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CULEGERE SEMESTRIALĂ DE STUDII ŞTIINŢIFICE ŞI DIDACTICE

CUPRINS

CAREER COUNSELLING FOR HIGHSCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract: *The article is a quantitative study on the factors involved in the high school students` career counselling. We have applied a questionnaire to a sample of 100 students from the 11th and 12th grade coming from six high schools of Arad. The interpretation and the statistical analysis show their intention or lack of intention in continuing their studies, the choice of their profession, the profile and field of study as well as their desire to be active persons in Romania or abroad.*

Keyword: *counselling, parents, quantity methods, students, option, career*

Theoretical approaches
The issue of career counselling is essential in a dynamic and constantly changing society from two perspectives. On the one hand, the youth`s demands from themselves and towards their career are higher than before and on the other hand, family faces dilemmas in defining alternatives for the future profession of their children.

The preparation for life offered by school involves counselling and orientation towards a certain type of studies or a group of professions. This aspect cannot be covered without a careful career planning. Career planning is the process by means of which a student decides upon a career, sets the goals regarding the career and initiates actions to achieve these goals. A. Ilica states that being a student in a university means "sharing its values, fitting into its organizational culture and adhering to rituals and a certain climate". (A.Ilica, 2010, p.452)

The aims of career counselling activities are the students` personal development and the development of knowledge, abilities and competences required by an effective career management. This fact is completely necessary in the present society which faces constant changes both in its external configuration (change in the relationship between different professions and their frequency on the labour market) and in its internal one (changes in the requirements of different professions). Moreover, the requirements evolve constantly and this brings about the training of youth for independence and flexibility.

The methods for studying the society fall within some essential paradigms which seek to discover the power or the role of education in the development of personality (A. Roman, T. Dughi, 2007, p.27). They are also transposed in the

definition of identity style which seeks a genuine understanding of rational and irrational aspects of human actions (Vilfredo Pareto). In this respect, the first demarcation to be carried out in any research involves the discovery of foundations and bases of an individual and of communities, including in terms of institutions (J. C. Alexander, S. Seidman, 2004). Schools play a decisive role in shaping the personality of youth and crystallization of their socializing elements (Kelemen, G., 2013). In essence, we accept the idea that any national culture mentions the distance and social dynamics in the social context and establishes inclusion and exclusion relationships between individuals and groups both nationally and on a global level.

M. Zlate (2002, p.352) mentions the following fundamental elements in the conceptual analysis of career:

▪ *Interdependence between objective and subjective:* the individual`s successive choices throughout the career, career success/failure are determined by characteristics, constraints and job objectives and by skills, interests, values, needs, experiences and expectancy of the person concerned;

▪ *Career paths* (ascending/descending, stationary/ multidirectional/ flexible) depend on the individual`s resources but also on the actions taken by the organization to orient, counsel and manage the career of its members.

Career development as a process, targets the person in the context of a constantly changing life. Therefore, W. Kolb suggests the analysis of certain factors, external pressure, significant relationships and experienced events (Wolfe, Kolb, 1980).

Deciding upon a career is the process that leads to choosing a career alternative from the set of options available at a certain time (Lemeni şi Miclea, 2004, p. 170) and it presents the following components: the content of career decision, the decisional process, and the decisional context. The decision content refers to the choices the person has to make: school or study profile; profession; educational path; ways to develop professional competences. The decisional context contains internal factors (self-knowledge, knowledge about educational and occupational alternatives and decision making skills) and external factors (parents, career patterns, group of friends, decisional structure) that determine a certain career decision. The decisional process is quite heavy and with a variable period of time. It contains different stages with various factors involved and it also requires counselling (Lemeni şi Miclea, 2004, pp. 171-176).

The issue of social mobility and the intention of enrolling in a university or choosing a profession is essential in today`s society. It is constantly changing, values the youth`s aspirations towards themselves and their career, shaping the national, regional and global dimension according to the cultural values they have been taught. The criteria of selecting the alternatives for a future career should take into consideration educational elements developed through experiences from formal, informal and nonformal environments. The inquiry on "Career counselling for high school students" was applied between February 17th and March 7th on a sample of 100 students in six relevant high schools of Arad, with an error margin of +/- 2,8%.

Methodology

The objectives of the empirical study (survey by questionnaire)

- Validation of direct survey data;

- Identification of mechanisms for school choice and study programme, as well as of the foreshadowed career path;

- Identification of correlation degree between the parents` and students` answers;

- Determining the degree of professional insertion of high school graduates;

- Establishing university areas of interest for prospective graduate students.

Study sample: 100 students from the following high schools: Economic College of Arad, Moise Nicoară National College, „Dimitrie Țichindeal" Pedagogic High school, „Sabin Drăgoi" Art School, "Alexa Popovici" Baptist High School, „Aurel Vlaicu" Industrial High School of Arad. The students` fields of study are different and significant covering theoretical human and real fields as well as vocational.

Method of data collection: direct survey based on a questionnaire filled in at school.

The questionnaire (I. Culic, 2004) contained eight questions aiming to identify the students` knowledge of the following issues:

•The high school graduates` intension to continue studies;

•Field of interest at post high school studies and vocational school in terms of the high school graduates` intention to continue studies.

•Personal motivations for choosing to continue or not their studies and social motivations involved.

•Identifying mechanisms for selecting a university and a study programme as well as a foreshadowed career path.

•Identification of correlation degree between the parents` and students` answers.

•Knowledge of the parents` and students` information sources on career orientation.

The questionnaires sought to highlight the mechanisms of choosing the type and level of education, in general, and of career, in particular, to see if there is any correlation between the parents` and students` opinions. Therefore, we have asked parents and students about their information resources, the manner of communication, about who took the decision regarding career and to whom can they turn to with this issue and what profession they want.

The questions were formulated as closed type of questions with multiple choice answers or apparently open questions where the variants offered to the subjects covered the whole spectrum of field of study, areas of study or professional insertion. The questionnaires tried to identify ways of relating to high school graduates` manner of socializing because career choice or studies are linked to personal or social decision making factors. They determine at least immediate career choice.

General results

In this study we have tried to identify structures of education or career choice in our country or in other countries by revealing the core of the Arad youth`s social

identity. Therefore, we present the general results of our study on the dimensions we consider relevant.

The first question was designed to identify the students` aspirations on the vocational training after high school.
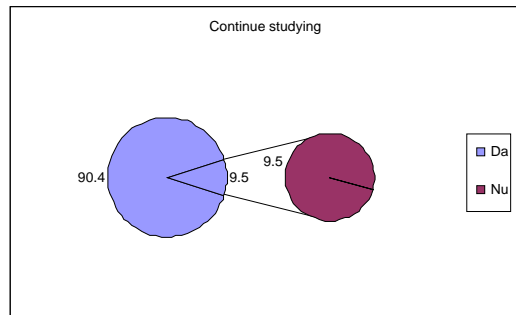
Chart no 1. Expression the options on continuing studies after high school graduation

The high percentage (90,4%) of students` who want to continue their studies in universities or attend post high school studies is worth mentioning. It reveals a tendency of avoiding active socio-professional insertion or their desire for continuous training.

Deciding upon the study institution.

Those who have answered positively the first question had to state the place where they would like to continue their studies.
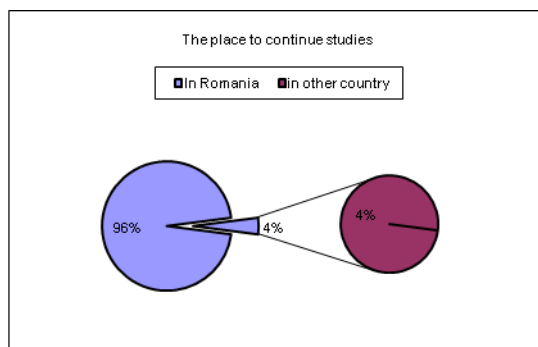
Chart n. 2.The students` option to continue studies with the country borders

The place to continue their studies shows that 96% of the questioned students who responded positively to the first questions want to study in Romania and 4% somewhere else. We can notice a major intention to study in a the university centre in Arad and a significant weight factor to continue studies in the closest traditional

university, Timisoara, in balance with other traditional universities such as Cluj-Napoca, Bucharest and Iaşi.
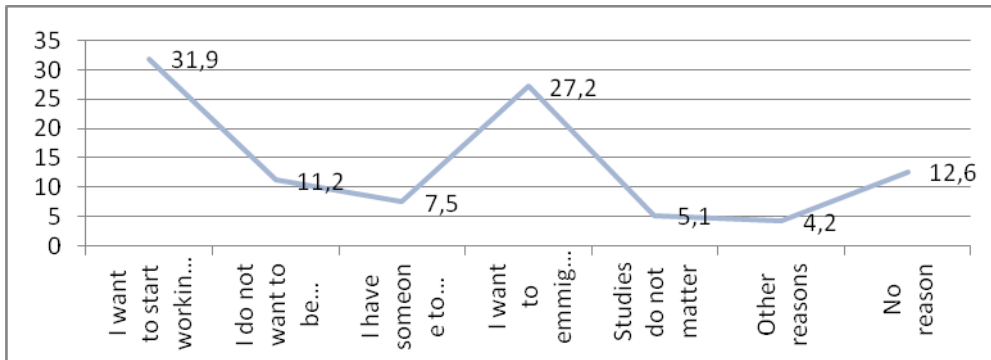
Chart no 3 Reasons for not continuing studies- students' answers in percentage

The first three percentage answers are significant in analysing the personal and social reasons used to justify the decision of not continuing studies. In positive cases they describe the subjects` desire to start working immediately and in negative cases their attempt to emigrate, due to the fact that they cannot identify themselves with the socio-professional structures from Romania. They also mention that they do not have a particular reason, or a reason they are aware of.

The answers provided by students and their parents allowed us to identify the actors involved in the career decision-making process. School and friends seem to play a secondary role as we can see from the parents` and students` answers, as compared to family.
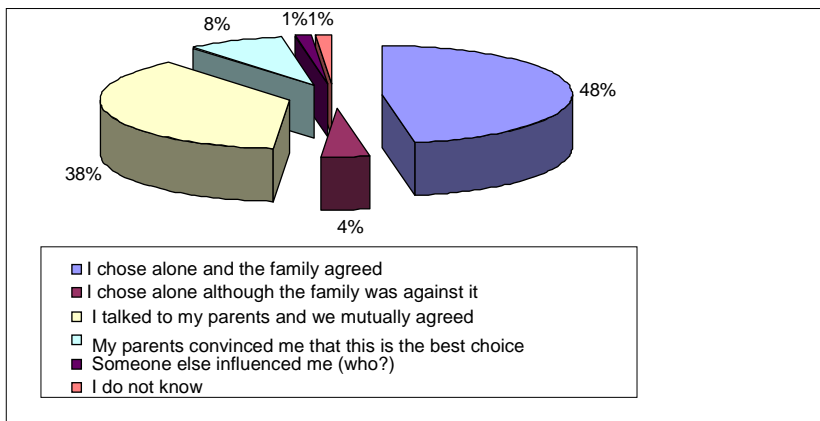
Chart no. 4 whom does the decision on career belong to – students` answers
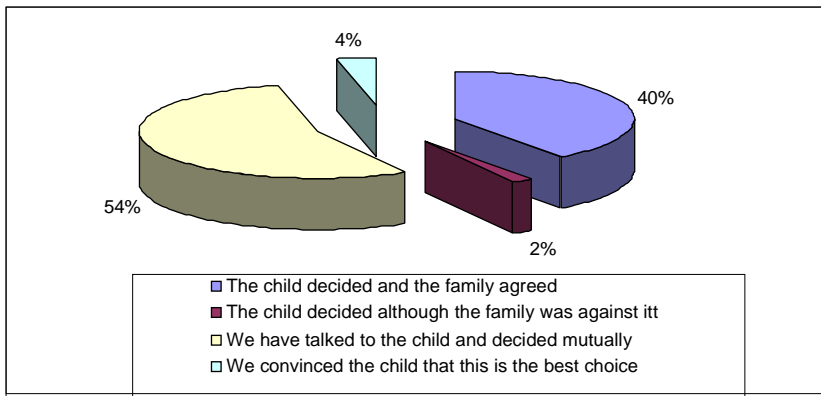
Chart no. 5. Whom does the decision on career belong to – parents` answers

As seen in the charts above, decisions related to choosing a university, a study programme belong to the teenagers along with their families, at least in our sample. The chart below shows us that parents consider that it has been a mutual decision, while teenagers think that it has been their own choice and parents agreed to it. Even if it might be the teenagers` freedom of choice or the parents` involvement in decision-making, we have to notice the important role played by the family.

