A 'MODERN' EUROPEAN EDUCATION

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Anotace: Příspěvek odpovídá na otázky vztahující se k pojetí „moderní" evropské identity, koncepci vzdělávání pro Evropu, k žádoucím změnám v myšlení a přístupech učitelů a fungování evropského vzdělávání v praxi. Autoři konstruují moderní pojetí identity v síti osobních a sociálních vztahů, argumentují ve prospěch kritické reflexe jako zdroje sebezdokonalování. V úvahách o koncepci „moderního" evropského vzdělávání považují za klíčový princip vzájemné závislosti (interdependence), která je prostředkem kooperativního učení ve třídě, sociální inkluze i výchovy k evropanství. Národní identita, mezinárodní solidarita a svoboda jsou pak tři hlavní témata evropského vzdělávání.

Klíčová slova: evropské vzdělávání, evropská identita, evropské občanství, role učitele, role žáka, princip vzájemné závislosti.

I Introduction

This paper is a version of a plenary lecture given to the final conference of a project entitled 'Training Teachers in European Union Affairs' at Charles University, Prague, in the Autumn of 1999. The Czech Republic is preparing for accession to the European Union with a target date of 2002. The focus of this project was to work with groups of teachers, inspectors, government officials, and academics exploring what teaching for and about Europe may be. One outcome was a teacher training manual which has since been used by several Czech schools as a part of curriculum initiatives and developments. A second outcome was a series of in-service workshops delivered to a range of Czech audiences by a collaborative team of Czech, Dutch and UK educators. The focus of these workshops was as much about teaching and learning processes as about European content. Thus, European education here implied a shift from traditional teacher-centred approaches to more pupil-centred approaches with an emphasis on active citizenship.

Both the plenary lecture and this paper have also been influenced by the authors'

own experiences and research outside the Czech project. These experiences include both explorations of identity and education, as well as ethnographic research into learners' constructions of modern foreign language learning in an urban secondary school in the North of England, which offers insights into their perceptions of 'foreignness', particularly on a European level.

The title of the paper 'A 'Modern' European Education' should perhaps be read as a question rather than a statement, that is, what might we mean by a modern[2] European education? This in turn leads us into four further questions which the paper will address:

1. What do we mean by a 'modern' European identity?
2. How can we conceptualise a 'modern' education within the new Europe?
3. What shifts in teacher thinking are implicit in such an education system?
4. What does such an education system look like in practice?

The paper will explore the first three questions from a theoretical perspective before drawing on the project to illustrate the theory in practice.

II European Identity

We would like to use a vignette taken from research on teacher identity to articulate[3] the notions of developing and shifting national identities within the new Europe.

I had passed the 11+ and had to travel from the London borough in which I lived. On my first day at school I realised that everyone else seemed to know a whole group of friends. I seemed to be the only one who didn't have a group of friends. However I slowly began to become a part of a group of 'outcasts'. This grouping took place through bus routes. In fact, some of the group radically altered their travel routes so that after a while we were all travelling into school together. The group grew closer and closer, doing everything together and gaining a reputation for being troublemakers. I remember the head of the first year calling us all into his office to tell us that this was the first time he had ever had such problems with a group of pupils. We took a pride in this label and tried to live up to it. We even christened ourselves 'The Magnificent Thirteen'. There was never any space for new members. We were a closed group with a strict code of indiscipline.

The group gave me the security I needed for a while but eventually I wanted more. I remember that for once I found myself concentrating in class. As I listened to the teacher questioning the group I realised that I knew an answer. I was suddenly forced to make a decision. As a member of ,The Magnificent Thirteen' I had taken our set of vows. One of these pledges was that we would never answer a question in class. But for some reason, on this occasion, I wanted to answer. I took the plunge and answered, correctly. It was almost as if the teacher sensed change, as if they visibly relaxed. However, as soon as I answered I looked back down at my desk - I dare not meet the gaze of any other mem-

ber of 'The Magnificent Thirteen'. When we left class all hell broke loose. I was teased and ridiculed. It was as if I had betrayed a trust, as if I had changed sides.[4]

