

British Journal of Education, Society & Behavioural Science

5(2): 158-168, 2015, Article no.BJESBS.2015.014 ISSN: 2278-0998



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Systemic Pattern of Student-centred Education, Strategies Applied in Romania Student-centred **Education Reflected in Legal Documents**

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed and interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

Article Information

DOI:10.9734/BJESBS/2015/12855

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Original Research Article

Received 22nd July 2014 Accepted 6th September 2014 Published 6th October 2014

ABSTRACT

Starting from de current educational system in Romania the study aims to develop a systemic pattern of the student-centred education. The student-centred education is built as an operational pattern from several pillars: knowledge, creativity, motivation, action in a broader system of the knowledge society.

The methods used in this paper are: theoretical documentation, systemic modelling, analysis and interpretation of legal documents.

In the introduction is presented the concept of a knowledge society that represents the context in which the Romanian educational system works at present. In the second part of the article there are described methods used in the paper. At the point three of the paper is being built a new conceptual model of the Romanian educational system named in the literature education studentcentred. After several stages of diagnosis of the educational system, of conceptualization and regulation of the reform, in the last years 2007-2011, several applicative strategies of the studentcentred education stood out and were analyzed in this paper.

In part four of the paper are selected from the recent Romanian legislative documents the most important applicative strategies of student-centred education in order to assess if the theoretical

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concept of education student-centred is reflected in educational policy documents. In conclusion it argues the need for generalization of education student-centred in the Romanian educational system but this requires a systemic conceptualization and strategic and integrated application of student-centred education.

Keywords: The student-centred education; systemic pattern.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education in general and particularly the studentcentred education cannot be effectively analyzed and made but in interdependent relationship with the generating and consuming education society.

Knowledge society, as it was defined also in Romania by M. Draganescu, in 2001[1] rests on 4 pillars: education, research, development and innovation [2] according to the presidential strategy "Education and research for the knowledge society". Therefore, systemically speaking, one cannot ignore the type of society in which the student-centred education is built in and, indeed, only a type of knowledge society in which the progress of society is due to the production of new information through the specialized and creative human resource can stimulate and support the student-centred learning.

The bi-univocal relationship between knowledge society and education could be given by the scheme:

Scheme no. 1. Bi-univocal relationship between knowledge society and education

Knowledge society...... Pragmatic axiological commitment..... Student-centred learning

In the context of the knowledge-based society of Romania formulate research questions:

- o The Romanian educational system is in its entirety student-centred?
- o In the Centre of the educational process is the teacher or the student?
- Teaching, learning and assessment are student-centred?
- Teaching evaluation starts from the teacher or a student?
- o What are the strategies set out in the documents of the educational policy regarding student-centred education and to what degree they are effective for the current Romanian educational system?

Based on these questions article aims: 1. to define the student-centred education 2. to draw a model of student-centred education necessary for the Romanian education system 3. to emphasize the educational policy strategies identified in legislative documents in Romania

2. THE METODOLOGY

The methods used in the paper are: theoretical documentation, systemic modelling, analysis and interpretation of legal documents. Through scientific documentation are put in evidence the characteristics of student-centred education, found in the literature. Systemic modelling are selected through the nodal of student-centred education based on which is built a model of student-centred education. Analysis of documents of the educational policy makes the transition from theoretical-conceptual level to the political strategy of applied education student-centred.

3. SYSTEMIC PATTERN OF STUDENT – CENTRED EDUCATION

Research hypothesis is the following: axiology of the society's commitment to a particular type of educational system including student-centred education.

The axiological commitment of the society – as we see it – is the philosophical and applicative mechanism that makes the mechanism knowledge society – student-centred learning possible.

This axiological commitment refers to the education policy in a given country, the selected values to be sustained in financial terms and the application of this policy.

If education policy values the quality of human resources, then it will fund training and human resource development through a student-centred learning. Quality education [3] is currently both at national and international level a coordinator concept of education, which has 15 output indicators organized in 4 categories:

- A. Skills, competencies, attitudes: proficiency in reading, proficiency in mathematics, new skills for the knowledge society, learning competences in learning active citizenship, cultural and social skills
- B. Access and participation: access to lifelong learning, participation in lifelong learning for people between 25 and 64 years-old
- C. Resources for lifelong learning: investing in lifelong learning, teachers and learning-ICT in learning
- D. Strategies and development: strategies for lifelong learning, coherence of the offer for lifelong learning, advice and guidance, certification and accreditation, quality assurance

The education system as a set of schools can be viewed in relation to the student-centred learning through its de-centralized **financial component**, using schools and university consortia in order to optimally benefit from the infrastructure for education, human and material resources.