Family constraint is not very common and can be regarded as rare, especially by the parents. This aspect can be discussed in terms of communication within the family which is seen as a long-lasting and indirect process.

We consider important that family has the leading role in the children`s vocational choices. Friends and school are not mentioned by our respondents as important but family takes an active role. Parents talk to their children and the decision is regarded as mutual especially by the parents.
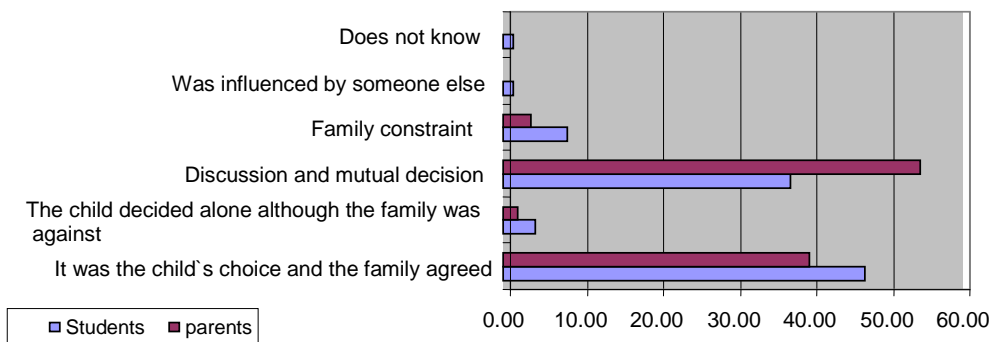
Chart no 6. Decision on career. Comparison between students` and parents` answers

The charts below present the sane issue, namely persons involved in the decision making process. We observe that family is the most important decision-maker also in the decision upon the future career. According to the teenagers` answers, the second important decision maker is the group of friends.

Among parents, the father is less involved in decision-making. In the respondents` families, either both parents are equally involved in the decision, or the mother is more involved.
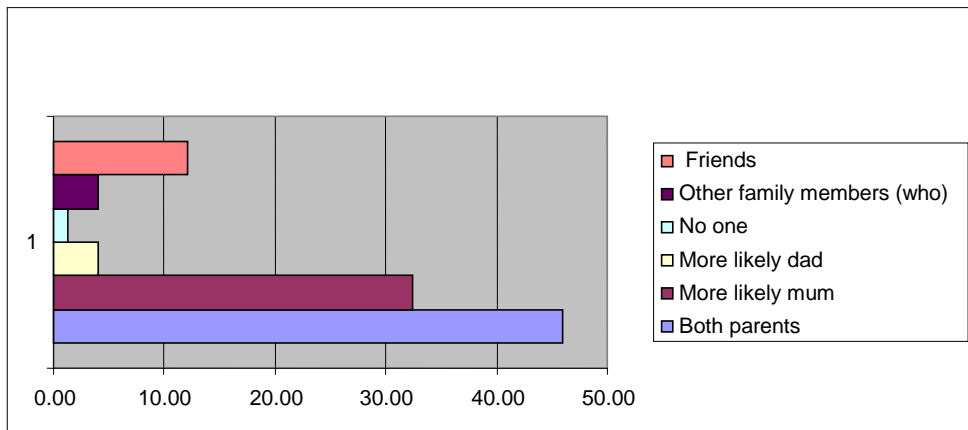
Chart no 7. Discussions about the career – students` answers

Parents have to be properly informed about the educational and vocational opportunities, to know their children as well and objectively as possible, to have good communication skills, to manage conflicts properly so as to be a proper partner for teenagers who face important decisions about their careers. Most parents from our sample state that they gladly take part in the decision-making process. They admit and acknowledge its importance and their willingness to be involved. Exchange of ideas, in other words communication, is the most common method used by parents to support the children`s decision. This corresponds with the above answers that revealed that children mostly talk to their parents when it comes to decision upon their career.

Conclusions

Educational fundaments hall-mark the high school graduates, revealing both the mechanisms of institutional framework and their effects on the inter-relating actors, on parents and high school graduates, namely future graduate students. This is an explanation for the high school graduates` intention to continue studies close to their hometown. Besides the financial facilities, there is also the process of anticipating how education works in a university – 47,5% intend to study in Arad and 31,9% in Timişoara.

Identity is developed by association with self-esteem and self-acceptance which brings about self-assessment and positive or negative acceptance of this assessment. In terms of negative assessment, we find relevant the answers which

state that graduates don`t want to continue their studies for personal reasons. Consequently, self-esteem and self-acceptance are relatively low in respondents who state that: don`t want to be employed yet (11,2%), someone supports them (7,5%), studies have no relevance (5,1%), for no reason (12,6%).

In these circumstances, we consider essential the students` and parents` involvement in a process of vocational counselling made by specialists because "it develops the feeling of psychical comfort, reduces stress and supports the effort of overcoming career obstacles" (Chen, Young, 1999, p.125).

In conclusion, all identity theories reveal the influence of national culture and civilization on the individual`s and groups` behaviour. In these conditions, individuals` are centred mainly on their own perceptions about the significance of the self, and only later on relating to the other one, to group and society. Society is mediated by the institutional framework and inside it, educational institutions; schools have a decisive role in the process of shaping the teenagers` personality and education towards the development of a true spirit of national culture and civilization.

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PERFORMING EXCELENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: *This article tries to underline aspects of university teaching activity related to the initial training of future teachers for preschool and primary school education. Our concerns for an efficient professional activity in training future teachers is emphasized by out attempt to search and find optimizing didactic strategies. They aim for an efficient and thorough training of future teachers for preschool and primary school education from theoretical and practical perspective.*

Key words: *initial training, proficiency, competence, knowledge, abilities, skills, performance*

1. From high school to university

Nowadays, academic education faces an unprecedented expansion in our country and abroad. Until recently, only few high school graduates had the opportunity to attend academic education. Now, this type of education is no longer the privilege of elite. High school students can choose and attend a university programme provided that they pass the Baccalaureate exam. The university enrols a variety of students coming from different high schools, with different training levels, with or without the abilities and training required to attend the study programme they have chosen. Academic education aims to train competent specialists in a certain field. This involves thorough study, acquisition of knowledge, development of skills and abilities necessary for the profession they have chosen. Thus, students are guided throughout their academic path to develop qualities required by their future profession and to give up activities that are not connected to their field of study. Sometimes, after enrolling in a university, students give up their studies because of the difference between their level of training and the academic demands. They cannot face the educational challenges or realize that their choice is not suitable for them. When referring to the study programme Pedagogy of preschool and primary school education from the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Psychology and Social Work we emphasize our concern for training professionals for preschool and primary school education with a thorough theoretical and practical training. In this respect, we want to underline certain aspects. First of all, students should be aware of the importance of theoretical as well as practical knowledge required by the didactic profession. The main objective of academic education is to allow students reach a standard of knowledge, understanding and competence, detectable in their performance. Besides knowledge, skills and abilities, the students,

future teachers, should have a proper attitude, motivation to learn, to improve their skills and to change failure into success. We try to change students from passive listeners into active players, participants in their own development through modern learning strategies. Learning autonomy is one of the main objectives of academic education (Pennycook, 1997). A student can reach learning autonomy if s/he possesses knowledge on the topic, abilities to process information and knowledge. The student has to acquire skills and abilities required by individual study, to deepen the information auditioned at the course. This fact requires metacognition but also adequate learning and study methods. The teacher is the facilitator, the mentor who guides the learner`s steps, but without sustained personal effort no one can achieve performance. The choice should be the student`s, s/he can chose between the teacher`s guidance and individual study. Autonomy should not be confused with libertinism or caprice.

2. A pragmatic approach

The question which concerns us all is what we should do to have well prepared students that would succeed on the labour market. The students` interest for thorough study should be constant if they want to perform at the expected level. Shallow learning can be overcome through thorough study, which involves understanding the studied concepts, linking them to previous knowledge and putting them into practice. Educational sciences, pedagogy and didactics offer methods by means of which one can access learning, knowledge, understanding and practical usage of theory. Knowledge acquisition is not a goal in itself; it is used only to replicate the concepts that have been learnt. Its aim is to know the objective reality. Knowledge is about being able to respond to the challenges of this reality. Through knowledge, one is capable of changing it into efficient practical actions. This paradigm brings about proper understanding of the fact that each action involves social implications.

Our faculty aims to train future teachers, capable of excellent performance. Therefore, emphasis is laid on theoretical but especially on practical application of theoretical concepts. They are used in the seminars but also during the students` teaching practice. Courses in pedagogy, theory and methodology of training and theory and methodology of assessment teach them the concepts of theoretical training. Didactics of speciality reveals didactic methodology specific for each subject. Educational research is the subject that offers our students, future teachers the possibility to put into practice various assumptions of scientific research. Students attend the teaching practice classes, observational and applied weekly; here they have the opportunity to link theory to practice (Roman, A., Dughi, T, 2007). The aim of the studies is to train students to be good practitioners with remarkable results in the institutions where they work. Specifically, future teachers should be able to teach a subject in an intelligible manner for each pupil in a group/classroom of children/pupils. Thus, methodological training is an aim of our faculty, where students are taught to apply the most proper methods and procedures used by the educational practice. They should be able to approach issues related to the educational process.[1] What concept can

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[1] Wickman, P.-O., & Ligozat, F. (2011). Scientific literacy as action: consequences for content pro-gression. In c. Linder, L. Östman, p.-O. Wickman, D. A.Roberts, G.Erickson, & A. Mackinnon (e

be taught at a certain age? Can it be learnt by any student? How can it be assessed? These are questions the future teacher has to deal with. The teacher selects the concepts to be taught but also the strategies required by the implementation of the educational process. The student, future teacher, should be aware that the curriculum objectives are compulsory and so is the syllabus. The teacher`s task is to select the contents that match with the pupils` age. S/he shouldn`t forget that children/ pupils in a classroom/group don`t have a homogenous psychical development; they have different skills, different learning styles and learning pace.

