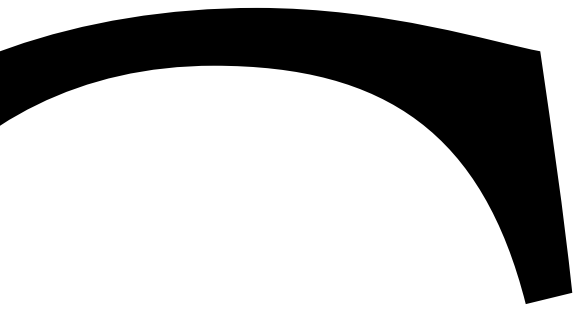


Филозофски факултет, Универзитет у Београду | 2013



1838



Contemporary Issues of
Education Quality

Editors:

Miomir Despotović

Emina Hebib

Balázs Németh

Publisher:

Faculty of Philosophy,
University of Belgrade, Serbia
Institute for Pedagogy and Andragogy,
University of Belgrade, Serbia
Faculty of Adult Education and HRD,
University of Pécs, Hungary

Editors:

Prof. Miomir Despotović,
PhD, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Serbia
Prof. Emina Hebib,
PhD, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Serbia
Prof. Balázs Németh,
PhD, Faculty of Adult Education and HRD,
University of Pécs, Hungary

Contemporary Issues of Education Quality
Belgrade 2013.

Reviewers:

Prof. Özcan Demirel
PhD, Hacettepe University, Turkey
Prof. Sabina Jelenc-Krašovec,
PhD, Faculty of Arts, Ljubljana, Slovenia
Prof. Snežana Medić,
PhD, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Serbia
Prof. Nataša Matović,
PhD, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Serbia

For the Publisher:

Prof. Radovan Antonijević,
PhD, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Serbia

Design

„Dosije studio“, Belgrade

ISBN 978-86-82019-75-6

*Milan Stančić, Milica Mitrović, Lidija Radulović**

From Glorifying Method Toward Post-Method Stance: Searching For Quality of Teaching/Learning

Abstract

This paper deals with the changes in the way of conceptualizing method in the context of teaching and learning and their meaning for the study of quality in education. We have used two sources of information: didactic terminology relevant for understanding the methods and the way of conceptualizing the method. Overview and analysis of the relation of method with the related didactic terms (teaching approach, strategy, technique and organisational forms) have shown that the process of conceptualising method is still open. The paper discusses four ways of conceptualizing the method: teaching method, teaching/learning methods, post-method and methods taken as the expression of the mutual understanding of the participants in teaching/learning process. Both sources of information suggest that: (1) the current didactic moment can be considered as a period of re-defining comprehension of methods and position to the methods; (2) didactic literature includes modern, post-modern and critical concept of methods; (3) there are no uniform responses on what is quality of teaching/learning in respect to the methods; and (4) different tendencies in considering methods are linked to the different criteria for understanding the quality of teaching/learning. We have reached the conclusion that there are two opposed tendencies in conceptualising the methods: (1) glorification of

* University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade, Serbia

method(s) by assiduous search for “good” – “quality” method(s) and (2) abandonment of the method concept in the favour of teachers’ search for a “good” relation to the methods in teaching/learning context.

Key words: teaching method, teaching/learning methods, post-method concept, the ways of method conceptualisation, quality of teaching/learning.

Introduction

Even a cursory glance at the pedagogic theory and practice, particularly the one that could be considered contemporary, indicates different understanding and approaches to the study and practice of methods in teaching/learning¹. The differences are not only about which methods are considered appropriate for the contemporary teaching (what assumes acceptance of the specific conception of education, including everything it covers) but also about the way of understanding what is the method, how it can be defined and how it is decided on in the process of planning and implementation of teaching/learning. Consideration and analysis of changes in the way of conceptualizing method may lead to comprehension of changes in the understanding of teaching/learning, thus provide one of the reference points for consideration of the quality of teaching/learning.