Scheme no. 2. Relationship between the education system and the student-centred learning

Education system...... School and university consortia...... Student-centred learning

The education process can be considered the main piece of the student-centred learning system. But, as we know it, the education process consists of 3 elements, mainly teaching, learning and evaluating, which either work as a whole or do not function at all. For the purpose of this work, we intend to follow the characteristics of the student-centred teaching, learning and evaluation within the modern pedagogy in comparison with the characteristics of the teacher-centred education within the classical pedagogy, from 3 perspectives: structural, functional and operationally integrated.

 Student-centred learning is based on the knowledge of the student and the others from the classroom generally speaking but especially in a given discipline: level of knowledge, specific skills, motivation,

- previous results, and aspirations. In this attempt, the teacher initiates knowledge process, implies also other educational factors: school psychologist, parents, students. The student-centred learning [4] is based on the same knowledge objective of students in its perspective of self-knowledge stimulated by the teacher, school psychologist, and parents. Student-centred learning is based on the outcome of the meeting between the two approaches of knowledge and selfknowledge of students.
- The setting of objectives for a lesson, their operationalization, involving all categories of objectives: cognitive, affective, and behavioural. This Student-centred learning is **a student-driven perspective** of clear objectives, defined and circumscribed as referred to possibilities - according the proximal development area. The studentcentred learning refers to the fact that the objectives belong to the teacher only to the extent he prepares and proposes them to students. It is the extent to which students internally the assimilate obiectives. accomplish them based on a behavioural plan which depends on the students. Therefore, objectives may change during the process of education, may reconfigure due to the learning experience of the students. At the level of the curriculum, of the entire educational system, goals and objectives of education have to be the product of a democratic action of participation from all decision factors, experts in education, teachers. The didactical evaluation in terms of objectives is student-centred to the extent that these objectives reflect students' skills, provide student learning progress from one stage another, and lead to students' satisfaction and not to their frustration.
- 3. The selection of contents is done by the recommended teacher from the bibliography of the level of the provenience scientific community, from the textbooks approved by the decision forums from the auxiliary curricula but also based on one's own teaching experience. The modern curriculum content must have the current knowledge's characteristics: inter- and trans-disciplinarity, integration, computerization but also the current didactical ones: modularity, essentiality, illustration and update. Teaching based on these contents is student-centred if

- students are trained in working with such content from preschool, if they are working constantly with such content and if such content is evaluated.
- 4. Student-centred teaching-learningevaluating strategies The interaction between methods, means, techniques, forms of organization and evaluation of learning achieved by the teacher is student-centred if it results from the teacher's didactical experience, if it is on *knowing* the based students. personality, type of intelligence, learning styles, motivation and aspirations, if it is used an active and participative as well as creative didactical technology [5].

In order to highlight the teacher-centred teaching and the student-centred teaching, we present herein the opposition between them in the following Table 1.

In the education process, the teacher's teaching type determines the students' learning type. We present herein how this interdependence can be played Table 2.

Evaluation [6] is part of the same system and its degree of integration can be seen in the following Table 3.

Lemeni G. and Miclea M. [7] highlight the correlation between the types of intelligence, learning styles and teaching strategies as follows:

- Musical intelligence....... learns better through rhythm and music efficient learning techniques are, for instance, writing a song about the material to be learned
- Kinaesthetic intelligencelearns through touch, movement techniques of learning through play, group work
- Linguistic intelligence learns saying, hearing and searching words techniques of discussion, reread, rewrite of information
- Logical and mathematical intelligence learns by categorizing, working with patterns and abstract relationships logical organization of the material to be learned, summaries, charts, graphics

- Spatial intelligence mental representations, images drawings, colors, movies

Table 1. Teacher-centred teaching versus student-centred teaching

teaching		
(modern pedagogy)		
1. The didactical design		
begins with the		
knowledge of the		
student.		
2. The objectives are		
more important than		
the contents.		
3. The student is the		
main character in the		
didactical space		
around which		
teachers build		
knowledge.		
The student		
participates in		
decision making in		
the choice of		
objectives,		
organization of		
learning situations,		
use of teaching		
methods, progress in		
learning.		
5. Active and		
participative as well		
as creative teaching		
methods prevail.		
6. The affective		
objectives can be		
achieved.		
domoved.		
7. The process and		
progress of		
knowledge is more		
important than the		
product.		
Teaching stimulates		
learning through		
understanding,		
imagination and		
creativity. 9. The transmitted		
The transmitted contents are		
predominantly		
transdisciplinary. 10. The leading style of		
iu. The leading style of		
the lesson is		
democratic.		