Individual features of pupils should always be taken into account throughout the educational process. Educational objectives should be set individually for each class/group.[2] Teachers should know their group/classroom of children/pupils very well and s/he should teach the contents according to the level of the group. The teacher starts with a simple learning situation and gradually introduces elements of different complexity. Each pupil has to understand the concept and solve the task. These aspects should be always considered by the teacher.

According to A.de Peretti, the teacher has various roles: expert, resource, facilitator, actor, methodologist, consultant, controller, evaluator, user, technician, and experimentalist. Proper training is required in order to be abler to perform all these tasks:

- Thorough knowledge of the subject;
- Professional skills;
- Enthusiastic, stimulating and motivational attitude;
- Good communication skills;
- Sociability and empathy.

These are only a few aspects related to a teacher`s qualities. When taechers are assessed based on these qualities, the assessment can be subjective and influenced by different factors. The image of a model teacher is built based on different education theories, from skills to their authority among learners.

Scientific approaches to teachers` assessment are made according to standards developed according to the requirements of educational policies but all of them aims for professional efficiency.

3. Methodology of search

Our concerns are focused on the improvement of the educational process in terms of efficient training of future teachers. In our study we have also been interested in the degree of our students` satisfaction, namely the students of the study programme Pedagogy of preschool and primary school education. Therefore, we have applied a questionnaire whose aim was to observe the students` satisfaction on course content and organization. The following aspects were questioned:

- The subject taught;

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ds.), Exploring the landscapes of scientific literacy(pp.145–159). New York: Routledge.

[2] Sensevy, G. (2011). Patterns of didactic intentions, thought collective and documentation work. In G. Gueudet, B. pepin & L. trouche (eds.), From text to 'lived' resources: Mathematics curriculum materials and teacher development (pp.43–57). New York: Springer.

–   Course content;
–   The topicality level of knowledge;
–   Approach and structure on hours and chapters;
–   Information load;
–   Time management during the course;
–   Resources used for teaching;
–   The relationship between the new subject and the previously taught subjects.

The study was applied on a number of 85 students from the study programme Pedagogy of preschool and primary school education, from 1st, 2nd and 3rd year of study.

4. The research results[3]
Study programme: *Pedagogy of primary and preschool education*
Year of study: I, II and III
Academic year: 2013-2014 – 1st semester
Assessed subjects:..
A.   Contents and course organization

Contents and course organization								
DESCRIPTORS	*A1*	*A2*	*A3*	*A4*	*A5*	*A6*	*A7*	*A8*
Mean	**3,13**	**4,53**	**3,53**	**4,07**	**3,33**	**3,78**	**3,15**	**3,19**
Standard Error	0,11	0,08	0,09	0,11	0,08	0,10	0,11	0,16
Median	3	5	3	4	3	3	3	3
Mode	3	5	3	5	3	3	3	5
Standard Deviation	1,00	0,77	0,85	0,99	0,71	0,94	1,05	1,48
Sample Variance	0,99	0,59	0,73	0,97	0,51	0,89	1,11	2,20
Kurtosis	0,00	1,73	-0,70	-1,43	1,58	-1,74	0,12	-1,33
Skewness	-0,19	-1,57	0,85	-0,37	1,83	0,47	0,00	-0,18
Range	4	3	3	3	2	2	4	4
Minimum	1	2	2	2	3	3	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Sum	266	385	300	346	283	321	268	271
Count	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85
Largest(1)	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Smallest(1)	1	2	2	2	3	3	1	1
Confidence Level(95,0%)	0,22	0,17	0,18	0,21	0,15	0,20	0,23	0,32

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[3] Data have been processed by Junior lect. Dana Timar Balaş, PhD candidate.

A1	For me, the subject taught at the lecture was:
A2	For my training as specialist, the course contents were:
A3	The topicality level of knowledge was:
A4	The structure of the subject on hours and chapters was:
A5	The volume of information was:
A6	Timing during the course were:
A7	Materials used during teaching (course, schemes, foils, slides) were:
A8	The subject overlapped/repeated was has been taught in previous subjects:

After analysing the answers of the feed-back questionnaire on students` satisfaction regarding the course contents and organization we notice that:

- The subject was partly familiar to the students,
- The course content was very interesting,
- The topicality level of knowledge was high,
- The structure of the subject on hours and chapters was very good,
- The volume of information was high,
- The time was used properly,
- The materials used during teaching (course, schemes, foils, slides) were very good,
- The subject overlapped the content of previously taught disciplines.

B. The assessment of teachers` activity for transfer of knowledge at courses (c) and seminars (s)

The assessment of teachers` activity for transfer of knowledge at courses (c) and seminars (s)										
DESCRIPTORS	B1C	B1S	B2C	B2S	B3C	B3S	B4C	B4S	B5C	B5S
Mean	**4,52**	**4,22**	**3,49**	**3,18**	**3,02**	**2,87**	**4,66**	**4,41**	**4,94**	**4,55**
Standard Error	0,10	0,14	0,09	0,11	0,07	0,09	0,07	0,13	0,03	0,11
Median	5	5	3	3	3	3	5	5	5	5
Mode	5	5	3	3	3	3	5	5	5	5
Standard Deviation	0,88	1,26	0,83	1,04	0,62	0,86	0,68	1,18	0,28	1,01
Sample Variance	0,78	1,58	0,68	1,08	0,38	0,73	0,47	1,39	0,08	1,01

Kurtosis	4,60	1,72	-0,46	0,54	4,96	1,60	1,51	2,94	30,10	4,85
Skewness	-2,09	-1,69	0,93	-0,04	0,30	-0,56	-1,75	-2,02	-5,30	-2,38
Range	4	4	3	4	4	4	2	4	2	4
Minimum	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	1	3	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Sum	384	359	297	270	257	244	396	375	420	387
Count	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85
Largest(1)	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Smallest(1)	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	1	3	1
Confidence Level(95,0%)	0,19	0,27	0,18	0,22	0,13	0,18	0,15	0,25	0,06	0,22
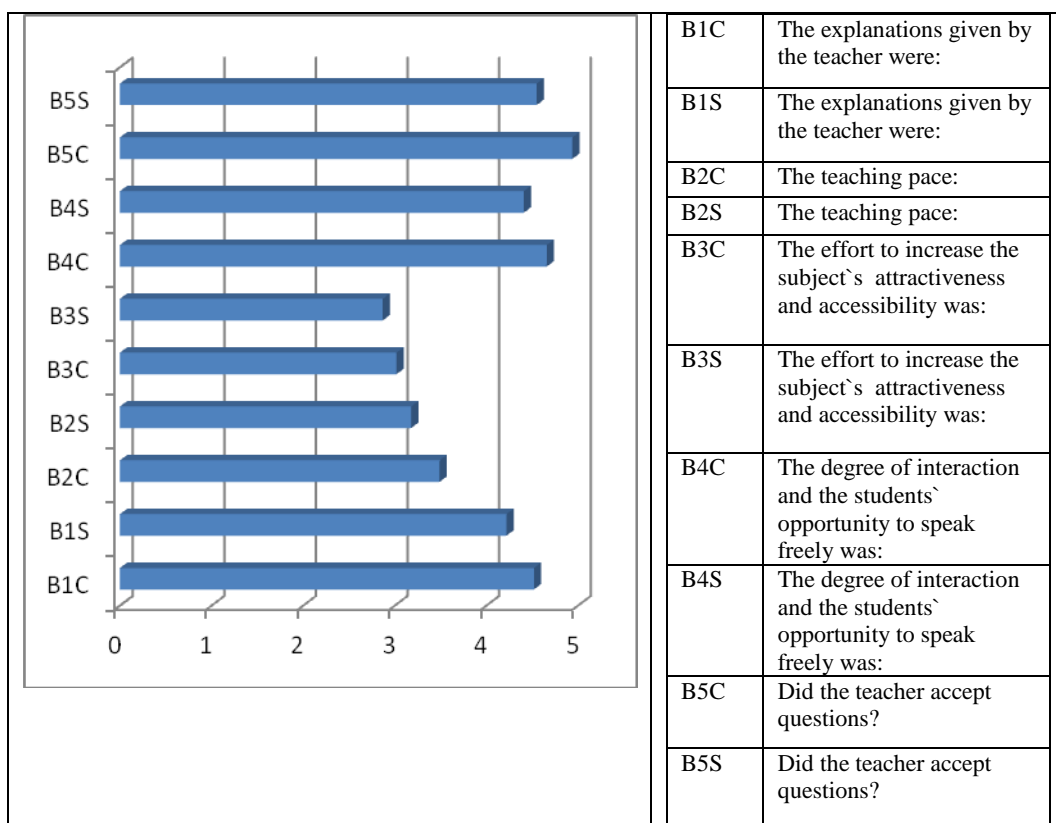
B1C	The explanations given by the teacher were:
B1S	The explanations given by the teacher were:
B2C	The teaching pace:
B2S	The teaching pace:
B3C	The effort to increase the subject`s attractiveness and accessibility was:
B3S	The effort to increase the subject`s attractiveness and accessibility was:
B4C	The degree of interaction and the students` opportunity to speak freely was:
B4S	The degree of interaction and the students` opportunity to speak freely was:
B5C	Did the teacher accept questions?
B5S	Did the teacher accept questions?

The assessment of teachers` activity for transfer of knowledge at courses (c) and seminars (s)										
DESCRIPTORI	B6C	B6S	B7C	B7S	B8C	B8S	B9C	B9S	B10C	B10S
Mean	**2,98**	**2,86**	**4,62**	**4,44**	**3,36**	**3,05**	**4,25**	**3,82**	**4,59**	**4,33**
Standard Error	0,07	0,09	0,09	0,12	0,07	0,10	0,10	0,13	0,11	0,14

Median	3	3	5	5	3	3	5	4	5	5
Mode	3	3	5	5	3	3	5	5	5	5
Standard Deviation	0,65	0,79	0,82	1,09	0,65	0,91	0,90	1,17	1,02	1,27
Sample Variance	0,43	0,62	0,67	1,18	0,42	0,83	0,81	1,36	1,03	1,60
Kurtosis	4,19	2,00	8,12	3,09	1,19	1,34	-1,58	-0,17	5,90	1,77
Skewness	-1,54	-1,08	-2,70	-1,98	1,58	-0,29	-0,51	-0,71	-2,59	-1,77
Range	3	4	4	4	2	4	2	4	4	4
Minimum	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	1	1
Maximum	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Sum	253	243	393	377	286	259	361	325	390	368
Count	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85
Largest(1)	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Smallest(1)	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	1	1
Confidence Level (95,0%)	0,14	0,17	0,18	0,23	0,14	0,20	0,19	0,25	0,22	0,27

B6C	The teacher`s availability in the relationship with the students was:
B6S	The teacher`s availability in the relationship with the students was:
B7C	The scientific language used by the teacher was:
B7S	The teacher`s availability in the relationship with the students was:
B8C	The teacher`s enthusiasm and interest were:
B8S	The teacher`s enthusiasm and interest were:
B9C	The teacher`s professional confidence and reliability were:
B9S	The teacher`s professional confidence and reliability were:
B10C	The assessment and grading methods (projects, tests, papers) were:

	B10S	The assessment and grading methods (projects, tests, papers) were:	

In terms of information transfer, the 85 questioned students assessed their teachers and placed them at the upper limit of the scale. Thus, the explanations given by the teacher were very clear, the teaching pace was proper, the effort to increase attractiveness and availability was adequate, the degree of interactivity and the teachers` availability were proper, the scientific language used was fully accessible, the teachers' enthusiasm and interest were adequate, their confidence and reliability were high and the methods used for assessment and grading were adequate and communicated in advance.

