

## **ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCES TRAINING THROUGH PEDAGOGY OF PRIMARY AND PRESCHOOL SPECIALIZATION'S CURRICULUM - ANALYSES AND DIRECTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT**

Claudiu Marian BUNĂIAȘU  
University of Craiova, Romania

### **Abstract**

*Students' entrepreneurial skills training from Primary and Preschool Pedagogy specialization is a strategic direction for curriculum development in the process of initial training, justified by the results of substantial research in the field of European curriculum. With reference to this premise, and on some analysis on the correlation between the desirable skills of graduates, necessary to facilitate entrepreneurial learning and curriculum for initial training process, we appreciated the legitimacy and desirability of a research study on the development of entrepreneurship education curriculum in the Primary and Preschool Pedagogy specialization's students. The article is structured in three dimensions: a) the theoretical foundation with reference to specific entrepreneurial skills training in professionalizing by initial undergraduate studies, and deepen the training by graduating Masters programs in science education; b) the research part, focused on presenting the process and the results of a study analyzing the views and curricular preferences of subjects (students, University didactic staff, primary and preschool teachers); c) assertion of several curriculum development directions, supported theoretically in agreement with the results of research and according to their methodological concepts. Conclusions of the article converge to the idea of focus on curricular re-dimensioning on desirable entrepreneurial competences components and on their relevance for facilitating entrepreneurial learning in preschool and early childhood education.*

**KEYWORDS:** entrepreneurial competences, initial professionalization curriculum, entrepreneurial learning in preschool and early childhood education, metacognitive strategies in entrepreneurship education.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The subject regarding entrepreneurial competences represents an essential component of the European citizen's desirable profile, formed in the spirit of European conscience's key values. The documents of European educational policies promote social and procedural values of the civic spirit and entrepreneurship regarding the plan of general finalities, as well as the plan of

the curriculum concerning educational system's levels or adults' training programs.

A comparative analysis of integrating civic and entrepreneurial competences with the primary education curriculum as part of the European Union, accomplished by the European Commission, reveals different curricular structures and approach levels. According to the European Commission's report – *Developing key competences as part of European schools: political challenges and opportunities*, as far as the Romanian curriculum is regarded, the spirit of initiative and entrepreneurship is being poorly represented, with concern to the curricular structures taken into account regarding the introduction of transverse competences: the cross-curricular level, integration as part of school disciplines, through separate disciplines [1]. Given this finding, education specialists and decision factors are concerned with identifying and promoting curricular solutions in order to introduce entrepreneurial competences especially as part of the primary education curriculum. Considering the introduction of transverse competences at this level, the process of curricular organization implies:

- re-dimensioning the national curriculum with regard to these categories of competences, by introducing distinct disciplines or structures integrated as part of the actual disciplines;
- increasing the percentage of cross-curricular homework as part of the nucleus curriculum or the one at the school's decision.

A basic premise of the relation between these reorganizations of the curriculum and the results expected as part of the entrepreneurial education, is represented by teachers' specific and methodological competences with regard to planning and managing the implementation of the curricular structures, which promote the spirit of initiative and entrepreneurship. For these reasons, we appreciate the legitimacy and opportunity of approaches concerning the curricular re-dimensions of the didactic career's training process, with regard to developing the entrepreneurial competences as part of the specialization Pedagogy of primary and pre-school education – bachelor's degree cycle, as well as part of master programs, which provide a thoroughgoing study or the professionalization in accordance with European models.

The basic components of initiative and entrepreneurship as key competences, relevant for the subject approached, are as follows [2]: a) identifying opportunities capitalized as part of activities with personal and professional purposes; b) properly managing an anticipative project (including the capacities and abilities of group planning, organizing and managing, of analysis, communication and evaluation); c) individual efficient activity, collaboration and team based; d) efficiently representing and negotiating; e)

assessing and ascertaining strengths and weaknesses; f) evaluating and approaching possible risks from a managerial point of view.

As part of the academic curriculum, the entrepreneurial education consists “in acquiring a system of knowledge, cognitive capacities, skills, entrepreneurial abilities and attitudes, in order to facilitate students the identification of some private companies opportunities, strategic planning and private initiatives management” [3]. As part of the socio-human field and especially as part of the educational sciences field, personal and professional initiatives are being identified and outlined through reflexivity, research and strategic planning, and approached from a managerial point of view through social and educational projects and programs.