In the above vignette James is both constructed through the context in which he is placed and through which he develops, and simultaneously constructs a space in which he can make choices. In other words, it is not so simple as to say that the classroom context predicts and produces the practices that occur. On the contrary, James' story suggests that the identities and practices constitute the very context within which they become practices and identities. This is not to dismiss notions of identity. Indeed such a notion is central to this paper. Rather we are trying to emphasise the ways in which we both construct identity and are constructed by the contexts in which we find ourselves. The vignette also illustrates the way in which identity is constructed in contrast to perceived othemess[5]. As a boy I construct myself as 'not female'.

The tension present in James' Story is described by Zizek[6] as the relation between the ideal ego and the egoideal. This is also seen as the operation of 'imaginary identity' and 'symbolic identity'. Imaginary identity is the image in which we can like ourselves. Symbolic identity is the view of ourselves from an outside observer. In James' case above his decision to answer the question shows a battle with his imaginary identity; member of the magnificent thirteen, not co-operating with school, and his symbolic identity as perceived by the teacher. Through answering the question he removes one of the differences which have constituted his identity. This in turn means rejection from the group at first but later a re-negotiation of the group identity takes place which redefines the group.

We would like to use this as a metaphor for the construction of national identities and

identities within a modern Europe. We would argue that, within European countries, tensions can clearly be seen between something often described as a national identity, and a European identity, seen by some as an identity constructed with half an eye on the image countries wish to portray of themselves to an external rather than an internal audience. An imaginary identity located within historical and social constructions of 'national culture' and a symbolic identity based on a vision of future development of national cultures' as presented to an 'outside' audience and as constructed with 'outside' influences.

For us the clearest articulation of such a construction of identity is given by Morwenna Griffiths[7]. Her image of self-identity is a web. As we construct this web we are partly in control of its development and at times at the mercy of the contexts in which we build our web of identity. Such a web is individual yet only develops through membership and 'belonging' to a range of communities, indeed it is this membership which defines and redefines such communities. For Griffiths the concept of community includes both personal communities and the wider society. The experience of acceptance and rejection so clearly stated by James cannot be separated from the structures of power and the political context in which he found himself. Thus the construction of identity and politics cannot be separated.

Such a European identity is underpinned by connection. Shifting notions of identities offer strength and most importantly a rejection of totalitarianism and xenophobia.

III Education within a new Europe

If we work with this sense of identity what does it mean for the aims of education. We offer the following as 'modern' aims for a European education system;

1. To develop an awareness of self.

Through this awareness of self both at an individual, a community and a national level we develop confidence, security and with that the ability to change. Of course this awareness of self includes the question, 'what is it to be European?'

2. To develop an awareness of others.

Through exploration of what is other we draw strength on what we mean by self. We begin to see the value of diversity and see difference as positive and not threatening.

3. To challenge prejudice.

Developing a strong sense of self and a positive sense of difference is clearly not enough in a Europe which is constantly threatened by war and by racism. A modern European education must challenge the prejudice at the root of these tragedies. However a developed sense of self and awareness of others are precursors to challenging prejudice.

4. To develop a vision for the future.

Modern European schools can act both as models for a diverse future and also as arenas in which the citizens of such a diverse Europe develop the skills, attributes and competencies necessary for the construction and maintenance of such a society.

Let us now focus on two key aspects of such an education for European citizenship which were also central to the educational initiatives of the Czech project. These are a shift from teacher centred approaches to leaner centred approaches, and a shift from individualised learning and teaching to collaborative learning and teaching.

Ideas of learner-centredness can be illustrated by using Modern Foreign Language teaching as a framework for discussion. The shift from teacher centred approaches to learner centred approaches can be illustrated as a shift from the 3 P's to the three M's. The three P's here are 'Presentation', 'Prac-

tice', and 'Production'. Here the teacher presents, the learner practises (carrying out tasks set up by teacher), and then the learner produces (within the parameters of the teacher's aims and objectives).