Starting from the belief that search for the understanding of teaching/learning quality can start from didactic theories and different ways of understanding teaching/learning (and not only from documents and papers on quality in education), this paper attempts to find the understanding of teaching/learning quality from didactic tendencies perspective with methods being in the centre of attention. We shall deliberate the ways of conceptualising and changes in understanding the method by reviewing:

- Didactic terminology relevant for understanding method and discussions of changes in the meaning of relevant terms and the relation of the method with those terms,
- New approaches to method, that is, new concepts of method and views on what a method is in the context of teaching/learning.

Based on this, we shall try to notice some tendencies in understanding the method and their meaning for understanding and exploration of the quality of teaching/learning.

1 In this paper we will use the term *method* or *methods* as generic terms which encompass various ways of conceptualising method which will be discussed further in the paper.

What the Terminology Can Tell Us

A look at didactic terminology definitely shows that there are many terms linked to the method, that the new terms occasionally appear, but also that their meaning is not always completely clear and same in each context. These terms are often intertwined, sometimes equalised, partially overlapping or are mutually exclusive. Besides the term method, the didactic literature also uses the terms like techniques, strategies, organisational forms, teaching approaches, teaching models, etc. The very number of terms proves the importance of this issue for the didactic theory and practice, while their different meanings indicate the connection with the different didactic views. All of this suggests that *the current moment in didactics is characterized by the changes in understanding rather than a particular understanding of a method*. We can get more insights on this by clarifying the essential meaning of the method concept and separating it from the other related terms/concepts.

Method, in its broadest sense, denotes the way in which something is done (from Greek word *methodos* that in an abstract sense mean a path, a journey), especially if this way is systematic and clearly determined (Oxford Dictionaries). The contemporary didactic conceptions complement this basic meaning with some other characteristics. Namely, this term is used for a way to achieve some pre-set goal (Meyer, 2002), to denote the established practice which can serve as a regulation, recipe (Bell, 2003; Richards & Rodgers, 2001), or theoretically and scientifically based way of work (Kumaravadivelu, 1994). The variations in the meaning of the concept of method bring it more or less closer to some related didactic terms.

Teaching approach and method. When establishing method ensues directly from the major changes in understanding teaching/learning process (and emphasis such shift), the term method may mean both – the way of teaching in practice and the comprehensive understanding of teaching, *i.e.* approach to teaching. Here is one example. Starting from the constructivist perspective critique of traditional teaching, the accent in determining the method is shifted from teaching (as teacher's activity) to the learning process (of pupils); in other words, method is perceived as a plan for initiating pupils' learning. This deviation from the traditional Herbartian didactics in the modern way of conceptualising method is reflected in determining method as a relation between organising teaching activities and desired learning processes to be ensured for pupils (Klafki, 1994: 29). Accordingly, the way of teaching is based on the pupils' activities and interactions between pupils, teacher and pupils and pupils with different sources of knowledge. Such way of work is called «interactive teaching methods»

but the phrase «interactive teaching» is also widely used. Therefore, in this case a term method is linked both to the way of teaching (in the sense of interactive feature of pupils' activities) and the comprehensive understanding of education in teaching, namely the teaching approach oriented to the pupils' activities and experience, with the emphasize on importance of various education goals, and not on education contents and their transmission. Such teaching/learning approach is also known as Deweyan – as opposed to Herbartian, constructivist – opposed to instructivist (Westwood, 2008) or experiential and revealing – versus explanatory (Jacobsen, Eggen & Kauchak, 1993). If we were to develop a short vocabulary making a strict distinction between the basic didactic terms, it would be possible to distinguish the meaning of terms approach and method. However, it does not change the fact that some of the contemporary understandings of method bear the characteristics of teaching approach.