Given these premises, we have elaborated the hypothesis of the empirical research, which is a particular one as part of the investigative approach including our micro research:

*If the curricular development directions aim disciplines with curricular structures in order to emphasize elements of the entrepreneurial competences and training strategies in order to facilitate the entrepreneurial education, then these can be capitalized by subjects and represent premises of a curricular framework of the initial training.*

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### ***2.1. Objective***

The purposes of the empirical investigation are:

1. Analyzing subjects' curricular conceptions and preferences, regarding the curricular development's directions, with concern to the development of entrepreneurial competences of future teachers as part of the primary and pre-school education.
2. Developing some strategic directions in order to develop the curriculum of the programs of initial training as part of the specialization Pedagogy of the primary and pre-school education.

### ***2.2. The sample of subjects***

The subjects of the research have been selected based on the representation criterion of the subjects involved as part of the process of initial training and in accordance with the equality of chances principle and the non-discriminatory treatment, with regard to gender and age variables. Given these, the sample of 110 subjects of the empirical research has the following structure:

- 20 teachers as part of the University education;
- 40 persons belonging to the didactic staff teaching as part of primary and pre-school education in school units all over Gorj and Dolj counties;

- 50 students attending the specialization Pedagogy of the primary and pre-school education, as part of University of Craiova.

### **2.3. Instrument**

The opinion questionnaire represents the basic tool as part of the empirical investigation. The tool has been developed based on two questionnaires we have elaborated and applied as part of two researches that had a methodological character, too, on the topic of entrepreneurial competences as part of the socio-human field and transverse competences as part of the school curriculum.

The questionnaire has been applied to each category of the sample of subjects, this fact enabling us to accomplish comparative analyses between answers. The structure of the questionnaire reflects the operational character of the variables of the micro research's hypothesis: a) entrepreneurial competences elements, relevant with regard to the specialization Pedagogy of primary and pre-school education (3-7 items); b) academic disciplines relevant in order to develop students' entrepreneurial competences (8-14 items); b) adequate and flexible training strategies, which facilitate entrepreneurial education (15-19 items).

## **3. RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS**

The significant results have been selected from subjects' favorable opinions, with the highest percentage of the high assessment degree. These results have been distributed on the variables previously mentioned, resulting multiple categories of answers:

- The structural elements of students' entrepreneurial competences are:
  - 1) the procedural knowledge regarding the educational marketing; 2) the capacity of analyzing the opportunity and feasibility of some socio-educational programs, approached as part of educational niche strategies; 4) the adequate management of educational programs; 5) the *feedforward* capacity, which "consists in monitoring the processes a) to secure the achievement of the set objectives, b) to eliminate those problems that could impede the operation of the system (before they occur) and c) for the prevention of risks and vulnerabilities that would affect the achievement of goals" [4].

Table 1. Percentage data regarding the structural elements of the entrepreneurial competences

Groups / Criteria	<i>University didactic staff</i>	<i>Primary and preschool teachers</i>	<i>Students</i>
Criterion no.1	60%	52,50%	62%
Criterion no.2	75%	62,50%	74%
Criterion no.3	80%	72,50%	82%
Criterion no.4	65%	57,50%	56%

As far as students are concerned, the academic disciplines whose curricular structure are based on entrepreneurial education, as part of the actual education plan or that might be introduced, are:

with regard to the Pedagogy of primary and pre-school education bachelor's degree program: 1) Entrepreneurial education; 2) Information and communication technologies; 3) Sociology of education; 4) Educational management.

Table 2. The percentage distribution of subjects' curricular preferences, with respect to the academic disciplines as part of the Pedagogy of primary and pre-school education bachelor's degree program

Groups / Criteria	<i>University didactic staff</i>	<i>Primary and preschool teachers</i>	<i>Students</i>
Criterion no.1	85%	77,50%	76%
Criterion no.2	65%	62,50%	72%
Criterion no.3	55%	52,50%	62%
Criterion no.4	70%	60%	68%

a) with regard to master programs in the field of Educational sciences:  
 1) Educational marketing; 2) Management of educational projects; 3) Planning and management of the educational curriculum; 4) Management of the didactic career; 5) Management of the human resources.