In contrast the 3 Ms consist of 'Meeting', 'Manipulating', and 'Making your own'. This requires a shift of focus to the learner, moving from extrinsic motivation towards intrinsic motivation. In Modern Foreign Language teaching, for example, the learner meets language in a variety of contexts and from a range of sources (not only the teacher); they manipulate the language through using it in a variety of activities (offering the learner more control and choice of activity and encouraging engagement of thinking); and, most importantly, they make the language their own (using it to say what they want to say, to be creative, to act on the world). An outcome of the three M's is a move from teacher-controlled production to the development of learner autonomy.

Such learner autonomy, however, can be misleading. It can, in fact, be a further control mechanism implemented by the teacher, a form of technical autonomy[8] in which individuals independently work through tasks set by the teacher. Learners are offered few opportunities to make real choices about what they are learning and are not encouraged to reflect on why. The results can be short-term compliance but long-term disaffection and social fragmentation. It has been argued elsewhere that such technical forms of autonomy need to be pushed forward to more political[9] or critical[10] autonomy in which learners can develop a voice and become empowered[11].

Such critical autonomy offers a way of responding to the above aims through the three key aspects of relatedness, reflection and resistance. Through relatedness we see the sense of identity described earlier. Re-

latedness in the classroom involves teachers developing a curriculum which works outwards from learner's own lives, enabling them to make real choices about their learning. Here learners begin to make the connections for themselves through using topics of interest and concern, and through making real contacts with people from different backgrounds. It also draws on the desire of learners to take initiative and responsibility. The reluctant learner becomes a thing of the past as education begins to relate to the learner rather than expecting the learner to relate to it.

Reflection can be seen as a tool to overcome 'regimes of truth[12]' or 'the limitations of routinised and traditional thinking[13]'. Both teachers and learners are here engaged in the development of critical thinking skills, including analysis. This supports an earlier aim through developing in learners (and teachers) the ability to recognise their own prejudices through ongoing critical reflection. By reflecting on the origins of their prejudices they are then in a better position to challenge them.

This is then activated by resistance. Resistance shows learners how to resist negative pressures, (e.g. from the media in the form of newspaper headlines, biased reports etc; from peer and political pressure which can lead to extremism). It also offers strategies for challenging others' prejudices (e.g. through engagement as an alternative to simple approval or condemnation). Resistance here is different from that which leads to exclusion. It is a positive, constructive form of resistance similar to what Sarup calls emergent, organised and progressive, as opposed to residual forms which often result in self-destruction and few possibilities for broader change[14].

Critical autonomy therefore extends the learning role to one which is both political

and critical, not just taking in ‚knowledge‘ but transforming it. We are suggesting that such an extension of the notion of learner autonomy will enable learners to recognise the potential and the constraints of the curriculum, and to influence the content and processes to make it more acceptable to them rather than opting out, "to struggle for cultural alternatives[15]". It is our belief that this offers great potential for transformation both at the micro-level (the classroom and the school) and at the macro-level (society), since it offers a 'training' in self-empowerment and negotiation which can be transferred beyond the classroom. Students will not be 'given' a voice, but will learn to 'find' a voice, to make the most of their space, to find alternative and constructive forms of resistance in a context of conflict, to become "authors of their own worlds[16]". As Dale has suggested, power structures in society are complex, but it is this complexity (and ambiguity) which allows opportunities, spaces, for self-empowerment:

"What we are faced with then is not either preparations for, or the early (or late) stages of a set piece battle, but a continuing series of rarely conclusive skirmishes on shifting terrain, between shifting alliances, in an over-all context of a system attempting to carry out contradictory functions, through means that may conflict with its objectives. It is in the spaces and interstices created by these and other contradictions that we must look for resistance to coalesce."[17]

This is echoed in the postmodernist debate which sees "dominance not as a single, centrifugal force, but as a confusing push and pull of ideological pressures operating on the individual within an increasingly fragmented public space[18]". 'Finding a voice' implies being able to develop one's capacities and realise one's potential in a society founded on fluid identities and flux, rather than be-

ing defeated by the power structures in which struggles for hegemony take place, or becoming an uncritical 'follower'.