Efficient learning involves the acquisition of concepts, skills, abilities, which are inter-connected by a coherent bond. This bond involves understanding and interpretation. If properly acquired by students, each concept can be discussed and interpreted by them and not just imitated.

C. Academic demand

Academic demand					
DESCRIPTORI	*C1*	*C2*	*C3*	*C4*	*C5*
Mean	**3,99**	**4,15**	**6,86**	**5,93**	**9,19**
Standard Error	0,13	0,10	0,38	0,38	0,11
Median	4	4	6	5	10
Mode	5	5	10	4	10
Standard Deviation	1,20	0,94	3,46	3,49	0,98
Sample Variance	1,44	0,89	12,00	12,19	0,96
Kurtosis	0,77	1,20	-0,61	0,99	2,04
Skewness	-1,20	-1,09	0,69	1,37	-1,16
Range	4	4	12	13	5
Minimum	1	1	2	1	5
Maximum	5	5	14	14	10
Sum	339	353	583	504	781
Count	85	85	85	85	85
Largest(1)	5	5	14	14	10
Smallest(1)	1	1	2	1	5
Confidence Level(95,0%)	0,26	0,20	0,75	0,75	0,21

C1	Compared to other courses, the intellectual challenge offered by this course was:
C2	Compared to other courses, your effort to acquire the subject (tasks, individual study, attendance) was:
C3	On average, how many hours have you allotted to this course weekly (attendance, task preparation or other activities connected to this course)?
C4	From the above mentioned number of hours how many do you consider useful for your education?
C5	What grade do you expect to get at the final examination in this course?

For items involving academic demand, the students` answers highlight the following: a high degree of intellectual challenge, the effort made to acquire the subject was high; the weekly average hours allotted to a course (attendance, task preparation or other activities) is of 6 hours. They consider the time fully useful for acquiring the concepts. The grading expectations are centred on the grade 9.

D. Assessment of specific conditions for the conduct of the course:

DESCRIPTORS	Assessment of specific conditions for the conduct of the course					
	D1	*D2*	*D3*	*D4*	*D5*	*D6*
Mean	**4,58**	**4,54**	**4,37**	**4,59**	**4,26**	**3,49**
Standard Error	0,06	0,07	0,08	0,06	0,09	0,13
Median	5	5	5	5	5	4
Mode	5	5	5	5	5	5
Standard Deviation	0,77	0,77	0,94	0,74	1,01	1,51
Sample Variance	0,59	0,60	0,88	0,55	1,03	2,28
Kurtosis	7,17	2,50	0,03	1,71	1,70	-0,83
Skewness	0,50	-1,64	-1,18	-1,65	-1,46	-0,67
Range	6	4	3	3	4	5
Minimum	3	1	2	2	1	0
Maximum	9	5	5	5	5	5
Sum	641	635	612	642	596	457
Count	140	140	140	140	140	131
Largest(1)	9	5	5	5	5	5
Smallest(1)	3	1	2	2	1	0
Confidence Level(95,0%)	0,13	0,13	0,16	0,12	0,17	0,26

D1	Assessment of specific conditions: The Lecture Hall
D2	Assessment of specific conditions: The Seminar room/ Lab
D3	Assessment of specific conditions: materials and equipment
D4	Assessment of specific conditions: The Schedule
D5	Assessment of specific conditions: The available bibliography
D6	Assessment of specific conditions: The possibility to make library research

The assessment of specific conditions for course unwinding: lecture hall and seminar rooms, materials and equipment, schedule, available bibliography and the possibility to make library research were very good, the average grades being placed at the upper limit of the scale.

E. Assessment of general conditions:

Assessment of general conditions					
DESCRIPTORS	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5
Mean	**4,15**	**4,35**	**3,81**	**4,16**	**4,38**
Standard Error	0,11	0,10	0,13	0,10	0,10
Median	5	5	4	4	5
Mode	5	5	5	5	5
Standard Deviation	0,97	0,86	1,16	0,90	1,07
Sample Variance	0,93	0,74	1,35	0,82	1,15
Kurtosis	-1,04	-0,61	-0,07	0,47	5,08
Skewness	-0,61	-0,91	-0,76	-0,87	-2,17
Range	3	3	4	4	5
Minimum	2	2	1	1	0
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5
Sum	295	296	316	320	512
Count	71	68	83	77	117
Largest(1)	5	5	5	5	5
Smallest(1)	2	2	1	1	0
Confidence Level(95,0%)	0,23	0,21	0,25	0,21	0,20

E1	Assessment of general conditions: Student Hostel
E2	Assessment of general conditions: Canteen
E3	Assessment of general conditions: Library
E4	Assessment of general conditions: Reading room
E5	Assessment of general conditions: Cleaning of lecture halls
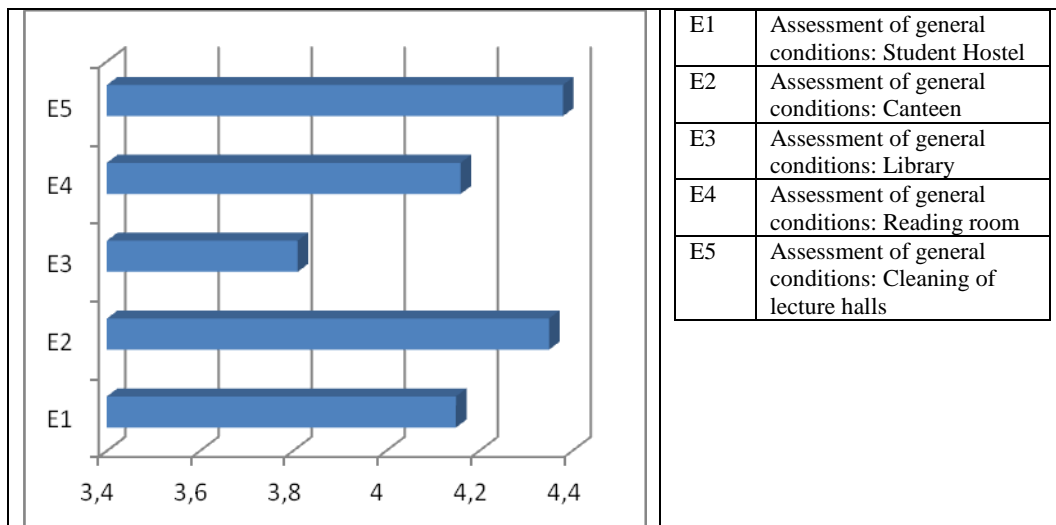
The assessment of general conditions focused on: student hostel, canteen, library, reading room and cleaning of lecture halls. The students` average answers are placed at the upper level of the scale, the general conditions being considered good and very good.

F. The assessment of university personnel`s availability

The assessment of university personnel`s availability							
DESCRIPTORS	*F1*	*F2*	*F3*	*F4*	*F5*	*F6*	*F7*
Mean	**3,76**	**4,04**	**4,33**	**4,41**	**4,49**	**4,30**	**4,47**
Standard Error	0,12	0,17	0,09	0,08	0,07	0,10	0,08
Median	4	4	5	5	5	5	5
Mode	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Standard Deviation	1,43	1,25	0,93	0,86	0,83	1,01	0,82
Sample Variance	2,04	1,55	0,87	0,74	0,69	1,02	0,68
Kurtosis	-0,69	1,43	2,31	0,09	0,71	1,71	1,72
Skewness	-0,77	-1,50	-1,49	-1,17	-1,40	-1,49	-1,46
Range	5	4	4	3	3	4	4
Minimum	0	1	1	2	2	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Sum	522	222	502	503	557	482	505
Count	139	55	116	114	124	112	113
Largest(1)	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Smallest(1)	0	1	1	2	2	1	1
Confidence Level(95,0%)	0,24	0,34	0,17	0,16	0,15	0,19	0,15

F1	Assessment of availability: The faculty`s secretariat
F2	Assessment of availability: Distance learning secretariat
F3	Assessment of availability: The Rector`s secretariat
F4	Assessment of availability: Accounting service
F5	Assessment of availability: Cashier's office
F6	Assessment of availability: Library
F7	Assessment of availability: Administration

The average answers for assessment of availability are placed again at the upper level of the scale. They consider that: the availability of secretariats is good, the availability of personnel in accountancy office, cashier`s office, library and administration is good and very good.

Conclusions

The feed-back received through this study shows us the degree of our students` satisfaction. We notice that our students, future teachers, are capable of performing an objective and rigorous assessment. They know their rights and obligations and their expectations in terms of training are very high.

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MY COLLEGUES FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ARAD: ALINA, GABRIELA ȘI DORIN

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Abstract: *The title configuration could give the reader reasons for reading the text with friendly feelings. My approach is the reflection of a finding: colleagues from the same university or faculty, members of the pedagogical community from our country do not know each other's scientific work, don`t read each other`s research and perhaps don`t even trust the others` professional reflections. A natural blend of personal, administrative or scientific life leads to labelling hidden under pleasantries without any consistence. I had the audacity to write essays about contemporary pedagogues (**Pedagogical ideas and doctrines**, "Aurel Vlaicu University Publishing House, Arad, 2013) so that we would know our well-deserved placed among education professionals. In this essay, written in the form of an inset, I will write about Alina ROMAN, currently the dean of the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Psychology and Social Work within "Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad, about Gabrielei KELEMEN, head of department at the same faculty and about Dorin HERLO. The easiest manner of ordering them was the alphabetical order and the order of insets does not have any connection with their value, quality or administrative attributions. I hope that my readers would recognize the friendly spirit of the writing, which would coincide with your mental projections. I hope that the praising spirit of my insets would find legitimation in the friendly spirit of the writing, which leads toeards a subjective pedagogical speech.*

Keywords: *pedagogy, Alina Roman, Gabriela Kelemen, Dorin Herlo, didactics.*

DORIN HERLO (n. 21 oct. 1951, Arad) vine în domeniul ştiinţelor educaţiei după o carieră apreciabilă în învăţământul preuniversitar ajungând la Arad, inspector școlar general adjunct. Actualmente, este profesor al Universităţii „Aurel Vlaicu" din Arad, calitate în care a întemeiat Departamentul de Pregătire Pedagogică Universitară. Licenţiat al Universităţii din Timişoara, Facultatea de Ştiinţe ale Naturii – secţia Fizică-Chimie (1975), obţine doctoratul în domeniul ştiinţelor educaţiei (1998), cu teza „**Modalităţi de individualizare a studiului chimiei prin instruire asistată de calculator (I.A.C.)**", elaborată sub coordonarea lui Miron Ionescu, îmbrăţişând cariera didactică universitară în cadrul domeniului de cunoaştere al ştiinţelor educaţiei. A beneficiat de câteva stagii de pregătire şi burse în străinătate, asimilând o deschidere către o

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redimensionare a teoriilor pedagogice şi o deplasare a accentului educaţional înspre beneficiar (vezi şi volumul D. Herlo, C. Piscanu, ”**Curriculum centrat pe elev şi implicaţiile sale în învăţământul preuniversitar”**, 2010). În acest text, analizează consecinţele pozitive ale gândirii ”*postmodernismului în educaţie, care vizează revalorizarea dimensiunii subiective a actului educaţional*” şi noua preocupare a şcolii de a pune în centrul interesului său individul, adică elevul. Volumul sugerează o formulă dinamică de cooperare dintre teorie şi practica didactică, aducând în sprijin argumente justificative sub formă de anexe. Cercetarea experimentală validează virtuţile modelului învăţării centrate pe elev, iar volumul merită atenţia deopotrivă a pedagogilor şi a didacticienilor.

