

MANAGEMENT OF THE INITIAL TRAINING IN THE AGRONOMICAL EDUCATION BY THE INTRODUCTION OF TRAINING STANDARDS

Olguța BREZULEANU¹

¹”Ion Ionescu de la Brad” University of Agricultural
Science and Veterinary Medicine Iași, Faculty of
Agriculture

e-mail: olgutabrez@yahoo.com

Any well-trained teacher can professionally manage the teacher-pupil/student relationship, as the core of the learning environment that any academic institution must provide. Article 155 of the Law 84/1995 highlights the tasks of the Ministry of Education of establishing ‘the national standards that assess the quality of any member of the academic staff’.

Within the context of Romania’s joining the EU, the current Romanian system of education requires excellent teachers capable of providing pupils/students with quality training. Such standards explain the concept of ‘very good teachers’ and cast light upon the ‘requirements of the education process’ in what activity is concerned.

Any teacher dealing with agronomic studies must be endowed with all the necessary abilities that should make him/her feel comfortable in front of the auditorium, regardless of the given situation he/ she has to face. Working in the field of education implies not only tension, pressure, stress, concentration but also responsibility towards pupils/students.

A standard contains the following elements: activities that must be performed by any teacher carrying out agronomic studies, characteristics that must be fulfilled by these activities, motivation of the necessity of carrying out these actions (the reason for them happening in the first place), criteria used in assessing the quality of the required activities (observable behaviours and measures that underline the fulfilment of required activities, assessment of required activities (evaluation forms, e.g. portfolio, test, observation).

Key words: *pedagogical training, initial learning*

According to the present organization, in the agronomical education of Iași, the teachers are trained for teaching through the Department of Teachers Training, which is a structure specialized within U.Ș.A.M.V.-Iași, with precise roles of their initial and continuous training. Therefore, achieving the teaching capacity is done modularly (module of educational psychology, pedagogy, didactics of the speciality, pedagogical practice) and theoretical-practical training, achieved at intervals of three years of academic study.

A well-trained teacher can face the interaction with pupils/students, which represents the essential part of the education environment the school must assure.

Article 155 of the Law of Education no. 84/1995 (republished) stipulates the charge of M.E.C. to establish the “National standards for assessing the quality of the teacher”.

Within the context of Romania’s joining EU, the present Romanian education needs very good teachers, able to offer a high quality education to pupils/students. The standards explain the meaning of the syntagma “very good teachers” and “the requirements of education” as concerns the activity.

The agronomical specialty teacher must have the necessary ability, which makes him feel at ease in front of the auditorium, in all the cases that might appear during his educational activity. The educational work represents not only an accumulation of tension, pressure, concentration and stress, but also an every hour responsibility towards pupils/students. Thus, the teacher has to face the various situations, which may be divided as it follows:

- Repetitive and ritual situations, for which the teacher has in his professional register the necessary ability to approach and solve rapidly and efficiently;
- New, unusual, creative didactic situations requiring new solutions, for which the teacher does not have the necessary ability of rapidly approaching and solving. These situations make him reflect or hesitate, etc.

We assess that making professional the teaching activity does not involve only the systematic assimilation of some abilities described by professional standards, but also a heuristic and creative utilization of them in educational situations and contexts requiring it. Under these conditions, becoming professional means “a radical redefining of the nature of abilities, which stand at the base of some efficient pedagogical practices”. Becoming professional must also include (besides the professional knowledge and ability) schemes of thinking/reason, interpretation, making hypotheses, anticipation and taking decisions.

The contemporary society has high expectations from teachers. They must have a high level of academic qualification (to manage very well one, two or more specialty disciplines); to renew continuously their knowledge, for offering a proper educational content; to acquire new experiences from their field of specialty and from others, in order to acquire new experiences, which may improve their pedagogical ability.

The agronomical specialty teacher must be aware of what they expect from him and he must have the professional ability to act with responsibility (OECD Report, 2001).

Only a well-trained teacher can face the interaction with pupils/students, which represents the essential part of the study environment the school must assure. Under these conditions, the professional didactic activity does not involve only the systematic assimilation of some abilities described by professional standards, but also requires a heuristic and creative utilization of them under educational situations and contexts.

In wide sense, the pedagogical capacity may be defined as the ability of a teacher to solve a pedagogical problem, on the ground of the deep knowledge of

laws and determinations of educative phenomena; in restricted sense, it refers to the ability of an individual to achieve, at a certain performance level, all the typical charges, specific to the didactic profession.

The notion of “pedagogical capacity” is used nowadays with the meaning of the minimum professional standard, often specified by law, which an individual must reach in exerting the main charges of the teaching profession. The society should be protected against the risk of insufficiently trained people practicing this job.

The following question is asked: Which are the abilities a teacher must have? We have tried to answer this question by making a synthesis of the conclusions of the investigations conducted until now in the field of the sciences of education concerning, especially, the conditions when teaching may contribute to the achievement of the educative objectives proposed to pupils/students. More theses have been formulated, named “Principles” by their authors, regarding the features, implicitly the abilities of an efficient teacher for the agronomical education:

He clearly establishes the educative objectives the pupils/students have to achieve. It requires the following:

- ability to identify the educative objectives, which have to be reached, taking into account the specific features of pupils/students;
- efficiency of the chosen objectives, which have to be proposed to pupils/students;
- use of techniques for analyzing the learning charges involved in the achievement of each selected objective.

b. He presents to the pupils/students the highest performance they are expected to reach in achieving the various activities.

c. He identifies and achieves learning activities, which are relevant for the real contexts of pupils/students’ everyday life.