The development of critical autonomy, however, does not imply egocentrism. Another key facet of education for 'life in an interdependent multicultural Europe[19]' is collaborative learning. The vision here is of independent thinkers working interdependently. Learners will learn that strength lies not only in the individual but also in the group, and that through mutual support and common goals a voice can be found. Negotiation and mutual transformation is then not about autonomy as individualism, but rather "self-development in a social world[20]". If we are to prepare our students not only to survive but also to make the most of the rapid change which will increasingly characterise the 21st century, there is a need for a new vision of education to include autonomy and collective well-being:

"We learn when we have a sense of purpose and such motivation is best likely to grow out of our active participation in creating the projects which are to shape our selves as well as the communities in which we live. Such a perspective emphasises our dual responsibility as citizens for making our private and public worlds and that our mutual dependence and accountability are best supported through the deliberate processes of democratic decision-making. We learn about ourselves and others through deliberating with others and reasoning practically about change.[21]"

Similar points have been made in pedagogical and philosophical discussions about the relationship between dependence, independence and interdependence. For example, Griffiths has reflected on the inadequacy of the existing language to define these issues, and she has illustrated this by describing how teachers can be teaching in diamet-

rically opposed ways but still with the aim of developing 'independence', a goal which in any case she questions[22]. Similarly Kirtikara has compared Western and Oriental understandings of autonomy, revealing that in Thailand, for example, autonomy has more to do with collective responsibility than with personal promotion[23].

The skills and values which need to be developed as part of European education therefore include the notion of interdependence, in which individuals are responsible for themselves but within a social context, in which all individuals 'belong' rather than being isolated, and in which individual difference and social diversity is perceived as a source of strength rather than threat. Thus, interdependence needs to be developed as a tool for classroom learning (co-operative learning), as a form of social inclusion (social education), and as a form of education for European citizenship (working together actively with others both at home and abroad to ensure socially just transformation[24]).

IV A model for 'modern' European Education

As a brief illustration of the ideas we have outlined above we will model the process through a description of a Comenius funded project called INCLUSIVE. This project's aims are as follows;
- To raise teachers awareness of the existence and effectiveness of inclusion strategies.
- To combat racism. To demonstrate the principle of advantage in diversity.
- To raise achievement and self-esteem of members of marginalised groups in school.
- To contribute to student teachers knowledge about ways to raise achievement.

The project involves learners, teachers and teacher educators from The Czech Republic, Spain, Denmark and The United King-

dom. During the initial stages of the project a common workshop was devised which was then adapted and used in the schools in the four different countries. The partners here share values and understandings and acknowledge that differing contexts will need differing emphases in the workshop. Strategies and resources are then shared directly by the learners and teachers through the use of the Internet. This allows critique and reflection leading to a reworking of individual strategies and techniques. The project will develop through direct contact in shared workshops working as a single 'European' group.

Looking back at the aims outlined earlier in the paper we claim this project illustrates the development of awareness of self (the use of co-operative and collaborative learning strategies within teachers own schools), an awareness of others (the sharing of ideas through the Internet), challenging prejudice (as we work with others using co-operative learning strategies we become aware of and challenge our own preconceptions). The final meeting we hope will act as a vision for what a 'modern' Europe is and what a 'modern' Europe might be.

Final thought
A home is something we carry inside us. Those who do not have a home inside them cannot build one, either from defiance or from stone.[25]

The novel which this quotation comes from 'Waiting for the Dark, Waiting for the light', by Ivan Klima describes the life of a Czech television cameraman immediately before and after the Velvet revolution of 1989. It describes a struggle to make sense of ourselves within dramatic historical and political contexts. The struggle of educators is to work with their learners in European classrooms as we all struggle to make sense

of ourselves as individuals, as 'nationals' and as Europeans. Perhaps most importantly as we try to define ourselves in the global context.

The most recent white paper on education from The Czech Government has three strands to its vision for education and three themes underpinning the developments in education. The vision is based on an education which is lifelong, democratic and free. The themes underpinning such an education are those of national identity, international solidarity, and freedom. We hope that this paper can be seen as a contribution to this development.

