

**THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF E. D. DNEPROV
AT THE LEVEL OF THE EDUCATIONAL POLICY**

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Abstract

The paper analyzes the educational policies in Russia in the postmodern (contemporary) period, a historical context in which the curriculum paradigm is asserted. The pedagogue with a remarkable contribution is E. D. Dneprov, an academician of the Russian Academy of Education and a Minister of Education. In the analysis of his books, we followed the following coordinates: the axiomatic foundations/the basic concepts that define the education policy, the specific object of study of the education policy (as a field of pedagogical sciences), its specific normativity and its specific research methodology. The historical research methodology was used to highlight the evolution of the field conceptually and institutionally, in a synchronic and a diachronic perspective. The table at the end constitutes a synthesis of the work, demonstrating the epistemological maturity of the analyzed texts, epistemically essentialized by capitalizing on the fundamental concepts.

Keywords: *educational policies, reform, counter-reform, innovation, strategy.*

1. Introduction

E. D. Dneprov, an academician of the Russian Academy of Education, the last minister of education in the USSR and the first minister of education in the Russian Federation in the period 1990-1992, is the theoretician of the education reform through the following books: *The current school reform in Russia* (1998); *Education and politics. The recent history of the Russian educational policy. Volume 1* (2006); *Russian education in the 19th and early 20th centuries 2 volumes – Volume I, The political history of the Russian education, Volume II, The formation and development of the Russian education system*

(2011). As it was developed in a period full of enthusiasm, *the perestroika* period, and the transition to another type of society, *the fourth reform*, initiated and theorized by E. D. Dneprov, deserves a special analysis, due to its perfect articulation, at the level of a global and open training model.

2. Content development

In the book *The Fourth Reform in Russia* (1994), the historical analysis undertaken allows advancing three **conclusions** about the education reforms: **1.** They take place in periods of social development, after economic and political reforms; **2.** They are durable if they have *the ability* to: **a)** "accumulate an ideational potential, social-pedagogical and technological achievements"; **b)** to make deep changes in the structure of the education system; **c)** "to self-develop and to radicalize the transformations started"; **d)** to contribute to the increase of the effective "degree of security and social participation and preparation for action"; **3.** They cannot avoid *the counter-reforms* politically generated by factors that "win the fight against school", which is a problem for specialists in sociology and the education policy (Днепров Э.Д., 1994, 30,31).

The moments of regression occur even after *the fourth education reform*, in the second half of the 1990s (Днепров Э.Д., 2001, 259): a) the tendency of stagnation generated by a multitude of factors; b) "political adventures", which led to the discrediting of decision-makers; c) the inability of the educational policy to address the key issues and the pseudo-problem of the generalization of 12-year education was highlighted; d) the moving away from the major interests of the educational community; e) the lack of *strategic* thinking and *systemic* vision (Днепров Э.Д., 2001, 259).

The analysis of the reform is carried out according to: 1) The triad of *the final goals*: a) the creation of the conditions for the personality development; b) the launching of the development and self-development mechanisms of the education system; c) transforming education into an effective factor for the development of the society; 2) *Ten basic principles* outlined in 1987, substantiated in December 1988, at the *Union Education Congress*, which can be ordered at the level of system reconstruction and improvement of the education process.

I) The principles aimed at *the reconstruction of the education system*: 1) *The democratization of the education* by: a) the liquidation of the state monopoly on education; b) the decentralization of the management; c) the participation of the local authorities in the

management of education; d) the autonomy of the educational institutions; e) the right of teachers to be creative; f) the right of the pupils to choose the school and the educational profile; 2) *The pluralism of the education* takes into account: *the variable and alternative specificity of the education, the diversity of the types of schools, of forms and channels of education* (Днепров Э.Д, 2001, 44); 3) *The popular and national characteristics of the education* ensures *the spiritual health* of the school, as a culture factor, with historical arguments (in the pedagogy of K.D. Uşinski); 4) *The open nature of education* implies: a) the reporting on global issues; b) the engaging in dialogue with other cultures; c) the valorization of the human values before those of class and group; d) overcoming the ideological limits of education; 5. *The regional character of education* implies the freedom granted to each region to choose its own educational strategy, "a first step towards the educational federalism." (Днепров Э.Д, 2001, 46)

II) The principles aimed at *improving the educational process*: 1. *The humanizing of the education* by focusing on the pupil's activity, approached organically, unitarily, psychologically and socially oriented, towards the self-training and the self-development; 2. *The humanistic character of training* achieved by overcoming the "division of the culture and education into humanistic and technical"; 3. *The differentiated training* by capitalizing on the child's right to choose his training path in relation to his own resources; 4. *The active nature of the training*, through the historical leap from the paradigm of the reproductive education to the innovative education, based upon development, which assumes the "innate human desire for activity". 5. *The permanent specificity of the training / self-training*, through the "multidimensional movement of the personality, in the educational space", in relation to all the pedagogical values, engaged culturally, economically, civically. (Днепров Э.Д, 2001, 51)