Even when the usage of terms denoting connection between method and approach is not so obviously synonymous, it is impossible to present the concept of method in its full sense separating it from the approach to teaching. Although some methods may initially seem to depict the characteristics of certain teaching approach (or even that they are alone characteristics of them), the presence of method itself does not tell enough about the teaching approach. Furthermore, the same method gets different qualities in different teaching approaches. For example, although a lecture is at the first sight common method in the traditional teaching, it is no less important method in the interactive type of teaching. However, in this approach, the lecture as a method changes significantly: for example, the choice of content, duration of lecture, senses engaged during the lecture, the role of those listening the lecture, place and role of lecture in the teaching/learning process are different. In other words, lecture is a method of both traditional (instructive, explanatory) and constructivist (interactive, experiential and exploratory) teaching/learning, but in these approaches it differs to such an extent that it is questionable whether this really is the same method. This applies to other methods as well because their purpose and meaning can be seen only within the comprehensive approach to the teaching/learning they are a part of.

Hence, the name of a method and the “application” of certain method in teaching (particularly if this is occasional) do not tell us enough about the approach to teaching and the essential nature of the teaching/learning process taking place with a certain method. This is also important from the perspective of assessing the quality of certain teaching in practice. The recent years teaching practice in Serbia shows the usage of methods enabling more interaction than before. However, it is possible that these meth-

ods sometimes increase the dynamic in a classroom and are attractive, but it does not mean that this kind of teaching is based on constructivism, that it reflects all the characteristics of interactive methods and that such teaching is verily interactive. To achieve this, it is necessary to comprehensively base teaching on the new standpoints, while “the implementation of the interactive methods, within the didactic-psychological contextual basis denoting transmission type of teaching, except the manifest appeal, does not mean much” (Mitrović, 2011: 170).

The above is just an example to clarify the relation between the concepts method and approach. The same logic is applicable even if replace the previous bipolar distinction of approaches (traditional and interactive) with some else. Nowadays, there are various categorisations of teaching approaches. They are sometimes referred as models of teaching or teaching perspectives (see: Bruner, 2000; Havelka, 2000; Joyce & Weil, 1986; Mitrović & Radulović, 2011, Pratt et al., 1998; UNESCO, 2004). Although discussion of different teaching approaches and their classifications are beyond the scope of this paper, we should point out that their substance is always about the comprehensive and fairly coherent understanding of the goals of education, teaching/learning process, position, roles and nature of those who learn, etc. This entity provides the framework for more than understanding and functioning of methods. In a certain sense, the method is not only one element of the teaching approaches, but the approach itself determines the method, represents the component of a method. Method becomes what it is only within a certain approach.

Teaching strategy and method. The substance of discussion on drawing a line between terms method and approach very much resembles drawing a line between method and teaching strategy. This term, usual in English language literature, refers to the general action plan, the teaching pattern in function of achieving the desired goals (Smith, 1960; Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997), that is, the tactic used by teachers to promote students' learning during the class (Friedman & Fisher, 1998). It is obvious that such definition highly overlaps with the concept of method – in a sense of a way to achieve the goal, or the concept of approach – as a kind of guiding idea for the choice of methods and actions to ensure learning. We can say that the strategy is the link between the approach, as a comprehensive understanding of teaching, and method, in a sense of the individual lesson activities (method in a narrow sense). However, the relation between the terms method and strategy is not always the same. Strategy is usually the reference point in making choice on the specific methods and techniques to use. For example, this is the meaning of individual, cooperative and competitive teaching strategies discussed by Johnson i Johnson

(1989) who emphasize that the application of different strategies leads to the realization of different teaching/learning goals. It is obvious that each method cannot be appropriate for each strategy. However, the meaning of the method and the possibility to achieve the goal with it depend on the systemic and consistent adherence to the one kind of strategy. The same authors in their study show that some of the goals may be achieved only if the teaching is organized in a cooperative learning way, systematically and consistently over a longer time. This is particularly important for the goals such as accepting and respecting differences, development of positive attitude to the school and learning, development of the positive self-image etc. Therefore, occasional application of a certain method requiring the cooperation between pupils is not sufficient to achieve those goals. Although the quoted authors do not use the term teaching approach, we may add that the choice of strategies and specific methods are directly connected with the teaching approach. For example, it is logically improbable that the cooperative strategy can yield from understanding teaching as transmission or that the cognitive teaching approach will attempt to realize psychosocial education goals. Therefore, *the essence of the individual method can be viewed only in the context of approach and strategy of teaching/learning*. The method in the above case represents the elaboration and realisation of the strategy. In other words, it stems from the selected strategy and gets the meaning according to the strategy.

