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The impact of coaching on the management of pre-university educational institutions

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Abstract: The profound transformations that contemporary society is going through have significantly changed the role and responsibilities of educational institutions. If in the past, the school had, mainly, the role of transmitting knowledge and preparing students for social and professional integration, today, it is required to form complex skills, respond to the diversity of individual needs and prepare young people for a world characterized by continuous change, uncertainty and global competition. In this context, educational management can no longer be reduced to the administrative or bureaucratic dimension, but must become a process of leadership, organizational development and valorization of human potential.

The professional experience accumulated over the years in teaching and managerial activity in pre-university education, as well as the responsibilities exercised within the management of a technical college with diverse educational profiles, were the main argument for establishing a direct relationship between coaching and the management activity of a school unit. The activity carried out in a complex institution, which brings together theoretical, technological and vocational branches, vocational training programs, post-secondary education and educational programs dedicated to students at risk, offered the possibility of direct observation of the difficulties, but also of the opportunities existing at the level of contemporary school management. Thus, through direct observations, through interactions with internal and external factors of an educational unit, relationships can be established that highlight the capacity of coaching to shape the level of communication and direct involvement in increasing the quality of a school environment.

Key Words: *education, coaching, educational management.*

***JEL Classification** : A20, A21, I21, J53, D83.*

Social Economic Debates
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Introduction

In current managerial practice, the director of an educational institution is called upon to respond simultaneously to multiple challenges: managing human and financial resources, coordinating the educational process, communicating with students, parents and the community, implementing curricular and administrative reforms, reducing absenteeism and school dropout, supporting performance and promoting educational inclusion. In many of these situations, classic administrative solutions prove insufficient, and success depends largely on the manager's ability to build trusting relationships, motivate and inspire people and transform the team into a professional community oriented towards development and performance.

Observations from managerial experience have shown that the best results were not achieved through the exercise of formal authority or excessive control, but through communication, active listening, professional support, encouragement of initiative and the involvement of teachers in the decision-making process. Naturally, these practices led to the identification of obvious similarities with the principles and techniques of organizational and educational coaching, even if they were not always explicitly assumed under this name.

In recent years, coaching has established itself internationally as one of the most effective methods of personal and organizational development, being widely used in the economic and corporate environment to increase performance and develop leadership. The transfer of these practices to the educational field represents a relatively new direction of research and intervention, but one with great potential for educational systems in the process of modernization.

Essentially, coaching involves changing the perspective on the management process and on professional relationships. Instead of the traditional model based on the transmission of solutions and rigid hierarchical relationships, coaching promotes open questions, reflection, empowerment and the identification of solutions by capitalizing on the individual's or team's own resources. The manager thus becomes a facilitator of the professional and personal development of his collaborators, and the teacher assumes the role of guide and partner of the student in the learning process.

However, the reality of the Romanian education system highlights numerous challenges that justify the need for such innovative approaches. The decline in the school population, dropout and absenteeism, fluctuating results in national exams, differences between urban and rural areas, difficulties in integrating students with special educational needs and the pressure exerted on schools by social and economic changes require the identification of new managerial and pedagogical tools.

In particular, technological colleges face additional challenges generated by the specifics of the school population, the constant need to adapt to the demands of the labor market, and the need to build solid partnerships with the economic environment and the local community. In these conditions, the development of an organizational culture based on communication, collaboration, and mutual support can be a determining factor for institutional success.

Social Economic Debates
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Based on these considerations, this research aims to analyze the impact of coaching on the management of pre-university educational institutions and to identify the ways in which techniques specific to this field can contribute to organizational development, increased performance, and improved educational climate.

The role of coaching in developing active communication skills and understanding of work tasks

Coaching provides individuals with the opportunity to learn how to express themselves effectively and engage in constructive conversations with others. It helps people learn how to set and share work goals, how to think strategically, how to express themselves, and how to listen. This will help participants develop their communication skills to a high level, which will allow them to better solve work tasks and deal with any problems related to it (Mercer & Fisher, 1993).

Coaching is an effective tool for developing leadership skills. It provides a structured, supportive environment to help the individual identify their strengths and weaknesses, receive feedback, focus on development goals, and create an action plan to achieve them (Tonsing, T., Feltz, D., 2003). Through coaching, the individual can gain a better understanding of their personal leadership style, recognize areas for growth, develop emotional intelligence, practice public speaking, hone their decision-making skills, and explore different approaches to problem solving. Coaching can provide the guidance needed to help the individual develop their leadership skills to a higher level (Milaré, SA; Médici, EPY, 2007.). Coaching can play a key role in developing active communication skills.

