

DIALOGUE' METHOD OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR VOCATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract: Article gives an insight into the necessity of dialogue' method in the careers development for vocational secondary schools' students. The last five years of Latvia' statistics indicate a highest unemployment rate of young people among others groups of society. Adolescence is most intensive time for learning, self development in order to their knowledge and skills to offer and to use in the labour market. One of the ways how to help to find a future plan of young people is to use dialogue' method, through which they can develop research and cooperative skills, occurs and gain new experience of meaningful learning.

Keywords: dialogue' method, career development, career counselling of vocational secondary schools.

Introduction

On the dialogue we can see from different perspectives, which are characterized by N.C. Burbules (1993), M. Buber (2000; 2002), J. Dewey (1916; 1997) etc. Based on these theories, we can discuss about importance of the dialogue in pedagogical relationship. P. Freire (1996) considers dialogue as an educational form. What happens between teacher and student? Is there a space where the teacher and student dialogue encounter, and if so, how it gets? When we are discussing these fundamental issues of pedagogical interaction, we must aware of the extremely complicated nature because it is involved in bilateral terms - teacher and student - and they are intertwined with each other, and naturally, that it derives its importance to socio-historical epoch as a whole, which are used. D. Dewey (1916) believes that learning should be exchange of experiences in which student presents self experience which interpreted on the basis of experiences of parent and /or teachers. Consequently, it is recognized that education is exchange of ideas; it is a conversation which belongs to a set of discourse.

At present in conditions of changing labor market for young people is essential to learn to assess their strengths and weaknesses, professional skills, abilities to define life goals. To do so is necessary for assistance of professional expert of career and education especially if targeted group is students of vocational secondary schools, since, as shown by the experience of these schools' teachers (Karjeras izglītība profesionālās vidējās izglītības iestādēs, 2006): students not always understood that they themselves can push own career in desired direction, rather than submit to conditions that occur in their life; they are still confused to sources of information on career opportunities; not acquired self-assessment and career planning skills; not always around them competent people who can give professional advice.

The above problems have been solved, if students receive support of career education and counseling in manner of various activities that is focused on students' self-cognition and self-development, career exploration and planning, which includes dialogue with themselves and dialogue with others. Issues of students' career development have been integrated into everyday learning process: in lessons of general and vocational subjects and extra-curricular activities, using by interactive teaching methods. It is important to provide students with group and individual counseling may help to solve their personal, social and educational problems, to find out appropriate place of practice and to promote further developing of career. Entering of young people in labor market begins with provision of practice place that is competence of each vocational secondary school; it is important long-term cooperation with companies and organizations that offer practice place and later job. But it is not always the potential employers are welcoming what shows the lack of constructive dialogue between vocational secondary schools and employer. A large proportion of students that are working in practice in companies are formed first work experience and communication skills with

their employer, to obtain ability to cooperate and work in new environments, as well as an understanding of the industry's labor market.

Taken by abroad studies the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Canada, USA, etc. of career dialogue in vocational secondary schools, confirms its effective use enables to learn creatively and to think untraditionally; develops the ability to correlate different skills and knowledge of their personality and career development, as well as give self-awareness of students, that their overall level of success will directly affect their well-being and competitiveness in further life.

Students' understanding of significance of their education and its link with own career development can provide a dialogue with competent teachers and / or qualified career counselors which are able to help students with advice, information and organize various types of consulting activities. One of the researchers in dialogue method P. Freire (1996) believes that dialogical teacher's main task is to investigate how students perceive and see the world; where they sees a major core of the contradiction; which contradictions are secondary, and how much they are aware these contradictions. In such a dialogue-based environment both teachers and students are teaching and learning all the time.

Materials and methods

The article explores the theoretical cognitions of dialogue' methods in career development and evaluate foreign experience of career dialogue in vocational education. The methods applied in research are the study of corresponding scientific literature and description of the personal experience of the researcher.

Nature of dialogue method well-characterized Socrates phrase, "*I know that I know nothing*". Unlocking the dialogue, we learn, to know that do not know anything, because this method as a tool can be used only one who knows how to completely to abandon from own experience, because it will interfere in the dialogue, which foundation is development, personal contact, and other human rights and, above all, - that participants see, hear and feel each other.