Some contemporary didactic views replace methods with strategies. While the advocates of the post-method approach criticize closeness and contextual insensitivity of methods, they do not deny a need for landmarks in making decisions on the activities and paths to the achievement of goals in teaching. Therefore, with abandoning of the term method, they suggest usage of the term teaching strategy (Brown, 2001; Marton, 1988). The advocates of such perspective on methods speak about macro strategies as universal theoretical, research and experiential based tactics or principles (Kumaravadivelu 1994, 2001, 2003). For example, some of the micro strategies in teaching foreign languages, which could also be used for the other areas, are: to facilitate interaction, promote pupils' autonomy, ensure social relevance, etc. (*Ibid.*, 2003). Starting from them, the teachers could find micro strategies as the way to implement macro strategies in a specific situation and context. In this sense, strategies become a replacement for methods or at least an attempt to assure both scientific foundation and contextual sensitivity to the method.

Technique and method. The above terminological distinctions show that the method is often viewed as a way to realize ideas of some theoretic-

cal base of teaching or a preset goal. Reducing the understanding of method to an action or procedure to fulfil the task or achieve the preset goal brings the terms method and technique closer. Sometimes the method and technique are even seen as a kind of recipe or routine procedure leading to the achievement of a goal (Bell, 2003; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Such understanding of method corresponds to the use of terminology “choice” and “implementation” of methods and techniques. This may imply that methods and techniques exist independently from the teaching approach and specific context, that is, they can be transferred and implemented in any context. Such understanding of methods develops in parallel with and opposed to the understanding of methods as inseparable from teaching approach. When method is understood narrowly, as the elaborated way to achieve preset goal, it could be said that the terms method and technique are of the same level, although technique may also stand for various ways of the concretisation of a certain method through a detailed specification of steps and procedures to be taken.

Organisational forms and method. Forms of organisation are yet another didactic term often used to precisely explain the way in which teaching and learning activities occur. This term refers to the social way of organisation: frontal, in groups, pairs, individually. As it basically does not describe a kind of activity, but only the way of social organisation during the activity, traditional didactic terminology, especially in Serbian literature, usually uses it separately from the method – as one more information about the way of teaching and learning. Therefore, traditional classifications of methods are completely separated from the classifications of the organisational forms, which implies that the social relations during learning are not seen as a part of the process itself. As the contemporary knowledge on education and teaching/learning indicate that the learner’s interaction and its kind are the key aspect of the teaching/learning process, the methods are viewed from the perspective of the learner’s activity (learning). In this context, *the (social) organisational forms of teaching and learning become the aspect of method.* In other words, the form of social organisation (and social relations) determines the method. Accordingly, didactic terminology nowadays blends the social form of organisation with the name of methods (for example in: Ivić, Pešikan & Janković-Antić, 2001; Macpherson, 2007; Pavlović Breneselović & Pavlovski, 2000; Velat & Radić Dudić, 2008). For example, there is a method called “small groups discussion” (indicating that this kind of discussion differs from the frontal discussion method) or “problem solving in pairs” (indicating that this kind of learning is not the same as when the problem is solved individually), etc.

The Four Ways of Conceptualizing Method

This review of the relation between method and other relevant didactic terms and of the changes in the meaning of their inter relations shows that the *process of conceptualizing method is still open*. Not only that new projections of education and new concepts of teaching and learning are developed, which repeatedly re-set relations between didactic entities, but also new conceptualizations of method and completely new methods emerge. This process has been especially intense during the last decades. We see it as a part of more and more pronounced tendency to explore teaching and learning and its phenomena in the given socio-cultural context with integrating relevant findings about the socio-cultural approach to teaching and learning, curriculum and literacy studies and other related interdisciplinary studies that share the common approach to teaching and education within the post-modern tradition. The issue of method in this new scientific context is still very current, but the ways of considering method have been enriched and changed. Phenomenologically speaking, we can distinguish at least *four ways of conceptualizing method*. We shall name them in the manner they are used in the didactic literature: (1) teaching method, (2) teaching/learning methods, (3) post-method concept and (4) method as the expression of the mutual understanding of intentions of the participants in teaching/learning process. We shall proceed with a brief presentation of each of them and continue with discussing the meaning of these changes for the study of the teaching/learning quality.