This is achieved by preparing for fearless interactions, building the necessary skills of expression and listening, as well as understanding the behavior and attitude of the interlocutor. Appropriate coaching significantly improves communication skills through exercises and real-world examples, encouraging participants to make the most of their expressiveness (Tonsing, T., Feltz, D., 2003). Furthermore, revealing the basic concepts of active communication helps people to understand and effectively use the appropriate means of communication in different situations. This can lead to better relationships and collaboration at the individual and team level (Liston-Smith, J., 2008). This can also influence attitude change and contribute to the adoption of a positive attitude within any type of interaction.

Coaching can help the team to have a better ability to communicate and work effectively. Through coaching, the person learns how to convey the message effectively, how to listen carefully to what others say, and how to expose themselves in front of others without feeling intimidated or discouraged. Coaching can also help the person develop their skills to listen, understand, respond, and respond in an appropriate behavioral way, all of which are essential for effective communication (Parsloe E., Leedham M., 2016). In addition, coaching can also contribute to stimulating understanding, loyalty, and fairness within the team, as well as building an effective climate based on a stronger sense of acceptance and collaboration between team members.

Coaching is a form of professional counseling or guidance or training, generally a process in which a coach helps another to discover their potential, develop their skills, and improve their performance.

The goal of coaching is to help the person identify personal short-term and long-term goals according to their capabilities and learn how to fulfill them effectively, in order to achieve the desired results more quickly. This

Social Economic Debates
Volume 14, Issue 2, 2025
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process is achieved through open and provocative questions, which emphasize the role of their own attitudes in adopting optimal solutions in relation to the proposed objectives (Tonsing, T., Feltz, D., 2005).
Understanding the work tasks requires that the person performing them understands the requirements, becomes familiar with how they must be performed, and creates an action plan to accomplish them. This means that the person must become familiar with the processes, techniques, and methods necessary to accomplish the tasks assigned. This person must also take into account any additional objectives that may arise during the project.

Coaching and task understanding can be particularly useful in pre-university education. For example, through coaching, teachers can provide students with individualized information about the goals they need to achieve and how these will be useful in the context of pre-university studies. This can also help reduce anxiety and increase students' confidence and motivation.

Understanding the tasks can also be just as important. By encouraging students to think critically about the tasks, teachers can provide a stronger foundation on which to build decisions about career and educational paths (Brinkley, M.-L., & Le Roux, I., 2018). This can provide a framework for better discussing ways to solve problems and thinking about creative solutions. As students understand the tasks, they can develop deeper critical thinking skills and become better problem solvers (Starr, 2016).

Coaches tend to provide a facilitating environment where people can enjoy better communication and knowledge transfer (Narayanasamy, A. and Penney, V., 2014). This can help those undergoing coaching learn to express their feelings and points of view in a personal, context-appropriate way.
Coaches provide the privacy and space that people need to connect more deeply with their needs, learn how to express these needs more clearly, and gain support in exploring solutions that can help them achieve their goals (Mukherjee, 2014). Coaching involves a deep self-analysis, which helps to highlight those qualities that can propel students in their professional development.

Coaches facilitate the development of a communication model adapted to the strategy for achieving individual and group goals of students, contributing to improving the ability to express, listen and understand the feelings and needs of those around them. This helps those who follow the coaching to feel more confident in their relationships, to listen more attentively and, ultimately, to feel more connected to those around them and fulfilled.

Coaching can be useful for developing active communication skills (Audet, J. and Cauteret, P., 201 2). Therefore, coaching can be considered an important component of a person's development and overall performance by bringing about positive changes, skills and competences.
Coaching can help individuals overcome communication challenges and use their skills more confidently (Denzin, NK, & Lincoln, YS, 2012). By fostering better communication and deeper understanding, coaching provides an environment that encourages the updating of personal skills and competencies.

A coach can help a person acquire communication skills through various techniques, such as point of view, understanding, and feedback. Thus, a person can develop communication skills, such as active listening, the ability to express feelings, clarity with conversation partners, the ability to address the feelings of opponents,

Social Economic Debates
Volume 14, Issue 2, 2025
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and the ability to effectively communicate essential information. Through communication coaching, a person can develop more confidence to communicate productively (Burger, Z., & Van Coller-Peter, S., 2019).

