

INTRODUCING NEW EDUCATION TYPES: TEACHERS' OPINIONS ON OUTDOOR EDUCATION

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Abstract: *In our modern society, there is a continuous development. This development requires new approach in the educational field. In order to fulfill the progressive need that society is bringing towards the formal and non-formal educational fields, teachers have to be ready to continuously learn and develop themselves. The ideal situation would be that educational institutes overcome this need, before these even appear. This mean that teachers have to always be a step before society and to prepare competent individuals, ready to integrate in the society and develop and change, mostly adapt in every situation, completing its needs efficiently. One of the most effective ways of doing this is to permanently develop, learn and participate to classes where they can learn about new methods and even new education types, so that ultimately they can apply them in their classes. In this work, we would like to present a study on the situation of one new education type, or educational method as it is used by the group of analysis, which is outdoor education, and also to present the perceptions and actual knowledge of a number of teachers from Arad. The main method used was the questionnaire and there were 117 preschool and primary school teachers that responded, also a smaller number of sociologists, psychologists and teachers that work in the field of special education.*

Key words: *outdoor education; new education types; new learning methods; perceptions of teachers;*

Introduction

The society we live in is constantly changing. Generations of people come and go, and society's demands are becoming more and more numerous. A modern educational system is therefore under the pressure to meet these social requirements, and to prepare young, competent, autonomous, capable people to make decisions and adapt easily to society. New times demand new people, and they must be trained in an open educational system to be one step ahead of its demands.

Rapid social development, technology, speed, and increased lifestyle add to the need for quality, pupil-centered education based on their needs and interests. This implies the more rigorous training of teachers, the use of new learning methods and to approach things differently to develop competences that go beyond the barriers known to date. Learning to learn, learning to be, competence to make decisions for oneself and others, communication, sharing, independence, collaboration, autonomy, innovation, initiative, creativity have become a 21st century must-haves. Starting from these needs, and from the constant interest of future teachers in the development of their knowledge on new education types, the idea of this brief research has started.

Theoretical foundation

We would like to start this work, by presenting a few explanations on the main topics that we are going to discuss during this research. First of all, there is the situation of modern learning approaches. If in the past, there was only the single discipline scheme, today teaching and learning activities have developed significantly into what we call interdisciplinary and integrated learning. The interdisciplinary approach appeared as a reaction to the disintegration of the modern intellectual space with the aim of preserving the global character of the intellect. Interdisciplinary approach, identifies an environmental component for the organization of knowledge and involves the development of a knowledge system that is at the intersection of several areas of knowledge and skills to use this knowledge for new acquisitions to solve complex situations. (Pletea, 2009)

Integrated knowledge delivery refers to an ideal or an integrator of principle that crosses the boundaries between scientific discipline and knowledge pooling according to the new perspective. For example, the principle of encoding information can group knowledge of genetics, physics, chemistry, computer science, linguistics, sociology, etc. to analyze information, codes, communication or information processing in the biological, physical, social and technological fields. Integrated content delivery presents concepts and principles so as to highlight the unity of scientific thinking. The current pedagogical literature describes curricular integration as an innovative way of designing a curriculum that involves the synthesis and didactic organization of content in different fields of knowledge so as to ensure that pupils acquire a coherent, unified picture of the real world. The term “integrated curriculum” suggests the correlation of content where the starting point is most often the end, according to which all the other components of the educational process are chosen. From a curricular point of view, integration means organizing and linking school subjects in order to avoid their traditional isolation. Integration also means

the process and outcome it, by which the student interprets the content being transmitted from his life experience and from the knowledge he has already mastered. (Herlo, 2004)

The levels of curricular integration are as it follows:

Monodisciplinaryity is centered on independent study subjects, promoting the supremacy of formal disciplines.

Multidisciplinaryity refers to the situation where a theme belonging to a certain field is subject to analysis from the perspective of several disciplines, the latter retaining its structure unaltered and remaining independent of one another.