According to M. Buber (2000) acknowledgment a genuine dialogue occurs only where each one of participants respect thoughts, concerns and experiences of other participants and where turn to each other in order to create a living relationship. Enter into dialogue means to think and reflect together, to notice another set perspective and explore new opportunities and it is difficult - at first to think together in relationship. It means that individuals can no longer take own position and thoughts as for granted; it is predict openness to other people's ideas and hearing of other people's perspectives. Dialogical relationships produce *I-thou* relationship where relate experience of one person to another person. It requires having regard for both self and other. *I-thou* is a relationship that stresses the mutual and holistic existence of two beings. It is a concrete encounter, because these beings meet one another in their authentic existence, without any qualification or objectification of one another. The opposite type of relationship is referred to as the *I-it* relationship whereas in *I-thou* the two beings encounter one another, in an *I-it* relationship the beings do not actually meet. Instead, the "I" confronts and qualifies an idea, or conceptualization, of the being in its presence and treats that being as an object. All such objects are considered merely mental representations, created and sustained by the individual mind. Therefore, the *I-it* relationship is in fact a relationship with oneself; it is not a dialogue, but a monologue.

Dialogue takes place between conscience-oriented thinkers as opposed to strategists. The conscience-oriented thinker will think in terms of a "good" outcome that maintains values and ethics, whereas a strategist will think in terms of achieving individual goals without concern for ethical practices. Persons who are engaged in dialogue will participate in what is called *narrow ridge communication* which refers to a common ground between parties. It is a point for participants to meet and share their views (Arnett, 1986).

American scientist N.C. Burbules (1993) considers that successful dialogue involves cooperation at the same time accepted disagreements, confusion and incomprehension of participants. Overcoming these circumstances appears features of respect, trust and consensus what in the real dialogical environment tends to grow and to become stronger from the all communicating sides. It is a form of dialectics between feeling and thinking that increasing the long spiral leading to the specific of thought

progress. Another important factor is the spirit of dialogue, which is characterized by research and questioning mood. It provides for the dedication communicative interaction with a view to *look at things* in order to reach a meaningful understanding and congruence between the participants. It has ability to create idea of primary interest, is bearing several long-term views.

The dialogue' method is an important component of individual education and personal development. Usually the dialogue' method is used where ongoing active learning. Prof. University of Oklahoma L. Dee Fink (2003) indicates that all learning activities involve some forms of dialogue: a *dialogue with self*; *dialogue with others* and two main directions of experience: *experience of doing* and *experience of observing*.

Dialogue with self happens when a student's thinks reflectively about a topic, i.e., they ask themselves what they think or should think what they feel about the topic, etc. This is *thinking about my own thinking*, but it addresses a broader array of questions than just cognitive concerns. A teacher can ask students, on a small scale, to keep a journal for a course or, on a larger scale, to develop a learning portfolio. In either case, students could write about what they are learning, how they are learning, what role this knowledge or learning plays in their own life, how this makes them feel, etc.

Dialogue with others does come in many forms. In traditional teaching, when students read a textbook or listen to a lecture, they are listening to another person, for example, teacher. This can be viewed as partial dialogue but it is limited because there is no back-and-forth exchange. A much more dynamic and active form of dialogue occurs when a teacher creates an intense small group discussion on a topic. Sometimes teachers can also find creative ways to involve students in dialogue situations with other people than students (e.g., practitioners, experts), either in class or outside of class or school.

Observing occurs whenever a student watches or listens to someone else *doing* something that is related to what they are learning about. This might be such things as observing one's teacher do something, or observing the phenomena being studied. The act of observing may be direct (the learner is observing the real action) or vicarious (observing a simulation of the real action). *Doing* refers to any learning activity where the learner actually does something, because by doing can learn just with our presence to participate in solving of study issues, or indirectly - through problem analysis, without the involvement of the same.

Each of the four modes of learning has its own value, and just using more of them should add variety and thereby be more interesting for the students; they supplement learning experience and give a new turn in mining of knowledge and experience. For example, if students write their own thoughts on a topic (*Dialogue with Self*) before they engage in small group discussion (*Dialogue with Others*), the group discussion should be richer and more engaging. If they can do both of these and then observe the phenomena or action (*Observation*), the observation should be richer and again more engaging. Then, if this is followed by having the students engage in the action itself (*Doing*), they will have a better sense of what they need to do and what they need to learn during doing. Finally if, after *Doing*, the students process this experience by writing about it (*Dialogue with Self*) and/or discussing it with others (*Dialogue with Others*), this will add further insight. Such a sequence of learning activities will give the teacher and students the advantage of the power of interaction (Fink, 2003). It is important to see the dialectic between experience and dialogue, which is the development, characterized by overcoming of contradictory, the fight between the old and new, the emergence of a new quality.

