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Vilmos Vass: The Soul of Pedagogy – Stories from the World of Teaching

The Human Dimensions of the Teaching Profession



One of the constant challenges in the field of pedagogical literature is how to link the theoretical findings of educational science with the day-to-day experiences of teachers. A considerable amount of publications on education lean either toward theoretical approaches or practical methodologies, while we more rarely encounter works that focus on the human, personal, and professional dimensions of pedagogical activity.

In this regard, Vilmos Vass's *The Soul of Pedagogy* is a unique endeavour: a reflective work on pedagogy that approaches the essence of pedagogy through the lens of human relationships, professional self-awareness and a commitment to teaching. One of the most valuable aspects of the book is that it interprets pedagogy not merely as a professional task or institutional practice but as a vocation centered on the individual. The author consistently argues that the effectiveness of teaching is not merely a matter of subject knowledge or methodological preparedness, but is closely linked to the character, authenticity, and interpersonal skills of the educator. This perspective runs through the entire volume and promotes a set of values that form one of the most important foundations of contemporary pedagogical thought.

This work is particularly remarkable for not portraying pedagogical knowledge solely as a theoretical construct. Vilmos Vass considers professional experience, real-life situations and the reflections associated with them as legitimate sources of insight into pedagogy. The book's narrative structure allows the reader not only to encounter theoretical statements but also to gain a glimpse into the thought processes that shape a teacher's identity. This approach is particularly valuable from the perspective of professional development as it draws attention to narrative and reflective thinking.

One of the book's most noteworthy strengths is its emphasis on self-reflection. The author does not offer ready-made answers to the complex questions of pedagogy, but rather opens up a space for reflection in which the reader can reinterpret their own professional experiences. Teaching is presented here not as a body of fixed knowledge, but as a continuous process of learning and development. This approach aligns with the modern concept of being a reflective teacher, according to which one of

the most important elements of professional competence is the ability to critically analyze one's own practices.

Another significant contribution of this volume is its emphasis on the prominent role of pedagogical and human values. Vilmos Vass persuasively points out that pedagogy is founded on trust, acceptance, and mutual respect. The teacher–student relationship is not merely a framework for the transfer of knowledge, but is in itself a factor in shaping one's personality. The author's line of reasoning is particularly timely in a 21st-century educational environment, where, alongside technological advancement and digitization, the preservation and development of human relationships are becoming an increasingly important issue. This volume serves as a reminder that the essential elements of pedagogy are still rooted in human encounters. The book's language reflects scholarly sophistication, while at the same time remains accessible and direct.

The author's distinctive style also deserves special mention. Vilmos Vass's writing style is characterized by subtle, low-key humor, self-reflective cheerfulness, and a direct tone, which naturally weaves its way through the academic line of reasoning. This humor is not self-serving; rather, it illuminates the human side of pedagogical situations, eases the tension of scholarly discourse, and helps to ensure that the reader not only interprets but also experiences the presented experiences. The author is able to discuss even complex pedagogical issues in a clear and accessible manner.

As a result, this volume is aimed simultaneously at active teachers, students enrolled in teacher training programs, and a broader professional audience interested in pedagogy. The text's professional credibility is further strengthened by the decades of experience that have shaped the author's ideas. The book's role in conveying values deserves special mention. It not only addresses the day-to-day issues of teaching but also commits to fundamental human and professional values such as responsibility, openness, curiosity, cooperation, and leading by personal example. These values are not presented in a declarative manner, but rather emerge naturally from the author's train of thought and stories. The significance of this volume also lies in the fact that it brings the human dimensions – which are often overlooked in pedagogical discourse – into the spotlight. While today's educational systems are in many cases dominated by the concepts of measurability, effectiveness, and performance, Vilmos Vass's work reminds us that the essence of pedagogy cannot be captured solely through objective indicators. The true value of pedagogical work is often best seen in the long-term effects that unfold as a result of an inspiring teacher-student relationship.

In summary, it can be said that *The Soul of Pedagogy* is an important volume that fills a gap in contemporary pedagogical narratives. The book is not merely a compilation of professional experiences, but also an authentic and uncompromising statement in support of the teaching profession. Its greatest value lies in placing the individual back at the center of pedagogy and highlighting that the true power of pedagogy is in personal relationships, professional integrity, and human awareness. Vilmos Vass's work is a read that not only encourages further thinking but also reinforces the reader's conviction that, despite all changing circumstances, pedagogy remains fundamentally a people-centered vocation. For this very reason, the book is a valuable read for all those who view the teaching profession not merely as a job, but as an activity that shapes character and builds community.