

Theses of a PhD Dissertation



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**THE HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF
THE MENTALITY OF THE TEACHER
TRAINING COLLEGE IN NAGYKŐRÖS**

**UNIVERSITY OF PANNONIA
SCHOOL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY DOCTORAL STUDIES: ARTS
(LINGUISTICS) AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES)**

**“THE PEDAGOGY OF TEACHER EDUCATION”
PhD PROGRAM**

**PROGRAMME CO-ORDINATOR:
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I. The main motives for carrying out the research, investigational fields

1. The history of Nagykőrös Teacher Training College in the past 15 years, preliminaries, the verification and the assessment of the conclusions of the previous doctoral dissertation

I chose the historical research on the educational system of secondary teacher training colleges – which existed until the end of 1950 – as a topic during the spring of 1991.

The everyday reason for my choice was that the Nagykőrös Teacher Training College – which was closed for 33 years – could open up again on the anniversary of 150th foundation / 1839/. The teacher- and the religious training could begin on 6th October 1990 with the professional control of the Jászberény Teacher Training College.

The professional motives /reformed mentality, person-centred attitude, social dispositional community formation/ of the restart are based on only hypotheses.

My own research goal that time was formulated in the following way: “It is very important for the restarted autonomous institute to explore the historical past, to examine similar educational systems, to compare their theoretical and practical training, and to draw the conclusion.”/1990/

In the discussion of my doctoral dissertation /1994/ I was determined to find the answers for the following questions:

1. Why could this ‘forgotten’ training model restart?
What mentality can we proceed with when talking about secondary teacher training on higher level?
2. What effect can a protestant institute – which is based on mental needs – have on the teaching profession?
3. How can we motivate the youth today in order to solve the problem of lack of qualified teachers in small villages?
4. Can our theoretical conceptions help the teachers create the basis for a person- and value-centred educational programme?
5. Will the presently Protestant school be able to provide the students with democratic atmosphere and mentality?
6. Where can teacher trainees practice their profession? How life-like and of what quality will that practice be?

While searching for the answers for my basic questions I investigated the educational system of several secondary institutions.

I found a lot of similarities in the ethos of Székelyudvarhely, Sárospatak, Pápa and Nagykőrös Teacher Training Colleges.

It was also revealed that all of them had similar organisational systems, only a small number of students and their communities’ mentalities were created by stable value- and view-systems.

In Netherlands I studied the system of four teacher training colleges. My relationship with these colleges has been being continuous since then.

I am glad that I have German and Austrian connections as well. In November 2005 I also gained insight into the teacher training practice of the University of Durham in England.

Our cooperation with the Transylvanian teacher training college has also proved to be illuminating. As a result, it is now possible in Marosvásárhely for higher education students to enrol in teacher training courses in Hungarian.

This institute is part of the Nagykőrös Teacher Training College since 1992. Students of this institute sit for their exams in Nagykőrös every year. Several hundred students have graduated, all of them stayed in Transylvania, and the majority of them are working as teachers, RE teachers or congregational church musicians in small villages.

More than a decade has passed since the defence of my previous doctoral theses. Thus, it might be worth reconsidering the initial hypotheses and the happenings of the past 15 years.

In my paper I would like to investigate how some aspects of certain theoretical issues can relate to these theses. For instance, why is there no educational practice without educational science? What tasks do or will we have in connection with pedagogic taxonomies? Or, as József Zsolnai said: how can it fit into science as a whole? Why can educational practice be called 'the art of mediation'? Why would it be worth rehabilitating the mentality of Sándor Karácsony, Sándor Imre, Ödön Weszely, Béla Juhász – who also worked in Nagykőrös -, Ferenc Váczy and other pedagogic minds who had similar views?

From the beginning of the 1990s I made an effort to gain insight into the pedagogic practice of other countries through personal experience as well.