- Interpersonal intelligencelearns in relationships, collaborating,

..... teaching strategies based on contests, presentations, study group.

Table 2. Contents-centred learning versus student-centred learning

Contents-centred		Stu	Student-centred		
learning (classical		learning (modern			
pedagogy)			pedagogy)		
1.	Learning starts from the teacher's requirements to acquire the prescribed	1.	Learning starts from the individual and age characteristic of the students known both by the teacher		
2.	contents. Learning predominantly requires memorizing knowledge already brushed.	2.	and the student. Learning predominantly requires thinking for knowledge discovery, processing, reconfiguration and reproducing information.		
3.	The outcome of learning is the known only by the teacher and the student.	3.	The student knows his progress in learning and manages his efforts in order to optimize the progress.		
4.	Correction in learning is done at large periods of time.	4.	Correction in learning is done in short periods of time.		
5.	Learning is organized by the school according the principle all students are the same (textbooks, auxiliary school course materials).	5.	Learning is organized by the school according the principle students are different.		
6.	The learning autonomy is reduced.	6.	The learning autonomy is high.		
7.	The motivation of learning is not known to the student.	7.	The student knows his motivation to learn and learns to properly manage it.		
8.	The teacher does not know his students' learning motivation.	8.	The teacher knows his students' motivation and learns to properly manage it.		
9.	The students' learning style is not known to teachers.	9.	Both teachers and students know the learning style of students.		
10.	Learning is predominantly objective, identical for all, immutable.	10.	Learning is mostly subjective, different from one student to another, exchangeable.		

Table 3. Knowledge object-centred evaluation versus Student's knowledge subject-centred evaluation

Knowledge object centred evaluation (classical pedagogy)	Student's knowledge subject-centred evaluation (modern pedagogy)
Evaluation starts from the teacher's requirements to acquire the prescribed contents.	 Evaluation starts from the individual and age characteristic of the students known both by the teacher and the student.
Evaluation predominantly requires memorizing knowledge already brushed.	2. Evaluation predominantly requires thinking for knowledge discovery, processing, reconfiguration and reproducing information.
 The outcome of Evaluation is the known only by the teacher and the student. 	 The student knows his progress in Evaluation and manages his efforts in order to optimize the progress.
Correction in Evaluation is done at large periods of time.	Correction in Evaluation is done in short periods of time.
5. Evaluation is organized by the school according to the principle all students are the same (textbooks, auxiliary school course materials).	5. Evaluation is organized by the school according to the principle students are different.
6. The Evaluation	6. The Evaluation
autonomy is reduced. 7. The motivation of Evaluation is not known to the student.	autonomy is high. 7. The student knows his motivation to learn and learns to properly manage it.
The teacher does not know his students' Evaluation motivation.	8. The teacher knows his students' motivation and learns to properly manage it.
9. The students' Evaluation style is not known to teachers.	Both teachers and students know the Evaluation style of students.
10. Evaluation is predominantly objective, identical for all, immutable.	10. Evaluation is mostly subjective, different from one student to another, exchangeable.

Same author emphasizes the students' learning styles and their learning strategies as follows:

- application of the learned knowledge.

Needles to say that one cannot separate these types of intelligences and learning styles so that the teaching-learning-evaluation methods may address them in an individualized manner. This is not even desirable. It can be dissociated a dominant type of intelligence and preferred a certain learning style which the teachinglearning-evaluation methods may address with priority. But the interaction between these intelligence types and the learning styles enables teachers to use techniques, methods and multiple and different work processes, to work both individually and in groups and in debates, to stimulate students by means of different memory work tasks, troubles solving, creativity, forming the students' personality in a full and harmonious manner [8].

Active and participative methods [9]: heuristic conversation, questioning, patterning, algorithms, simulation, case studies, creative methods, all these are procedural methods by which the teacher can centre the teaching-learning-evaluating process on the student.