Teaching method. This is the oldest and the best-known conceptualization of method in European didactic tradition. Method has been the focus of all esteemed pedagogical theoreticians and even today it is unavoidable theme in the university didactic textbooks. This conceptualisation has always been underpinned by several intentions: (1) to ground the method scientifically so that it represents “purposeful and systematic way of managing pupils’ work during the teaching process” (Trnavac & Đorđević, 2007: 276); (2) to develop universal system of methods applicable in different formal education areas and (3) to give a detailed description of the method’s characteristics, conditions and the ways of its application. The above has resulted in many definitions of methods, classifications based on different criteria, descriptions of the concrete methods and attempts to apply and specify them in the subject didactics. This marks the beginning of glorifying teaching method or a kind of pan-methodism (after J. A. Comenius). From today’s distance, it seems that the adjective “teaching” in the phrase “teaching method” has acquired by time and for a long time kept expressing the meaning of method as something *obligatory, unchangeable and closed*.

Over time, such understanding of method has proven to be insufficient in the different areas: goals of formal education (tensions between teaching and education methods), multimedia education environment (new media are source of new types of interactions), different education concepts and teaching models (as already pointed out – nominally same method does not function in the same way in the different teaching approaches). Moreover, the system of universally applicable methods for different areas of educational work has never been found. The awareness has risen that the teaching method concept has been developed for the transmission type of teaching and that it is insufficient in the context of different understanding of teaching. There are also tensions between didactic and subject didactics of the education work, thus some authors today deem that didactic should be „[...] freed from the tasks it cannot solve” and that it is time to confess that teaching methods and their elaboration are the issue of subject didactics. (Bognar & Matijević, 2005: 268).

Teaching/learning methods. Used up and exploited meaning ascribed to the “teaching method” is one of the reasons to think in terms of “teaching/learning methods.” This conceptualisation (which does not have a single starting point) offers several novelties. Firstly, the method is seen flexibly in the structure of teaching/learning process. Meyer (2002: 46) has given the most comprehensive explanation. He explains the methods on the three methodic levels and shows that sometimes “large methodic forms” on the macro level (like project work, learning on public squares, etc) are long-lasting and provide the framework for the selection and usage of other methods on the mezzo-methodic level. On the mezzo level, the author distinguishes following „dimensions of methodic action“: (1) social forms of work (2) action patterns (teaching method in a sense of the earlier conceptualisation) and (3) the organization of teaching course; on the micro level, there are “staged” teacher’s and pupils’ techniques during the concrete class. This explanation shows that the answer to question “what is method” – depends on the methodic level from which we look at it and that the same method can have different functions and meanings in relation to the course and goals of teaching/learning. The answer is also different from the perspective of different pedagogic disciplines, different didactic theories, models and teaching conception. As an illustration, Kiper i Mische (2008: 109) point out that in “the didactic oriented to achieving learning goals” the method is seen in the function of achieving a goal, while in the “constructivist didactic” [...] “method has a crucial role in the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction” of the subject of learning. The conceptualization of method also involves an attempt to broaden the concept of method by including certain research methods

pertinent to the scientific area. In this sense, method „[...] should never be developed isolated from the content“ and they can also sometimes be the teaching “themes” or the important elements of teaching theme (Klafki, 1994: 25). We should also note that the *number of the described methods and techniques is constantly increasing* justified by the argument that the “pluralism of the forms of learning calls for the pluralism of methods.” (Terhart, 2001: 47). Thus, Winkel (1994) distinguishes 173 methods; Meyer (*Ibid.*) lists 250 methods and about 1000 techniques. Also, some methods are drawn closer to the forms of learning, new methods to change/develop certain qualities of teaching are developed and completely new methods appear which, like “broad methodical forms”, make the frame of reference and are realised by the application of several other methods. A particular novelty regarding the concept of method are the attempts to consider and define the function of method in *establishing relation between teaching and learning* and to *increase teachers’ and pupils’ ownership of the methods*. In this sense, the methods that would lead pupils to their own methods or the methods that would ensure pupils’ subject position in the teaching and learning process are mentioned (Mitrović, 2011).