Poznámky:

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2) We should perhaps point out that here 'modem' is a direct translation from the title of the paper in Czech and should be read as meaning 'new' and 'up to date' rather than as a precursor to 'postmodern'.

3) We use 'articulate' deliberately echoing Stuart Hall, he used the word as it emphasised both connections and explanations through example.

4) Cotton, T. (Ed) (1998) *Thinking about teaching*, Hodder and Stoughton: London. Pages 63-64.

5) See also Di Stefano, (1991) 'Masculine Marx' in Shanley, M.L. and Pateman, C. *Feminist Interpretations and Political Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

6) Zizek, S. (1989) *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. London: Verso books.

7) Griffiths, M. (1995) *Feminisms and the self: The web of identity*. London: Routledge books.

8) Benson, P. (1997) 'The Philosophy and Politics of Learner Autonomy', in Benson, P. and Voller, P. (Eds.) (1997) *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning*, Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman. Pages 18–34

9) *ibid*

10) We are using 'critical' here as we might in describing critical theory, That is as closely and implicitly related to power structures.

11) Lamb, T.E. (2000) 'Finding a voice – learner autonomy and teacher education in an urban context' in Sinclair, B., McGrath, I. and Lamb, T.E. (eds.), *Learner Autonomy, Teacher Autonomy: Future Directions*, Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman. Pages 118–127Lamb, T.E. (2000) 'Finding a voice – learner autonomy and teacher education in an urban context' in Sinclair, B., McGrath, I. and Lamb, T.E. (eds.), *Learner Autonomy, Teacher Autonomy: Future Directions*, Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman. Pages 118–127

12) Foucault, M. (1980). Truth and Power in *Power/Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon Books

13) Carr,W. and and Kemmis, S. (1986) *Becoming Critical: Educaion, knowledge and action research*. Lewes: The Falmer Press.

14) Sarup, M. (1991) *Education and the Ideologies of Racism*, Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books. Page 12

15) Pennycook, A. (1997) 'Cultural alternatives and autonomy', in Benson and Voller (1997) *op. cit.* Page 45

16) *ibid*. Page 35

17) Dale, R. (1982) "Education and the

Capitalist State: contributions and contradictions", in Apple, M.W. (Ed) *Cultural and Economic Reproduction in Education,* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. Pages 157–158

18) Nixon, J. Martin, J. McKeown, P. and Ranson, S. (1996) *Encouraging Learning: Towards a theory of the learning school,* Buckingham: OUP. Page 64

19) Pavla Polechova, at the final conference of Phase One of the project entitled 'Training teachers in European Union Affairs', Charles University, Prague, December 1999

20) Wallace: 68 Wallace, G. (1996) 'Engaging with learning', in Ruddock et al (1996) *op.cit.*

21) Nixon *et al* (1996), in Ruddock, J., Chap lain, R. and Wallace, G. (Eds) *School Improvement: What Can Pupils Tell Us?* London: David Fulton. Pages vii-viii

22) Griffiths, M. (1992) 'Autonomy and the fear of dependence', in *Women's Studies International Forum,* 15 (3). Pages 351–362

23) Kirtikara (1997) in *Proceedings of the International Conference 'AUTONOMY 2000': the Development of Learning Independence in Language Learning,* held at King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Thonburi, Bangkok, Thailand, in association with the British Council, November 1996

24) See for example Giroux, H. (1983) *Theory and Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition.* London: Heinemann

25) Taken from 'waiting for the dark, waiting for the light' by Ivan Klima

Pozn. red.

Autoři jsou z Velké Británie. Působí jako vysokoškolští učitelé na Pedagogické fakultě Univerzity Nottingham. Tony Cotton je původně matematik, Terry Lamb lingvista. Oba se zabývají multikulturním vzděláváním a mají zkušenosti z mezinárodních projektů. V současné době spolupracují na dvou mezinárodních projektech Ústavu výzkumu a rozvoje školství Pedagogické fakulty UK.