

Olivera Knežević Florić  
Department of Pedagogy,  
Faculty of Philosophy,  
University of Novi Sad  
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## NEW HORIZONS IN PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSIBILITY<sup>1</sup>

Today, the construct of knowledge society or learning society is embodied as an ontic need rather than an ideal, while the strategy of lifelong learning makes an aspect of its reification. Social transformation where we live has been launched by a radical change in the meaning of knowledge as a phenomenon. Both in the West and in the East, knowledge has always been perceived as something which is related to being, to existence; today, knowledge implies action, doing. It has become a resource and useful goods, namely public goods. In this respect, the new paradigm in education promotes the soundness of acting, rather than perfection of knowledge. So far, the interaction of the world of work and the world of education has been metaphorically reflected through making the status of schools equal to that of factories (authoritarian hierarchical system, bureaucracy, excessive division of labour, direct operating instructions, control in all segments, etc.). Modern social discourse calls for a new school metaphor – perhaps as a professional learning community.

In the first part of the paper, the author considers the assumptions of discourse of knowledge society and their implications for pedagogical reflection from the aspect of interpretative paradigm. The second part highlights the importance of a critical attitude toward neglecting the essential prerequisites of knowledge society for educational reality, as well as the need for redefining the pedagogical responsibility of teachers in the educational practice of the knowledge society.

Keywords: knowledge society, pedagogical discourse, teacher, pedagogical responsibility, professional learning community.

### INTRODUCTION

The discourse of knowledge society where all social development should be the subject of conscious and responsible management and planning, where the system of top-down imposed discipline should disappear, and where personal and social development is articulated by ratio, freedom of choice and personal responsibility, must recognize and find ways for continuous development of such reality. Perspectives of these tendencies are actually hiding in reconciliation of individual's general and specific needs at the level when his life is not articulated by

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<sup>1</sup> florico@ff.uns.ac.rs

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extreme individualism, but by its actual needs and aspirations for developing all the potentials and capabilities, both on the personal and social level. This is indeed the essential postulate of educational paradigm of the contemporary social discourse, or the fundamental entity of pedagogical reflection of discourse of knowledge society. To what extent knowledge and education in general can help in all the forthcoming changes and uncertainties, as well as overcoming and alleviating the tensions they are bearing?

#### PEDAGOGICAL DISCOURSE OF KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

The last century left us with the obligation and duty of critical and comprehensive reconsideration. Scientists from all disciplines critically summarize or redefine results achieved by respective science in the last century. Given the changes already unfolding, as well as those yet to come, educators are also required to reconsider the field of pedagogy, the role of education in social discourse which takes a whole new structure, dynamics, function, architecture, etc. It is also about the need for educating people in their full particularity and personality, as well as their self-realization, acting and interacting in a particular and specific, material and social reality. From the previously experienced and lived history, man carries the highest desires and goals, and the achievement of quality of life in a quality environment among the other things. The idea of education now seems to be representing the sense of human existence, thus becoming the last justification of existence, individuality and human community (Delors, 1998).

The main factors of development in today's society are science and education. As probably the most fundamental social subsystems, they are essential to articulate *human capital* – certainly the most important developmental resource of any country. As the importance of education has become more dominant in the overall social development, the 21<sup>st</sup> century is hallmarked as the *century of knowledge*. As all aspects of social development depend on human potentials, human resource development becomes a social priority. Consequently, the economic competitiveness of any country is directly correlated with the ability of its citizens for the *21<sup>st</sup> century literacy*, including the capability for taking critical distance, communication skills, problem solving abilities, skills and readiness for teamwork, ability to work with new information technologies, technological culture, mastering foreign languages, and ability for continuous, lifelong learning (Senge, 2006). In addition to the changing content of the *new literacy*, new values, needs, and attitudes are also established due to the growing human and social interdependence. Therefore, education should enable sustainable social development, successful integration of the individual in society (by the division of shared obligations and responsibilities), the identity of each individual through the mediation of cultural tradition, as well as permanent, lifelong individual development for each individual.

The relationship between education and social discourse has become more dynamic since all social subsystems (including education) are in an interactive relationship. As a social subsystem, education has a certain degree of autonomy,

which, whether we like it or not, is dependent on the state and needs of other social subsystems, primarily economy, social and demographic structure of the population, culture and politics (Giddens, 2003). However, given its strong relation to science, which is also a social subsystem, education itself can also be a generator of new, individual and social needs; it can be a means for distributing new scientific knowledge to be implemented by educated individuals in social reality, constantly changing it thereby and initiating new educational needs.