Este implicat în proiecte finanţate, având disponibilitate pentru construcţia unor experienţe pedagogice derivate din acestea. A publicat volume de autor, reprezentative pentru domeniul didacticii generale, intitulate „**Metodologie educaţională**” (2002) şi „**Didactica**” (2006), urmate de ”**Tehnologie informaţională computerizată”** (2005)[4]. În aceste volume, se arată un riguros organizator al sugestiilor educaţionale, dorind să ofere soluţii practice şi eficiente pentru o învăţare dinamică, productivă, interactivă. Manifestă interes pentru aşezarea realităţilor pedagogice în definiţii riguroase, pentru structurarea ideilor şi pentru o redimensionare valorică a metodologiei pedagogice. Dorin Herlo consideră că educaţia are nevoie să dea tinerilor noi tipuri de deprinderi: ”*introducerea TIC nu vizează numai familiarizarea educabililor cu prelucrarea informaţiilor, ci şi cu însuşirea unor procese de învăţare mai puţin pasive şi mai autonome*”. Totodată, afirmă D. Herlo, ”*sistemul educaţional trebuie să formeze o nouă cultură a informaţiei şi a comunicării, tot atât de necesară unui cetăţean european ca şi cultura civică*”. Este interesat de analiza domeniului educaţional dincolo de perceptele canonice, participând la proiecte experimentale care să-i confirme opţiunile. Consideră pedagogia un domeniu al cunoaşterii, ale cărei preocupări trec dincolo de realităţile şcolare în spaţiul public, vizând educaţia permanentă a individului, integrabil în noile paradigme comportamentale şi atitudinale europene.

Dorin Herlo are preocupări legate de implementarea unora dintre noile educaţii, cum ar fi „*educaţia consumatorului*” (în cadrul unui proiect european, intitulat „**Dolceta**”), „*educaţia interculturală*”, din perspectiva cărora redimensionează virtuţile ştiinţelor educaţiei, cărora autorul le dă o configuraţie deschisă şi pragmatică. A coordonat ori a colaborat la alte volume, cum ar fi: **O pedagogie pentru învăţământul primar** (2005), **Aspecte privind cercetarea pedagogică** (2007), **Comunicarea în educaţie** (2007).

În calitate de coleg, împărtăşim opinii şi colaborăm în ceea ce priveşte temeinicia administraţiei instituţionale, perfecţionarea profesională prin grade didactice, promovarea tehnicilor interactive de învăţare şi a procedurilor specifice gândirii critice. Am resimţit credinţa tot mai mare a profesorului în necesitatea promovării cu încredere a tehnologiilor de comunicare în învăţământ, de implicare a elevilor şi studenţilor în

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[4] Lucrări reprezentative: **cărţile**: “*Didactica*”, ”*Tehnologie informaţională computerizată*”, “*Asupra curriculum-ului educaţional*”, ”*Instruire asistată de calculator în chimie*”, ”*Metodologie educaţională*”, “*Formarea iniţială a cadrelor didactice*”; **software-ul educaţional brevetat de ORDA** – ”*Introducere în studiul hidrocarburilor*”, ”*Alchene*”, ”*Arene*”; **lucrările ştiinţifice**: ”*Tehnologie informaţională şi educaţională*”, ”*Învăţarea activă*” (din CV).

valorificarea acestei importante resurse educaționale. Particularitatea textelor elaborate de Dorin Herlo constă în rigoarea argumentației, claritatea discursului și justificarea logică și coerentă a aserțiunilor. În relațiile didactice cu studenții și profesorii din preuniversitar, își respectă condiția de profesor, fiind cald în exigență, riguros și ironic în indulgență.

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GABRIELA KELEMEN (n. 10 aug. 1959, Arad), absolventă a Liceului Pedagogic din Arad, este licențiată a Facultății de Teologie Ortodoxă- Didactică din cadrul Universității Aurel Vlaicu din Arad. După o experiență managerială în învățământul preuniversitar, trece în învățământul superior, parcurgând treptele de promovare universitară în cadrul Facultății de Științe ale Educației, Psihologie și Asistență Socială a Universității ”Aurel Vlaicu” din Arad. Obține doctoratul în domeniul științelor educației la Universitatea „Babeș-Bolyai” din Cluj-Napoca, sub coordonarea științifică a prof. dr. Vasile Chiș, cu teza „**Pedagogia supradotării. Identificarea și educarea copiilor supradotați**” (2008).

A publicat volume de autor și cursuri universitare (actualmente are titlul de conferențiar, fiind Director al Departamentului de Pedagogiei, Psihologie și Asistență Socială), dintre care menționăm: „**Pedagogia preșcolară**” (2007), „**Psihopedagogia jocului**” (2010), „**Metodica activităților cultural-civice și recreative**” (2010), „**Metodica educării limbajului**” (2012), „**Pedagogia școlară și preșcolară**” (2013) etc. În aceeași ordine, menționăm volumele publicate în colaborare, cum ar fi: **Psihologia copilului, Didactica învățământului preșcolar, Metodica activităților instructiv-educative în grădiniță**, la care se adaugă o serie de studii și articole, publicate în reviste de impact din țară și străinătate (actualmente fiind editor-șef al revistei **Educația-Plus,** înregistrată în vreo 6 baze internaționale de date și clasificată în categoria **B+**).

Problematica diversă a educației a devenit sursă de interes profesional pentru Gabriela Kelemen, care are ambiția de a limpezi, pentru sine și pentru studenți, cât mai atent semnificația didactică a acesteia. A tratat chestiuni legate de psihologia copilului, de creativitate, de consiliere psihopedagogică, de pedagogie socială și cele derivate din ceea ce unii pedagogi numesc „științele educației”. Excelentă este în zona didactică a învățământului preșcolar și a educației timpurii, valorificând o temeinică experiență profesională și o expertiză sistematică de calitate, dobândită în activitatea efectivă din învățământul preuniversitar. Ca teoretician al educației, are o atitudine modernă, reflectând asupra documentelor curiculare și adoptând spiritul acestora. Dispune de capacitate de selecție și de o viziune unitară asupra fațetelor variate ale modelelor de organizare a învățării. Afirmam, într-o Prefață la volumul „**Pedagogia învățământului primar și preșcola**r” (2010) următoarele: Gabriela Kelemen „*este un ambițios, care ascunde sub faldurile sale atitudinale un orgoliu, asemănător unui viciu frumos*”. Ambiția se măsoară în virtuțile pe care un om le degajează pentru a se depăși într-o aspirație generoasă spre împlinirea orgoliului. Acest volum urmează altora, cu problematică specifică, începând cu „*Universul copilăriei*” (2003) și continuând cu pasiunea pentru ”*Metodica activităților*

instructiv-educative în grădiniță” (2009), pentru ”*Metodica activităților culturale, civice și recreative*” (2010), pentru ”*Copiii cu dificultăți de învățare*” (2012), pentru ”*Pedagogia supradotării*” (2008), pentru ”*Pedagogia preșcolară*” (2008), pentru ”*Consilierea școlară*” (2011), pentru ”*Psihopedagogia jocului*” (2012), pentru ”*Psihologia copilului*” (2012), pentru ”*Metodica educării limbajului*” (2012), și încheind cu un volum, oarecum sintetic, despre cuprinderea într-o structură coerentă a problematicii învățământului primar și deopotrivă preșcolar, din perspectivă didactică, intitulat ”**Pedagogia școlară și preșcolară**”. Structural, volumul are 12 capitole, după cum urmează: **Importanța obiectului de studiu** Pedagogia învățământului preșcolar și primar**; Cunoașterea copilului; Cunoașterea structurii și dinamicii personalității copilului preșcolar și școlar mic; Instituții: Grădinița de copii și școala (primară); Împlementarea curriculumului la nivel preșcolar/primar; Proiectarea didactică; Evaluarea în învățământul preșcolar/primar; Metode folosite în învățământul preșcolar/primar; Normativitate în procesul de învățământ preșcolar și primar; Jocul; Parteneriatul grădiniță - școală – familie; Personalitatea cadrului didactic**.”

Dorind să ardă etape, manifestă curiozitate științifică, realizează studii pentru reviste din străinătate, se implică în strategii de îmbunătățire a procesului de învățământ, cooperează cu instituțiile de învățământ preuniversitar, ca o interfață pentru operaționalizarea ideilor pedagogice și de educație.

Este evident că Gabriela Kelemen are plăcerea apariției publice, cu volume cât mai multe, în stare să-i satisfacă aspirația spre vizibilitate. Dispune de tenacitate și ambiție intelectuală, este curioasă, dorind să aibă opinii despre cât mai multe aspecte cu care se intersectează în cariera profesională.

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ALINA ROMAN (n. 2 dec. 1971, Arad) este absolventă a Liceului Pedagogic din Arad (1990), apoi licențiată a Facultății de Istorie și Filozofie, specializarea sociopsihopedagogie, a Universității „Babeș-Bolyai” din Cluj-Napoca, după care a finalizat un doctorat în științele educației, sub coordonarea prof. dr. Miron Ionescu, cu teza „**Evaluare și autoevaluare la institutori**” (2004). Este conferențiar (și actualmente decan) al Facultății de Științe ale Educației, Psihologie și Asistență Socială din cadrul Universității „Aurel Vlaicu” din Arad. Are preocupări științifice referitoare la implementarea programelor de educație interculturală, a formării cadrelor didactice, precum și a organizării practicii pedagogice de specialitate. Alina Roman a publicat volume de autor („**Evaluare și autoevaluare. Competențe, atitudini, practici**”, 2008) și „**Societate, educație, umanizare. Abordări sociopedagogice ale clasei de elevi**” (2008), precum și volume în colaborare și coordonare: „**Labirintul evaluării didactice**” (colab., 2005), „**Comunicarea în educație**” (colab., 2006), „**Elemente de psihologia educației**” (colab., 2007), ”**Dimensiuni psihologice ale învățării**” (colab, 2009). Acestora li se adaugă studii și articole de specialitate, precum și derularea unor proiecte educaționale cu finanțare europeană. Preocuparea tematică fundamentală a Alinei Roman este **evaluarea**, activitate didactică pusă în relație cu „*legitimitatea și oportunitatea reconceptualizării*” acestui moment esențial al procesului de

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învățare. Autoarea împărtășește definirile și conceptualizările curente despre evaluare și autoevaluare, tipologia, precum și structura acestei importante acțiuni didactice. Evaluarea este integrată relației „*predare-învățare-evaluare*: „*relația predare-învățare-evaluare este formativă și formatoare, dezvoltând, în esența ei, un proces complex, prin care educabilul devine un actor activ al propriului său proces de formare, dezvoltându-se competențe, abilități, priceperi și deprinderi de învățare*". Funcționarea corespunzătoare a acestei relații generează achiziționarea unor strategii personale de autoformare și deopotrivă de autoevaluare. Se susține valoarea socială a evaluării școlare, având în vedere că „*fiecare performanță a elevului este rezultatul unei sinteze de factori, de la cei individuali la cei sociali*". De altă parte, evaluarea întreține o puternică relație socială, oficializată și chiar reglementată juridic. Dorin Herlo, prefațatorul volumului „**Labirintul evaluării didactice**", apreciază că autoarea „*propune o regândire a relației profesor-elev, ca poli centrali implicați direct în actul evaluării, în termeni actuali: alți protagoniști, altă filosofie de viață, alte realități economice și sociale, alte orizonturi de aspirație și posibilități de împlinire*".

