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## **Educational Policy and Reforms**

**Abstract:** Education reform lives its difficult times. Current implementations and models prioritized in education by reforms have characteristics to create results as centralization, monotyping, over inspection seen as problem in former periods. It is possible to see implementations as standardization, accreditation that we hear frequently today as implementations to create old problems again. In same context, increasing sources appointed for education and studies to be performed to spread education are not also more functional steps for nowadays. So, it is needed not to decide what problems we face in education currently by considering old way of thinking related to education. Favorite implementations and models in today's education are met with doubt. Otherwise, even education model and implementations demanded to be left in previous periods can be reborn by effect of today's new trend implementation and models accepted. This can create a meaningless discrepancy and left more shocking effect for intellectual basis of education. From this point of view, education must be considered not as an implementation area dealt with technical perceptions but an area having theoretic side. In this context, each implementation performed in education must be dealt with context of bindings founded between today and moments in which education thoughts and institutions appeared firstly. For this, education must be signified and guided and implemented by societies having its own terminology, culture on plane of conflicts between paradigms. Besides that reform attempts as increasing in number of school, teacher, student, intensifying technology, increasing education budget must be taken more carefully.

**Keywords:** Education reform, Changes of education

## **Educational Policy and Reforms**

Dear Minister of Education, Distinguished Directors of the Pedagogical Institute, Distinguished Guests!

I congratulate the 75th Anniversary of the Pedagogical Institute and sincerely thank you for inviting me to this congress. The first point I would like to mention about the reform in education is that we need to protect our basic knowledge, concepts, institutions and theories about education. It is a good thing that you have left behind the 75th year of the Pedagogical Institute you have in Mekadonya. In my country, Turkey, there was an institute called Pedagogy Institute, which was opened at Istanbul University about 90 years ago. Unfortunately, we closed this institute later; Or rather, we changed the name. On this occasion, I would like to say that there should be things that we should not change, that is, we should protect, as much as what we try to change in education.

In this panel, I will talk about reform in education. I will present my views on reform in education.

There have been many educational reforms so far. Transition to compulsory education, co-education, vocational education, student-centered education are some of these reforms. Depending on these reforms, education has changed and developed. In fact, thanks to these reforms, the

political, cultural and economic needs of the countries were also met. In particular, the need for labor, the need for certain skills, was met in this way.

However, there is a blockage in education reforms in many countries in the world today. We have arrived to dead ends in educational reforms. Indeed, it is difficult to say that reform initiatives of the last decades have been beneficial for education. Indeed, especially in the last quarter century, the educational reforms did not contribute to culture, economy and politics in a concrete way.

Therefore, the expression “reform in education” could not go beyond being a discourse that had no effect as expected.

Because there has been a vicious circle in recent education reform efforts. This vicious circle can be explained as follows: Until about half a century ago, certain problems related to education were mentioned.

*What were these problems?* Centralization. authoritarianism. Hierarchy. Tight control. Tight control. One-of-a-kind education. Monopoly. Dependence.

*So, what were the ideals on the agenda regarding education?* Liberation. Originality. Variation. Differentiation. Dynamization. Localization.

*So, what has been done about education especially in the last quarter century?* Standardization has increased. Accreditation became widespread. The quality movement became widespread. Digitalization has increased. Technologicalization became widespread.

*So, what has been observed in the last quarter century after all these works?* Centralization in education has increased even more. Monopoly in education has also become more widespread. Uniformity in education became widespread. In this process, both the teacher and the student lost their freedom. Likewise, originality in education has decreased. Education was more molded. In other words, freedom in education has decreased.

Recent education reform efforts/initiatives have briefly followed this cycle.

*What else happened during this process? Let's talk about them now...* In the past, education was a field in which philosophers, educators and pedagogues were involved and initiated. The people who provided education and founded schools were theoreticians. In other words, those who were involved in educational practice were also theorists. Pedagogues such as Froebel, Pestelozzi, Dewey, Tolstoy, Cecil Redie were both theorists and practitioners. Because all of them had their thoughts on education and in their schools, which they implemented their ideas into action.

Recently, however, entrepreneurs and companies have begun to change education, not philosophers or educators. The school began to be founded by non-philosophers and educators. Education began to be changed not because it was needed, but because large companies and companies demanded and forced it. For this reason, developing and underdeveloped countries labeled as delayed and they were strongly advised to implement educational reforms to develop. In the face of these suggestions, societies and countries tried to change their education.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that today education has become a field that wealthy entrepreneurs have taken up. In other words, education has become a profitable field for entrepreneurs. Today, there are “reforms” made not because they are needed, but with a different motivation.

The game looks like this. The system is constantly seen as inadequate and weak in certain dimensions. It is then forced to be reformed or even replaced with a totally new one. For example, first teachers' incompetence is underlined; then teacher training is recommended. The inadequacy of curricula and textbooks is marked; then they are requested to be changed.

As a matter of fact, this situation was clearly expressed in an article written in Turkey in 1919. In the article, it is said: “The Ministers of Education have a characteristic in common: whoever takes the lead does three things: The first is to change the curriculum. The second is to change the textbooks. The third is to train teachers.” Nothing much seems to have changed today. Today's ministers of education often try to do these three things in a similar order.

There are other problems with the reform in education besides the issues I have mentioned above. First of all, whenever a reform is discussed, a future scenario is definitely proposed. Imagining the future in education is very often repeated. However, it is not realistic to talk about a future fiction that will be constantly prepared. Therefore, it is worth stating that “there is no future to be prepared for”. In other words, talking about the future in education should be dropped from the agenda.

