

Reviews

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Review

“Integral Nursery Education in E. Bojanowski’s System of Education – Continuation and Change” by Sister M. Opiela

The issue of integral nursery education is highly important, especially nowadays, in an era when such values are likely to disappear. These values such as family, education, respect or dignity seem to be eradicated out of society. In the plurality of numerous educational proposals, there has been the lack of the basic ones, in which, the subjectivity of a child plays a role of utter importance. In the age of consumerism, most of the Christian values have been disappearing, many individuals are likely to omit them within integral nursery education.

In the age of postmodernist chaos, accompanied by the multiplicity of educational proposals, it is extremely difficult to implement the framework of a nursery educational system and a well proven educational method.

It is not surprising that contemporary educators, teachers and parents are to face the hard task of preparing their pupils for life in a constantly changing reality. Unfortunately, in the plurality of numerous educational methods it is extremely difficult to choose the appropriate one, which would combine Christian values together with the biblical concept of the human being, respecting personal dignity. Therefore, it is essential to implement the educational method which includes all the above mentioned values. This is not always practiced in contemporary nursery education. E. Bojanowski’s system

of integral education is one which takes all the above mentioned values into account. It is the system sharing the temporal, supernatural, individual and social dimensions. Sister M. Opiela points out the timeliness of everlasting values in E. Bojanowski's message. The author, rightly brings to the attention of society the use of timeless and essential Christian values. The author rightly observes that it is not an alternative system, but it is the Catholic model of nursery education.

In order to explain the essence of E. Bojanowski's education, Sister Opiela analyzes the practice of Bojanowski's legacy and the implementation of the timeless pedagogical tips in the contemporary nursery reality of the twenty first century. The author rightly states that it is possible, thanks to the hermeneutics of continuity of Bojanowski's assumptions and message. The author rereads these assumptions afresh and implements them in a constantly changing reality. The publication of Sister Opiela is an extremely significant position in the age of globalization. The author draws the reader's attention to the significant role of timeless values in the process of integral nursery education. This book is rightly recommended for all teachers, especially the ones who work in the field as well as ones who are studying and specialising in the need of implementing Christian values into the modern theory and practice.

Among the arguments that make the book valuable, it is important to mention that the author, through the analysis of the origin of Bojanowski's educational system, the history of education together with an educational understanding, presents the timeliness of the system and its place in the modern nursery education. The author draws the reader's attention to the philosophical and religious inspirations, as well as the social and cultural considerations, in which Bojanowski's practice and message was shaped and "continually improved". It is necessary to mention that in the XXI century reality, in which the human is perceived as an object, the appropriate axiological attitudes in the education of nursery school pupils are threatened to disappear. The newly reborn theory and practice of Bojanowski's educational system presents the child as a human being which need to be the centre of education. This publication is therefore an ideal proposal to all educators, who have been looking for timeless values together with well proven educational methods.

Another issue presented in the book is the integrity of nursery education. In her book, the author presents the anthropological assumptions, as well as axiological attitudes, accompanied by the context of creating integral nursery

education. The author marks the importance of a pedagogy knowing its origins in Christian inspirations and highlights the necessity of a nursery education based on Catholic Pedagogy. It is therefore a valuable position among those offered, respecting contemporary globalisation currents.

Another important issue, which is stated by Opiela, is presenting the Bojanowski's methods in the historical and cultural contexts. It is important to place them in the contemporary nursery educational methods. The author presents the concept and explains that Bojanowski's reflections were mainly inspired by philosophy, pedagogical insights, theology and psychology. She compares current liberal teaching methods with the well proven and traditional ones presented in Bojanowski's teachings. She situates them in the contemporary educational system. Moreover, she draws attention to shaping the appropriate axiological attitudes among the nursery school pupils. She emphasises that these attitudes, shaped in early childhood, have basic significance in later, adult life. Nursery education, according to the author, should be supported by Catholic teaching. Philosophy, religion and spiritual development play a significant role in the process of nursery education. These elements are undeniably essential in nursery education.

Another significant element reflected temporarily is the universality of theories and practices of nursery pedagogy in Bojanowski's teachings. It combines Christian traditions and applies them for today. It is an ideal help for educators who value Christian traditions. The publication is also enriched with innovative educational methods, it is therefore a kind of a "bridge" conjoining history, tradition as well as universal values with the latest trends. The author claims that educating children in the spirit of bravery and courage is highly important in today's globalised and emancipated society.

Sister Opiela, in her book, emphasizes the role of the family in a child's education. She also emphasizes the family values, which, according to the author, make pupils free human beings, spiritually mature, responsible and persons who do good. Family education, as the author states, together with nursery education, are to complement each other. Within the above mentioned factors pupils may easily develop their moral, physical as well as intellectual qualities, which perfectly harmonize with their growth. It is important in order to prepare young children for an active social life. Therefore, all the family values emphasized by author are extremely significant in an era of commercialization and in a constant rat race.