Using of dialogue' method (with *self* or with *others*) is able to help student to construct the meaning and understanding of many possible experiences. A teacher who can creatively use dialectics of the learning activities and which students move back and forth between the intake of rich new experience and attractive/pleasant, deeply meaningful dialogue can increase probability that students will gain valuable and meaningful learning experience.

The above-described L. Dee Fink (2003) active learning idea coincides with P. Freire (1996) recognition that learning is interpersonal relations in the form of dialogue where teacher and students fuse in the joint identification and re-discovery of the study object. Instead of knowledge statically sold as a certain teacher's estate, dialogue requires a dynamic convergence of the object. Therefore it

can be agree with the statement that teaching and learning in general is better, both ethically and practically, if teachers and students collaborate in researching and interviews with both one another, but also study objects.

Has always been actual question *why classroom dialogue should be used?* R. Satklifs (Menon project, 2005) offers arguments in favour of dialogue in classroom, because he believes that most learning is dependent on new information or viewpoints that challenge and complicate every student's knowledge and understanding, because less appropriate is anything that tends to motor learning - and more suited to become discursive and dialogue approach. Development happens when ideas are being tested by experience. D. Dewey (1997) insists that students are given ample opportunity to carry out targeted research. Therefore, education should provide students knowledge on how to ask questions, not only to provide examples of how to solve problems or how to respond. Dialogue research in education has always been an actual. And nevertheless, authors' group of Menon project (2005) endorses the view supported by a growing number of teacher around the world who believe that greater attention be paid how students can best learn, not how teachers can best teach the meaning of to train and transfer knowledge. There are several reasons why would be supported such a refocusing because in conduct of research has been collected evidence that discussion of what student should learn, is quite an effective way to promote learning; inquiring whether a research-based approach to teaching and learning processes increases the level of motivation and learning in different subjects; students can improve their questioning and reasoning skills, practice them regularly, especially if it include in the philosophical elements of the questioning; teachers need to improve their skills of asking and good judgment, if they wish to promote students' learning. For that reason, in a world where knowledge is rapidly distributed and where skills are constantly changing, young people must learn and know the subject, and to think quality. The final aspect is becoming increasingly important because more and more young people are using the internet as a source of knowledge, but they lack skills of critical researching that will enable skillfully to evaluate information and effectively to process it.

Dialogue provides the results of education, if each participant has the investigative skills. M. Lipman (2003) considers that a person can become educated only if he surviving and experiencing a new cognitive process to find the answers. A good teacher recognizes that a student is unable to perceive statement as a matter of course, but the student arrive at the assertion of truth is required meaningful knowledge. According to M. Buber (2002), in fact most successfully teacher teaches when he deliberately does not seek to teach, but acting spontaneously based on their experience. Then he can get a student's confidence because he has been able to persuade him. And when the student has gained confidence, he accepted teacher as people who can be trusted and that teacher adopted student, without showing desire to influence him; and so the student learns to ask. In this context, encounter with *Thou* and convergence of horizons is possible if we have the principle desire to understand other. In dialogue situation it is possible only if we listen and restrict ourselves. Whereas the dialogue is both individual and public activity, listening is composed of two strands - *listening to others* and *listening to inwardly*. Therefore, in the dialogue silence is equally important as speaking because thinking and understanding in silence create new meanings. The format of the dialogue is appreciatory, confrontational (presenting contradictions in expressions and/or behaviour, question the realistic nature of thoughts), exploratory, aimed at learning to reflect, activating and network-inducing.