The essence and tendencies of the theory of human development (Organization for Economic Development and Co-operation - OECD, 2008) are based on improving the quality of human life. Today, economic reduction of the quality of life as a material well-being is largely abandoned because the quality of life is conceptualized as satisfying all universal existential needs rather than just basic ones. By emphasizing the development (of satisfying) social and self-realizing individual needs, the focus is also on basic developmental goals of education which are directed primarily towards fulfilling the individual's higher needs: that for self-realization as well as quality relations with other people. In this sense, education contributes to the quality of people's life both in direct and indirect ways; directly, by enabling to successfully perform their basic life roles through which they satisfy their existential and social needs, and indirectly, by developing individuality through the process of learning based on which human potentials can be articulated (Murphy, 2013). Hence the assumption of the discourse of knowledge society that education is a value for itself because it is not only a correlate of social development, but of individual, personal development as well.

Necessary changes in pedagogical paradigm aimed at promoting the success and activity of all, rather than only at verifying the success of successful individuals, are possible and realistic if introduced on the developed principles and postulates of modern, democratic education. Without adequate changes in education at all levels, educational effects will be limited. Between impotence in the face of dynamics of changes and superiority in dealing with them, education undoubtedly provides support and chance for success. Of course, education in itself cannot solve the problems, especially those under the responsibility of society; but conceived in a way to respect the individual's entities, his objective and subjective dispositions, and with contents that suit his needs, the individual's capacity for coping with changes and solving problems can be encouraged and promoted, and for the benefit of both the individual and common good.

#### ON PEDAGOGICAL DISCOURSE OF KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE

Actually, the term *knowledge society* is inadequately chosen term. We use it because it is widely used and generally accepted. Knowledge society is in fact learning society. Knowledge societies are processing information and knowledge in a way to maximize learning, stimulate intellectual potentials and inventiveness, develop the ability of creative initiative, as well as an active approach to the process of accepting

changes. On the other hand, wealth and prosperity in knowledge economy depend on people's ability to be more inventive and wiser than competitors, to adapt to the wishes and needs of the market, as well as to change jobs or develop new skills according to the demands of economic fluctuations (Senge, 2006). In knowledge economy, these abilities are present not only at individuals, but the organization as well.

Our present activities are oriented towards learning society, but with the affinity towards knowledge economy. Knowledge economies are stimulated and guided by creativity and spirit, while schools in knowledge society should encourage the development of these abilities, but not in the context of education for all, but education for everyone. Giddens (2003) suggests that knowledge economy, like other forms of capitalism, is the force of creative destruction. Knowledge economy stimulates growth and development, but its relentless pursuit of profit and self-sufficiency are limiting and fragmenting factors of the social order. Thus, along with other public institutions, our schools should encourage and nurture empathy, communion and cosmopolitan identity that will mitigate the most destructive effects of knowledge economy. Knowledge economy primarily serves the private good, while knowledge society includes the public good as well. Our schools should prepare young people for the importance of both goods. However, instead of cultivating creativity and intellectual abilities, an increasing number of school systems have become obsessed with imposing a uniform teaching material and its micromanagement (Hargreaves, 2003). Instead of the ambitious mission of encouraging empathy and communion, schools and teachers are now burdened with the vision of positive results of knowledge tests, preset curricula objectives and normative list of responsibilities. And instead of cultivating a cosmopolitan identity and a sense of empathy, for which Adam Smith (reference: Levin & Fullan, 2008) believes to be the emotional foundation of democracy, there are too many education systems promoting excessive and self-sufficient sense of national identity.

In many parts of the world, the search for higher educational standards has been deteriorated into a compulsive obsession with standardization (Hargreaves, 2003). In our schools, young people are neither prepared to work in knowledge economy, nor to live well in civil society. Instead of promoting economic inventiveness and social integration, too many schools remain trapped in legislation and routine of utilitarian standardization. Furthermore, the fact that the main task of the school is developing intellectual and moral excellence of each individual has been neglected.

We live in a defining moment of educational history when the world in which teachers work is changing significantly, just like the demographic composition of teachers in the teaching process. A large number of teachers who started the profession in the seventies are now in the process of retiring. The process of teaching once more becomes the profession of young people. Regardless of the person joining the teaching process and his approach to the work, he will be shaping the teaching profession and defining its ability to work with young people over the next thirty years. If we surrender to the idea that public education can only be a

low-cost system that relies on inadequately trained, poorly paid and overburdened teachers whose main task is to maintain order, teach what is necessary for the testing process, and follow the standardized curricula, then teachers in the next three decades will neither be able nor committed to teaching *for*, but also outside knowledge society. Instead, they will become followers and clones of the legislators' anaemic ambitions, but also responsible for their results which can only be achieved in under-funded education systems.