The success of the education reform implies the fulfillment of seven *conditions* (Днепров Э.Д, 1994): a) *supporting innovative changes*, at the economic, political, cultural and media level; b) *ensuring a systemic character*; c) *substantiating efforts* to increase the development space of education in an open context; d) *employing the capacity of the school organization to self-regulate*; e) orientation towards an *innovative process*; f) supporting *the pedagogical and social needs of the population* on a social scale, not only at the level of the "top individuals"; f) *the staging* of the reform process in the perspective of innovative change, at the level of *goals, structure and content*.

The "fourth reform" underwent five stages: 1) The crisis, which imposes the design of the reform (mid-1985 – May 1987); 2) The preparation of the reform concept and its

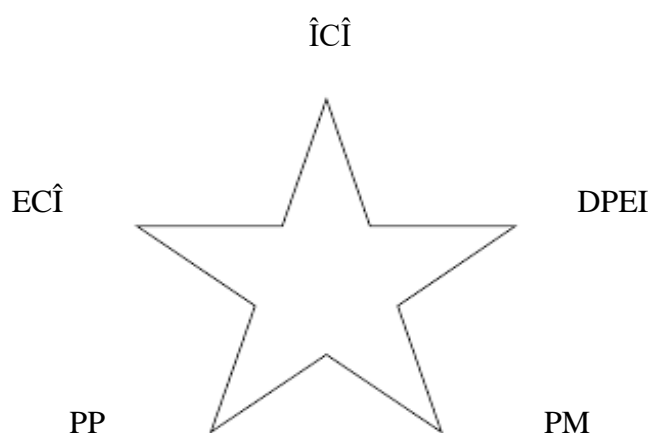
programs (June 1987-July 1988); 3) Adoption of the reform (August-December 1988); 4) The stagnation of the reform (January 1989-July 1990); 5) The achievement of the reform "in a new political configuration" (after August 1990).

The preparation of the reform is marked by a *corpus of innovative ideas*, promoted in the *Teacher's newspaper*, led by V. F. Mateev, the ideologue of the school restructuring. The *creative pedagogy club "Evrika"* was created around him, which: a) initiated the *Teachers' Congress*; b) promoted the *Pedagogy of Cooperation Manifesto (The Teacher's Newspaper, October 18, 1986)* which advocates the *teaching without coercion*. The project is based on: a) *objectives aimed at the self-improvement*; b) knowledge elaborated in "big blocks", from a constructivist perspective, which capitalizes on the pupils' resources in the zone of the proximal development; c) *the creative education method*; d) *the incentive evaluation*; e) the creative self-management; f) *the generalized cooperation* (between the school and all community factors, among teachers in formal and non-formal contexts; among the educated and so on).

The provisional scientific team, established by political decision (June 1, 1988), has substantiated ***the concept of general secondary education***, published in the *Teacher's Newspaper* of August 23, 1988, improved in December 1988, at the *Education Congress*. It promotes a model of *democratic pedagogy*, based on the unity between *the school* and *the community*. This model "defines *the pedagogy of cooperation*". The ideas were incorporated into legal documents, which laid the foundations for *the Law of the Russian Federation on Education*, adopted in 1992.

The new *education law* is built on the basis of three priority principles: 1) the humanistic character of education; 2) the priority given to general human values, the life and health of people; 3) the free personality development. *The objectives* are the following: a) the qualitative renewal of *the content* of education, *the training standards* and *the technologies*; b) supporting the development of *national and regional education systems*; c) *the continuous training*; d) *the administrative decentralization*; e) expanding the society's participation in the education management; f) attracting additional sources of funding for education; g) the development of innovation in education at all levels; i) the social support of the teaching staff. The reforming program involved: a) the achievement of the new education plan, alternative programs and textbooks; b) the development of the national standards necessary for system and process evaluation; c) the training of teaching staff in an innovative spirit.

Thereform process is represented iconically in the form of a star. The top peak concentrates the fundamental orientations and values of education, which are the basis of the contents of education – $\hat{I}\hat{C}\hat{I}$. On the side dimensions the following actions are written down: a) the evaluation of the quality of education – $EC\hat{I}$; b) the development of the innovative educational processes, DPEI. At the bottom there is the complex action of: a) the training of pedagogues for teachers from all disciplines and levels of education, PP; b) the training of school managers from all levels of the education system, PM. (Днепро́в Э.Д, 2001, 135)



- 1) $\hat{I}\hat{C}\hat{I}$ – the guidelines and fundamental values / the innovative renewals of the educational content;
- 2) $EC\hat{I}$ – the action to evaluate the quality of the education;
- 3) DPEI – the action for the development of the innovative educational processes;
- 3) PP – the complex training action of pedagogues / teachers;
- 4) PM – the complex training action of the school managers.