d. He is concerned with adapting himself to the diversity of pupils/students, by selecting some training strategies and learning materials, which are proper to the previous training, the cultural values and the individual needs of their education.

e. He creates in the classroom/ amphitheatre / laboratory a working environment that encourages learning, the intrinsic motivation of learning and the desire to achieve the proposed charges: training requires many educational management abilities, beginning with those connected to the arrangement of the classroom environment, in order to make easier the interaction between teachers and pupils, to establish together with pupils/students some reasonable limits between which everyone’s behaviour should be found, and finishing with those connected to the creation of a proper working environment, encouraging the preoccupation of pupils/students to continuously control themselves and the abilities of treating adequately the indiscipline;

f. He encourages the social interaction of pupils/students in discussing and achieving the various training activities, linked to the theme under study;

g. He gives pupils/students a working structure for guiding the training activity of pupils and their behaviour during classes;

h. He helps the pupils/students to manage their knowledge and skills, which are useful for the high level-study of a field, a requirement that implies the capacity of essentialization from the teacher;

i. He gives the pupils/ students working charges, which are interesting and should stimulate their intellectual development; for instance, there are charges that make the pupils/students test their effective knowledge and establish what they have to learn; charges supposing the exertion of some strategies for solving difficult problems or strategies by which they can develop certain abilities;

j. He continuously monitors the progress of pupils/students in achieving the proposed educative objectives (J.E. Ormrod, 1998).

The professional standards refer to those components of the teaching profession that can be observed and measured. The standards of the teaching profession represent an assembly of expectances and requirements, explicitly formulated, as concerns the knowledge and abilities a teacher must test in his activity with pupils/students, in order to fulfil his professional duties at a quality level accepted by the society.

A standard contains the following elements:

- what are the activities that have to be carried out by a teacher;
- which are the characteristics these activities must fulfil in order to be assessed; they must be achieved at the socially accepted qualitative level (description);
- motivation of the need to achieve these actions (reason of their execution);
- which are the criteria used to assess the quality of required activities (the observable and measureable behaviours, pointing out the achievement of required activities at the allowable qualitative level);
- how the required activities will be measured (evaluation forms used, e.g. portfolio/ test/observation).

The teacher's activity cannot be entirely reduced at strict norms and rules, at professional standards, which, even necessary, cannot cover the entire area of the situations in which the teacher is found. Introducing the standards of the teaching profession should clearly explain what the expectances of the society from the agronomical specialty teachers are and, thus, their initial training should be managed, so that they could face the educational requirements of the educable people.

Researchers in the field of education sciences pointed out, besides the above-mentioned abilities, the presence of some individual qualities of the teacher, which have to be developed by experience and good professional education. The new quality of the affective relations, established between teacher and pupils/students in the contemporary education, for avoiding psychical trauma or the appearance of inferiority complexes, requires teachers that have some personality traits, such as: real authority (acquired through professionalism, morality, flexibility and consistency), and not imposed by different forms of restraint; pedagogical tact and

permissivity. D.G. Ryans has studied the personality traits of the teacher. The most certain sign of the pedagogical talent is how an agronomical specialty teacher succeeds to motivate his pupils/students as concerns the discipline he teaches.

Other necessary qualities involve the cultural level of the teacher, required by cultural and social responsibilities in the contemporary society: ability to dialogue, to inform objectively and to communicate easily, critical non-dogmatic attitude and civic- democratic qualities.

The contemporary technological civilization asks the teacher to develop personal qualities, such as management of the new techniques used in the contemporary classroom; ability of inventing new means for using these techniques; ability of innovating them and proposing the necessary improvements. The scientific function of the contemporary teachers implies the development of new qualities and attitudes: knowledge of logics and structure of their discipline; promotion of the scientific spirit; preoccupations of propagating the scientific culture. The professional ethics and the requirements of self-improvement involve the ability of self-organization, an open mentality and availability to study comparatively different educational systems and practices in the world, an experimental attitude for the continuous improvement of the methodology and the teaching style. All these qualities, which are necessary for a teacher, may suggest that the didactic profession needs attentively selected people and who will need a long period of professional training.

The standards of the teaching profession must show what “the requirements of the education” are as concerns the activity developed by a teacher at his chair.

CONCLUSIONS

The advantages of introducing the standards of training the teaching staff for the agronomical specialty education:

- Great opportunities for pupils/ students to receive from their teachers a quality education in schools/universities, because the standards define the activity the teacher must develop in the school and follow the improvement of teachers' professional qualities;
- Professional standards are a major reference for the programs of initial and continuous training offered by the institutions that furnish these types of programmes;
- A correct vision of the teacher on the professional abilities he has to reach, which guide and motivate him in his personal activity of initial and continuous training;
- The teacher will be able to see in his professional standards the opportunity to develop himself professionally, a motivation of his efforts for the professional development, an objective reference in the professional assessment and a common language of communication;
- Positive effects in designing and achieving the school management (*Lucia Gliga, 2002*);

- Redefining, by increasing the prestige, the condition of the teaching profession in the occupational system and on the labour market;
- Rethinking of the contents and forms of the initial and continuous training of teachers; achieving the coherence in the approach of teachers' training, on the entire training system for this profession;
- Cooperation inside and outside the profession, collaboration between teachers for reaching the professional aims;
- Creation of a common training environment – university or school – which favours the formation of the specialist;
- Standards are not a unique treatment – that reform, which will cure all the evils of a traditionally organized school system. They represent only a base component of the modern education system and a standard system highly increases the capacity of authorities to coordinate all the elements of the strategy for the quality teaching;
- Once developed, the system of National Professional Standards for Teaching could result in the appearance of a strong and receptive teaching staff, where excellent teachers may have opportunities of professional promotion.

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