Coaching in pre-university education can help develop active communication skills. Coaching in school consists of providing motivational stimulus and guidance for change and improving students' performance and skills. Coaching provides students with opportunities for self-development and encourages them to develop their ability to focus, self-regulate and use their practical skills to improve their academic performance (Leedham & Parsloe, 2016). This allows them to learn how to better express their ideas in a courageous and constructive way, thus encouraging active communication (Campos, Teodoro Malta; Nunes Pinto, 2012).

A coach can provide feedback and support to help students develop better communication skills and show them how to think critically, express themselves more clearly and persuasively (Cardoso, MLAP; Ramos, LH; D'Innocenzo, M., 2014). A coach can also provide advice, encouragement, and assistance to address problems, create strategies for conflict, and even help them overcome their own limitations. All of these are extremely important for the development of active communication skills in young people (Leedham & Parsloe, 2016).

Coaching can provide an effective way to develop active communication skills and help students achieve their long-term educational goals. Clear communication can help improve academic skills and increase overall participation and success in the classroom.

A learning coach can help develop a student's ability to express themselves verbally and nonverbally by encouraging positive behaviors through learning communication techniques (MacKie, D., 2016). Students can also be trained to express themselves through written work and discussions, including presentations.

An instructor can use specific techniques, such as anti-stress strategies, authentic communication, and listening techniques, to help students become more comfortable with the process of direct communication. This can help increase motivation and confidence, in addition to developing expressiveness.

To help adolescents feel more comfortable and present their ideas better, coaching can help them adapt more easily to social situations, manage their emotions, express themselves assertively, and listen actively (Grant, AM, 2014). This can also help develop problem-solving skills.

The process of understanding tasks is extremely important in pre-university education, for several reasons: understanding tasks contributes to improving student performance, stimulates critical thinking and improves communication skills (Clutterbuck, D., 2005). Also, understanding tasks allows students to develop their creativity and maximize their potential (Cardoso, MLAP; Ramos, LH; D'Innocenzo, M., 2014).

In addition, understanding work tasks leads to the validation of the role of learning in recording positive outcomes in school by preparing students for real life and for professional experience that will help them develop in their future careers (Leedham, M., & Parsloe, E., 2017).

Because understanding the tasks is essential for student success, high school teachers should ensure that students understand the instructions and assignments. This can be accomplished by providing detailed explanations of what students will learn, providing assistance when needed, holding students accountable, and preparing for group discussions (Clutterbuck, D., 2004). Teachers should also approach the tasks and instructions

Social Economic Debates
Volume 14, Issue 2, 2025
ISSN 2360-1973; ISSN-L 2248-3837

from the student's perspective, using leading questions to gauge students' level of understanding of their responsibilities.

Understanding assignments in pre-university education is essential because they provide the framework for academic progress. Each assignment provides students with the opportunity to learn and experience important concepts related to the subject. Assignments help students understand and apply what they are learning to make significant progress in understanding the subject they are studying (Campos, Teodoro Malta; Nunes Pinto, 2012).

The process of intellectual stimulation and practicing tasks leads to improved cognitive skills and motivation of students in the learning process, contributing to the transformation of information into knowledge used for solving problems and tests. This can help to consolidate grades and obtain higher qualifications (Linder, PS, 2010).

Work assignments challenge students to think critically and implement creative strategies to meet work requirements. This helps students make connections between concepts and the nature of tasks assigned by teachers to achieve learning outcomes by practicing cooperation, teamwork, decision-making, and monitoring the use of educational resources to achieve expected outcomes (Grant, AM, 2014).

The correct understanding and application of work tasks in pre-university education are essential for the process of developing students' cognitive skills, improving the social and communication component through teamwork, necessary for the success of future learning paths (Giglio, L., Diamante, T. and Urban, JM, 1998). They also provide students with the opportunity to investigate and understand concepts and ideas related to theories, subjects, activities and tasks, preparing students for lessons, tests, competitions, practical works and exams, facilitating student-teacher interaction and providing knowledge and skills adaptable to society (Denzin, NK, & Lincoln, YS, 2012).

Verbal and nonverbal communication encourages students to participate in discussions, to take an active role in the process of transmitting information, while removing communication barriers and providing students with the opportunity to express themselves freely.