The demand for innovation has also become a legend. This situation leads to alienation from the past, namely accumulation. This makes us forget the eminent authorities and classical tradition and roots.

The frequent attempts of change in education has weakened the culture of education. Frequent changes in education hold back us to establish long-lasting institutions. However, education exists with institutionalization. As such, it should be a value not to change education for tomorrow but to change it for today. In other words, we should pay special attention to stability in education. For this, instead of determining what will change as always, it should be essential to determine what will not change and to ensure this.

Another reform proposal that does not fall off the agenda is about resources, namely money. In other words, it is always on the agenda to increase resources by addressing the scarcity of resources allocated for the improvement of education. This is an old way of thinking. There were times when it was true, of course. However, the scarcity of resources is voiced not because it is true today, but for companies and companies that want to make money to earn more. For this reason, when any reform proposal comes to the fore in education, and first of all, it should be questioned whether the reform in question is very much related to money, and then, if it is, the reform should be approached with suspicion.

Projects voiced for education should also be considered in this way. Because today, there is a situation resembling a project dump. Education is being developed through so-called projects. The problem here is that projects are produced not to solve a problem, that is, to meet a need, but to share large public resources. However, the project has to meet a need. Now, the project developers are preparing projects because they are tracing the resources allocated for education.

Another point is that the package of suggestions about the teacher and teaching should be known that improving teaching and teaching aside, molds it, makes it shallow and artificial. The steps taken to improve the teacher quality somehow result in the restriction of the teacher’s freedom. For this reason, attention should be paid to the suggestions about the teacher and teaching. It should not be forgotten that every step taken for this reason may dehumanize and objectifies teaching.

In addition, it should be known that the emphasis on teaching, that is, the method, weakens the real basis of education and training. By overemphasizing the method, we may have taken the risk of neglecting the real foundation, namely language, science, and mathematics.

Patrik Frange says; The history of education consists of the struggle between those who want to take a step for others and those who want to take a step for themselves. That is, on the one hand, someone is working to save others; On the other hand, individuals are working to save themselves. It should be known that trying to save others is both unrealistic and unethical.

It should also be noted that the steps taken in the name of reform can enslave education, that is, enslave it. The education we are trying to develop may be a molded education. However, what needs to be liberated and liberating education. This classification, which belongs to Freire, should always be kept in mind when it comes to reform in education. The question today is: Does education liberate? Does it enslave? I think education today enslaves more than it liberates.

For educational reforms, the knowledge and perspective of educational science should be utilized more. Today, the science of education has turned into a divided and multi-part structure. Thus, the long-standing integrity of educational science has been disrupted.

While educational science was comprehensive and powerful, it could offer an objection to educational reforms. However, educational science cannot offer a perspective on educational reforms as it has been divided, fragmented and weakened for a long time. In this way, in the absence of a theoretical and strong educational science, education becomes a field that everyone dares to change and intervene.

It should be known that education became a productive field first for philosophy and then for psychology. In particular, psychology was also revived by approaching education. The same is true for Philosophy. However, it is observed that the educators themselves move away from education. These people who are trying to distance from education should be released. These people should be allowed to divorce from education. Apart from those who stay away from education, educational science should be strengthened by classical knowledge. For this, educational science should meet with historical references.

Educational reforms should be based on education, learning and schooling. In other words, reform in education should in any case start with school, learning and teaching and end with learning.

And finally, attention should be paid to the redemption and development implications seen in education reforms. It should not be forgotten that the reform steps that started with the liberation are not realistic. No one can save anyone. Therefore, especially teachers and students should be convinced that they can save themselves before others. As William Reich says "Listen, little man! I tell you: Only you yourself can be your liberator!"

Finally, I would like to point out that there is the debate of education vs course. When education is mentioned, a more abstract, more theoretical, more open-ended process is understood. More general purposes come to mind. When the course is mentioned, concrete operation, process, purpose and system come to mind.

Likewise, today's schools resemble organizations. Hierarchy, workflow, job description, etc. are intertwined with industrial qualities. However, schools should be like institutes, that is, academies.

During the pandemic, we observed closely that education left the school behind just like the genie came out of the bottle. Just as it is not possible to put the genie out of the bottle back in, education should not be brought back to school just because the pandemic is over. Education should continue outside the school where it could liberate itself since then.

Schools had to be closed due to the pandemic. When conditions improved, it was tried to be opened. The closure of schools has created a substantial educational gap. Education should not be stuck with schools staying open or closed. Schools should always be open for education. It should be open for living and producing, not just for lessons. Society should be open for all, not only for students. It should be open all the time, not only in certain periods, but also in summer and winter, day and night, on weekdays and weekends.

Education is a humble, simple field. For this reason, Education should not be shown too much, that is, it should not be explained. Because the more it is manifested explicitly, the more it becomes fictitious. It should be known that education becomes artificial and fabricated as it is intended to be exhibited.

In this sense, there should be no display (exhibition room) and arrangement works (decor) for education. It is possible to demonstrate the quality of road, water or electricity services materially, but the quality of education cannot be displayed in material terms.

The last point I want to mention is this: We should know that education can not be changed, it changes. Society changes, culture changes, life changes, and then education changes. However, let's not forget that trying to change education can be an unnecessary compulsion.

Thank you very much for listening to me. I respect you all.