Post-method Concept. This way of conceptualisation is mainly developed within the applied linguistic and as a form of the foreign languages teachers resistance to the non-functionality of the previous concepts of method. During the decades of adherence to the general didactic views on the teaching method and different pedagogic projection of the language education, the lists of the desired methods have been replacing each other in the foreign language teaching. Kumaravadivelu (2006) presents them as the three generations of differently oriented methods (methods oriented to language, *i.e.* to content, methods oriented to pupils, methods oriented to the learning process) always accompanied by new myths on efficiency. In this area, as of 1991 the symbolic „*death*” of the *teaching method concept* has been proclaimed and the post-method concept and so called post-method pedagogy have been developed. The post-method logic is expressed in the necessity to „[...] substantially change the perception of language in the education, teacher education and the pedagogic perspectives on teaching“ (*Ibid.*: 169). In his papers, this author projects post-method pedagogy as a “three-dimensional system” of pedagogical parameters (1) particularity (2) practicality and (3) possibility. The first parameter denotes sensibility to the specificity of the teachers and pupils community in the concrete socio-cultural context embedded in the socio-cultural environment. Practicality is considered responsible for a new relation between theory and practice, for the teachers’ capacity to monitor own practice and the effectiveness of teaching, and for the transformative

role of education. Parameter of possibility is considered in the light of P. Freire's philosophy, particularly his notions on the possibility of developing education practice where the experience from the social environment are brought into the classroom and have a potential to change (prescribed) education goals and activities in accordance with the educational needs of concrete pupils. In this orientation, design, choice, application and evaluation of the applied methods are completely transferred to the teacher. To apply this concept, the professional teacher education should make teachers competent to develop own theories in practice.

Method as the expression of the mutual understanding of intentions of the participants in teaching/learning. This conceptualisation stems from the critical pedagogy and understanding the teaching/learning process as essentially contextualised process: regardless of how we name or project the method, its final verification comes from sharing the intentions and achieved understanding between pupils and teachers in the teaching/learning process. There are a number of goals in advocating for such understanding of method. First, it is a reaction to the eclecticism in the choice of method and a reaction to the policy of standardising achievements which often has a manifestation in delivered "packages" (prescribed goals – prescribed contents, prescribed textbooks and methods – prescribed outcomes). Secondly, it presents the resistance to the frequent practice of proclaiming changes in methods (and not their footholds) as the reform of education. Last, but not least, it is a resistance to the centuries of forgetting that pupils are the ultimate beneficiaries of teaching/learning methods, thus presents a strive to change the education practice on the principles of new knowledge on language and learning in the institutional context. This is also a devotion for the teachers' autonomy in a post-method sense (with accent on the meaning of *method in the context*) and for the teachers' reconsideration of methods. Edelsky, Altweger & Flores (1991: 43) argue that not a single method is "good" or "bad" *per se*, but the "same" method used with different professional beliefs "becomes a different method", that is, professional beliefs of teachers, paradigm and the framework of work "in action" give the meaning to a certain method. Similarly, Huit (2003) argues that the teaching models and methods differ due to the specific interpretation of the learning/teaching concepts and principles. It is important that the teachers master the methods but it is even more important that they understand the concepts and principles underpinning them. He quotes (*Ibid.*) R. W. Emerson's statement: "If you learn only the methods, you will be tied to them, but if you learn the principles you can design your own methods."