Table 3. The percentage distribution of subjects curricular preferences, with respect to the academic disciplines as part of master programs in the field of Educational sciences

Groups / Criteria	<i>University didactic staff</i>	<i>Primary and preschool teachers</i>	<i>Students</i>
Criterion no.1	65%	57,50%	66%
Criterion no.2	85%	77,50%	78%
Criterion no.3	85%	75%	74%
Criterion no.4	70%	75%	60%
Criterion no. 5	65%	72,50%	76%

The training strategies that facilitate the entrepreneurial education and confirmation of performances in the field of entrepreneurship, specific to the specialization curriculum and in accordance with psycho-social characteristics of students attending Educational sciences and their training needs, are: 1) strategies and methods specific to the management of educational projects: the context analysis, the relevancy analysis, the managerial approach of the project’s cycle, the benchmarking method [3]; 2) modern strategies, specific to the programs and activities of professional and entrepreneurial training: “strategies of training focused on student, interactive strategies, strategies of constructivist training, methods and techniques of online teaching and communication, methods of teaching through action, methods of mentoring ” (Johnson, W., Ridley, C., 2004, Boyer, N., 2003, Sava, 2007, Wilson și Lowry, 2000, apud [5] ; 3) metacognitive strategies, focused on monitoring and improving the implementation of personal projects of professional development; 4) methods and tools of social and educational research: applying opinion and need questionnaires to beneficiaries of educational programs, focus-groups, experimental investigation of some innovative educational products.

Table 4. Percentage data regarding subjects’ opinions with respect to training strategies focused on developing entrepreneurial competences of students attending educational sciences

Groups / Criteria	<i>University didactic staff</i>	<i>Primary and preschool teachers</i>	<i>Students</i>
Criterion no.1	75%	52,50%	78%
Criterion no.2	85%	77.50%	74 %
Criterion no.3	80%	47,50%	74%
Criterion no.4	80%	72,50%	68%

The results of the research confirm subjects' methodological opinions in accordance with the modern strategies promoted as part of University education and the curricular development tendencies as part of Educational sciences. The comparative analysis of the percentage data between the categories of subjects, reveal significant differences between answers with respect to two cases, as far as the training strategies are concerned:

- regarding the variable *metacognitive strategies, focused on monitoring and improving*

*the implementation of personal projects of professional development*; we correlate the assessment to a larger extent of the University didactic staff and students with approaching the metacognition issue especially as part of the academic environment;

- regarding the variable *strategies and methods specific to the management of educational*

*projects*, we also notice a greater experience of University teachers and students.

The needs of professional training mentioned by students and teachers as part of the primary and pre-school education, confirm the acknowledgement of the necessity in order to personally and professionally develop, with regard to developing entrepreneurial competences. Integrating values, principles and methodology of entrepreneurial education as part of the professional culture, represents the basic premise in order to achieve success as far as the entrepreneurial education as part of primary and early education is concerned.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The results achieved and their significance confirm the hypothesis of the empirical research. Thus, the curricular development directions of the entrepreneurial education, capitalized by subjects, may represent premises of a curricular framework in order to train for a didactic career as part of the primary education, with respect to the bachelor's degree and master programs. The curricular variables developed and analyzed confirm the results of a previous personal research, on the topic of entrepreneurial education of students attending the socio-human field, which details them as part of the specialization Pedagogy of primary and pre-school education. The curricular re-dimensioning according to these directions will generate good educational programs and practices concerning teachers' training in order to provide the success of entrepreneurial education among pre-school and younger children.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Comisia Europeană/Eacea/Eurydice (2012). *Dezvoltarea competențelor cheie în școlile din Europa: provocări și oportunități pentru politică*, noiembrie 2012, 22-23. În: [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic\\_reports/145R0.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/145R0.pdf)
- [2] Negreț-Dobridor, I.(coord.), Mândruț, O., Catană, L. (2012). Programul de formare Proiectarea curriculumului centrat pe competențe – Suport de curs. Proiectul POS DRU/87/1.3/S/61602 “Cariera de succes în învățământul preuniversitar prin implementarea de programe de formare inovative!” În: [www.tr-ecariera.ro](http://www.tr-ecariera.ro)
- [3] Bunăiașu, C.M. (2012). Strategic premises and directions in order to develop students entrepreneurial competences in the social-human field. *international conference entrepreneurship education - a priority for the higher education institutions – crebus title of book*, in proceedings, medimond s.r.l., p. 40, romania, bucurești, october 8-9, 2012.
- [4] Vlăduțescu, Ș. (2013). *Feedforward irradiation in psychology, psychopedagogy and communication. The ontological principle of feedforward*. Revista de Psihologie a Academiei Române, vol. 59, nr. 3, Editura Academiei Române, p. 261.
- [5] Verzuh, E. (2003). *The Portable MBA in Project Management*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
- [6] Bunăiașu, C.M. (2012). Strategic premises and directions in order to develop students’ entrepreneurial competences in the social-human field. *international conference entrepreneurship education - a priority for the higher education institutions – crebus*, in proceedings, medimond s.r.l., p. 43, romania, bucurești, october 8-9, 2012.