective learning; intelligent learning.

A learning strategy targets a coherent cluster of procedures that ensure the cognitive transfer in the following conditions:

- Non - local character, being able to become general after testing and validating;
- Targets the long term (long life learning);
- Offers a systematic vision having as finality the creation of competences;
- It is programmatically applied, targeting the durable founding of the career of future graduates and their adapting at the dynamic of the work market, teaching them to learn.

The structure of differentiated learning strategies for economic higher education has the following elements: vision, mission, values, and objectives, courses of action, institutional and methodological anchors and expected results.

The complex process of identifying learning strategies involves understanding its concepts and processes, both in terms of student and teacher.

A denoted is given if has a meaning relevant to the specific context, transforming the information when it eliminated uncertainty about her.

Only if that information fits into the system of principles, beliefs of the student becomes aware of it, and transforming it into power is in direct association with the skills and attitude to learning. That power must then exercise constantly and consciously to achieve performance.

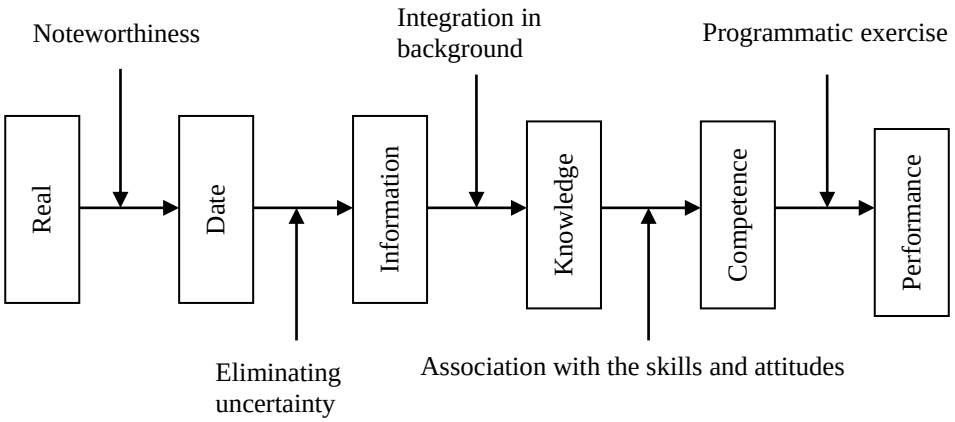

Figure 1 – The strategy of learning
Source: *Dinga Emil, Strategii de învăţare şi FPC implementate de proiectul DEFIN,* Timişoara, December 10th 2011

3.1.* The *RESPECT model in higher economic education

The model is an integrant part of the specific learning strategy applicable in higher education and proposes three general objectives:

1. Making the educational objectives specific to the economic sciences operational

To operationalize an objective means to implement it in terms of actual behavior, observable and measurable. The operationalization of an educational objective involves the development of a suite of information: performance specification, performance specification author, specifying concrete conditions in which will take place performance achievement and setting a minimum acceptable level of success.

The educational objectives can be synthetized by the acronym RESPECT having the following significance:

a) Specifying performance

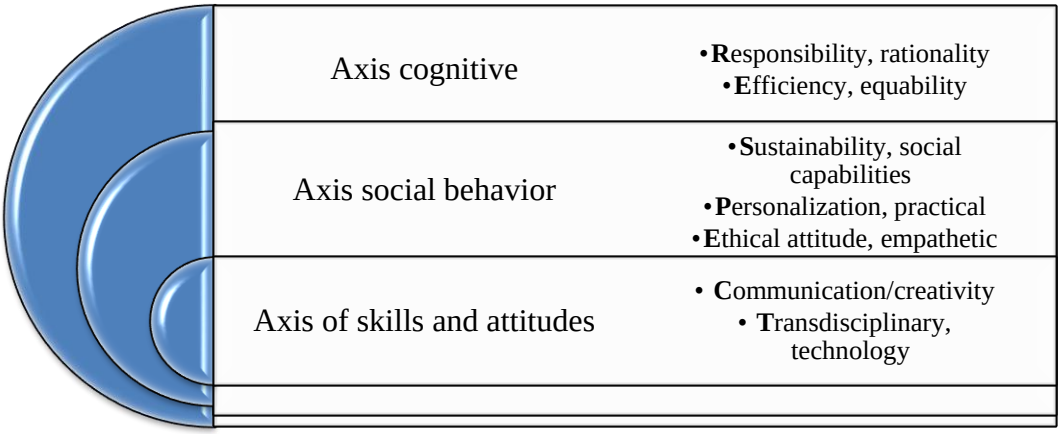

Figure 2 - ***The performances of the "RESPECT" learning strategy***
Source: Author

b) Specifying the author of the performance

I could not speak in students' performance without taking into account the resources (human, material, financial, informational) and the legislation. Such a strategy has broad implications for the entire institutional system.

c) Specifying the concrete conditions highlights the methods and principles applied in implementing:

Research– Based Approach to projects and process,
Enquiry– Based Learning,
Self- directed Learning,
Problem- Based Learning,
E- Portfolios of student work,
Critical Analysis,
Teaching and Learning Resources.

d) Settling the minimal level of accepted success

In establishing the methods and procedures of examination and final component of the learning process should be clearly defined performance levels for each cycle (bachelor, master, doctorate). To ensure the mobility of students and increasing their adaptability to the labor market, the main needed permanently correlated both between disciplines and between academia and the real economy.