Interdisciplinarity implies an intersection of the different disciplinary areas, as a result of this intersection, new objects of study may be born. (Nicolescu, 1996)

Transdisciplinarity is described as a form of intertwining more disciplines and coordinating research so that it can lead, through specialization, to the emergence of a new area of knowledge. In the context of school learning, the transdisciplinary approach is most often from the perspective of a new topic of study. (Bocoş, 2007)

Directions

One specific direction in this case, could be the introduction in schools of new education types. This is proper and benefic because not just that respects the curricular integration levels, but also prepares the students in practical ways for the life and society that is ahead of them. The idea of new educations aims to build on principles of a unique pedagogical society and an educational environment. Being aware of the problems and values of today's society, humanity know how to formulate problem-solving strategies by training the values within which it exists. The most important type it is the strategy that makes the change of mentality. The most important type of strategy is the one that realizes the change of mentality. And it is known that any change in mentality occurs effectively and globally through the transformative action of education, although the influence is not excluded either on the mentality exerted by the economic, political and social, etc. Understood in the most developed sense of this notion, education is omnipresent (so it affects the economic, political, social, etc.), universal, imminent to any individual and social group, as it influences any change in economic, political and social terms by changing the mentality of those who cause change in these areas. And it is knew that any change in mentality occurs effectively and globally through the transformative action of education. In this sense, we believe the model new education, called New Education, is of overwhelming importance. (Butnari, 2017)

New education type is the approach of today's educational society, a suite of strategies and general objectives responding to the imperatives indicated by the problems of today's society, and not educational concepts or theories about educational content. There are several kinds of educational subjects that can be introduced in schools, some of them are listed as it follows:

- Environmental education;
- Education for Change and Development;
- Education for technology and progress;
- Education towards the media;
- Demographic education;
- Education for Peace and Cooperation;
- Education for Democracy;
- Modern health education;
- Outdoor education;
- Economic education;
- Education for family;
- Education for tolerance;
- Intercultural education.

The list can continue, with other types that teachers can use in their classrooms for personal and social development of the students, these subjects being introduced in the National Curriculum or even in the school's curriculum, as optional subjects. Knowing the benefits of introducing these subject into the weekly routine of children of all ages can be even more motivating.

Recent perspectives

We wanted to analyze, during this study, only one aspect of those enumerated above. We have chosen one that had brought lots of attention lately in the educational area: outdoor education.

Although there are a multitude of activities through which the educational process can take place, too few teachers choose to use and adapt outdoor activities to their daily routine. Outdoor games as well as learning in the natural environment have ancestral origins around the globe. In educational units of the fundamental procurement cycle, nature was seen as a "raison d'être" and kindergartens and schools always had a secured outer space (Bilton, 2010). Nature has always been an environment conducive to learning, addressing all children's needs: social, emotional, psychic, linguistic and cognitive. This environment should be available daily through activities, not just in small ages, but throughout the years of study. This does not necessarily mean adapting the whole curriculum so that it can only be

done in the form of outdoor activities, but rather the introduction of such hours as a complement to classroom activities. The external environment is the space that offers freedom and time to work on the students' current interests. After long-term observation of the activity of young children, it has been shown that they are not limited in their activity by the weather conditions. Regardless of outside weather, they have a strong desire to spend time in nature even in poorly equipped areas, having a natural predisposition to find outdoor activities. Whether children are rebellious or instinctively aware of the following: the outdoor environment is indeed a natural area of teaching-learning, one in which most children feel strong and able to learn by discovery. Those children who have been involved at least once in outdoor activities are telling their experience with many smiles and joy. Outdoor learning activities most often involved using the resources available at that time, so if nothing was available, the children used leaves, trees and other materials in nature. The creativity of those involved is a great inspiration because most games are universal, involving so many aspects of development.

Education outside the classroom describes school learning through curriculum, other than that of a class of students sitting in a room with a teacher and using only books. It includes field biology research, insect searches in the school garden as well as indoor activities such as observing stock management from a local store or visiting a museum. It is a concept that is currently enjoying a renewal due to the awareness of its benefits in terms of a more active lifestyle. He has been recognized as bringing history and art to life, developing social skills, and clearly enhancing geography and science.