Dialogue' method of vocational education will be successful if it is based on constructive cooperation, which will involve students, teachers, school management, career counsellor and employers. At present in Latvia is observed fragmented cooperation among vocational education establishments, guidance counsellors, local employers and the community, which led to having a successful dialogue of students' career development, which involving their needs, acquired qualifications and interests, as well as local, regional, national and European social and economic dynamics. These days, a job is also considered to be an opportunity to give meaning to one's life. From this perspective, it is important for individuals to be able to justify their actions as personal choices and, with this in mind, to search for personal beliefs and ideas (McCash, 2006). Modern career counselling is about connecting identity with work. For this reason, important is student self-reflection, what indicate direction to *what* and *how* students are learning; *what* students are doing and *how* they got there; but question *why* is crucial for finding out reasons and motives.

Results and discussion

Dialogue as one of effective tools is used when the vocational secondary schools' students lacking motivation to learn because it is factor that influences the career development. In this context may agree to the Netherlands scientists A. Winters, F. Meijers, M. Kuijpers, H. Baert (2009) view that a career forming environment in vocational secondary schools justified by the circumstances which is based on practice and where the education environment is an informative, searching and open to dialogue.

Studying abroad experience of practice of the career dialogue' methods in the vocational secondary schools, the author of this article concludes that both of the above described forms of dialogue (*dialogue with self* and *dialogue with others*) are widely used. And experience of the North countries - Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Finland - shows that vocational secondary schools are not only as an establishments that focuses on getting learners qualified, but also as a *career centre* where students acquire competences such as being able to reflect on personal ambitions and motives, and taking action and initiative to direct their own career development (OECD, 2008).

Recognized an experience of *Stoas* College (the Netherland), where student's career development based on dialogical learning environment reveals the *dialogue with self* looking for answers to the following questions (Noom, 2010):

- 1) What is my passion and what are my challenges?
- 2) Which competencies do I want to improve?
- 3) Where can I learn of new experience?
- 4) How do I rank priorities?
- 5) Which Tasks and roles do I want to develop?
- 6) What kind of proofs and d instruments can I collect to show my development?
- 7) How can I work on development of competencies in an authentic situation?
- 8) What does my action mean to me and my surrounding?
- 9) Did I develop the competencies?
- 10) What does this development mean for me?

It is a learning spiral where Keywords are to *like*, *to be able to*, *to do* in which result students occur a self professional growing up through systematic thinking and developing eco-intelligence. To realize this, many vocational secondary schools are implementing career guidance as an integral part of competence-based education and are using or implementing instruments such as *portfolios* and *personal developments plans* to help students develop career competences (Kuijpers, et al. 2006). This example indicate that e acquiring of students' professional skills and competences is going in dialogue-based environment, resulting in which students obtains an authentic learning experience and occupational practice; they are able to influence content and progress of the curriculum and where career learning process is being evaluated and discussed in a dialogue between students and teachers (Lombardi M. M., 2007).

To the *Dialogue with Other* we can look from the three angles: *teacher – student*; *teacher - student - supervisor or mentor of practice* and vocational secondary school – *social partners*. In Dutch, vocational education it's means learning in practice of labour organizations (Mittendorff et al., 2008). During these placements, students receive guidance from a mentor from school (usually a teacher) as well as from a mentor from practice. Teacher, mentor and the student have at least two meetings to discuss the work experiences of the student: one at the beginning of the placement and one at the end. It training conversations are almost completely aimed at evaluation and on transferring expert opinions from the teacher and mentor to students. In such a dialogue-based environment student learns to develop three different career competencies: career reflection (reflection on qualities and motives), career self-management (work exploration and career control) and networking. But how to recognize research group pedagogies of professional development at The Hague university (Kuijpers, Meijers, 2006), this type of dialogue is currently being held very rarely, and least of all in a proactive manner. When a student does speak with his mentor from school and/or practice, the conversation is mainly held *about* and *to* the student and hardly *with* the student as a result, career counselling include

a monologue which provide an advice, feedback, and information. The dialogue is about talking *with* the learner and not just *to* or *about* the learner. Some of the conditions for having a career dialogue are that counsellor must show concern about the well-being of the learner and that he must show genuine interest in the issues that truly matter to the learner. Furthermore, it is important for the learner to trust that he or she is taken seriously by the counsellor, that counsellor treats what is being said as confidential and that the counsellor is fully equipped to support the learner in his or her (learning) career.

