

# Features of Democratic Citizenship Education Didactics

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**Abstract:** *The democratic changes that have taken place in all fields of life; such as in the political, economic, social, as well as in the cultural ones, have also brought forth high expectations in the field of education of the individual in a democratic society. COED addresses to people of all ages (generations), and of course, belonging to different levels of society. It's important and necessary clarifying the problems which make possible the crystallization of a new pedagogic discipline, the Civil and Democratic Education Didactics. Civil and Democratic Education Didactics occupies a special place within the Didactic and General Pedagogy in contrast from all other didactics such as, Mathematic Didactic, History Didactic, Geography Didactic etc.*

**Keywords:** Didactics Pedagogy Education Citizen Civil Democratic

## 1. Introduction

What is the Civil and Democratic Education Didactics? What is the subject, the area of concern that make it (CDED) a unique discipline among other disciplines on education?

The answer to these questions is of special importance. It shows the position, and its place as a discipline in the genre of the various sciences of education.

In this first attempt, on defining the subject of Civil and Democratic Education Didactics it is obvious that there will be intricacies on the way, especially in discerning it from the other disciplines and other educational sciences. Therefore in order to shed light on the features of this subject, we will make use of the induction method.

This method is *"The method of research and the logical assumptions, whereas on the basis of specific truths, we build a general truth, respectively when we draw a conclusion which applies for all other cases, yet unknown; the induction as a method of inquiry is the movement of our thought from the specific to the general form of truth".* [Dictionary of philosophy - (by) Ekrem Myrtezai. "Toena" Publishing house. Tirane 2007.]

Therefore, induction is *the way of reasoning, which starts from the very specific in order to reach out to the general truth; it is the induction of a logical assumption; it is the general conclusion that is built in this way...* [Dictionary of the Albanian Language" - group of authors. The Albanian Science Academy, Albanian Language and Literature Institute, Tirana, 2006]

On basis of this method we are to study the specifics of the Civil and Democratic Education Didactics and come into a general conclusion in our attempt to define the scope of its study.

What are the specifics of the Civil and Democratic Education Didactics? We can specify the following:

1. Didactics
2. Education
3. Civil
4. Democratic

We will be analyzing each of these parts, as accurately as possible, in order to clarify the range of problems, and the scope of study of Civil and Democratic Education Didactics. So let us start with analyzing the above mentioned parts. What is their meaning, and essence?

**Didactics - a:** (Greek: *didasko* - teach or *didaktike techne*; German *didaktik*; French: *Didactique*; English: *didactics*) a discipline or part of pedagogy, which deals with the study of the essence, value, role or other types of related matters of learning and education.

Despite the fact that the matter of learning as a process of acquiring knowledge, has been inquired by many philosophers since the times of Old Age, like (Plato, Aristoteles, etc), the founder of didactics as a proper scientific discipline, a mastery of teaching is considered Jan Amos Komenski, the author of the illustrious works

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Let us check the definition of the term Didactics in the book with the same title written by the Academy of Pedagogy and Psychology in collaboration with the Institute of Pedagogical studies, published in Tirana, as of 1986.

The term **didactics** was used for the first time in the XVII century expressing the meaning **for the art of learning**. The use of the term derived from the Old Greek; **didasko** which means **"to learn"**.

**Didactics is one of the main fields of pedagogy.** It deals with the theoretical basis of the teaching process, therefore in the pedagogical literature it is called **the art of learning**.

The didactical thought is as old as the pedagogical thought in general. But as a didactical meaning, having to some

extent, an existing mold and basis, the didactical thought started to shape more than three hundred years ago. Considering the fact that J.A.Komenski (1592-1670) is studied as the first author to have founded didactics in the classical sense of the word, this is correlates with its illustrious work *The Great Didactics*, which in the year 1657 is published in Latin, and after it was published it echoed in time and space.

From then hitherto, didactics has developed ever since, it has been enhanced and improved under the influence of the teaching practices, and of the changes that the process of teaching has undergone, during the various periods and stages of the development of the human society itself.

**In the contemporary pedagogy it is observed the tendency of discerning it as a separate scientific discipline.** Such a tendency is determined by the accumulation and the enrichment of knowledge on the learning process, from the studies that have been held recently on the intensification and updating of this process. [Didactics" - University of Tirana. Psychology and Pedagogy Department, in in collaboration with the Institute of Pedagogical Studies, Tirana 1986, pg 9]

Didactics is a part, and a discipline of pedagogy. **Pedagogy is a practical theory of education**, according to Durkheim. We would better say: **Pedagogy is a reflection on the goals of education and an objective analysis of the conditions of the existence and functions of education; it is closely linked to the educational work, which makes the basis of reflection and analysis, but yet, remaining as un entangled and therefore, a distinguished field of inquiry.**

So, pedagogy or its integrated disciplines, make a corpus of educational sciences, and the subcategories of the disciplines that are concerned with the educational activities, as it is practiced in all the fields, such as in the: the educational level, adult learning, life-long learning, etc. We recur the especially true definition of Z. Celler, who defined it as a Draft of a pedagogical science. (Ibid., Z.Celler, 1919).