The strategic documents of the reform include: the federal laws – *About Education and About the professional higher and the post-graduate education*; *The national doctrine of education in the Russian Federation until 2025*; *The main directions of the long-term social and economic policy of the Government of the Russian Federation*; *The concept of modernization of the education in Russia until 2010* ;*The concept of social and economic development of the Russian Federation in the long term (until 2020)*; *Normative and legislative documents of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.*

On December 29, 2001, the Government of the Russian Federation approved *the Concept of Modernization of Education in Russia by 2010*. It was considered that "Russian education has faced modernization rather than reform." (Днепров Э.Д., 1994, 263) "The basic link is the secondary school", which aims at: "the development of the pupils' personality and their cognitive and creative abilities."

The national doctrine of the education in the Russian Federation until 2025, approved by *the Federal Law*, establishes the priorities of the public education. *The strategic objectives* aim to involve the education in the development of the Russian society for: a) "overcoming the social, economic and spiritual crisis"; b) ensuring "the quality of the people's lives and the national security"; c) "restoring the status of Russia in the world community as a great power in the fields of education, culture, science, technology and economy"; d) "creating the basis for the sustainable social, economic and spiritual development of Russia".

At the end of the 90s, the education reform registered a series of dysfunctions generated by the tendency to subordinate education to *a certain economic radicalism*. In the period 2000-2004, education modernization programs occurred, supported at the education policy level, necessary to carry the reform to the end, in accordance with the cultural, economic, political and community development requirements of the society.

The analysis of the education reform, undertaken in the past 20 years, requires reporting on three pedagogical criteria, regarding the capacity for innovative change achieved at the level of: 1. *Purposes (ideal, general goals; objectives)*; 2. *Organizational structure of the education system*; 3. *Curricular content of the educational process* (curriculum, programs and school manuals). (Cristea Sorin, 1994, 317)

The ideal of the education is defined in accordance with the national priorities, in accordance with *the Constitution of the Russian Federation* and *the Law of the Russian Federation on Education*. Its construction involved historical research. During *the Middle Ages*, *the ideal of the education* was that of *forming a religious man*. In the 18th Century, when the State rises above the church, *the ideal of the education* is that of *a citizen useful to the Russian Empire, the State and the Motherland*. *The Soviet era* proposed as the ideal of education *the multilaterally developed personality*, involved in achieving the progress of society. In the 1990s, *the ideal of a free personality was formulated*, delimited by the narrow national traditions and the dogmatic commitment subordinated to an authoritarian political regime.

The ideal of the education in the current era represents "the citizen of Russia formed at a moral, creative, competent level, identified with the destiny of the Motherland, with the future of the country, with his roots in the spiritual and cultural traditions of the multinational people of the Russian Federation. "The projective force of *this ideal* is reflected at the level of *the strategic goals* of the education system and *the general and specific objectives* of the education process.

The organizational structure of the education system includes: the preschool education, the primary education, the basic education, the (full)secondary education, the initial professional education, the secondary professional education, the higher professional education (university diploma, specialty and postgraduate training programs) and the postgraduate education. A decisive role belongs to *the general education* (6-18 years old), which includes three stages, corresponding to the three levels of education programs: the primary, the basic the (full)secondary education program.

The content of the training is designed in relation to *the ideal of the education, the strategic goals and the general and specific objectives of the educational process. The basic federal education plan* includes *the state standards for the general education*, designed as *general objectives*, according to which the foundations necessary for the development of *regional* (national and regional) *plans* and of *the educational institutions* are established. In this perspective, *the federal basic curriculum* proposes an annual number of classes that can be redistributed by schooling institutions through modular organization.

This allows for the development of a *differentiated and variable curriculum*, based on a special pedagogical relationship between **the federal component** (75% of the total time) – *the regional component* (not less than 10%) – of *the educational institution* (not less than 10%). *The concept of modernization of the Russian education until 2010* proposed increasing the number of training hours for *the economic and social subjects, foreign languages and computer science*.

The general (full)secondary education is *the final stage of the general education*, designed to provide *functional literacy and social adaptation*, necessary in the process of *the social and civic self-determination* of pupils. It aims at *the continuity* between *the general education* and *the professional education*. The set of *basic and specialized subjects* form *the federal component of the basic curriculum*.

The optional subjects fulfill two main *functions*: a) deepening the contents of some of the basic subjects; b) satisfying the cognitive and social-emotional interests of pupils in

various areas of the human activity. Some *integrated subjects* (*Social Studies* or *Natural Sciences*) are studied depending on the chosen specialty.