The author of this article, based on their indirect observations and studies (2006; 2011) on the way of students career development (studying further and the labor market) concludes that all vocational secondary schools' teachers motivate their students (on a regular basis - 25%; sometimes - 75% from 36) and begin to do from the first year (66%). In turn, interviewing 40 different vocational secondary schools' graduates who are now studying at LLU concludes that only 23% of respondents as the main motivator named teachers of practical training, 15%, parents, 8% - LLU students who are graduates of vocational secondary schools, 8% - course tutors and 5% - of all teachers. It can be concluded that vocational education teachers are still a few thinking about the future of their students and does not encourage them to make long-term goals. At the same time, a fact that students were motivated to their career development after graduation aware of only 41%, 17% - reject, 27% - uncertain, 15% believe that it may have been motivated. Should be added that students' motivation for career development shall be carried out mainly by teachers who lack the professional skills and competencies for career counseling.

Dialogue between vocational secondary school and social partners is one of the providers for the students' career development support. Foreign experience shows that social partners have advisory and decision-making role by different aspects of vocational secondary schools (see Table 1), cannot be allocated to the situation in the Latvia vocational education system.

Table 1

Involvement of social partners in vocational secondary schools (%) (OECD 2008)

North Countries of EU	Curricula D / A	Practical training content D / A	Duration of practical training D / A	Acquired competences D / A	Examination requirements D / A	Delivered qualifications D / A
Denmark	95 / 95	100 / 95	100 / 95	95 / 100	95 / 100	95 / 100
Finland	53 / 53	0 / 53	0 / 0	53 / 53	53 / 100	47 / 0
Norway	0 / 100	1001 / 0	0 / 100	0 / 100	0 / 100	100 / 0
Sweden	0 / 98	0 / 98	0 / 98	0 / 98	0 / 98	0 / 98

Note: **D** – decision making; **A** – advisory role.

Can be regarded at the moment, this dialogue is fragmentary and inconsequent. Therefore (MES concept, 2008) remains a serious and rather controversial issue: a large part of employers want their future employees to be young and with work experience what the vocational secondary schools cannot provide because work experience is completely the responsibility of employers. Only 50% of employers willing to take students to practice, if could be adequate state tax policy. Employers by employing young professionals are faced with the noncompliance of ethical standards, lack of communication skills, willingness to work in good faith. Employers are still not satisfied with the distribution of theory and practice. Only half of employers are ready to participate with their proposals for curriculum development. This indicates that too few employers are involved in vocational education-related issues. Employers are not willing to invest their funds in long-term development, which is education. Insufficient dialogue between vocational secondary school and social partners is the cause that content of the curriculum is seen as incompatible with labor market. In addition experts of Vocational education (MES concept, 2008) have recognized the problems with both the practice places and further employment of graduates which are frequently not related to the failure of education quality, but to a large extent they are incurred as a result of the economic situation. However the school has need to become more open to business environment and the business community are involved in education programs, then focus on vocational training for young people will be more

attractive and valuable. At first students have seen that in the country or the world generally are working there undertakings that require their skills. They need assurance that such work is necessary. Enterprises should be supported vocational education system of Latvia with the involvement in evaluation of the qualification examination, offering places of practice, technological provision in schools; to think about opportunities for continuing education of teachers, thereby growing up a greater awareness of the need for dialogue in career development of vocational secondary schools' students.

Conclusions

- Dialogue is a common human thinking and reflection mode, in which its participants using each their distinct way of thinking, perception and experience increase trust and achieve mutual understanding before engaging in decision making; deal with emotion-laden, potentially divisive content, determine shared interests and establish common ground of topic or issue; manage diverse opinions, create new ways of seeing and doing things, as well as develop cohesiveness and community.
- Dialogue on development of vocational secondary schools' student career have succeeded if
 - a) it occurs in some ways: a dialogue *with self* - finding out self as a person, knowing strengths and weaknesses, identifying self needs and opportunities; dialogue *with others* (peers, teachers, supervisor or mentor of practice and potential employees);
 - b) have a dialogue-based environment that is an informative and searching; has a student-centred approach, which is based on competencies; where students are made responsible for own learning and career path; where teachers are seen as coaches who guide students along their career way; where are used *portfolios* and *personal developments plans* as instruments of dialogue.
- Abroad experience shows that use of the dialogue method in inclusion of social partners in the educational process of vocational secondary schools refers to the mutual interest to make a balance between curriculum and demands of labor market.

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