2. The exploration of the mentality of the teacher training in Nagykőrös after World War I.

As I have already stated, there is a great opportunity in the extension of the person- and value-centred training to the field of teacher education. Our institute that has been operating for 17 years now can prove that it is possible to successfully operate a partly forgotten model, of course, not as an isolated one, but following the social challenges, searching for scientifically verifiable bases.

In my previous doctoral thesis I did not deal with the secondary educational system after World War I. Now I would like to examine that period with the help of yearbooks, archives of Nagykőrös Teacher Training College. I would also like to deal with the memories of teachers and former students from those days. My attitude is based on problem orientation, practice and also on philosophical educational theory.

In my research I try to keep the basic pedagogical facts, or, as József Zsolnai said, the concordance of the pieces of reality, in mind.

I was influenced by famous minds of Hungarian pedagogical history /Sándor Karácsony, Sándor Nagy/. I lay stress on the values, teleology, social attitudes, natural time and space, culture, world of metaphysics that were represented by them.

I am particularly authorised to do so by those contemporary documents according to which Sándor Imre had had a determinative role in the proceedings of the life of the Nagykovács Teacher Training College. As far as Sándor Karácsony is concerned, he was a leader of the contemporary reformed youth, so he controlled mentally the Christian youth organisations in Nagykovács as well.

3. The possible relationship between the last and present mentality of Nagykovács teacher training, programme and aspect formation

The philosophical propositions of Sándor Karácsony, which I tried to build up on the basis of his pedagogical and literary writings, will be of my assistance in discussing the above mentioned issues. We suggest that we can educate our students at the beginning of twenty-first century to become Hungarian teachers because of their field of action is the functional Hungarian culture. But with this statement we arrive at a particular field of competence. The notion of nationalism, appreciation of the national, local feelings and sanctity of community mentality are not unambiguous nowadays.

The fact that the ideas of Sándor Imre still affects the teacher training practice in today makes the situation more complicated. He claims that beyond everyday education there is also a transcendental culture. It is doubtful how the people of our days experience this. In addition, most of the Hungarians declare themselves as Europeans. It is not our task to define who is European but it is obvious from the aspect of spirit that the term European cannot only be defined on the basis of our geographical knowledge, but also on what we know about the culture of the nations. For instance, the Christian belief is shared by most European cultures. The Christian ideology is the view-system that keeps the nations together in many cases. In the relevant chapters of my thesis I would like to find the answer for the following question: what is the practical problem with this ideology? In order for teachers to be able to practice the theses of the new ideology, they need theoretical preparation. They have to familiarize themselves with a great variety of macro-cultures. József Zsolnai considers the profound knowledge of child personality as the basis of effective education / Zsolnai, 2006 /.

The word 'competent' is widely used today both in theoretical and practical pedagogy. The question is: who is competent in what and how can one achieve competence? /Nagy, 2000/. The often cited new qualification requirements and training programmes aim at defining the elements of teacher competence. These elements were collected by a number of authors, and by synthesizing these, we can get to a more practical answer to our question.

4. The explanation of content and mental renewal of teacher training; the description of the main tendencies presently

In Hungary a number of workshops are working presently on the content renewal of the teacher training practice. In the 1990's the elaboration on the 4 and the 5 year programmes took place, while in September 2006 the professional board of the kindergarten and school teacher training colleges

with the coordination of Eötvös Lóránd University by establishing a consortium worked on the elaboration of the new MA and BA teacher training programmes.

It was a great honour for me that I could present Károli Gáspár University in this work and the Consortium relied on me to draw up some fields. I had an opportunity to look at the research work of Pannon University in Pápa from 2006. I was determined from that on to summarize the work of our institute and to reveal the missing relationships which were hidden by the 35-year-period interruption. I was also inclined to retrace the mentality that lived on and that could have a transfer effect on some similarly constructed institutes and on the basic teacher competences.

After these delicate questions I return again to the field of the basic teacher competences, so as to find out what kind of values, cultural elements and standards should dominate in the work of a devoted expert. What content elements provide the feelings of safety during education? I think it is unquestioned that the teacher has anthropological needs.

