

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS KEY COMPETENCES AND TRANSVERSAL SKILLS THROUGH PRACTICE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: *Initial and life-long learning teachers' training on designing, implementing and evaluating programs competence approach is based on the concept of cumulative development acquired in formal, non-formal and informal context. (European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (NQF) 2009. Learning based on development key competences is recognised as being an independent and collaborating activity as well and it use rational knowledges. It requires deep changes in classroom practice comprehensive and coherent policies at national, regional and local school levels, investments in both human and material resources and supports, and time for teachers to change mind-sets and develop new pedagogical approaches and practices. (The European Reference Framework of Key Competences defined in the Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning adopted by the Council and the European Parliament in December 2006). The Recommendation on key competences for life –long learning identifies eight key competences and various transversal themes – which combine knowledge, skills and attitudes – considered as necessary for personal fulfillment and development on becoming active citizens, future teachers for social inclusion and employment in the 21st century. (The Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning adopted by the Council and the European Parliament in December 2006).*

Keywords: *key competences, transversal skills, learning to learn,*

pedagogical approaches and practices.

1. **Introduction**

Current reforms were triggered by the need to bring curricula more closely lining with the key competences approach. (EACEA/Eurydice, 2011b, 2011c, 2011d). Supporting the development of key competences is a complex process that involves introducing or adapting policies to improve the quality of education and to ensure that learning and teaching continues to reflect the needs of both individuals and society. The process takes place at several levels beginning with preschool and primary school and also is an important element is the introduction of a strategic and coherent approach to improving students' knowledge, attitudes and skills in the form of a national strategy, action plan or improved syllabus or educational policy.

In this segment research we investigate the aspects which refers to the development of the transversal skills based as professional competences during the university practice stage students and also the perspectives and projections on practice teaching. The key competence framework, with its emphasis on the application of knowledge in real world situations represents a significant departure from “traditional” content-based approaches, with subjects taught and assessed discretely.

Competences, almost all have put in place national strategies that address the development of digital and entrepreneurship competences. Transversal or cross-curricular competences such as in ICT, entrepreneurship and civics are widely integrated into the curriculum at primary and secondary levels. In one third of European countries, however, the focus on entrepreneurship education does not start until secondary level.

In contrast to the basic skills (mother tongue (or language of instruction), mathematics and science), transversal competences, such as citizenship and entrepreneurship and, to a lesser extent, ICT skills, are not associated with school subjects that derive from traditional academic disciplines. Encouraging the development of these skills is nevertheless equally important in the context of our knowledge-based, globalised and fast-evolving societies. The following analysis looks at whether transversal competences are integrated into national curricula across Europe and, if so, how this is achieved. In most countries, citizenship, entrepreneurship and ICT education are integrated into the curriculum for primary and secondary education

Assessment can play a significant role in improving the quality and relevance of the skills that are acquired at school. A number of national initiatives have been designed to develop assessment methods which can capture the complexity of the whole range of key competences and can measure students' ability to apply their knowledge in context. A further

focus on better integrating the transversal competences in all types of assessment would contribute to strengthening the coherence of the learning process and emphasise the equal importance attributed to all key competences.

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2. Theoretical Foundation

The European Commission has a key role to play in supporting the process of change and promoting international peer learning, as well. The syllabus curriculum projection on the competence pattern assume a pragmatic view, appropriate to the study school subjects.

The principles of learning to learn based on competences planning are: centering on competences, (educational programs and standards, school syllabus, instruments for identify learning level; sustainability (meaning solving problems in personal or professional environment); individualisation (promoting the interests also individual and personal capacities).

The International Education Encyclopedia in (2003,p.1164-1168) identifies three directions in curriculum designing: the knowledges and the school disciplines organise as a source for learning.; the students and their capacities view as a source for curriculum project, and the third direction resume the society direction as the source of school project.

Introduction the professional competence as the final results of the school preuniversity curriculum between 2001 and 2004 (for high school) and then in 2009 for secondary school represents real oportunities for methodological inovation.

The study of this research represents inregistrations and developing with: curriculum design, pedagogical competences transfer, knowledges, abilities, padagogical atitudes, cognitive studies, atitudinal, actional, volitive knowledges during students practical teaching.The pourpose of this research is to identify the main role and characteristic curriculum syllabus studied, centered on competences for developing student s behaviour.