Alternatively, we can promote a significant investment in the form of educational system in which highly skilled teachers are able to generate creativity and intellectual abilities in students by having themselves the experience of creativity and flexibility in the course of their own development as professionals in knowledge society. In this scenario, both teachers and teaching process will go much beyond the mere technical tasks of achieving satisfactory results on knowledge tests, seeking to make the teaching process again a social mission that will shape lives and change the world. Today's teachers should understand their training, professional development and entire working life, and be up to date with the changes that carries knowledge society because their students will live and work in that social environment.

Teachers should be among the most prominent intellectuals in knowledge society; not limiting their activities to the sanctuary of the classroom, they also need to prepare students to be citizens of the world. They should do their utmost to ensure that their students are advancing beyond the private goods of knowledge economy. They also need to help their students to be committed to the public good that cannot be accommodated by the corporate interests of knowledge economy.

For performing pedagogical activity in knowledge society, teachers are required to have a certain level of experience and assessment, which is much higher than that required only for delivering the prescribed curriculum and achieving results on standardized knowledge tests (Hargreaves, 2003). The process of teaching requires a quality staff and intellectual maturity which takes years to develop. Teaching in knowledge society cannot be a refuge for profession that is in the second place, only a poor technical performance, or as legislators would formulate, an exhausting job that should be performed exclusively by young people full of energy before focusing on something else (which is particularly present and visible in the secondary vocational schools). Teaching in knowledge society should be the profession of first choice, a job for adults, intellectuals, a long-term commitment, social mission, a job for life. Anything else leaves our view gazing away from the horizon of knowledge society – and teaching should not be anything less than that.

#### ASSUMPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Professional organizations in knowledge society are formed with the aim to share, create and apply new knowledge on continuous basis. They create *an atmosphere of mutual learning that leads to constant innovations, which tend to be informal, unplanned and accidental because organizations themselves equally depend*

on both collective and individual intelligence (Reich, 2001, p. 81). In knowledge society, organizations develop these capabilities by providing their members with more than enough opportunities for improvement and further training by removing barriers to learning and communicating, encouraging employees to work in flexible teams, looking at problems and mistakes as learning opportunities, rather than chances for condemning, including all in the *big picture* of the direction of the organization's development, as well as by developing social capital that provides people with additional support and opportunities for further learning (Coleman & Earley, 2005).

The key to strong knowledge economy depends not only on whether people have access to information, but also on how good they are in processing information. Economic success and culture of constant innovations depend primarily on the ability of employees to continuously learn, but also on the process of learning from each other. The influential OECD report on *Knowledge management in the learning society* relates knowledge management with challenges that emerged due to accelerated changes. *We are moving towards a knowledge economy where the success of individuals, companies, regions and countries will be reflected, more than anything else, in their ability to learn* (OECD, 2000, p. 29). These trends raise a serious of questions about what knowledge students have gained, and what knowledge should they obtain in school environment.

Education in knowledge society means developing and nurturing not only the individual's cognitive, intellectual and emotional abilities, but also his specific, general and lifelong abilities. It involves encouraging creativity and intellectual curiosity, developing the need for researching, working in teams and networks, promoting the process of problem solving, decision making and risk-taking, the ability to accept changes, concern for others and a constant commitment to improving the personal and social reality (Murphy, 2013). For teachers, this means commitment to personal professional development, continuous professional learning, working with colleagues in long-term groups and short-term teams, as well as the opportunity to teach and manage (and thus learn) as professionals in other environments. Thus, educational trends of knowledge society are aimed at the school as a professional learning community, rather than a place to cope with curricula contents successfully.

The educational response to the fear of failure does not require increasing the educational content, but a stronger school community. This is especially important in the adolescent period of youth education. Reaching educational standards or achieving positive educational outcomes, especially for the most vulnerable young people, is not insured by focusing on the very success. At a time when adolescents are subject to various influences in their life, focusing their thoughts solely on success is useless (Malinić and Džinović, 2004). Success in learning requires intellectual and emotional engagement in school and everything related to it. Our schools' organizational culture and pedagogical climate reduces our ability to realize the mission of knowledge society. Among other things, the excessive and exclusive focus only on academic success is largely responsible for this. In knowledge society,

education is should have certain level of experience and assessment, which is much higher than that required only for delivering the prescribed curriculum and achieving results on standardized knowledge tests. It requires a quality staff and intellectual maturity which takes years to develop.