The mental need system of Ehrenhard Skiera could also give an answer for the teacher's mental competence-system. /Skiera, 1994/. The seven mental needs induce seven teacher competence-mass. It is worth identifying these, and suggesting what teacher competences we can recognize in them. I will return to this point several times in my thesis, particularly during the examination of Peter Peterson's and Sándor Karácsony's pedagogical systems.

II. Research methods, the principles behind the classification of the revealed results

I make an effort to meet the research requirements of philosophical, social-ontological, axiology-cultural, ethical, aesthetic and transcendental fundamental doctrine – as it is required by features of pedagogy – in my thesis.

During the epistemological approaches, from the philosophical fundamental studies I would like to enlarge upon the ontological, traditional and mitological questions.

It is obvious that pedagogy is a complex multidiscipline, so it is necessary to deal with the knowledge-surroundings. That is why I would like to conclude on such an area of pedagogy which is linked to, for example, ethical and credontologic knowledge. The main goal of my research was to reveal the relationships which can identify the similarities between the past and the present of the teacher training in Nagykőrös. The teacher training in Nagykőrös gives us the possibility to deal with Christian culture and credontology as well. Therefore, it is necessary to review the pedagogical phenomenon in a complex way. As a consequence of the metaphysical approach, my claims can become normative sometimes, but at the same time I would like to vindicate the thought of Max Weber to reveal cause and effect. The teacher does his work in the whole society. The work of the teacher is combined by “whole” effects. As József Zsolnai claims, teacher training is the world of metaphysics, aesthetic quality, axiology, politics, sociology, anthropology and pathology, which basically determine the pedagogical activity; evoking trustworthy and untrustworthy value-dual of

the teacher. That is the reason why it is important to study the pedagogical views of Ferenc Váczy, Béla Juhász, András Seri and Miklós Nánási.

With my hypotheses I would like to uncover such problems that show us how the teacher training can help the perfection of trustworthy-value. The mentality of the teacher training system in Nagykőrös shows those “whole” attitudes which are trustworthy. During my reconstruction I would like to rely on archives, year-books, remembrances of living teachers and graduates as well as the memories of school-leaving students and of those who left school during the past decade.

My methods are document hermeneutics and data analysis, interview and questionnaire, data and fact analysis. I rely on outside survey data, too, for example the survey of FELVI-2006, on joint international research projects and on Hungarian investigations /MATRA-project, OM, KOMA/.

III. Answers for the goals of the theses, the reinterpretation of the proposed problems and hypotheses

1. The analysis of the research results of the past 15 years and of the conclusions of the previous doctoral dissertation

My pragmatic goal in my thesis was the summary of my written works.

At the beginning of my work it was difficult to make a prognosis of the concrete synthesis, but at the end I could see such a cohesive force that converges the results of more than two decades. It is nothing else but the reconstruction of the mentality of the Nagykőrös teacher training practice.

In my previous work I could reply to components of a forgotten teacher training system only partly, because I examined it only from a historicultural point of view. That time I could not rely on this synthesizing force, which could - beyond its historical quest - keep alive the mentality of the institute for so long. It was Ákos Pauler and his phenomenological conception that showed me that some problems could lose their original features and could become embedded in the new macro-system, but if there is a possibility for them to work in the original structure again, then they can gain back their original features. On the basis of Tamás Kozma's research, the school is an “organisation”, but in the system of Sándor Karácsony and Sándor Imre the school is still a community as well.

The problem of both school structures has been involved in education. We try to speak about class communities and the function of school collectivity on the basis of the substance nowadays. But the question is: how does this exist? According to hyparchology, the pedagogical practice can be realised in different structures. József Zsolnai names some additional hidden functions like mission and the indulgence of needs in the world of schools.

In my previous thesis I have already tried to point out that the secondary teacher training colleges that had a small number of students could function only on the basis of social mentality. The religious teacher training colleges have an additional so called “congregational social form” as well.