Pasionată de reflecția asupra dinamicii educației în lumea contemporană, în câteva studii se referă la problematica postmodernității „*ca un curent inovator prin intermediul căruia se dorește să se depășească modelele tradiționale, raționale, explicite de tipul modelărilor cauzale și ale stereotipiilor*" (2013). Din punct de vedere evaluativ, în pedagogia actuală se urmărește „*un savoir al formării de competențe dinamice nu statice, al implementării unor cogniții…al comprehensiunii valențelor multiple de dezvoltare a personalității umane pe parcursul întregii vieți*".

Alina Roman dispune de o temeinică pregătire pedagogică, intuind cu fler și obiectivitate problematica educațională și aspectele didactice ale acesteia. Particularitatea scrisului său constă în organizarea textului într-o structură coerentă, folosind un limbaj clar, corect și atent semantizat până la nuanțe.

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Along two full professors (**Dorin HERLO, Anton ILICA**), two associate professors (**Gabriela KELEMEN**, **Alina ROMAN**), the Faculty of Educational Sciences, psychology and Social Work has also a few young assistant professors with much intellectual availability and many aspirations towards "*the great pedagogical community*": **Evelina BALAS, Camelia Nadia BRAN, Anca EGERĂU**. Around the State University of Arad is centred a genuine *SCHOOL OF PEDAGOGY*, based on scientific atmosphere, autonomous thinking, writing and re-writing the contemporary pedagogical discourse, and also based on the coherence of a vision on educational and didactic way of thinking.

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PARAGOGY. A NEW THEORY IN EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

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Abstract: *The concept of „paragogy", appeared in the first decade of the 21st century, it's a new in-comer in educational sciences. Paragogy came to characterize the critical study and practice of peer-learning (literally, "para-" alongside, "-gogy" leading, here adapting the classical concept of „pedagogy" and the recent notion of „andragogy" to a peer-learning context). Paragogy addresses the challenge of peer-producing a useful and supportive context for self-directed learning, based on connectivism between peers in the digital era. This mean creating "wisdom" starting from "data", "information" and "knowledge". So, paragogy deals with a very important challenge, that of analyzing and co-creating the educational environment as a whole by the peers, which share their learning situations and experiences benefiting of information technology.*

Keywords: *paragogy, peer-learning, self-directed learning, peer production of content, connectivism*

Introduction

The 21st century is in a constant change and we must to have open minds to "the new culture of learning". In their book "A new culture of learning" (2011), Douglas Thomas and John Seely Brown [1] pursue an understanding of how the forces of change, and emerging waves of interest associated with these forces, inspire and invite us to imagine a future of learning that is as powerful as it is optimistic.

They pointed out that our understanding of what constitutes „a new culture of learning" is based on several basic assumptions about the world and how learning occurs such as:

- The *world is changing faster* than ever and *our skill sets* have a *shorter life;*
- The *world is* getting more *connected* that ever before;
- In this connected world, *mentorship* takes on new importance and meaning;
- Challenges we face are multi-faceted requiring *systems thinking* & *socio-technical sensibilities*;
- Skills are important but so are *mind sets* and *dispositions*;
- *Innovation* is more important than ever – but turns on our ability *to cultivate imagination*;
- *Play* is the basis for cultivating imagination and innovation.
- *Understanding play* is critical to *understanding learning*;

• A new culture of learning needs to *leverage social & technical infrastructures* in new ways;

Taking in consideration all these basic assumptions, we can already propose "submersion" in concept of *paragogy.*Highlighting the fast paced nature of the web, Thomas and Seely-Brown (2011) suggest that *peer learning* can be both timely and transient. They show that never before has access to information and people been so easy and so widespread, and that we *make connections* with people who can help us manage, organize, disseminate and make sense of the resources. Such *interconnectedness* and *willingness to share* creates a new kind of *peer mentoring* that operates at multiple levels and many degrees of expertise, supporting learning in all its complexity.

In the digital age both students as well as educators we are a species of learner who can see, hear, and speak „through walls" and around the planet because information is what gives us experience meaning and we do not merely consume the information. Our halls and seminar rooms — what they look like, how the furniture is arranged, what teachers and students do, what is taught, how it is taught, and why — are all modelled after old and outdated stories that are still being told by our culture. We must change these stories and tell new ones, based on a new world, a world of information, an unpredictable future, almost unlimited opportunities, a new kind of student, and compelling new learning experiences that have never been possible before.

It must to search and try to understand the new tendencies of a new culture of learning of which part is *paragogy (peer learning)* associated with *connectivism.*

Paragogy. A new theory for informational society

The term *paragogy,* as it proposed by his founders Corneli and Danoff [2,3], it use to characterize the critical study and practice of *peer learning* (literally, "para-" alongside, "-gogy" leading, here adapting the classical concept of *pedagogy* and the recent notion of *andragogy* to a peer learning context).

Paragogy is defined in contradistinction to another neologism, *andragogy* by turning Malcolm Knowles [4] principles of adult education, by 90 degrees. Knowles's five principles of andragogy being:

(1) that adult learners are self-directed;
(2) that they bring a wealth of experience to the educational setting;
(3) that they enter educational settings ready to learn;
(4) that they are problem-centered in their learning; and
(5) that they are best motivated by internal factors.

paragogy adjusts each one of Knowles's five principles to the *peer-based learning context.*

Paragogy principles were adjusted because paragogy deals with a very different challenge, that of *analyzing and co-creating the educational environment as a whole.*

The five paragogical principles [5] are:

1. Context as a decentered center. „For learning design in a peer-to-peer context, understanding the learner's self-concept - in particular, whether they see themselves as self-directed or not - may be less important than understanding the concept of „shared context in motion".'' This principle stresses the importance of understanding the idea of shared context in motion. The idea of „shared context in motion" can help us think about how a context constrains or supports different types of (inter-)actions, and also about how we (re-)shape the contexts we find ourselves in.

Nonaka and Toyama [6] take this idea and apply it to knowledge creation. They suggest that knowledge is created as people interact over time in a shared context, in a process that can be broken up into repeated phases they call Socialisation, Externalisation, Combination, and Internalisation (SECI). In simple terms, any given phase can be understood in terms of „what I do", „what we do", „how we do it", and „what it's all about".

This first paragogical principle says that instead of focusing on how learners see themselves (e.g. as „self-directed" or „dependent" or something else), we should be asking how the learning context shapes what learners are actually able to do. Note that this includes looking at ways in which learners can contribute to reshaping the learning context.

Instead of simply saying „so-and-so lacks the required understanding of learning, so I need to help them", a paragogue would also look for contextual features of the learning environment that are „blocking" self-directed learning. These may include features that block the ability of learners to make adjustments to the environment on their own behalf, or which limit their ability to ask for help.

In paragogy, it recognize that are not merely teachers or learners, but are partners who actually co-creating „the environment", the learning context as a whole. At a minimum, a learning environment contains:

(a) the learner;

(b) a „setting" or a „space" wherein the learner acts, using tools and devices, collecting and interpreting information, interacting perhaps with others, etc.

Therefore, in the paragogical view, the environment should not be taken as "given" but should instead be viewed as co-created by peers.

2. Meta-learning as a font of knowledge. „We all have a lot to learn about learning." Here we are concerned both with efforts to "learn how to learn", and efforts to learn how to support others in their learning efforts. From the other perspective, in a proper analytics of a learning landscape we ought to ask, as well: what learning? and why this learning?

3. Peers are equals, but different. „The learner mustn't seek only to confirm what they already know, and must therefore confront and make sense of difference as part of the learning experience." Clearly, differences pose challenges but these are worth grappling with.

Firstly, for psychological reasons: in many domains feedback is only available from peers (but of course, peer learning can be relevant in domains like computer programming, where automatic feedback does exist).

Secondly, there are philosophical or political reasons to affirm difference. In a peer learning space, which aims to provide „learning for everyone, by everyone, about almost anything", it can hardly avoid developing an „understanding of social relations without domination in which persons live together in relations of mediation among strangers."[7]

From another point of view, for the peers to work in a small closed group, versus the choice to work as a group embedded within a larger commons, rise the question: how much difference do we want to confront while engaging with the learning process?

4. Learning is distributed and nonlinear. „Side-tracking is OK, but dissipation isn't likely to work. Part of paragogy is learning how to find one's way around a given social field." Learning does not go in a straight line [8]. In particular, involvement in co-creating the learning context becomes an important "strand" in the paragogical understanding of peer learning and for the peers there are also some issues and requirements such as: the potential objects of peer learning must be modular (distributed and nonlinear); the modules be small in size; the integration of them into peer learning process must run at a fairly intellectual effort.

5. Realize the dream, then wake up! „Paragogy is the art of fulfilling motivations when this is possible, and then going on to the next thing." But without clear goals, there will be nothing to realize. Without critical thinking about goals (leading us to change them), learning is a mostly passive game. Paragogy calls for a strategy of "deliberate practice" [9].

The paragogy principles provide guidelines on best practices for building successful peer learning experiences and, to implement these principles, the authors of this theory proposed four steps that could be taken into account:

   i. Review what was supposed to happen (training plans).
  ii. Establish what happened.
 iii. Determine what was right or wrong with what happened.
  iv. Determine how the task should be done differently the next time.

The stated purpose of its is to „identify strengths and shortcomings in unit planning, preparation, and execution, and guide leaders to accept responsibility for shortcomings and produce a fix."

On the other hand, it is important to note that while one person typically plays the role of evaluator in such a review, the review itself happens among peers, and examines the learning unit as a whole.

Our approach about *peer learning* is in a sense of something we all know how to do, but can't always do well. Intuitively, there are bound to be difficulties for a group of peers studying a subject together, outside a traditional classroom or without a teacher. Indeed, peer learning is different from other forms of group effort, the proverbial "barnraising" for example, in which the persons involved can be presumed to know how to build barns – or at least to know someone who knows, and stand ready to take orders. Typically, peers are not experts in learning, didactics, or in the subject

they are studying, and are faced with multiple difficulties associated with putting together knowledge about the subject, assembling a suitable learning strategy, and communicating with one another.