Three key components are emphasized by professional learning communities in schools: working together and constant professional communication, constant focus on teaching and learning in the context of working together, monitoring results and other data in order to assess student progress and recognize potential problems (King & Newmann, 2001). Instead of fast solutions, superficial and transient changes, they create and support sustainable long-term improvements; they create progressive organizational culture in the school, positive school climate, as well as awareness of the constant need for the teachers' professional development. A strong professional learning community is a form of a social process in which information is transformed into knowledge. It is part of social ingenuity based on the principle that new ideas, knowledge creation, interests and professional communion become the basis for solving problems in education in a society that is changing so fast (Fullan, 2001). Professional learning communities promote and assume the key attributes of a knowledge society. They work best when combined with the culture of care when based on long-term relationships of trust, security and commitment to active care among teachers and everyone else in the school environment. But professional learning communities are neither easy nor gentle enclaves for reaching agreement. They require *adult profession*, with adult professional standards of teaching, where teachers are equally demanding to adults as well as problematic students, where professional disagreements are greeted and embraced with joy rather than avoided, and where conflicts are seen as necessary part of professional learning, rather than fatal act of betrayal (Hargreaves, 2002).

Viewed from a different angle, it seems that sophisticated professional learning communities work best with highly qualified teachers in often rich high capacity systems, where schools are reasonably effective, leaders capable to motivate and engage their teachers, and fundings sufficient to ensure schools and teachers with necessary time and flexibility to work together professionally. However, it is important to know that many of the basic challenges of schools in poor communities are not a result of a lack of developmental strategies, but of being forced to endure the *punishment* of impoverishment that undermines opportunities for community development. Regarding the economic development and social justice, it is of vital importance to redistribute economic and social resources to the whole society, including those in the greatest need (Murphy, 2013). We will never reach a fully equitable and efficient knowledge society, and we will never be able to count on collective intelligence of all as long as the poor are not able to use the well-equipped schools, highly qualified teachers and substantial external assistance. The knowledge society gives signs. It is time for all and everyone to have the right for assured education. Otherwise, we will be leaving behind us sustainable uncertainty.

## VISION OF PEDAGOGICAL RESPONSIBILITY

In our pedagogical theory and practice, the process of education is still seen as a process of transferring and acquiring systematic knowledge, skills and habits, while emphasizing that the most efficient education is realized in a strictly planned and organized manner, and based on a well established system. From the aspect of this reference framework, education is a means of focusing the activities aimed at forming the knowledge, skills and habits, all these mainly within the traditional teaching framework (Đorđević, 2000). If we fail to accept the European dimensions in education, the least damage will be that it will never be early enough to supply our young stock of knowledge. In European dimensions of education, where for the first time people are referred to their universal human values regardless of the flag under which they live and where the gap between rationalism and what Michel Foucault (2003) calls a *thought from the outside* is slowly disappearing; the gap between the two cultures – literary and scientific, separated since the times of Descartes, also disappears. Probably the flaw of major philosophies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was that they were too ambitious: they sought to show the totality of history and *paint* a new man. However, their merits included that they have not separated individual development from social progress: they tried up to utopian enthusiasm to become a thought of community. Particularly, we should return to that care – care to avoid detaching individual development from community development. Individuality can be reconciled with the coexistence with other and different people, and with developing the community in all its dimensions. Thus, maybe one of the possibilities for opening our pedagogy is taking the orientation towards common European creative imagination, the common spirit that does not separate education from human life, from civic participation and the overall development in general (Knežević Florić, 2008).

The above signs of different approach to education and learning requires pedagogical processes, procedures, and pedagogical situations to be fundamentally redefined at all levels; aided by the new thinking and orientations, it will be based on previous achievements of our pedagogical science, which relies on humanistic education. Thus, with its human oriented development, pedagogy could be actually a form of protest against disorders and technocratic positions of education, and a basis for shifting from the paradigm of knowledge, skills and habits to the paradigm of development in education, which promotes soundness in acting, rather than perfection in knowledge. Starting from the ontology of human development, potentials of the development paradigm in education are in the illumination and encouragement of psycho-physical, intellectual and moral excellence, but also motivational resources of development of any individual whose ultimate outcome in a dynamic-interactive relationship with the social environment should be the constant need for lifelong personal and social development. Therefore, if education is understood as a comprehensive and life-long experience which includes both understanding and application, then any form of organized learning has to abandon the instrumental conception of education as a knowledge, skill and habit formation



process, and accept the educational process where life-long human development is the benchmark.