Outdoor education is not time spent outside, as it was once thought, and no relaxation or play, nor does it refer to leisure activities as it is still believed. As its name implies, it is about learning and involves learning activities, it is a way of education, it can often involve residential or travel experiences in which students participate in a variety of adventurous challenges but must have as their primary goal: learning. The purpose of outdoor education is therefore not external activity but multilateral learning. For example, an educator can learn how to overcome adversity, work with others, and develop a deeper relationship with nature, with peers and with himself. Some specialists say education for adventures is outdoor education. I would say that it is just a component of outdoor education as well as ecological education. Indeed, it helps to develop interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, but they do not represent outdoor education, but it complements it. To end all the definitions discussed here, outdoor education is a cultural construction that addresses and applies differently

from one system to another. It is a type of education for social, personal and environmental development. (Higgins, 2002)

Outdoor learning is based on the involvement of all senses: seeing, hearing, taste, smell, intuition and touch as well as the involvement of the three areas of learning: cognitive, affective and motoric (Lewis, 1975), outdoor education calls for the use of senses for observation and perception. The abstract approach of the disciplines is completely replaced by the sensory, the children will use their ears, eyes, and nose and muscles externally, and will learn through this process (Mand, 1967). Science, skills and attitudes are requirements that will be developed in outdoor programs (Ford, 1980)

From the point of view of the contemporary approach, it can be said that public schools make great efforts to introduce in the curriculum dimensions of learning with strong student accents, and its involvement in decision-making and changing the school and community environment. There are clear links between the local community and outdoor learning, so the key steps of the concept of active citizenship include the requirement for students to use their imagination, to consider, besides their own experiences and the experiences of others, to think, express, explain and critically assess the opinions of others and, above all, develop and learn freely in a space as close to nature as possible to discovering and experimenting. It is precisely because of these factors that contemporary school is the mirroring of the school of the future, and schools centered in the future are of interest in content tailored to pupils' needs and curiosities, the introduction of new learning methods and the increased potential of school spaces to turn into true outdoor learning sites classrooms of the future. Contemporary education must have as its main concern the search for new ways to create inspired buildings that can easily adapt to the educational and technological changes that emerge (DfES, 2003f, p. Iii). More and more indoor sports schools are also used outside sports classes, and more and more outdoor areas of the school are refurbished and rethought in the spirit of their use as an educational environment, and the yards of schools are the second most used space to run educational activities.

Research

Recent research highlights the great benefits of outdoor education, with all its components. For example, various outdoor activities can be combined with adventures or excursions, even with camping. The relationship between students engaged in outdoor learning activities and their teachers is improving, and as a result, many cultural links are suddenly available. Various health benefits have been observed, highlighted by many physicians, physical and mental benefits. During these activities, children

develop managerial skills and competences, find positive models, and learn to develop leadership opportunities, search for individual methods of personal development and, especially from a social point of view, develop friendship relationships, connect with each other and learn from each other. Through these activities, there is great opportunity to learn responsibility and independence, to enhance inter and intra-personal skills, to be actively involved, to solve problems and to develop decision-making abilities.

During this study, we wanted to see the actual knowledge and mostly the openness of preschool and primary school teachers about outdoor education and its practical implementation as a category of new education in everyday routine of children. The analysis of the real and objective situation of the knowledge and application of the outdoor education method at the preschool and school level was made in Arad County, in different educational fields. At this stage, a teacher's questionnaire was applied to show the level of knowledge on the given method, the degree of use, the way of use, the teachers' opinions on some aspects of knowledge and application of outdoor education, enthusiasm, effectiveness, participation, introduction of the method in the curriculum and daily routine of students.

Analysis of the results

Therefore, following the processing of collected statistical data, the following were observed:

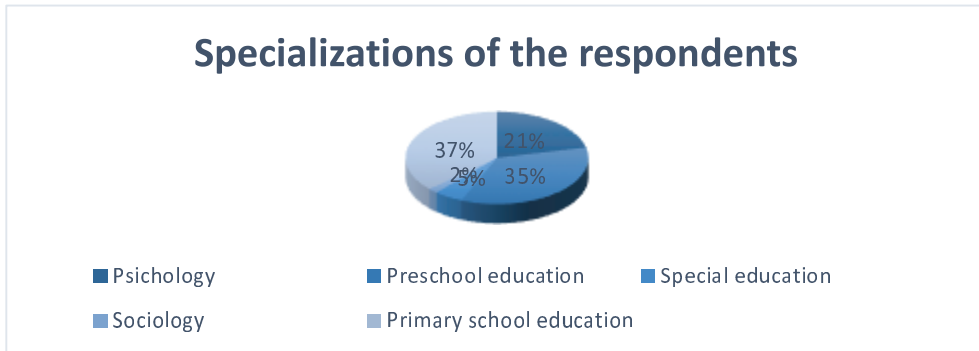
1. 117 people responded to the questionnaire. Of these, gender distribution was: 16 males and 101 females.