The law of the Russian Federation on Education defines *the content of the education* as one of the factors of economic and social progress of the society. It is value oriented through four *strategic goals*: 1) "Ensuring the foundations of the personality formation; 2) Creating conditions for its achievement; 3) The global development of the society; 4) The consolidation and improvement of the rule of law". **The general objective** aims to ensure "an adequate level of general and professional culture of the society".

The derived *specific objectives* aim at: a) the formation of a level of knowledge corresponding to that of the educational programs and the current level of knowledge; b) the integration of the individual into the national and universal culture; c) the formation of a citizen integrated in the contemporary society and oriented towards the improvement of the society; d) the formation of the spiritual and moral personality; e) the training and development of society's human resources" (*The law of the Russian Federation* of 10.07.1992 No. 3266-1, ed. On 28.02.2012, p.12, *On education*).

3. Conclusions and suggestions

The conclusion of our historical study reiterates the idea of the existence of *the four reforms of the education* in Russia, which were intensified in the modern and postmodern (contemporary) era. The trends of the recent years are, in fact, *an advanced modernization*, which continued with *the fourth reform*, which tried to respond to the value requirements imposed by *the democratization, the globalization and the computerization* of the society. At the level of the pedagogy, it involves capitalizing on the higher normative requirements of the curriculum paradigm, provided in the postmodern (contemporary) historical era, from the second half of the 20th century to this day.

Culturally, but also *ideologically*, Russia has its paradoxes. On the one hand, it has an enormous capacity to resist, confirming its status as a great intellectual power, "thanks to the autonomous archipelagos of scientific invention, protected by the regime, in the academic towns, closed citadels of scientists." (Nivat Georges, 1994, 132) On the other hand, the Russian historiographical tradition assimilates the reform with a cyclical threat from the West, directed against its own cultural values. This is an idea taken up in the 1990s by Solzhenitsyn, who believed that such a reform is dramatically marked by a true "catastrophic turn", in the conditions of the non-respect of the specific community (national) culture.

The way out of this historically accumulated ideological tension can be achieved by designing *an educationreform* in accordance with the global values of the information society, taken over and developed *specifically* in the context of *an exceptional cultural model* in which *theinternal contents* are predominant in relation to *theexternal forms*.

The following table summarizes the work and demonstrates the epistemological maturity of the texts under analysis.

The evolution of *the pedagogy* in Russia in the *postmodern (contemporary)* era at the level of *education policy*

<p>Axiomatic foundations / Basic concepts that define:</p>	<p>REPRESENTATIVE TEACHER <i>E. D. Dneprov, The Fourth Reform in Russia, 1994;The current school reform in Russia, 1998; The recent history of the Russian educational policy, 2006</i></p>
<p>1. The education policy</p>	<p><i>Theoretical and normative pedagogical science, with an applicative character at the level of the social system and the educational system and process</i></p>
<p>2. The specific study object of the education policy (as a field of pedagogical sciences)</p>	<p>Designing and implementing education reforms in socially and historically determined pedagogical contexts</p>
<p>3. The normativity specific to the education policy (as a field of pedagogical sciences)</p>	<p>- <i>The federal law on Education, built on the basis of the "Strategic Documents of the Reform" which establish the strategic goals, the general objectives and the specific objectives</i> - <i>The principles aimed at: a) the reconstruction of the education system (democratization, pluralism, national, universal, open, regional character: b) the improvement of the education process (humanistic, differentiated, active, permanent character)</i></p>
<p>4. The research methodology specific to the education policy (as a field of pedagogical sciences)</p>	<p>a) Fundamental, involved in building: - a model of the reform process represented in <i>the shape of a star</i> (at the top, the goals and values; the lateral</p>

	<p>dimensions – the quality assessment and the development of innovative processes; at the bottom, the training of teachers and school managers);</p> <p>- <i>The education law</i> aimed at the reconstruction of the education system at the level of goals (ideal, strategic goals, objectives), organizational structure, curriculum content (plan, programs, textbooks, in relation to the proposed goals);</p> <p>b) Operational, empirical, experimental, necessary for the periodic quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the results at the level of the educational process, of concrete educational and training activities.</p>
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In our approach, we started from outlining the premises of the evolution of pedagogy in Russia in the postmodern era. The "ideological thaw", initiated in the 1950s and 1960s, favored the development of the pedagogy. The humanist pedagogy, represented by V.A. Suhomlinski, the initiator of the movement of the innovative pedagogues, is a relevant example in this regard.

The academician E. D. Dneprov, the theoretician of education reform and minister of education, is representative for the contributions at the level of the educational policy. He designed the fourth education reform in Russia, according to two categories of principles, which intended the reconstruction of the education system and the open nature of education. The work captures the variety of trends manifested in the pedagogy in Russia in the contemporary period as the representative names brought into discussion tried to outline the profile of the period, but they were also representative from the perspective of the epistemological foundations of pedagogy.

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