Another important matter according to Sister Opiela in her book is the synergy of educational theory and practice of E. Bojanowski. The author rightly observes that a good education cannot function without the appropriate pedagogy. It is helpful in the customisation of the nursery educational process. Combining theory and pedagogical practice enables implementing Opiela's educational suggestions by all the educators. It is worth taking advantage of both Opiela's theory and practice, since it is supported by both her own and Bojanowski's pedagogical experience. Bojanowski's theory is created and practiced and based on anthropological basics. It is also open to understanding every pupil's needs. This theory definitely considers the needs of modern education. Bojanowski's practice, according to the author, originating in the 19th century has been updated. Contemporarily, it is considered in terms of necessary and modern. Thus, all the educational aims and assumptions practiced by Bojanowski are reflected in a modern nursery system of education. Reading this publication gives the possibility of a deeper understanding of the idea of nursery education in Bojanowski's teachings. As Opiela observes "The pedagogical activity of Bojanowski and handmaidens is based on the conviction that without the orderly and definite theory well organised educational practice is impossible to exist, such practice verifies the theory". It is therefore extremely important to modernize Bojanowski's theory. This publication contains a well completed literature review. It has a rich combination of references to numerous nursery educational theories. It is important to state that, through the process of presenting these theories, the author describes her own reflections supported by quality research implemented in nursery educational practice. Therefore, it is fair to say that the reader is given a picture of an educational system, in which the author performs analysis of educational methods from 19th century until now. Presented ideas followed by statements and theories are enriched with a universal Catholic message.

Another important aspect is that Sister Opiela, through the use of hermeneutic method, tries to reveal the essence of nursery education through the analysis of theoretical reflection presented by Bojanowski's assumption and legacy. It helps in understanding the main gist of theoretical basics and their use in nursery education nowadays. The author takes advantage of her rich knowledge and logic. The author also relies on a scriptural base, stating at the same time, that these particular theories are to refer to personal experience in working as an educator. The author shows the compatibility of presented theory with her working experience. These factors are immensely valuable,

since every reader may be equipped with a precious and rich experience of a nursery education presented by Opiela.

Furthermore, the author confirms all the assumptions and research hypotheses. She complements all the educational attitudes such as respect, or the creative development of a pupil, with a process of self-discovery. More importantly she puts a special emphasis on a pupil's personal dignity: a highly important factor in the process of education.

The perspective of Bojanowski's pedagogical message presented by Opiela is a significant educational element as well. The author perceives the human being as the highest value, in a process of constant development. Pointing out to the above mentioned elements, she regards them as extremely important in a child's education. Sincenowadays it is extremely difficult to distinguish between good and evil the whole humanity seem to be lost. Moreover, Catholic teachings are no longer perceived as valuable. Opiela, in her publication, draws the society's attention to return to the Catholic values in educating young children, shaping pupils' personalities accompanied by such significant values.

Revealing Bojanowski's legacy as an actual and universal is worth attention as well. Such a point of view gives the reader a rich and valuable outline of Catholic values. Such a spiritual development enables pupils to expose the most valuable features of their personality. Thus the publication is highly recommended not only for educators, but also for parents.

Opiela, in her book, pays special attention to the integrity, universality, contextualisation as well as the timelessness of Bojanowski's message. This publication presents a significantly valuable book, since it emphasis family values in a special way. It is crucial to mention that each chapter is a separate whole. The author writes about the origin of educational system, revealing Bojanowski's system of education. She illustrates, through the contextualising this system in present times as well as presenting the anthropological basics of integral nursery education. The author takes into account the assumptions of nursery education. Opiela has also presented the structure of the integral nursery education in the pedagogical system.

The author claims that "Bojanowski's apprenticeship allows for practicing the rules of integral education in various educational environments, it also responds to the contemporary requirements, it also protects both educators and pupils" (p. 422).

It is worth paying attention to self-development, which is recalled by the author. She rightly states that both educator and a pupil are to open to lifelong

learning. According to Opiela “Educators, who are aware and responsible for the full development of a pupil in nursery educational knowledge and law, should also respond to social and cultural challenges” (p. 420).

The author marks the importance of the teacher’s self-development, which is a highly crucial element in the process of preparing a pupil for a wise adulthood.

Sister Opiela, in her publication, refers to various sources, which do not only contain the elements of Bojanowski’s texts. She also refers to numerous books of other authors. Opiela, inspired by Bojanowski’s message and practice, systematizes theory with constant progress. What is essential, she reveals Bojanowski’s legacy in the light of contemporary trends and challenges.

Taking everything into account, the following position is worth recommending to all the readers who value the implementation of timeless and universal values in the process of educating a nursery school pupil. The reviewed publication gives an outline on essential values in a nursery school education in the light of Bojanowski’s system. The author, in an accurate way presents forms, methods as well as assumptions and their reflection in the contemporary educational reality. The main goal is to reveal the nursery education, inspired by Christian thought, theology and a Christian philosophy. Contextualising the theory, integrity, timeliness as well as the accurate imaging of the synergy of both Bojanowski’s theory and practice, encourages both educators and parents to implementation of those practices and theories in the integral nursery education. The author presents the crucial issue of environmental factors, which are created and properly selected for the requirements of particular group of pupils. This is a significant element for educators, since all the methods presented by the author help in educating pupils in the spirit of openness to other individuals. These methods teach cooperation. Furthermore, they prevent from growing alienation and isolation, which are typical for postmodern era.

Both the self – development process of a pupil and the education in spirit of tolerance and respect play a significant role here. Building a brand new quality of a nursery pedagogical system, presented by the author, is highly important nowadays. Taking inspirations from Bojanowski’s concept of education, as well as numerous archival sources and her own practice, Sr Opiela gives the reader an opportunity to take inspirations from this rich legacy in order to implement them into the new school reality.