2. The average age of the respondents is 37 years, the minimum age being 20 years and the maximum age of the respondents is 66 years. Most respondents are between the ages of 25 and 30.

3. The age of the respondents is an important element in the analysis, as it can be a real indicator compared to other variables. There are, therefore, 57 people who are under ten years of age in education, and another 38 of the respondents have an average age of between 10 and 20 years. Only 18 percent of respondents are in high age, over 20 years in education. Of the respondents, there are only 2 under the age of one and four people over the age of 40 in education.

4. As regards the specialization of the teachers who answered the questionnaire, it can be said that it is varied. We consider this positive because at this stage of the preliminary study, we are interested in the real situation in which outdoor education is practiced in the educational units from Arad, at any level, radiographing the whole system, then we can get closer to what is interested in private. This is necessary because good practices may or may not have continuity with the evolution towards higher cycles. At the same time, it is important to know whether the use of outdoor

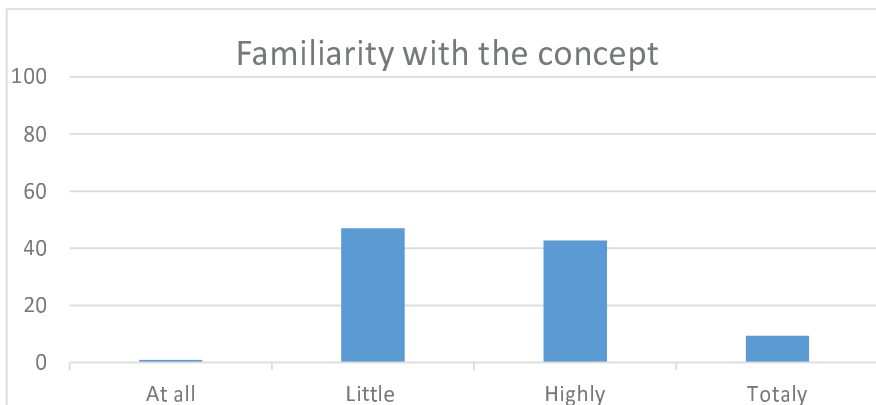
education is easier or not at the same time as advancing to higher classes, facilitated by the approach used, the style of the teaching staff, their collaboration or even their lack of cooperation at higher levels. The situation of specializations appears in the following chart:



It can be seen from the chart that the percentage of respondents in the area of interest is the highest. More than half of respondents belong to the environment most interested in the study. We will not neglect the answers of those in areas such as sociology, psychology or even special education.

5. The next variable to be analyzed is the environment in which the respondents are working. During the analysis, the correlation of this variable with others is of great interest to the study. We want to find out if there is any link between the teaching environment and the time spent on outdoor activities or whether this variable affects in some way the other educational routines. Teacher environments were of two types, urban and rural, and no significant differences in this variable could be observed. Of the 117 respondents, 64 work in the urban area and 53 in the rural area.

6. He was very interested in the level of familiarity with the concept of education outside the classroom and the answers appear in the following diagram:



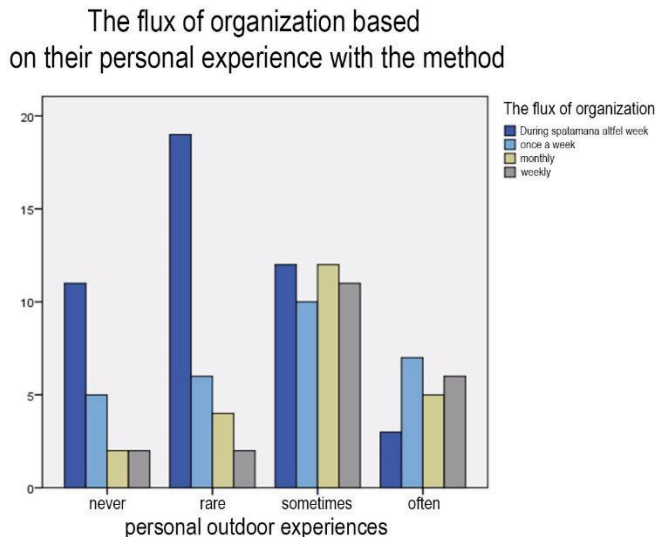
After analyzing these results, it can be said that most respondents believe that they know the concept of outdoor education to some extent. Following the training of teachers in this respect, the respondents admitted that they had erroneous information and knowledge about the concept and what this type of education implies. One person considered that they did not know the concept at all, and only 11 people felt they were fully familiar with it.

7. Another variable to be analyzed would be the way it came into contact with this concept. The results of the preliminary study show that most respondents came to know the concept through the Internet or through training courses or pedagogical circles. This results reveals the leadership's concern regarding the introduction of new concepts in formal education systems in Romania, and especially the willingness of teachers to evolve and modernize personal activity in the classroom, providing new opportunities for students to develop. A smaller number of teachers claim to have come into contact with the concept through a specialist book or journal, which reveals the need for research in this area. Only 3 people said that the television would have provided information on the subject.

8. The next variable was considered important because it reveals information about where Arad teachers place, as a concept, outdoor education. The importance attached to this concept also shows the level of accountability that they feel they have regarding the topic. The largest percentage of respondents believe that outdoor education is a new learning method. This could mean that it could easily adapt to classroom activities by introducing outdoor activities into the classroom's daily routine. The methods are easily accessible and can be used at any time of activity or day. A similar percentage considers outdoor education as a type of non-formal education. It can be inferred, therefore, that these respondents are not concerned with introducing outdoor activities into daily routines because they place it in an educational area that relieves them of responsibility, being responsible only for the activities carried out in formal education. One interesting thing could be the rigidity of the school curriculum, which would make the use of the method inaccessible during class hours. A small number of respondents place outdoor education in extracurricular activities or just the time spent in nature. This reveals that they attach little importance to the concept and place it in the sphere of choice or relaxation.

9. When asked about outdoor education experiences, an equal number of respondents checked that they had such experiences, being personally involved, never or often. The vast majority of respondents checked the option rarely or sometimes. This reveals that a teacher who is not involved in a personal experience with this concept cannot in turn show interest in organizing or involving the class with whom he works. This also results from

the comparison of the variable with the one in which they are asked about how often they organize or involve students in such activities.

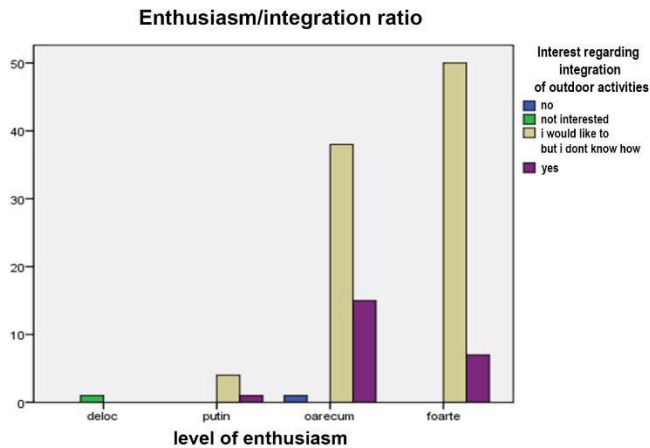


The chart shows that those teachers who have experienced outdoor activities on a regular stream are also those who use this type of activity most often. The other week is the most common time when this method is practiced. Most often, outdoor education with related activities is used in all its forms by teachers who have been continuously exposed to this type of activity. This may mean giving a high importance and due to the beneficial effects observed by the teachers by their personal participation in outdoor activities.