The task comprehension competence, on the other hand, facilitates the understanding of teachers' instructions and can train students to develop their logical thinking and problem-solving skills (Du Toit, A., 2014). This competence stimulates students to focus, be organized and be more responsible, which contributes to better results in pre-university education by increasing motivation and performance.

Verbal communication is essential in pre-university education, contributing to educating and motivating students to achieve positive results in the educational act by facilitating free and direct discussions in relation to their areas of interest, the problems they have and the possibility of using their knowledge to solve them (Grant, AM, 2012). Appropriate and correct language is also important to inspire student behavior.

Coaching can be used to ensure that students develop their skills. Teachers typically have to make many compromises in the classroom to teach students in a participatory manner, beyond the rigors of an educational curriculum. At the same time, a teacher should also bring a coaching component to give students a different

Social Economic Debates
Volume 14, Issue 2, 2025
ISSN 2360-1973; ISSN-L 2248-3837

perspective on how the learning process plays an active role in their lives by making them aware of how to use the knowledge they have acquired to achieve long-term success (Mercer & Fisher, 1993).

Coaching supports the way to better understand the needs of others, to use words to convey a concrete message, with addressability, to consider the points of view of others and to develop the ability to support one's point of view through a carefully constructed dialogue (Greif, S., 2013). This can include practicing listening, understanding and responding skills, as well as taking responsibility for one's own expressions (Grief, S., 2017). It can also include developing a deep awareness of how one relates to others and how one expresses one's feelings.

Coaching, in the process of developing communication skills in pre-university education, aims to help students identify, use and improve verbal and non-verbal skills for success in school and in life. Through the coaching that teachers provide, students develop their skills to communicate through speaking, writing, listening, reading and interpreting questions and answers (Gray, DE, 2006). This is especially important in the school environment where students need to express themselves correctly and understand the language used in various situations (Lozano Correa, LJ, 2008). Through the exercises and activities within the coaching, students begin to feel safe and comfortable in any communication situation and to express themselves with more warmth and more freedom. This approach also helps students develop listening and understanding skills to be able to express their opinions appropriately and make decisions based on specific understandings of the different societal contexts they may find themselves in. This communication skill can also help them connect and achieve socially, and this opportunity can have a lasting effect on their professional success (Liston-Smith, J., 2008).

Coaching can help people understand their core tasks by providing the support, guidance, and feedback they need to identify priorities, define goals, develop skills, and establish action plans. Coaching insights and feedback will help people understand more clearly what is needed to succeed in their core tasks and develop specific skills to achieve them (Leedham, M., & Parsloe, E., 2017). Coaching also provides direction, motivation, and support in understanding their core tasks, which can help speed up the process and achieve positive results.

Coaching is a learning-centered instructional method in which mentors or teachers guide their students to explore behaviors, skills, and abilities that help them understand the topics taught. Coaching in pre-university education provides teachers with new and effective tools to assist students in creating critical perspective, developing learning skills, solving problems, and understanding the complexity of tasks. Through coaching, students receive the support and motivation necessary to understand the topics and tasks taught and to enjoy a high-quality learning process (Du Toit and Reissner, 2012).

Conclusions

Although the term coaching is relatively new in the Romanian educational vocabulary, many of its principles and techniques are already used intuitively by managers and teachers. Solution-oriented questions, constructive feedback, active listening, stimulating student autonomy and responsibility, or supporting staff professional development are practices that are frequently found in school activity and that can be integrated into a coherent model of educational leadership based on coaching.

Social Economic Debates
Volume 14, Issue 2, 2025
ISSN 2360-1973; ISSN-L 2248-3837

In a period when change is the only constant, and institutional success increasingly depends on the ability of organizations to learn and adapt, coaching can become one of the essential tools of the modern school manager. From this perspective, this research aims to contribute both to the theoretical development of the field of educational management, and to the identification of practical solutions capable of supporting the evolution and modernization of pre-university educational institutions in Romania.

Any learning approach requires the assumption of a partnership attitude between teachers and students that generates individual performance and motivation for teamwork. The transition from learning for grades to learning for the development of skills and abilities is translated into an educational approach assumed and turned into an action plan with responsibilities and deadlines. This individual development plan can lead to long-term results as the educational path from general training to personalized training and conceptualized in learning objectives.

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Social Economic Debates
Volume 14, Issue 2, 2025
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