5. The *teacher-student relationship* may be student-centred if the management of the school and classroom is *democratic*, if the teacher's attitudes in relation to the students are open, based on empathy, on stimulating their interest in knowledge, with the application of those attractive educational approaches, motivation and creative development of the student's personality [10].

The democratic management of the school and classroom depends on the type of democratic society, the mentalities that were maintained from a previous society form, the appropriate funding for education in order to manage time-

consuming activities, training of teachers in a democratic management style.

In conclusion of this analysis we can define the student-centred education as the process of teaching and learning assessment focused on the student's needs and possibilities, a process that takes place in an educational context favorable human values.

Therefore we present herein the following scheme concerning the student-centred education system (Scheme no. 3).

In the same way with our discussion in 1997, a revision of an analysis of the Working Group on Education of the American Psychological Association appears [11], identifying 14 principles of the student-centred learning as opposed to teacher-centred education. The principles are divided into 4 groups:

3.1 Cognitive and Meta-cognitive Factors

- 1. The nature of the learning process: learning of complex subjects is more effective in the presence of an intentional process of building of the meaning obtained from information and experience. Performing pupils and students are active, goal-oriented, self-regulated, assuming responsibility for learning [12].
- The objects of the learning process should be strategic and relevant to students. Teachers can help students in prefiguring some knowledge objectives consistent with their aspirations and personal interests as well as with the educational objectives [13].
- 3. Construction of knowledge [14]. Performing students build their knowledge under the guidance of a teacher if they establish connections between the new information and the old ones, through active and creative teaching strategies that teachers put at their disposal.
- Strategic thinking. Performing pupil and students have the ability to create and use a repertoire of thinking strategies as to achieve complex learning objectives.
- Thinking about thinking. Higher order strategies for selecting and monitoring mental operations enhance critical and creative thinking. Performing pupils and students can monitor how they learn, the progresses they have made, the

- difficulties they encounter and can find ways to increase progress in learning.
- 6. The context of learning. Learning is influenced by environmental factors: culture, technology and instructional practices.

3.2 Motivational and Affective Factors [12]

- Motivational and emotional influences on learning. Motivation and positive emotions stimulate learning whereas motivation and negative emotions inhibit it.
- Intrinsic motivation for learning is stimulated by attractive and challenging tasks for learning depending on the particular characteristics of the students.
- 3. Effects of motivation on effort. Meaningful learning activities with positive educational practices stimulate the learning effort.

3.3 Social and Development Factors

- 1. Influences of development on learning. Understanding the differences of development between students by the teacher may lead to an optimal context for learning [15].
- Social influences on learning. Learning approaches that respect diversity and social interactions encourage flexible thinking and social competence.

3.4 Individual Differences [13]

- Individual differences in learning. Teachers must be sensitive to the individual differences of students.
- 2. Learning and diversity. Learning is more effective if teachers observe the linguistic, cultural and social differences of students by increasing motivation and performance in learning.
- Standards and evaluation. The establishment of some high and challenging enough standards as well as the evaluation of the learning progress including the diagnostic evaluation of the process and product is an integral part of the learning process.

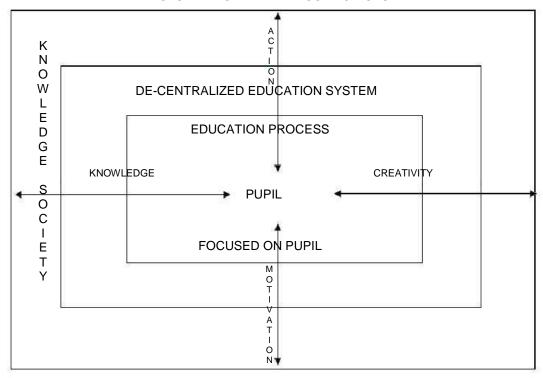
4. STRATEGIES APPLIED IN ROMANIA STUDENT CENTRED EDUCATION REFLECTED IN LEGAL DOCUMENTS

The education reform in Romania started in 1990 has undergone a long process, often contradictory, being extended until today. After several stages of diagnosis of the educational system, conceptualization and regulation of the reform, in 2007-2011 the following strategies applied to student-centred learning stood out:

- Declaring by law the early education as public good as well as the state funding spent on early education
- 2. Education focuses on beneficiary [16]. For the very first time, an entire chapter is dedicated to the beneficiaries of education (National Education Act, 2011, art. 64-72). Between the education unit and parent/ legal guardian, it is established an educational contract that includes obligations and rights of the parties. National special programs of school extension are funded ("school after school"-type programs). Post-secondary state schools are free. Are subsidized the costs of attending high school for children from disadvantaged backgrounds and children from institutions.
- 3. University focus on the student [17]
 Students are considered partners (Draft
 Law University Education, art. 63).
 Universities adopt a code of duties, rights
 and freedoms of students (Draft Law
 University Education, art. 16, paragraph 2).
- 4. Centring of the curriculum on 8 categories of key competencies

These 8 categories of key competencies are:

- Communication skills in mother tongue and in two other international languages;
- b) Basic skills in maths, science and technology;
- c) Digital skills (of use of information technology for knowledge and problem solving);
- d) Axiological or valuing skills (necessary for the active and responsible participation in the social life);
- e) Personal life and career development management skills;
- f) Entrepreneurial skills;
- g) Cultural skills;
- h) Lifelong learning skills.



THE STUDENT-CENTRED EDUCATION SYSTEM

Scheme 3. The student-centred education system

- 5. The quality of education matters more than the education provider's type (public or private). Core funding for preschool and compulsory education is given to all schools, public or private, if they are accredited and are subject to regular evaluations. With the preschooler/ pupil's transfer also the financial resources allocated to his instruction are transferred -National Education Act, 2011, art. 81 [16].
- 6. Flexible curriculum
 - Flexible curriculum will be made on two dimensions:
 - a) Increasing the proportion of hours in the curriculum at the disposal of the school (CDS);
 - b) Increasing the degrees of freedom of the teacher in implementing the curriculum within each discipline
- 7. Education is rebuilt for the "digital generation". Within one year of passing the law, all schools will be connected to the Internet. It will be established and financed by the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation the Virtual School Library and the e-learning School Platform so that all content to be learned in school, the lessons of the best teachers can exist in

- digital format and be accessible to any student from any school-National Education Act, 2011, art. 45-47[16]. All contents to be learned in school, all working tools, examples of tests to check the students' knowledge will be converted also into digital format and be accessible at all times to any student or teacher, on a LMS (Learning Management System) learning-type platform, on line.
- 8. Training of teachers and school managers for the management and implementation of a new curriculum
 - In order to succeed, curricular reform must necessarily be associated with a reform of the evaluation procedures, based on the following principles:
- Current and periodic evaluations check not the memory of information, but the skills;
- (2) Each acquisition cycle of skills (= curriculum cycle) is associated with a type of regular evaluation;
- (3) Regular evaluations are completed not only with a score obtained by the student, but also by means of:
 - a) A detailed report sent to the parent/ legal guardian regarding the child's

- school situation and appropriate counselling of parents/ legal guardians;
- an individualized learning plan for recovery (for children with disabilities in learning), acceleration (for gifted children) or consolidation of the acquired knowledge;
- 9. Management is decentralized. Directors are selected by competition and are appointed by the Managing board of schools-National Education Act, 2011, art. 76, 77, 78[16]. Directors sign performance contracts with local authorities and management contracts with the Managing boards. If these contracts are not meet, directors can be dismissed both by the local authorities and the Managing boards following an audit made by the Education Inspectorate. Directors of schools cannot be members of political parties-National Education Act, 2011, art. 76, paragraph 4[16].
- 10. Balanced financial decentralization. Funding available for a school will have four components:
 - a) Core funding, which is composed of standard cost/ student (preschooler) + coefficients οf correction disadvantaged minorities. groups, children with special educational needs). It will fully cover all personal expenses. textbooks. general equipments and routine maintenance. Core funding is awarded by county's financial administrations - directly to schools, from the state budget;
 - b) Complementary financing, which is composed of expenses, repairs and development of the school network. Complementary funding is provided by the State and local councils' budgets. The City Council decides the distribution of complementary funding to schools based on their institutional development projects, as well as the development needs of the school network;
 - c) Additional financing, which is composed of funds from the County's Councils (balancing funding, other funds) and Local Councils, which set both the amount and use destination;
 - d) Self-financing, funds obtained directly by the school, which are managed according to its own decisions.

