Learning, emotions and teaching

Snježana Kević-Zrnić

Originalni naučni rad doi: 10.7251/NSK1401107K UDK: 37.015.3:159.953.5 Original scientific paper

(Taša Stanković-Janković, Učenje učenja i emocije u nastavi, Art print, Banja Luka, 2012)

There is a phrase which appears in the scientific circles—the society of learning and/or knowledge. This society, which by its learning and knowledge assures the very existence and progress in all spheres of life, cannot exist without individuals who learn, use and upgrade their knowledge. Perhaps that is why this phrase is being avoided, for it could be hard to assess which society is capable to respond to such a challenge. We have been doing an injustice by placing the learning into the institutions. There was no place for emotionality in those institutions. Teachers would forget their emotions as they entered their classrooms, and students, following their examples, would try to
do the same. Being imposed and conducted under pressure, learning did not, and still does not elicit positive emotions in class. The tasks we do not have positive emotions for, we cannot do well, so the question is what kind of learning and what kind of knowledge do our students get, and can they meet the challenges of modern society, whatever it might be called. By her work “Learning How to Learn and Emotions in Education”, the author reminds us about the significance of a more humane and more liberal approach to learning and education.

In Chapter “Theoretic basis of research”, the author unobtrusively puts theories of learning (behavioral, cognitive and humanistic ones) versus the learning how to learn. Then, the circle is closed by “Emotions in education”, and the notable findings of tangential research are presented. Learning, as a complex process, is explained in a simple and concrete way, without omitting the important factors such as: goals, motivation, memory, concentration, forgetting, metacognition etc. In regard to physiologic processes of the brain, the author backs up the natural connection between emotions and learning, giving us a number of interesting and extraordinary creative examples how to learn and en-rich ourselves. Numerous methods and techniques of efficient learning are described in a simple, yet scientifically based way, while the connection with emotions is, as shown by examples, more than obvious. All this is flavored by original and creative illustrations and graphic representations.
Defining the subject, goal and tasks of the research, the author leads us into a complex methodology. In the Chapter “Methodological basis of research”, she boldly hypothesized that valuing of learning how to learn by students stands in an interdependent relation to their emotions. Later, she presents hypotheses that sex, success, age, intensity of emotions, attention, techniques of successful learning and students’ competencies cannot be ignored when it comes to learning how to learn. By applying the research methods and techniques, as well as certain instruments with which she essentially grasped these elements, the author came to significant and applicable findings. As my goal is to get the readers interested in “Learning How to Learn and Emotions in Education”, I shall not present the research findings here, and yet, I have to point out that, after this work, we can rightfully claim that interdependence of valuation of learning how to learn and emotions of students does exist. In chapters “Results of research and their interpretation” and “Synthesis of research findings”, the author, in detailed, scientifically based and methodologically correct way, presents the findings, comments on the goals fulfilled, and generously opens the path to future research as well as the actual questions. In “Conclusions” we are presented with certain factors which the author considered important, but has not dealt with in detail, so she points out to the school marks and their social dimension that is being missed, and then she stresses out the importance of education of teachers.
in applying the techniques of successful learning. The author justifiably stressed out the need for textbooks and handbooks that would contain certain instructions for successful learning.

Of course, it is important to mention the zeal of a humane pedagogue, which is noticeable throughout this work. Unconstrained by the traditional school she attended and worked in, the author, Tanja Stanković-Janković, besides the scientific, also implemented into her work a friendly, humane and, before all, caring relationship with the students, which is, I’m afraid, rare to be seen nowadays.

We shall not be wrong if we call this work an example of correct citing and academic writing, which can be seen in “Literature”, “Index of names” and “Index of terms”. Besides that, the “Appendices” are an important segment, where the author presents the tables and instruments which were used. Finally, “Learning How to Learn and Emotions in Education” is written concise and clearly, without obsolete foreign expressions, which enables the readers who are not of the educational profession to easily approach the reading, while the students, on the other hand, can learn in a short time period about the pathways for their further work and advancement. And, what is most important for all those who do not know how to “learn how to learn”, let them seek the answer in this book.