This actual research presume a pedagogical testing experiment on developing transversal competences (professional skills as cognitive skills, functional skills and transversal skills as personal and professional skills development) on students registrated as C1 Competences Pattern. Rethinking Education investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes will increase productivity in the long-term and training encompasses objectives such as active citizenship, personal development and well-being. The efforts need to be concentrated on developing transversal skills. (CEDEFOP)

During two school semesters of practice teaching in preschool system students should improve and consolidate skills on learning how to learn and also developing transversal skills such as the ability to think critically, take initiative, problem solve and work collaboratively will prepare individuals for today's varied and unpredictable career paths.

The extinctions of this integrated patterns lead on practicing collaborative learning using appropriate methods and giving new learning opportunities between students and teachers as well.

3. Methodology

Nowdays many teachers are still using teaching which focuses on content in one single subject area so the main role that teachers play is crucial in implementing key competences. The resources for their continuous professional development should be a priority. Teachers should also be considered as important stakeholders and included in the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of ongoing policy and curricular reforms. Initial teacher education and students practice teaching will need to be reformed in order to align with key competence education but for a variety of reasons.

The scientific segment of this research is the experiment of C1 Competence pattern. The subjects are the 33 freshmen students enrolled in PPPE specialization. During two semesters they were using different types of activities providing learning how to learn skills: seminars, teaching on class different school disciplines, peer-activities, mentoring activities, informing and documentation prophylaxis and scientific conferences participations.

Throughout these semesters we intended to facilitate the assimilation by students of knowledges, skills related to learning to learn competence, such as knowing and understand the initial level of students knowledges, abilities and attitudes related to the management instructive educative activity competence, the ability to investigate and solve specific problems of school education developing critical thinking, networking, broader support and collaboration between teachers and students on highlight key competences as a priority in school plans community, cooperative and responsive attitude on the way to benchmark progress and identify areas for improvement stimulating motivation and stakeholders relations.

4. Results and discussion

Applying how to learn concept in different context of cotidian experience in life ensures self-assessment and provides continuous and progress learning improving their own reflexive capacities of professional practicing skills.

Students work was objectified in developing portfolios. The analysis of the students' activity products, contained in individual portfolios, and the

interview method were used to collect data.

Students were able to identify their initial acquirements at the beginning and in final semester were able to indicate self -assessment using tests, questionnaires, personal portfolios, personal achievement and experience from the perspective of needs, opportunities and threats.

The students were able to encourage the development of their own transversal competences, such as citizenship and entrepreneurship, ICT skills, which are not associated with school subjects that derive from traditional academic disciplines.

Also they were able to apply some of the learning experiences achieved on practice teaching in order to support the "learning to learn" competence and susstaining the concept of teacher development cumulative level of competence.

The students' assessment activity forms an integral part of the teaching and learning process and is an essential tool for improving the quality of education (*EACEA/Eurydice, 2009; OECD, 2011*).

The transversal competences, as well as other generic skills like creativity or problem solving, relate to more than one subject area are more difficult to assess with traditional instruments. So it is worth exploring what forms of assessment instruments available for teachers to assess student progress in these fields. Their practice activity results were reflected in final products: the Future Teacher profile an argumentative essay, a syllabus and a curriculum design- pattern, practice journals, activities as: thinking, relating to others, using language, symbols, and texts, managing self, participating and contributing, enquiry and knowledge-building cycle.

Active students are "doing" – applying learning and using learning in meaningful ways generating knowledge through their participation in learning (as opposed to remembering, repeating, recording, waiting, copying). Real/purposeful students interact with others in real, authentic contexts. Connections are made between learning areas (as opposed to classroom-only contexts or in relation only to single discreet knowledge areas).

Relevant Learning is relevant to students' lives now and also supports their development as life-long learners (as opposed to learning relevant only to a limited range of possibilities from the past) Empowering student is offering attention to developing students' learning dispositions – their desire, inclination, and will to learn (as opposed to a focus on complying with instructions, reliance on only teacher-directed, teacher-driven, teacher-prompted learning), disscussion tools, reflection and effective pedagogy, references, engaging examples of practice: usefull stories like:e.g.

"Creating a Pacifika Dance" (focus key competences: thinking, meta-cognitive and creative There are some activity examples:" During the three

days the teacher ensured that every student had the opportunity to demonstrate leadership at some point. Opportunities for students to self-reflect were an important design component.

The story has clear learning intentions and the teacher said she frequently drew the students' attention back to these: "What are we here for? What's our aim?" Each student completed a written reflection at the end of the three days. Some students who chose this learning episode were not known for their writing fluency. The teacher ensured they could be successful by using a reflection practice." The students made a range of interesting and insightful self-reflection comments. They were most likely to associate this learning episode with the development of their joyful, creative, and collaborative Independent Learner Qualities. They are caring, creative, collaborative, curious, enterprising, joyful, persevering, resilient, thinking, and wise.