10. The following variable analyzes the permissiveness of teachers related to the time spent on children in kind. This variable measures their openness to extend the classroom in nature, the external environment or even the school yard. This is important because if there is no open time for students to spend outside, there will be no openness to organizing outdoor activities. The teacher may observe the behavior of the students while they are exposed to the outside environment, even during breaks or play. Interactions that develop between them can be valuable indicators of the level, communication, strengths or weaknesses of the group. These indices provide new ways for group management that will lead to better group homogeneity and better school results. Teachers who maintain that the whole activity is carried out only indoors, showing inflexibility in the organization of the premises, usually prohibiting and using breaks in the outer space, invoking health reasons or even the inadmissibility of the parents. According to this study, the results are shocking: the highest percentage of teachers allow less than 30 minutes for students to spend in the open. This figure is

far too low in primary and preschool education, where learning should be mobile, interactive, experimental, and immediate interaction with the environment. An equal number of teachers give 1, 2 or 3 hours a week in the outdoor environment. This may represent that educational systems are based on theory and less on experiential education.

11. Another variable underlying the analysis was the integration of outdoor activities into our own educational routine, which we analyzed in accordance with the enthusiasm in organizing such activities. The results are presented as follows in the following graph:



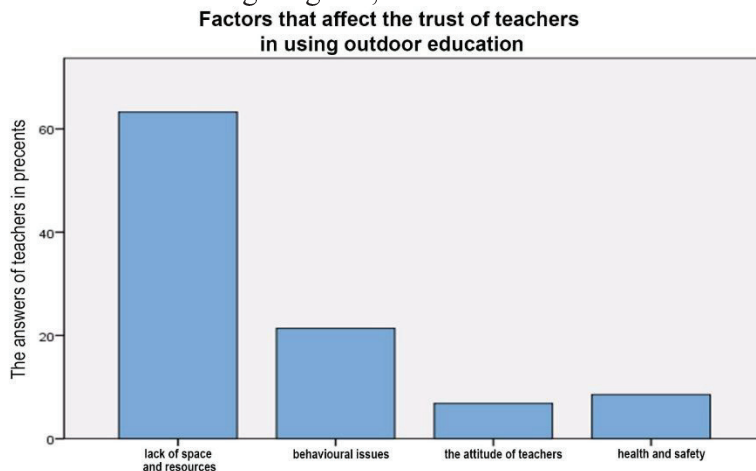
The results show that there are no enthusiastic or disinterested teachers in integrating outdoor activities into the activities they organize. At the same time, it appears that the majority of teachers who are enthusiastic about the method would like to integrate it, but they do not know how to do it. The same is the percentage for those who are somewhat or very interested, want to integrate it into daily activities. This result could mean that there is openness among respondents about more method-related information and especially about how to put into practice or adapt formal education, but there are no courses to support this initiative.

12. The next variable measures the interest in attending activities, personal training courses. More than half of respondents say they are interested in outdoor education. These are closely followed by almost 40% of people who are very interested in developing in this direction. This must be a motive for the inspectorate, who can use the handiest way to address the outdoor theme, under the pedagogical circles. This result also denotes the fact that teachers really want to develop and bring something new to classroom work.

13. The following two variables test the confidence level of the method following two distinct criteria: the level of knowledge assimilation and the level of cross-curricular skills and life skills. On average, teachers

are more confident that the outdoor method develops transversal skills and life skills, rather than helping to assimilate content and theoretical information. This may mean that the method is given the presumption of a modern method of experiential learning that develops the individual from a multilateral perspective and not only from the point of view of assimilation of information that may or may not be practiced in the course of time. In both cases, teachers give great confidence to the method in both senses.

14. In the following, we will analyze the responses to the variable that puts in the foreground the factors that affect the respondents' trust in outdoor use. Among those listed are health and safety issues, their own attitude related to the method, behavioral problems of the group that could jeopardize the normal or optimal performance of the activity and, last but not least, the lack of space and resources. Analyzing the results, the following facts are shown in the following diagram, as follows:



The level of trust is strongly affected by the lack of spaces or resources. It is true that the outdoor method mainly uses resources that are found in nature or in the external environment, whether natural elements or even buildings and different areas that become learning tools. The natural elements can be combined with the elements in the class, complementing each other to make the results as truthful as possible. Even though these facts are known, and together make the method available anytime, anywhere, teacher concerns are grounded in space and accessibility to spaces, as well as the flexibility to leave the classroom to provide useful learning experiences and without danger. Responding to this variable alerts the need to modernize educational spaces by making them more efficient, and outer spaces become overlays in the classroom, with the two spaces easily interchanging. Secondly among the factors affecting teachers' confidence are the group's behavioral problems. Here we can say that this is due to the lack of safety of the teaching staff on the group, or even the management problems of the

group of students. It is absurd to say that a teacher who does not trust that he can control the group of students in the external environment can do it internally. Research shows that in the external environment there are fewer pressure factors on students than just learning faster and more efficiently, but they connect with self, with nature and with the group, and so most negative or aggressive behavior behaves solve by itself. Indeed, it is necessary to establish clear rules and limits in which each student must fit, but these are certainly not as limited or restricted as those in the classroom. Health and safety are the elements of the disruptive factors and the personal attitude of the teachers or, more precisely, the prejudices, the availability or the values that guide them are also the criteria for using the method.

15. Another interesting discussion starts from another factor that often arises in educational systems, which is concerned both with pedagogues, academics, teachers, specialists and parents alike, namely the media impact on learning and the extent to which exposure to these media would influence spending leisure time or even time spent on education in the external environment. The results are as follows: most respondents consider that exposure to media products negatively affects participation in outdoor education activities. Research shows that students are finding themselves harder in the reality of the palpable world than in the virtual world, and are increasingly moving away from everything that is nature, experiential learning, fresh air, problem situations that the external environment and where decision-making and cooperation are key elements. Studies show that media can be incorporated into outdoor activities, which would motivate students to participate in these activities. For example, the camera or smart phones, outdoor education applications clearly enhance outdoor activities and the satisfaction of the participants.

16. The last two variables analyzed are directly related to the perception of respondents about the staff who should conduct outdoor activities in formal education. The answer to the question that outdoor learning can be organized by the class teacher or not, the answers were: over 80% think that the time teacher can organize outdoor activities, around 15% claim that a teacher can organize outdoor learning activities are not necessarily responsible for this, and a number of two respondents believe that the time teacher cannot organize such activities. The last analyzed variable tests whether the outdoor education activities should only be done by specialists in extracurricular education or teachers who have been formed or not. The answers were as follows: over half of respondents believe that these activities should not be carried out exclusively by qualified staff, and an almost equal number of respondents believe that these activities should be done by specialized teachers in this respect. This result may suggest the need for teachers to improve in this area to be sure of the qualifications gained in

this field and to remove any doubts or questions. The vast majority of teachers believe, however, that at the method level, any teacher should be able to adapt the method to their own class, according to the curriculum and curriculum given.

Intervention

The intervention consisted in a training, which lasted three days, it took place in an outdoor area, close to the city of Arad, and it had grouped a number of 18 teachers. There, the participants could get involved directly in outdoor education activities and participate at creating new ones based on the curriculum of different levels and classes. At the end, there was a discussion forum, where they could ask further questions and information on the topic. It was a fruitful experience, which led to the implementation and integration of outdoor activities as new education type in different classes belonging to the city of Arad.

Conclusions

Outdoor education is often given too little, even insignificant value. As such, we believe it deserves to criticize the field and focus more closely on its value and importance. The question is critically whether open-air education is a discipline or not, and if the answer is positive then how it can be treated as a discipline in education. Outdoor education is seen and treated as a method, rather than a totally independent discipline, and used in education by transforming and adapting curricular content so that they can meet the same procurement goals and achieve the same goals, but achieving to differ: to be more interactive, easier to assimilate, more fun, more efficient, faster and why not, to represent real learning experiences. Outdoor learning contributes to formal education and is compatible with school practice and objectives.

The findings and ideas that emerged during the research are related to the recent literature on educational reform, which encourages teachers to collaborate in curriculum review, work environment improvement, teaching professionalization, and local education policy development. It is expected that the idea of using nature as a context of learning and developing environmental consciousness will be increasingly important in the future challenges of education, and that outdoor education can be included in the curriculum as a pedagogical and didactic, holistic method that maintains motivation and welfare in the educational environment. It has already been proven that especially for pupils with special needs, it can be implemented as a rehabilitation method without cost or massive resources. (Potter, Dyment, 2016)

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