

THE IMAGE OF A MODERN TEACHER: A FASILITATOR, A LEADER AND A PARTNER

Fanenshtel Natalia Vasylivna

Ph. D., Associate Professor of the Department

Foreign Languages Department

Khmelnytskyi Humanitarian-Pedagogical Academy

Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine

Summary

In this paper the author highlights three roles which should be adopted by a modern teacher in order to introduce completely new educational environment. Furthermore, some samples of the best worlds teaching practices carried out by Maria Montessori, David McNamara and Katy Ridnouer have been examined.

Key words: facilitator, engagement, “teacher-centered” approach, “purposeful” environment, teacher’s roles.

Education as a powerful tool of sustainable development has been changing in recent years due to the global changes caused by demographic growth, immigration, Internet etc. Such changes have made a shift in pedagogical paradigm that includes teacher’s attitude, knowledge and skills, relationship between teacher, students and parents and classroom atmosphere. In my opinion, to follow the new educational path a teacher should adopt three main roles. I will introduce each in turn.

Firstly, the importance of teacher’s role as a **facilitator** should not be neglected. An educator organizes students’ work in such a way that they are able to complete learning tasks more easily or helps them to find the solution to a problem by discussing things and suggesting ways. Facilitation begins with observing the child in the natural environment, understanding he/she as he/she is, and not how he/she should be. This method was introduced by Maria Montessori – the first Italian female doctor, psychologist and teacher. Applying experimental data, M. Montessori defined the form of freedom necessary for child’s internal development. To develop

in the right direction, the child, who is given the freedom to act, must find in the environment something that matches his/her internal order. Thus, the problem of preparing the environment in such a way that the child found the means of self-education in it, became one of the tasks of the new pedagogy. The main idea of M. Montessori pedagogy is the idea of free education, which motto is “Help me to do it by myself”. That is, the adult’s task is not to do instead of the child, but to stimulate his/her own activity. To ensure child’s self-education it is not enough only to permanently involve him/her in cognitive activity, this process must be carried out under the guidance, accompanied by correction.

Secondly, an educator must be a **leader**, who inspires the students by his/her unique personality and experience. What is more, some teachers even believe that “teacher-centered” approach, especially in elementary school, is the most suitable for children. In particular, David McNamara, the British scientist and teacher, considers an educator the main figure in the classroom as he/she has more knowledge and skills than a student and knows which way the student should be taught. At the same time, if society burdens on the teacher such responsibility, the teacher should not receive passive instruction regarding the organization of teaching from the top, but should play an active role in discussions ways of education development. According to D. McNamara, a teacher should separate his/her own attitude to teaching children from taking into account their personal circumstances. As a professional, teacher must sympathize with the student, but in his/her actions he/she should be guided not by compassion, but by common interests.

Actually, a teacher should focus on two main tasks in his/her work. The first is providing the students with information and the materials with the simultaneous organization of educational activities that corresponds their abilities, the level of their knowledge and should lead to the formation of the desired level of knowledge, skills and abilities. In this context it is essential to convince as often as possible that the student does not spend too much time, performing complicated tasks that ensure no progress in learning, but only makes the student being busy during the lesson.

Another teacher's task is optimization time and opportunity for the most effective involvement students in productive educational activities. This, due to D. McNamara, can be achieved by following some tips. They are:

- Group work should be combined with collective and individual, taking advantage of each of them. For this, it is better to place the desks in the classroom in the form of a square, which will provide greater mobility in switching from one form of activity to another, will enable the teacher to see all the students better, and children - each other.

- The content and duration of the lesson depend, on the one hand, on the teacher who plans the content of the material and activities, and on the other - on the students involved in role-playing games, creative tasks, group discussions. Such an alternative requires a teacher to balance between two important aspects on which learning effectiveness depends. First of all, the teacher should supervise the order in the classroom and be confident that all students are involved in active learning activities. At the same time, he/she should not focus only on the topic of the lesson so that the students are bored of a monotonous complex work.

- Creating "purposeful" environment in the classroom promotes students' learning. To promote this, the teacher must constantly emphasize the importance of students' work by setting goals and outlining the expected results. Each lesson should start with the announcement of purposes. During the lesson a teacher should give clear and detailed instructions and explanations, manage the students' practical activities and provide feedback and correction.

- Students always expect rewards for the work they have done. But when presenting a new material, especially a complex one, it is better to avoid any approvals or condemnations their reflections, since they will more likely to make the children doubt their own strength than encourage them to participate in the conversation.

The *third* role teacher should acquire is a **partner**. Each teacher can and must turn the students and their parents into his/her partners. The problem is only in choosing the ways of interaction and defining its limits. Katy Ridnour, a teacher

who worked in American and British schools, distinguishes the key points of effective partnership as the following:

- attitude to each student as an individual;
- engagement;
- providing students with support and encouragement that keep their behavior and learning under control;
- preventing failures and managing difficulties in relationships;
- attraction of external means for expanding educational boundaries outside the classroom.

Katy Ridnour believes that effective engaging can be achieved by treating each student and his/her parents, first of all, as individuals. Thus, the teacher should start his/her work with the study of the students' demographic data. Competency in everyday habits and interests, peculiarities of the economic situation, and the religious beliefs of the child's family will help the teacher determine the type of interaction that will bring the desired result for a particular student.

Any interaction begins with effective communication. To form children's positive attitude towards the school and class as an open community and help them find their place in it the teacher should take the following actions: introducing to the students the tools of overcoming their fears; practicing with students the behavioral change models; clarifying expectations. To involve parents into communication the teacher should offer a wide range of communicational tools (traditional and alternative), avoid difficulties in understanding with parents (communicate in an accessible language), create a communication routine (established types of communications must be regular).

Experience shows that when parents expect children to succeed in learning and believe in their ability, children behave in an appropriate way. The unity of the requirements of the school and parents contributes to the development of students' abilities to make effective decisions both in learning and in life in general.

The teacher's roles outlined above, should provide educational opportunities for children so they can get the skills necessary for overcoming difficulties and being successful in their lives.

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