In this conception of pedagogical reality, the problem will no longer be how to prepare young people for life if education provides everyone permanently with opportunities and cognitive references which they need to understand the world around them and act responsibly. Now more than ever, it seems that the basic purpose of education is to enable the freedom of thought and choice, freedom of judgment, feelings and imagination necessary to develop skills and establish, as far as possible, control over the own lives. Thus, it seems fully justified when Edgar Faure (referenced by: Knežević Florić, 2008: 35) sees the principle of *learning to be* the most important principle of educational paradigm, saying that ... *its meaning is in the full realization of people, in the full splendour of their abilities, complexity of their forms of expression and their different roles – as individuals, as members of families and communities, citizens and manufacturers, innovators and creative dreamers.*

Consequently, the responsibility of society lies in establishing an educational policy based on the strategy of lifelong learning and learning society, in order to conceive a long-term oriented development of education, and principles and guidelines for its practical implementation. In this sense, the system of education/training should rely on the principle of relating formal education with informal forms of education, principle of decentralization of the school system and increasing school autonomy, principle of strengthening professional information and guidance of young people, principle of strengthening scientific and developmental infrastructure of educational system, principle of flexibility of the system of education/training. Curricula contents should be oriented towards mastering skills and knowledge with the highest transfer value and, as a rule, are the most permanent; contents should be programmed interdisciplinary and new areas of education/training should be constantly developed by monitoring individual and social needs. Ways or forms of realization of contents defined in such manner should follow the principle of continuity in raising the quality of knowledge and skills (learning with understanding), principle of combining and interacting various forms of teaching with experiential learning, principle of individualization of learning, principle of stimulating climate and culture in educational institutions, principle of continuous, quality education of educators and teachers, as well as the principle of improving their professional status.

Teachers should believe in the vision of the ever changing pedagogy. Not a self-sufficient, but pedagogy useful to all individuals, their communities and their mutual, constantly changing needs. Only recognized and understood in its totality education can be a barrier to anti-human and anti-social scientific and experiential insights. The process of development and self-development, realization and self-realization, formation and auto-formation of the individual lasts throughout his life for which the individual should be qualified. Otherwise, if the process fails to permeate the entire education, the individual will also fail to find both human sense,

and human purpose in his knowledge, skills, and in what he creates and does. It is hard to find, if at all, a sense and purpose of the own existence and life, sense and purpose of belonging to the own social, but also global reality.

Therefore, mastering pedagogical competences in which knowledge is only a segment means acting in pedagogically responsible manner. Developing pedagogical competences in educators and teachers constantly requires new visions of pedagogical reflection, evaluation and creation of new fields of work in this direction, creating a positive school climate for their realization, but also their own visibility in the process of broader (general) reification. At the same time, they are also conditions for positioning and realization of educators and teachers in the pedagogical process that they need to experience personally as a creative act in which irrational moments, knowledge and intuition, intellect and emotions also play an important role.

Olivera Knežević Florić

#### NOVI HORIZONTI U PEDAGOŠKOJ ODGOVORNOSTI

Konstrukt društva znanja ili društva učenja, danas se opojmljuje kao ontička potreba a ne ideal, a strategija doživotnog obrazovanja kao vid njegovog postvarenja. Društvena transformacija u kojoj živimo pokrenuta je radikalnom promenom u značenju znanja kao fenomena. I na Zapadu i na Istoku, znanje se oduvek poimalo kao nešto što se odnosi na biće, na postojanje; danas je znanje delanje, činjenje, ostvarenje. Postalo je resurs i korisno dobro, tačnije javno dobro. U tom smislu, nova obrazovna paradigma promovíše ispravnost delovanja, a ne savršenost znanja. Interakcija sveta rada i sveta obrazovanja do sada se ogledala u metafori izjednačavanja škole i fabrike (autoritarni hijerarhijski sistem, birokratija, rigidna podela rada, striktna uputstva za rad, kontrola u svim segmentima, ...); savremeni društveni diskurs traži novu metaforu škole – škole kao zajednice učenja.

U prvom delu rada, autorka iz ugla interpretativne paradigme razmatra pretpostavke društva znanja i njihove implikacije na pedagošku refleksiju. U drugom delu rada, naglašava se značaj kritičkog odnosa prema zanemarivanju bitnih pretpostavki društva znanja za pedagošku stvarnost, kao i potreba za redefinisanjem pedagoške odgovornosti nastavnika u pedagoškoj praksi društva znanja.

Ključne reči: društvo znanja, pedagoški diskurs, nastavnik, pedagoška odgovornost, zajednica profesionalnog učenja.

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