In pedagogy and andragogy seems to be that an educator or facilitator is part of the picture. In paragogy (peer-based setting), that may not be the case: we can easily find examples of learning environments where there is no „teacher" in the „classroom"; where, for example, the task of facilitation is shared among all participants or even encoded in the learning materials or supportive technologies. Not that one way is more desirable than another: it simply mean to highlight the fact that the most basic features of a given learning environment will influence everything else. In particular, it seems to us that a move to the more „horizontal" regime of paragogy can often occur within pedagogy or andragogy, e.g. when inviting participants to interact; and vice versa, a move to a more „vertical" regime of pedagogy or andragogy is possible within paragogy.

The fact that „παραγωγή" is a word in Greek meaning "production" shall not dissuade us from this new usage in English, knowing that nowadays the learning is student-centered learning and this means that is frequently demanded to be at the heart of „peer production" of the students and professors.

The links between paragogy and peer production were explained. As Phillip Schmidt [10] writes: „Upon closer inspection of commons-based peer production communities, we find learning at their core". Conversely, in the conclusion to „Education and Mind in the Knowledge Age", Carl Bereiter [11] writes: „Schools are places where knowledge creation can go on, but where it does not have to be market driven or competitive. ...Knowledge creation in schools is the creation of knowledge by students for their own use. ...To the extent that knowledge created in schools has value beyond the classroom where it was created, it enters into a barter economy."

The notion of „paragogy" relates to the *peer production of learning* but as Corneli (2012) warns, such an agenda may be at odds with established educational systems in some respects, and may even be opposed by some. This is due to the challenge that „students teaching themselves" might pose to the privileged knowledge and power structures many formal educational institutions continue to hold in such high regard.

In essence, Corneli and Danoff's paragogy thesis is premised on the argument that online environments are now sufficiently developed to support *peer production of content* which can be shared freely and widely, and can promote learning for all within any given community.

But, at the same time, presenting a challenge in terms of the quality, reliability and provenance of content. The user generated content currently available on the web has been criticised for its inconsistent quality [12] and its potential to encourage

plagiarism, piracy and a host of other nefarious practices [13]. User generated content has also attracted criticism over issues of mediocrity, lack of accuracy and superficial scholarship [14,15]. Notwithstanding, many are now turning to web based user generated content to educate themselves and to share their learning. In many ways, the ability to use personal technologies to create, organise, share and repurpose content, in many formats across the global web environment has become a democratising, liberating factor in education.

There are now a variety of new ways we can create peer networks, learn from each other and share our ideas. In so doing, we are building what Illich (1971) once termed „the learning webs" [16] that will enable each of us to defines ourselves by both learning, and contributing to the learning of others.

Reflecting on education-relevant potential of paragogy, Martin Weller [17] writes: "It is [...] no easy task to adopt a decentralised model, since it will require massive procedural, economic and professional change in higher education". It would argue that what's new here is not simply a disruptive force in the traditional educational landscape: there is also a compelling chance to understand learning better. It hope that further developments in paragogy can contribute to this process in a practical way.

The founders of paragogy encourage the research community to test their ideas in practice of various forms and come with some proposals for paragogical design in its implementation:

▪ Establish a group consensus for expectations/goals/social contract of the course and how each of them should be evaluated at its conclusion.

▪ Have learners designate learning goals that they then commit to stick with.

▪ Formalize a process for assisting peers (e.g. responding to questions, giving feedback on publicly posted work).

▪ Develop explicit pathways for learner feedback to translate into changes to the learning environment.

These could be for educational scientists, the milestones to deepen and research on this new path of educational sciences.

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MODEL FOR THE SCA CERTIFICATION - STUDENT CERTIFICATION ASSESSMENT

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The Project "**PERFORMER**" provides the Certification of skills acquired by students of the Master

"**PSIHOPEDAGOGIA EDUCAȚIEI TIMPURII și a ȘCOLARITĂȚII MICI**

EDUCATIONAL PSICOLOGY of PRESCHOOL and PRIMARY SCHOOL"

Certification of skills is determined according to the Model I.S.P.E.F. that issued the *SCA Certification – Student Certification Assessment*

Below are illustrated the guideline of *SCA Certification*.

The Project "**PERFORMER**" - „*Perspective ale formării prin masterat a specialiştilor în domeniul educaţiei timpurii şi a şcolarităţii mici la un nivel calitativ superior"*

THE MODEL FOR THE SCA CERTIFICATION STUDENT CERTIFICATION ASSESSMENT – OF MASTER AND HIGH QUALITY COURSE

is structured on the following topics **:**

Chapter 1:

STRUCTURE OF THE MASTER/HIGH QUALITY TRAINING COURSE

Chapter 2:

THE MASTER/ HIGH QUALITY TRAINING COURSE QUALIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES

Chapter 3:

COMPETENCES DESCRIPTIONS IN MASTER DISCIPLINES

Chapter 4:

THE EVALUATION OF MASTER DISCIPLINE TEACHER

Chapter 5:

THE I.S.P.E.F. EVALUATION BASED ON COMPETENCE LEVELS

Chapter 6:

THE EVALUATION FOR THE SCA – STUDENT CERTIFICATION ASSESSMENT

Chapter 7

SCORE IN THE EVALUATION FOR THE SCA CERTIFICATION

Chapter 8:

MASTER/COURSE COMPETENCES QUALIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION

Chapter 1:

STRUCTURE OF THE MASTER/HIGH QUALITY TRAINING COURSE

The I.S.P.E.F. Model of University Master or professional high quality training course at International level is structured on the following education Areas:

1) FACE-TO-FACE Area with LESSONS in CLASSROOM/SEMINARS
About THEORICAL-SCIENTIFIC and TECHNICAL-PRACTICAL

2) E-LEARNING and INTERNET RESEARCH Area
About THEORICAL-SCIENTIFIC and TECHNICAL-PRACTICAL themes
With the following activities:

a) study of disciplinary concepts and themes
b)internet research about studies and researches related to the disciplinary subject
c) students' educational path monitoring in information technology network

3) PROFESSIONAL INTERNSHIP AND TRAINEESHIP Area
    With the following activities:
a) internship in a professional environment
b) comparison, coordination and monitoring in the educating community
c) self-training in groups(4-12 students) or with the field professional.

4) DOCUMENTATION AND EDUCATIONAL PATH REVIEW Area.
FINAL REPORT REDACTION
a) Documentation, general review and final report redaction,
b) Documentation and review of each discipline studied in the first Master year
c) Documentation and review of each discipline studied in the second Master year

Chapter 2:

QUALIFICATION AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES OF THE MASTER/ HIGH QUALITY TRAINING COURSE

2.1.MASTER/COURSE QUALIFICATION PROFILE

The Master/Course qualification, certified by I.S.P.E.F., attests the training path of the specialized professional, that is able to analyze critically, to think over and consequently to intervene in working environment for which he has achieved the qualification; in this way he/she contributes to the qualitative development of the Social Knowledge Community and to his/her self-realization in the socio-economic reality.

Moreover, the students that achieve the Master qualification with the I.S.P.E.F. Certification has got a knowledge, abilities and theoretical-scientific and technical-professional competences that allow to solve specific professional problems of the Societies-Institutes-Companies the University cooperate with.

Finally, the students that achieve the Master/Course qualification with the I.S.P.E.F. Certification is well prepared to do technical-practical intervention, to use professional tools, to elaborate verifications and proposals aimed at satisfying the working, social and cultural contexts requests.

2.2. COMPETENCES ACQUIRED DURING THE MASTER/COURSE

There are three different kinds of competences and abilities acquired during the Master/Course:
- Transversal skills and competences;
- General professional competences and skills;
- Specific professional competences and skills

Transversal skills and competences;

The professional transversal competences (informal and non formal) that will be developed in the Master/Course are the following:

• Competence in analyze and summarize information-methodologies-strategies-techniques from different sources and knowledge tools, different theoretic models for the realization and the evaluation of interventions in the professional Master area;

• Planning, research, experimentation and innovation skills with new ideas and proposals that contribute to the improvement of system and services quality in the Master working environment.

• Competences in decision-making, adapting the professional interventions to the working situations and the local social context;

• self-management and autonomy in doing skills;

• Competences in the use of new information and communication technologies in order to support and develop efficient and effective interventions;

• Ability in cooperation work and in multidisciplinary groups, that allows the realization of concrete proposals that give specific professional solutions to the interventions in the Master working environment.

• Professional ability in coordination, promotion, decision-making and professional experiences evaluation for an effective improvement of services and quality of the intervention realized in the working environment.

General Disciplinary Competences and Skills

The general disciplinary competences and skills that will be developed during the Master are the following:

• Competences for the creation of professional interventions able to solve the problems related to the world of work and to the local Social Community.

• Competences for the development of professional actions able to create spaces and active cooperation strategies in the working environment, knowing how to manage the organizational strategies and the mediation abilities, in order to have an adequate interaction among the actors of the socio-economic-cultural processes;

• Competences in using the new professional and technical instruments of the Knowledge Society, by planning and regulating the operational interventions in the Master working environment

• Ability in specialization in interventions methods and techniques for the professional development in the working reality and in the Social Community;

• Ability in applying the professional strategies acquired in the Master, with an adequate competence of tools and techniques that support the conception, the application and the evaluation of working proposals efficient and effective in the Societies-Institutions-Companies of the local context.

• Ability in the promotion of actions that create synergy in relation to local Societies-Institutions-Companies projects, programs and strategic planning aimed at involving professionals of different socio-economic realities, through the creation of work cooperation networks.

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Specific Disciplinary Competences and Skills

The disciplinary abilities and competences that will be developed specifically during the Master are

the following:

1) competences in the use of technical/professional methodologies and professional interventions related to the Master qualification;

2) Professional skills and consolidation of theoretical concepts and operational instruments in technical-professional, methodological-applicational,socio-organizational,communicational-relational and innovation field ,

3) Specific skills/competences in the development and valorization of potentialities and professional capabilities in the local Societies-Institutions-Companies, used to coordinate and realize:

- interventions and services in the working environment, in the professionalism qualified by the Master;

- work support, tutorial assistance, coordination of team work and practice exercises in the field qualified by the Master;

- planning and innovating activities at local Societies-Institutions-Companies level and also at Social Community Network level;

- professional activities of coordination, planning, monitoring and interventions evaluation;

4) Ability in recognition of requests and offers of professional performances of local Societies-Institutions-Companies and evaluation of real opportunities to enter the world of work.

5) Competences in work choices finding and in analysis of the local Societies-Institutions-Companies educational needs for the creation of professional intervention strategies according to the service quality in order to optimize human resources, organizational system, structures and the technical tools.

Chapter 3

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE MASTER DISCIPLINE COMPETENCIES

The Disciplines have to be structured as follows:
- in modules per Teaching Units,
- personalized with further information analysis, research activities and experimentations on the basis of each student's training path.
The results to be achieved in each Subject are defined in this way:
- Disciplinary Competencies
- Cross Competences
- Competence Levels.