Tendencies in Conceptualising Method and Studies of Teaching/Learning Quality

The given brief overview of the meaning of terms used in the contemporary didactics regarding methods and the contemporary understanding of methods leads to the conclusion that the current didactic moment can be called a *period of redefining methods and relation to them*. Instead one answer to the question which methods represent contemporary understanding of teaching and what are the characteristics of the teaching that may be considered a quality one, we will show different tendencies in considering the issue of methods that yield different types of criteria for understanding the quality of teaching. Through the integration (and probably simplification) of different aspects of understanding methods, the two kinds of tendencies appear:

- Starting from the assumption that the presence of a specific method (or methods) in teaching may be taken as the characteristic of the quality teaching, this tendency is oriented to the search for “good” – “the best” – “quality” methods, their detailed elaboration, scientific basis and empirical testing. In the contemporary understanding of teaching/learning, these probably are interactive and cooperative methods oriented to the pupils activities and not to the knowledge transmission. In this sense, the method itself is glorified: *choice and application of a “good” method* (implicitly from the list of different methods and independently from the specific students, teachers and context) is the indicator of quality teaching/learning and perhaps a magic wand that leads to the achievement of the desired goals in a quality manner. In a certain way, this applies to the concepts of teaching method and methods of teaching/learning because both assume that the methods *per se* determine the quality of teaching/learning. It is not usually explicitly stated that there is only one good method but the selection and usage of the methods is viewed as takeover (in principle from the specific scientific knowledge system) and application (according to the specific guidelines). The selection is made according to the pre-set teaching goals and contents (the goals and contents themselves are independent in this process). It is appropriate to state that the teacher applies a method (which is pre-designed, finalised and closed). The understanding of method very much resembles the understanding of the technique which teacher will use provided s/he is well prepared to do so. This tendency may be considered as modernistic.

- Starting from the critique of mono-methodism and the glorification of methods as closed, contextually independent and standardised, searching for “good” method(s) is replaced by searching for “good” stance to the methods. This perspective implies that methods can be good in different ways and that the *adequacy and value of a method can be judged only in the context*, thus it depends on the specific pupils and teachers. This assumes consideration, selection, application and adjustment of methods as well as the reflection on and re-consideration of the contents, goals, needs and capacities of pupils, teachers and environment. The teacher’s personal theories, strategies and his/her ways of work are important in this process. Understanding methods is brought closer to the understanding of approaches or at least teaching strategies. Therefore, even in this case the teacher has certain landmarks (principles) but they do not stem only from a micro-plan and are not recipes, but they assist in monitoring and decision making process, and their meaning should also be reconsidered in the context. The typical contemporary landmarks are connected with the contemporary theories of education and didactic theories, as well as with the social values (e.g. participatory and subject position of the pupil, education justice). This tendency may be considered as post-modern or critical.

Conclusion

This paper discussed the changes in the way of conceptualizing method and their meaning for studying the quality of teaching/learning. Our starting points were the didactic terminology relevant for understanding methods and the current conceptualisations of method. This has led us to the following conclusions: the didactic literature contains modern, post-modern and the critical concepts of method; different tendencies in considering the issue of method are the source of different types of criteria to understand the quality of teaching/learning; there are opposing tendencies in this area – tendency of glorifying method through persistent search for “good”/“quality” method(s) and the tendency of abandoning the teaching method concept in a favour of teachers’ search for a “good” relation to methods in the context of teaching/learning.

References:

- Bell, D. M. (2003). Do teachers think that methods are dead? *ELT Journal*, 61, pp. 135–143.
- Bognar, L., & Matijević, M. (2005). *Didaktika* [The didactics]. Zagreb: Školska knjiga.
- Brown, D. H. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bruner, J. (2000). *Kultura obrazovanja* [The culture of education]. Zagreb: Educa.
- Edelsky, C., Altwerger, B., & Flores, B. (1991). *Whole Language: What's the Difference?* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Publishers.
- Friedman, M. I., & Fisher, S. P. (1998). *Handbook on effective instructional strategies: Evidence for decision-making*. Columbia, SC: Institute for Evidence-Based Decision Making in Education.
- Havelka, N. (2000). *Učenik i nastavnik u obrazovnom procesu* [Student and teacher in the education process]. Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva.
- Huitt, W. (2003). Classroom instruction. *Educational Psychology Interactive*. Valdosta, GA: Valdosta State University.
- Ivić, I. D., Pešikan, A. Ž., & Janković-Antić, S. V. (2001). *Aktivno učenje 2 – Priručnik za primenu metoda aktivnog učenja – nastave* [Active learning 2 – Guidebook for the use of active learning methods]. Beograd: Institut za psihologiju.
- Jacobsen, D., Eggen, P., & Kauchak, D. (1993). *Methods for Teaching: A Skills Approach* (4th ed.). New York: Merrill.
- Johnson, D., & Johnson, R. (1989). *Cooperation and competition*. Edina, MN: Interaction.
- Joyce, B., & Weil, M. (1986). *Models of teaching*. (3rd ed). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Kiper, H., & Mischke, W. (2008). *Uvod u opću didaktiku* [The introduction to general didactics]. Zagreb: Educa.
- Klafki, W. (1994). Didaktika kao teorija obrazovanja u okviru kritičko-konstruktivističke znanosti o odgoju [Didactics as a theory of education within critical-constructivist educational science]. In H. Gudjons, et al. (Eds.), *Didaktičke teorije* [The didactical theories] (pp. 13–32). Zagreb: Educa.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (1994). The postmethod condition: (E)merging strategies for second/foreign language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28, pp. 27–48.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2001). Toward a postmethod pedagogy. *TESOL Quarterly*, 35, pp. 537–560.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003). *Beyond methods: Macrostrategies for language teaching*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006). *Understanding language teaching: From method to postmethod*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Macpherson, A. (2007). *Cooperative Learning – Group Activities for College Courses – A Guide for Instructors*. Canada: Kwantlen University College.
- Marton, W. (1988). *Methods in English language teaching: Frameworks and options*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Meyer, H. (2002). *Didaktika razredne kvake* [The didactics of class teaching]. Zagreb: Educa.
- Mitrović, M. (2011). O novim konceptima metoda u nastavi [On new concepts of method in teaching]. *Pedagogija*, 66, pp. 168–172.
- Mitrović, M., & Radulović, L. (2011). Načini razumevanja i konceptualizovanja kvaliteta obrazovanja u nastavi [The ways of understanding and conceptualising quality of education in teaching]. In N. Kačavenda-Radić, D. Pavlović-Breneselović, R. Antonijević (Eds.), *Kvalitet u obrazovanju* [Quality in education] (pp. 135–155). Beograd: Institut za pedagogiju i andragogiju, Filozofski fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu.
- Oxford Dictionaries, Online Edition: <http://oxforddictionaries.com/>
- Pavlović Breneselović, D., & Pavlovski, T. (2000). *Interaktivna obuka: priručnik za obuku voditelja interaktivne obuke* [The interactive teaching: Guidebook for training moderators of interactive teaching]. Beograd: Institut za pedagogiju i andragogiju, Filozofski fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu.
- Pratt, D. D. & associates (1998). *Five Perspectives on Teaching in Adult and Higher Education*. Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, B. O. (1960). *A Concept of Teaching*. Teachers College Record.
- Terhart, E. (2001). *Metode poučavanja i učenja – uvod u probleme metodičke organizacije poučavanja i učenja*. Zagreb: Educa.
- Trnavac, N., & Đorđević, J. (2007). *Pedagogija* [The pedagogy]. Beograd: Naučna knjiga Komerc.
- UNESCO (2004). Global monitoring report 2005. *Education for all, the quality imperative*. UNESCO Publishing.
- Van der Horst, H., & McDonald, R. (1997). *Outcomes based education: a teachers manual*. Pretoria: Kagiso.
- Velat, D., & Radić Dudić, R. (2008). *Aktivna obuka: priručnik za trenere/ice* [Active training: Guidebook for trainers]. Beograd: Dial.
- Westwood, P. (2008). *What teachers need to know about teaching methods*. Australia: ACER Press.
- Winkel, R. (1994). Didaktika kao kritička teorija nastavne komunikacije [The didactics as a critical theory of communication in teaching]. In H. Gudjons, et al. (Eds.), *Didaktičke teorije* [The didactical theories] (pp. 95–113). Zagreb: Educa.