This spiritual organisation along with the existentialist organisation also operates transcendental mental attitudes.

During the analysis of the pedagogical systems of Sándor Imre and Sándor Karácsony, I managed to map these attitudes in the everyday pedagogical practice of the institute.

Miklós Nánási, who was one of the directors of the teacher training college, referred to “postexistentialism” in 1964 in the relation of seven-year-old training. This existence regenerates not only in the remembrance of old students but in the current students’ as well when over the organisational reality the elements of hidden curriculum are operated.

My studies abroad affirmed my hypothesis that the Christian mentality in education can live on. In Romania and Slovakia the minority existence preserved the original mentality during communism. /I made an educational film about it/.

In Holland in the Gouda Protestant Teacher Training College and in the Jena-plan school I understood the relationship between the organisation, the community and the mentality / It is proved on video films/. For example I could find similarities between Gouda and Nagykőrös chorus of 1945, as I could remember the recollections of old students.

All these research results consolidated my previous assumptions and improved them by the laws of prudentia.

2. Systematisation of the mentality of the Nagykőrös Teacher Training College after World War I.

Another goal of my thesis was the systemanalization of mentality of Nagykőrös training.

The elements and the periods of the system became clear for me during the remembrance.

According to my research it can be devided into five bigger historical units.

- i. From the beginning of World War I to Trianon, until the effectiveness of dualism and its failure /1914-1920/
- ii. From Trianon until the beginning of World War II, until the effectiveness of national education /1921-1939/.
- iii. The period of World War II, which was the period of will education, struggle and national existence /1940-1945/.
- iv. After World War II, the period of democratic restoration /1946-1948/.
- v. From the total nationalization until the closing of teacher training college, the period of national, political centralism, the atheism /1949-1957/.

The five periods can be devided clearly along the historical events, but the mentality of the Nagykőrös teacher training can be regarded as one during the Váczy-period. I could find the reason for this in the followings:

- i. The Reformed Church as the maintainer declared and declares nowadays clear and unified requirements for the studies, like Christian values and mentality.
- ii. The concept of institutional leadership was stable during the forty years. Ferenc Váczy as the director was appropriate, consequent which induced unified educational effect for 35 years. The teacher staff represented the so called “Váczy-mentality”, so it could exist from 1914-1957.
- iii. The dominant members of the staff agreed with this view until the closing of the institute.

3. The role of research results in the current content reform of teacher training

We can find some messages from the previous period for the reform of present training, especially for the educational programme:

- i. The teacher training is a unified system, of course, on the higher level nowadays.
József Zsolnai claimed the necessity of a five-year “MA” teacher training because of the “Bologna-process”.
- ii. Among European countries there was an interactive kind of teacher training. The interpersonal, social-mental bipolar relationships /teacher-student/ can be operated primarily in the smaller institutes, especially in small-team forms. This idea was supported by the Holland-Hungarian research, the so-called “MATRA” project.
- iii. During the research it became evident for me that the teacher training institutes must develop an own image. For the basic pedagogy teaching it is necessary to accept the some theories of philosophy, social-ontology, axiology, ethics, aesthetics, epistemology, transcendentalism, which means the stability of the work of the teacher.
The past and present model of the Nagykőrös teacher training would like to enforce all of the above mentioned basic sciences.
- iv. One of the main points of the reformed teacher training in Hungary is the practical training. Anthropological science draws our attention to the natural way of getting to know the human being. During the exploration of the “biological human” medical science cannot imagine the neglect of practice in the living environment. The study of pedagogy can be acknowledged only in its natural sense: systems, attitudes and examinational levels.
According to Iván Falus’s research, the teacher’s view system can become stronger or weaker only through practice. Therefore, it is necessary to operate such “practice-fields”, where the teacher-child study and intermediate-art activities could be enforced. /ÉKP-system school net of József Zsolnai/.