**Pedagogy is the general theory of the art of education, it groups the special beings and the personal methods in a system closely connected to the universal principles, by starting with the reality, and by systematically depicting the facts real happening in the real world from those that belong to the ideal one.** [General pedagogy" - by Gaston Mialaret. "Faik Konica" publishing house, Tirana, 1995, pg.6.]

One of the important components of pedagogy is **Didactics** which cannot be left out from the study of the educational and academic process, just like pedagogy itself, but always bearing its peculiar nature as pedagogical science. We often come across words like, education, schooling, edification, which are closely related to one another. We cannot have edification without education and vice-versa. In general, these words are often interchanged depending on the context they are used.

## 2. What is the meaning of Education?

In order to give an accurate definition, we will be able to have a look at various references. Whenever we speak of education we have to remind ourselves of the range of meanings the word itself bears. The word education is of a polisemic nature (it bears more than one meaning). This means that we remain on the viewpoint of goals in the field of action, in the viewpoint of the conditions required to implement that action, or in the viewpoint of the effects and the outcomes of that educational action.

In any case there can be cited two definitions which far from different, on the action of education, 1) the definition of Durkheim and; 2) the definition of the International League on Education (LIEN).

**Durkheim:** Education is the action carried out by the elder generations towards those who are not mature yet for the social life. Its aim is to exert on the child a series of physical, intellectual and moral changes in order for him meet with the social and political requirements generally accepted and set by the society in which he takes part.

**LIE:** Education consists of favoring the development to the fullest possible extent of such behaviors of any person, as an individual and as a part of the society, in the reign solidarity. Education is indivisible from the social development, it is one of the determining forces of such a development.

The purpose of education and his methods are to be recurrently revised in accordance with the extent that science and experience increase our knowledge on the child, the individual and society. [General pedagogy" - by Gaston Mialaret. "Faik Konica" publishing house, pg. 6.]

But what definition is there in the "Dictionary of Philosophy" and "Dictionary of the Albanian Language" for the word **education**?

**Alb. Edukim-(Education) I** (lat eductio, educare - educate, cultivate; nurture, edificate etc. Germ. Erziehung: French: education, English: education):

- a) **In its narrow meaning:** the systematic action, planned and the purpose of school or other specialized institutions (such as, nursery, kindergartens, courses etc). Respectively their professional personnel in the formation and the development (through lecturing, teaching, exercising, illustration with practical examples etc.) of the physical and mental skills of the children, adults, or whole generations in a given direction, pertaining, towards a set of social, moral, political and human ideals, etc.
- b) **In its broad meaning:** the influence of the family, street, social groups, of the community, country state "the good society" and "the bad society", examples etc. that results in shaping the profile of the individual, who as a consequence, obtains his own beliefs, viewpoints, concepts, mentalities, character traits, sensibilities and ideals. A main feature of the education is the **management** of the formation of the personality on

basis of an ideal, ideology, policy or value which the society considers positive; education is a kind of indoctrination of the new generation and the rest of the society ...

- c) Alb. Edukate, (Education II) a: the result, the effect of the education, pertaining of the action taking place in school, family, "street", society, etc. in the formation and the development of the given positive awareness, viewpoint, morals, beliefs, character traits, attitudes, behavior and ideals passed on to the new generation and the rest of the society.

In the "Dictionary of the Albanian Language" it is defined only the meaning of the word **education** while the meaning of the education as a process is derived hitherto, as one of the many meanings of the word **education**.

Practically: **Alb. Edukate/a (Education)** 1- the physical and mental traits (the mentality, moral values, character traits and free will etc) that a person acquires in school, family, society as well as through his own activity. Education 1) the process of being educated and getting educated, derived from the verb educate, to be/get educated, 2) **education**.

I suggest we see the same meaning in the words **education** and **education (as a process)** when we refer to them in the following of this material. Without any further delay, let us continue with our analysis on the terms citizen and citizenship. What do these terms stand for?

**Citizen/citizenship:** In the European Council there is an increasing awareness of the fact that the terms **citizen** and **citizenship**, are neither permanent, nor confined terms given in static terms restricted in an indisputable definition.

In the context of the Civil Democratic Education, the term **citizen** can be described in the broad sense as a person who **co-exists in a society**.

However, we cannot stand for the idea of the **citizen** in correlation with the notion nation-state is not important or applicable anymore, but given that the nation-state is not the only focal point and consequently source of authority anymore, there is a new need to develop a whole set of viewpoints on this concept.

The broader meaning on the **citizen** and **citizenship**, offers a new model, open to scrutiny, as to how we can live together. Therefore, the challenge of moving beyond the borders of the nation-state, in the concept of community, which includes the local, regional, national and international contexts, where these individuals live.

In this light, the idea of the **citizen** and **citizenship** includes the idea of the **social status and role**. Here are encompassed matters regarding the rights and duties, but also the idea of equality, alteration, and that of social justice. Actually, it is neither sufficient nor adequate to confine the idea of citizenship with the act/right to vote. It has to encompass the order of actions performed by the individual that affects the life of the community, be it local, regional, national or international, required by the public milieu, inside which the individuals may interact with each-other. [Glossary, on CDE" - by Karen O Shea. European Council Information Office. Tirane, 2005.]