2. Founding and implementing an active student – professor – business environment– work market partnership.

The professor becomes a mentor acting for the development of emotional intelligence; he or she pursues a personalized relationship with the student, whom he or she must know, know his or her creative valences and potential, intermediates them to value in a distinct and individual fashion. Knowledge supposes handing out a universal good", the distance between professor and student decreasing exponentially. The forming will focus on education for sustainable development (ESD) and on global citizenship education (GCED).

Learning is performed to support the concrete situations in the real economy, known to students through internships internship, working visits, dialogue with prospective employers.

Curriculum design needs to be professionalized and adapted in labor market trends. Psycho-pedagogical research allows systematic identification of specific generational learning styles and adapts content to their needs.

3. Personalization, teaching "infrastructure" and teaching and learning resources (TLR)

Teaching paradigm must be replaced: reading, assimilation is particularly; classroom discussion permits the presentation of paintings dynamic simulations, games, allows the teacher to follow the student, stimulating imagination, thought, cognitive ability in all its magnitude, orientation towards practical activities, active direction of towards the formation of connections, conversion assimilation (which is conducted in private) in skills training and skills development.

Using virtual infrastructure in the learning environment, adapting to the requirements of potential employers didactic content, so enabling active participation obtain the desired skills.

This will be achieved through the use of educational platforms, teaching courses in virtual system (ppt., video), broadcast in closed circuit for students discipline, the use of special programs for testing, where the main problems are tested and discussed in cyberspace, using media platforms, which can make simulations, games, tree solutions, etc., using e-mail, Facebook's, other media networks for information and stimulating environment encouraging the use of virtual communication.

Classical methods of teaching - learning - assessment based data storage and reproduction arrive in the best case to state transmission of information, highlighting predominantly quantitative aspects of the process.

The sheer volume of information and liberalization of access to them through ICT creates the illusion that hold information equals knowledge (Anghel&al, 2009). This is a major risk of postmodernist approach that confuses education with fragmented approach democratization and freedom of expression in the general context of consumerism.

The transition from simple information to cognitive abilities and attitudes abstraction is achieved through reduced further by practice (demonstration, simulation, personal experience).

„Knowledge is experience – everything else is just information" (Albert Einstein).

It is well-known that people remember 10% of what they read, 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see, 50% of what they hear and see, 70% of what they say and write, 90% of what they say and perform as a task (Dale, '69).

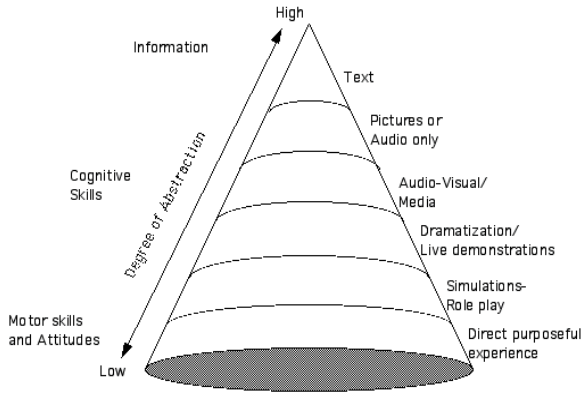

Figure 3 - The efficiency of learning methods

Source: Monica Mincu, Jay Desire, *Developing Specific Didactical Materials for University Education*, 2015, UNIVERSITARIA – didactics and advanced research university school

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Adapting abilities and competences of the future economists to the demands of the work market and integrating them i an organization and community, requires a radical change of the learning model.

"Employees` professional training is of major interest for employers, its quality being reflected directly by the company's performance, the good employee-employer relationship, the increase of the employee`s labor productivity, which constitutes a positive influence on the company's costs and at the level of salaries. According to the results of the study referred to above, 69% of employers are satisfied with the general training of graduates, 23% declare that they are partially satisfied, and 8% of employers are dissatisfied, which clearly shows that the situation should be improved to harmonize the interests of the two categories: supply and demand." (Dragolea L- L., 2015).

Designing a learning strategy involves several steps that starts with establishing the principles based on which will identify the vision, mission, values, goals, directions of activity, institutional and methodological anchors and will forecast the expected results.

The acronym RESPECT reveals in principle that the final results obtained want: self-esteem based on the development of professional skills and personal attitudes tailored integration into society; respect for others (peers, teachers) revealed through teamwork and good results in the evaluation phase; respect to future employers by integrating knowledge and their expectations from the higher education institution, its faculty and students; respect for society and the environment by reporting to a value system based on sustainability, innovation and scientific research.

This article is intended to be continued by the author in other publications that highlight the challenges and achievements in designing and implementing the economic education RESPECT model.

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