4. Revision of the Nagykőrös Teacher Training programme

My other aim with the current study was to contribute to the revision of the Nagykőrös Teacher Training programme. I tried to draw up some conclusions on the basis of prudentia.

I offer some standpoints viewing science as a whole, as Comenius suggested centuries ago.

- i. As far as philosophical studies are concerned, it is very important in a reformed institute to deal with pedagogical tradition and teleology. From the aspect of pedagogical peratology, the theological science is correlative with pedagogy. But regarding pedagogical uziology, it is necessary to deal with those theological elements separately that are in connection with childhood education.
- ii. With respect to social-ontology, the main message is to declare the human-image of our time. According to the mission of our institute theological anthropology approach is primary /Sándor Karácsony/.

Christian ethnology help the development of a view-system about education as a whole.

When interpreting past societies, we can find supporting effect in the area of hermeneutics. But we should be careful with superficial analyzes of the Bible /for example children are beaten/, because it leads to pedagogical pathology.

- iii. Christian education can produce ideological stability in connection with axiology, culturology, ethics and aesthetics.
- iv. Another main point is the suitable handling of pedagogical epistemology. It was proved in the thesis that Béla Juhász was committed by this approach.
- v. It could be tracked that beside pedagogy which based on psychology the theological disciplines between the two World Wars was emphasized, but they dealt with the hygienic, economic, politological, judicial and linguistic questions as well. It is proved by year-books that the different self-teaching groups were the common base of the scientific and art work. But I found only few connection with eugenetics, game-theory and library-science. Today students are interested in especially the new sciences. For example, social-ecology, pedagogical media-science, film-science and human etology. However, they are not so keen on gardening and farming, although it was an excellent field of training years ago.

5. Conclusions

All things considered, the Nagykovács reformed Teacher Training College had a special ethos during the “Váczy-period” which was a standing value for students. The institute educated them for sense of vacation, self-respect, the respect of classmates, active social life, national consciousness, patriotism, justness and respect for God. The so called “Váczy-period” was a consciously built system which existed for approximately half a century.

The result of my research identifies cohesion of different system-elements.

The interactive, value-and person centred teacher training system with other similar ones served the advance of Hungarian reformed teacher training through decades.

It can be proved that it had the necessary criteria for teacher training. Form a current point of view, they are the followings:

1. The institute could boast of a universal, European mentality, because it represented the Christian value. All those values were controlled by Bishop László Ravasz and Sándor Imre as the church district educational executive.
2. The mentality of the institute was based on sciences. It enforced the research results of theology, psychology, philosophy and pedagogy from that period.
3. It dealt with emotional education appropriately after Trianon. It had great results in the education of patriotism.
4. The students, who had enough self-respect despite the two world- wide catastrophes, were educated for public life. They dealt with culture and art on a higher level; their results were particularly excellent in music, using the Kodály-method.

5. They enforced practice-orientated training during teacher character training. Today this is called competency-improving. Well-trained teachers helped with character training /like András Seri, Miklós Nánási etc/.
6. Positive child- and corporate image could develop in the minds of students. They regarded the principle of starting out from the child and the processes of child-study as top priority. /László Nagy/.
7. They believed in the development of the “lower” social classes, the capacity of living of smaller towns.
8. A great number of school leaving students stayed in their profession, most of them worked under simpler circumstances, they became real “lamps” /e.g. Sándor Nagy, András Márton, Mrs. Gedeon Horváth, Mrs. Lajos Mészáros, Pál Kardos etc./.
9. The former students have never forgotten about their institutes, teachers, classmates, class-anniversaries.
10. They were able to preserve and transmit such kind of mentality which we should continue in our days, too.

6. Future prospects

For the 21st century, it has began to evolve such a teacher-training model in Nagykőrös which was closed down in 20th century. The students of the Teacher Training Faculty of Károly Reformed University – according to the survey of 2006 – spoke about such mentality of their institute which was parallel with the former students’ opinion, who had finished school 50-60 years ago.

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