### 3. What is the meaning of the term democratic?

**Alb. Demokratik/e (Democratic):** In the framework of Civil and Democratic Education, the adjective democratic emphasis the fact that it is a citizenship based on the principles and values of the human rights, the respect for the human dignity, pluralism, and on the cultural diversity and alteration under the priority of the law. ["Glossary, on CDE" - by Karen O Shea. European Council Information Office. Tirane, 2005]

#### Democratic

In the context of this thorough analysis, based on the many studied and verified resources, we can now fully endorse a generalization on the scope of study of the Civil and Democratic Didactics.

What is the scope of study of Civil and Democratic Didactics?

What is the scope of Civil and Democratic Didactics that depicts and correlates it with the other pedagogical subordinate disciplines, which are integrated parts of the whole range of the educational sciences?

The Civil and Democratic Didactics is part, subordinate discipline of the General Didactics which is called **the theory of learning**. Didactics is one of the main and most important branches of Pedagogy or so **called the general theory of the art of education**.

There is an actual tendency to discern Didactics as a separate scientific Discipline. The Civil and Democratic Didactics is a subordinate pedagogical discipline, part of the corpus of the educational sciences and it distinctively deals with the study of:

*The content, the core, the goals, the role, the methods and the forms of organizing the art of learning on the education and making the free Individual aware on his/her rights and duties in the society, it consists of enabling the individual to take independent, critical, active and responsible stands, based on the principles and values of the Human Rights, the respect for the human dignity, freedom, equality, solidarity, pluralism, and cultural diversity, under the priority of the law, viewing learning in this light, as an integrated process that cannot take place only in the framework of the official institutions, but in formal and informal milieus, official and non-official environs, in the coordinated interaction of the respective institutions and organizations, where there is a distinctive alteration of the relationship between the Instructor (teacher) and the learner, through the various up-to-date teaching methods.*

In brief, the Civil and Democratic Didactics is the theory and mastery of learning acquiring the ability to live in a community or residential area, where democracy is considered as a way of living with each-other, where the formal and the informal are matched, through the up-to-date methods of teaching and learning.

The learning process is the milestone for the acquisition, conveying and exchanging knowledge and social engagements required by the reality. In the framework of this integrated process, there is a change of the mere idea and practice of learning; it does not confine itself only in the early stages of live, or in the official institutions such as, schools, universities or vocational training processes. In the actual period of rapid, constant, and far-reaching changes, learning is more than ever turned into a subject of permanent scrutiny, of the individuals, societies and nations.

The knowledge of the social and economic processes requires new objectives and methods of learning. The ability to think critically and independently, the readiness to accept the responsibilities in order to embrace new attitudes are some of the criteria that determine the nowadays processes of education. Democracy is the political system in which this kind of learning can be enhanced. If we accept that radical changes bring forth instability, then we have to agree that the values of democracy are to be maintained as the pillars edifying learning for all the individuals.

The citizens, who are able to develop independent, critical, active and responsible attitudes, provide the basis of all societies nourishing the values of democracy. If it is as Abraham Lincoln has put it; "Democracy is to be understood as a governing of the people, for the people and by the people", than we may draw the following conclusions:

- 1) First, the concept of the **citizen** does not imply only the juridical status of the individual in a given political system; he has to live in a rich and diverse environment, consisting of formal and non-formal, official and non-official settings.
- 2) Second, learning about the democratic citizenship is an integrated process that cannot be developed only within the framework of the official institutions; it has to be developed in a diverse formal and non-formal, official and non-official with the coordinated participation of the institutions and respective organizations.
- 3) Third, during the learning process, there is a clear change that takes place in the relationship between the Instructor (teacher) and the learner.

In the meantime the issue of the proper and effective answer that each individual may address to all the requirements of the citizenship, is becoming more and more important. The three a.m., conclusions which are nonetheless but derived by the scope of Civil and Democratic Didactics, also include the fundamental issues and the need of producing a final didactical textbook on the matter.

**First conclusion**, requires the re-evaluation of the changes and the understanding the essence of the nowadays concepts of citizen and citizenship. This will cover the first part of the book: "Fundamental concepts and competences on the field of education in correlation with the Civil and Democratic Education".

**The second**, lays out the thesis in the framework of institutions involved in the field of learning, in the context of Civil and Democratic Education. Even though the domain framework remains still in the official educational

departments, in the future it is to closely collaborate with another department which is becoming more and more important in the education process, i.e., it is to closely collaborate with the society itself.

**Third**, it underlines the importance of the methods and ways that are to be followed in order for the Civil and Democratic learning to become successful and sustainable. Considering the fact that the exclusive supplier of knowledge, the formal education is more and more finding itself under the pressure to develop more effective ways of learning. The use of new teaching and learning methods will be a determining factor, especially in increasing the learners' motivation. This text is addressed first and foremost to the teachers to be, the actual teachers, trainers etc.)

The above conclusion will be developed in the third part of the textbook, entitled "The method and practice"

## References

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