- 11. Human resource instruction for decentralized management of the education units
 - a) Competition between schools. These competitions will be based institutional evaluation of each school. Schools will be evaluated based on two maior axes: inclusion performance. Based on the evaluations on each of the two axes, a 5-level classification of schools will be achieved ("Excellent", "Very good", "Good" "Satisfactory", "Unsatisfactory"). There will be prizes both for schools in inclusion and for those with excellence in performance. Schools assessed as "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory" will be subject to assistance and stringent monitoring, with appropriate decisions.
 - b) Competition between teachers. Based on a specific methodology, schools will designate the Teacher of the year, as sign of excellence in teaching. At the county's and national level, the Teacher of the year will be appointed for each subject in the curriculum. Excellence in teaching will be rewarded substantially.
 - c) Competition between students.

 Olympics on subjects will be strongly encouraged. They will be added Olympics of technical-scientific and artistic creation and Olympics of sports.

12. Performance pay differentiation

In order to promote the teaching profession, it is necessary that the average wage

in secondary education to be the equivalent of 1, 35 GDP/ capita, which achieves

average wages in OECD countries.

13. Elaboration of new methodologies for evaluation of teachers

At the end of the school year, each teacher will be evaluated. The evaluation will focus on:

- (a) Self-evaluation in the classroom;
- (b) Evaluation of 3 colleagues from the same specialty (one appointed by the concerned teacher, two appointed by the school's management);
- (c) Evaluation from the school's board.
- 14. Students' evaluation becomes as a priority the instructive function to optimize learning by remedial interventions or individualized learning plans.

- 15. The recognition of non-formal and informal learning.
 - Are set the legislative grounds for recognition and certification of non-formal and informal learning regardless of the context in which it was acquired. There will be no non-certified skills and diplomas without skills. All education and training providers are accredited and periodically evaluated.
- 16. The researcher and the university research take precedence [17] (art. 36-38). Universities assume public stance on scientific research and their evaluation is performed according to the type of university chosen by the students.
- 17. Study programs are flexible and focus on learning outcomes. Are established several types of master programs (in science, engineering, arts and vocational education) and doctoral programs (scientific and professional)-Project of the Higher Education Law, art. 27-28 [17].
- 18. The university promotes managerial and entrepreneurial type-art. 71-79 [9]. It provides funding and flexible multi -Draft Law University Education, art. 94-98 [17]. Multi-annual core funding is granted for the whole duration of a cycle of studies as research grants, based on equivalent average cost per student for each field and course. Research grants are managed by universities based on the autonomy principle.
- 19. Support is granted to the private education performance. Additional funding, which honours excellence, is provided to the institution originating it (on programs and institutions) whether public or private provider of higher education-Draft Law University Education, art. 95, paragraph 4 [17].
- 20. Permanent Act. [18]. Education Permanent education is the responsibility individuals of and institutions and is stimulated by the state. For education, it is allocated an annual minimum budget of 7% from GDP, public funds. Permanent Education Community Centres are established to provide lifelong learning education [19] and training for community members. The National Museum of Science is established for non-formal and informal learning about achievements contemporary science and technology. Permanent education is supported

financially. The government set up a bank account worth 500 euros for each new child in Romania. Annually, parents/ legal guardians may submit in the account for permanent education an amount of up to 500 Euro per year, which will be tax exempt. The account for permanent education can be used by the holder for educational purposes only, after completing compulsory education.

Each public institution is required to use at least 2% of the budget for staff training and development. Companies are exempt from taxation of profits reinvested in training of human resources within 5% of its value.

Media is used for educational purposes. A public television and public radio will be devoted exclusively to education. The Government will fund special programs, educational programs in the private media.

These applicative directions of the education reform have a strategic character, being designed for 2007-2015. As these are designed, they function as an operational system being interdependent and provided with funding sources while they are pupil and performance-centred.

5. DISCUSSION

In Romania the educational system is not entirely centered on the pupil. The educational system's actors: teachers, students, parents, the Inspectors recognize that the use of new methods and means of education but education student-centered strategies is not yet apply entirely to.

In the center of the educational process is not yet the student, but the teacher who tries to cede the central place but fails to leave the leadership of hand.

Of the 3 components of the educational process: teaching, learning and evaluation, learning remains the more student-centered. Teaching and assessment are still centred on the teacher.

Political strategies student-centred education have been developed but they are not entirely applicable.

6. CONCLUSION

- Development of the pupil/student's personality cannot be removed from the context of the society, being possible and prolific also in the knowledge society, with factors of progress as: knowledge, motivation, creativity and action of the educational subject.
- Political factors in Romania have an instrumental function, of transposition into the practice of education pupil/ studentcentred by educational policies and strategies.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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