The impact of this inquiry on, time to reflect and redirect", was the students in your classroom?" "School curriculum design? ", "other learning areas?" the implementation of new or different practices strategies"; student agency and involvement?"

Now, move into a new phase of inquiry by: identifying new questions," "concerns and issues to explore"; suggesting possible new outcomes for student learning"; writing an action plan for your next inquiry", reflecting on the process with your students".

Analyses on: "considerations as you embark on curriculum design and review at your school" and answer on four key questions: "What are our priorities for student learning (based on evidence)?" "What knowledge and skills do we need, and what actions shall we take to improve student outcomes?" "What has been the impact of our changes (based on evidence)?" "Where to next? What are our priorities for student learning now?" Students were able to solve these problems and to activate critical thinking in giving new learning pathways and designing and reviewing a curriculum experiment.

The development of transversal competences on students is conceived as a collective process within schools, to which all teachers should contribute. The pre-experimental formative stage was consisted in elaborating a curricular centered pattern named 3CCC at the final stage of practice teaching activities at P.J. Gradinita P.P. Gradinița Prieteniei from Arad and in developing their professional competences thru different learning forms.

The study implied four main stages: actual diagnose stage and actual curriculum syllabuses; the curricular model project stage; the implementation stage curriculum model named 3CCC and the evaluation curricular pattern stage on developing key competences.

Considering the issued theory it reveals particular assumptions: according to the initial instructiv-educativ curricular pattern 3CCC the students will develop their pedagogical knowledges and skills related to "learning how to learn" competence and also will improve also the outcomes related to digital, civic or entrepreneurship competences feature within the specific curricula for these subjects. This study improved the student's cognition competences, the comprehension and the crossrelation of the pedagogical knowledges in the systemic manner.

A cross-curricular status implies that all the different learning areas and subjects constituting the curriculum should contribute to the acquisition of the related competences. The formativ experimental stage consisted also inelaboration the,, 3CCC" curricular design centered on improving practice teaching activities.

The research pursued the following main objectives: identifying the extended views of teachers and students regarding on the measure current curriculum of educational facilitates the formation of professional skills of students to design the educational activities on their managers and assessment of outcomes learning;

Accordance with the,, 3CCC curriculum pattern", students will improve their pedagogical techniques, knowledge and learning skills related to design educational activities and also will improve management and assessment learning outcomes.

It will improve understanding, knowledge and pedagogically integrated knowledge in a systemic manner. Since the pre-test involved the initial evaluation of all skills, this stage of the experiment involved the existence of several steps required by the structure and organization of our pre-university education (referring here to organize groups, focus language, classes and disciplines, making learning visible,).

Thus, the steps involved were: initial assessment of the level of knowledge, skills and attitudes of the students related to the competence of designing educational activities that was conducted at the beginning of the school year 2014-2015 semester, within pedagogical study disciplines theory and methodology.

5. Conclusions

Through a comparative analysis of results achieved by the post-test showed, on the basis of calculating t test, and index Cohen's d, which measures the size of the effect, that the model curriculum 3CCC is functional, causing superior results in the experimental group compared the group control. The results obtained from research show that both of the teachers and the pupils' opinion, the current educational curriculum of subjects is not sufficiently functional, which is only focused on knowledge

building and not in training and skills development.

Going through its experimental stage it included: establishing the initial level of the students regarding the formation of the three pursued competences along to the formative experiment: "learning to learn" ability, of practical activity design competence, the learning evaluation competences of outcomes learning and comparison on the results presentation stage. The skills levels of development positive was correlated with the attitudes therefore we can assume: the main components on the pedagogical design competence followed thru 3CCC model implementation was increased.

The students acquired an increased level of knowledge, improved professional competences in practice teaching related with the initial stage from the assumption research. Therefore we can end the research with the declaration: according to the experiment we found that at the final stage of the two semesters students achieved a full participation related to assessment competences of learning outcomes.

There is full compatibility of the framework plan of educational curriculum designed in order to ensure consistency between the written curriculum components, focusing to capitalize internal structural components of all pedagogical skills: teaching- pedagogical knowledge, practical-pedagogical skills and attitudes teaching and learning to learn competence.

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ERATUM

We mention that in the previous issue of **JOURNAL PLUS EDUCATION**,
Volume XIV, No. 1/ 2016 we have published the following two studies:

Gabriela KELEMEN, Laurence FOND HARMANT, Mihaela ARDELEAN
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Work meeting report from Arad, in the project 'SPSM – employability' 170

*We need to make a correction and state that the first author of both studies is
Mrs Laurence FOND HARMANT.*