AN EXAMPLE OF A TEACHING UNIT COMPETENCIES STRUCTURED

UNIT 1: OBSERVATION/LISTENING OF THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES
1.1. *Observation/ Listening models*
1.2. *Acquisition of an observation/listening attitude*
1.3. *Observation/Listening methodological criteria*
1.4. *Observation/Listening transcription criteria*
1.5. *Observation/Listening: an evaluative tool for educational processes*

DISCIPLINARY COMPETENCIES AND COMPETENCE LEVELS:
- Acquisition of the **model for a right transcription** of the Observation/Listening as a scientific method of the Science of Education
- Acquisition of the **conceptual scheme** and **tool** for a right compilation of the Observation/Learning
- Realization of systematic Observations/ Listening in educational and scholastic environments
- Analysis of the teaching activities and of teaching-learning relation through the correct use of the model and the acquired tool
- **Interpretation and evaluation of results and educational processes** identified by using the systematic Observations/ Listening

Competence Levels (also defined as "LEARNING LEVELS"[1]):
5. Scientifically coherent, efficient and significant interpretations and evaluations of systematic Observations/Listening

4. Scientifically adequate interpretations and evaluations of systematic Observations/Listening without coherence relations, efficiency and significance with the didactic activity and the teaching-learning activities

3. Scientifically correct realization of systematic Observations/Listening that are not efficient for an interpretation and evaluation of results and processes identified

2. Complete realization of systematic Observations/Listening, but not accurately and in details described
1. Incomplete realization of systematic Observations/Listening
0. Lack of systematic Observations/Listening realizations

CROSS COMPETENCES AND COMPETENCE LEVELS:
Acquisition of a *psychic awareness that allows to perceive and interpret the reality building intervention educational and psycho pedagogical paths*, through:

A. the Acquisition of the ability in participating efficiently and significantly inside the educational environment, through:

1) the acquisition of psychic competence of *empathy in the interpersonal relationships;*

2) the acquisition of competence in analyzing and scientific thinking over about the teaching activities, detailed and correctly described

B. Acquisition of the ability in *distinguishing facts from opinions,* understanding:

1) meaning and functions of students' behavior and communication;

2) the educational methods and teachers' ability in interpretation-evaluation.

Competence Levels (also defined as "LEARNING LEVELS"[1]):

5. Educational and psychopedagogical interventions that are coherent, efficient and significant through systematic Observations/Listening, characterized by the empathic and reflective participation of the Teacher

4. Educational and psychopedagogical interventions that are coherent, efficient and significant through systematic Observations/Listening, without a an empathic/reflective participation of the Professor

3. Scientifically correct transcription of educational and psychopedagogical interventions through systematic Observations/Listening, but not efficient from an interpretation and result processes evaluation point of view

2. complete transcript of educational and psychopedagogical interventions through systematic Observations-Listening that are not accurately described

1. Incomplete transcript of educational and psychopedagogical interventions through systematic Observations-Listening

0. Lack of educational and psychopedagogical interventions through systematic Observations-Listening

I.S.P.E.F. will certify the competencies acquired by each student in the disciplines and the final report of the Master with an evaluation system made of six competence levels, as explained below:

[1] Note: From now the term "Competence Level" will be used as a synonym of "Learning Level"

Chapter 4

THE EVALUATION OF THE MASTER/COURSE DISCIPLINE TEACHER

The Evaluation of the University teacher, that is the responsible for the Master Discipline, is determined through the realization of the following four phases, and the consequent compilation of the following four tables:

1) **Discipline structured in Teaching Units** through the compilation of Table 1: characterized by the Discipline division into Teaching Units, to which the Teacher must assign the "Training Hours" (Courses and Seminars,E-Learning,Internship and Documents) and the percentage value of each Teaching Unit on the basis of its

relevance in the learning process and in the competencies development that the students must acquire in the specific Master Discipline.

Table 1

DISCIPLINE "………………………………………………………" ECTs ….. **Master "……………………………………………………"** **University "…………………………………………………"** Academic Year 20…/20…		
DISCIPLINE TEACHING UNITS	*Training HOURS* Course and seminars, E-Learning, Internship and Documents	*% ASSIGNED PERCENTAGE VALUE*
1.		
2.		
3.		
4. …….		
TOTAL	**125 hours**	**100 %**

The **percentage value of each Teaching Unit** s defined by the Master Discipline Teacher; the **Discipline Value** instead,-indicated in ECTs, is defined in the University Master Regulation who responsible is the Master Manager.

2) **Training Path definition** through the compilation of Table2: characterized by the division-made by the University Teacher-of each Teaching Unit in **Parts** and **Dimensions** that take part of the Training Path of the Master Discipline, as presented in the following table:

Table 2

DISCIPLINE TRAINING PATH
"………………………………………………………………………………"
TEACHING UNIT 1. …………………………………………………………… ♦   ………………………… ♦   ………………………… ♦   ………………………… ♦   …………………………
TEACHING UNIT 2. …………………………………………………………… - ………………………… - ………………………… - …………………………
TEACHING UNIT 3. …………………………………… *A.* …………………………… - ……………………… - ……………………… - ……………………… *B.* …………………………………………… - ………………………………………………………… - ………………………………………………………… - ………………………………………………………… - ………………………………………………………… *C.* …………………………………………… - ………………………………………………… - ………………………………………………… - …………………………………………………

| *TEACHING UNIT 4.* ……………………………………………………
  A. ……………………………………………………

  B. ……………………………………………………
  - …………………………
  - …………………………
  - ………………………… |

Therefore, every Master Discipline is structured by the University Teacher on the basis of TEACHING UNITS, that must be organized on the basis of the DIMENSIONS, divided in Dimensions PARTS of the Teaching Units.

So, the structure of each Master Discipline is organized as follows:
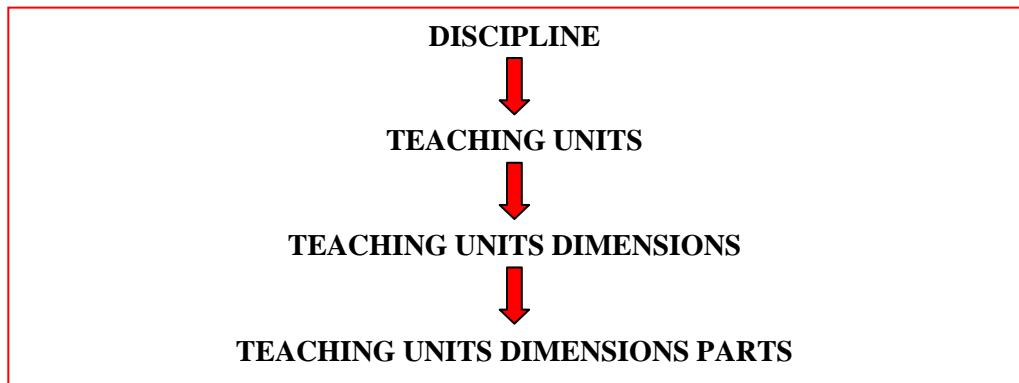
The simplest Teaching Units are those that haven't Dimensions and/or Dimensions Parts of the Teaching Units.

In order to evaluate the competencies acquired in the Master Discipline, the Teacher will do:
- the detailed evaluation starting from the single Dimensions Parts and his activity ;
- then, the evaluation of each Dimension according to the result achieved in all of its Parts;
- the evaluation of each Teaching Unit on the basis of the result achieved in the evaluation of all of its Dimensions;
- finally, the evaluation of the Discipline determined by the sum of the results achieved in each Teaching Unit take part of it.

Each element that is part of this evaluation pyramid will have its own value that will be assigned by the University Teacher depending on the importance of :
- the Teaching Unit compared with all Teaching Units;
- the Dimension of a given teaching Unit compared with all the Dimensions of that Teaching Unit
- Part of a specific Dimension compared with all the Parts of the same Dimension.

3) **Evaluation of each Teaching Unit** through the compilation of Table 3,characterized by the following aspects:
- DESCRIPTION OF THE TEACHING UNIT PARTS AND DIMENSIONS;
- DESCRIPTION OF DISCIPLINARY COMPETENCES;
- EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE for eachPart/Dimension and the assignment of the competence level achieved in the four education types;

- the GENERAL COMPETENCE LEVEL,achieved by the student in each Part/Dimension of the TEACHING UNIT, determined by the average of the levels assigned in the four education types.

Table 3

EVALUATION OF THE TEACHING UNIT "………………………………………………………" OF THE DISCIPLINE "…………………………………………………………"						
DESCRIPTION OF THE TEACHING UNIT PARTS AND DIMENSIONS	DESCRIPTION OF THE LEVEL OF DISCIPLINARY COMPETENCES	EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE				General COMPETENCE LEVEL
		A. COURSE AND SEMINARS Competence Level	B. ELEARNING Competence Level	C. INTERNSHIP Competence Level	D. DOCU_MENTS Competence Level	

If the Teacher has identified and assessed also the Transversal Competences to acquired and developed by the students in the specific Master Discipline, the Table 3 has to be completed by compiling the Table 3bis :

Table 3bis

EVALUATION OF TEACHING UNIT "………………………………………………………" OF THE DISCIPLINE "…………………………………………………………"						
DESCRIPTION OF THE TEACHING UNIT PARTS AND DIMENSIONS	DESCRIPTION OF THE LEVELS OF DISCIPLINARY COMPETENCE	Level of Disciplinary Competence		DESCRIPTION OF TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCES LEVELS	Level of Cross Competence	COMPETENCE LEVEL

In Table 3 bis in addition to the data of table 3 there is:
- the DESCRIPTION OF TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCES;
- the Level of Transversal Competence achieved by the student in each Part/Dimension of the teaching unit ;
-the COMPETENCE LEVEL achieved by the student in each Part/Dimension of the Teaching Unit obtenined averagengin the Level achieved in the Disciplinary Competencies and the Level achieved in the Transversal Competencies.

4) **Assignment of the total score of each Teaching Unit and each Master Discipline** by compiling Tables 4, 5 e 5 bis.

In order to assign the TEACHING UNIT TOTAL SCORE, two operations have to be calculated and they allow the definition of
1)the Level of the acquired Competence (between 0 and 5) in the Teaching Unit, obtained by computing the average of all the Competence Levels assigned for each Part/Dimension of the Teaching Unit. The level value must be included between 0 and 5;

2) the **Teaching Unit Score**, obtained by the product of the "Level of acquired Competence in the Teaching Unit" and the "Teaching Unit value".
The "Teaching Unit value" is presented in Table 1 of this paragraph.
The Teaching Unit value is defined by the Teacher of the Master Discipline.

The EVALUATION OF THE TEACHING UNIT GLOBAL SCORE can be represented as follows in Table 4:

EVALUATION OF THE TEACHING UNIT GLOBAL SCORE	
1) LEVEL OF COMPETENCE ACQUIRED (0 - 5) (average of the Levels of Competence of every Part/Dimension)	..,..
2) TEACHING UNIT POINTS Percentage value of the T.U.. …% x Level of competence acquired	..,.. *..,.... = ..,…..

The GLOBAL SCORE OF THE DISCIPLINE is determined by the compilation of tables 5 and 5bis.

Table 5, that assigns the "COMPETENCE LEVEL IN THE DISCIPLINE", is composed by:
- as much lines as the Teaching Unit that are part of the Discipline and the related scores;

- a line with the Level of Competence (0-5) acquired in the Discipline.
Table 5

The LEVEL OF COMPETENCE OF THE DISCIPLINE is obtained by

DISCIPLINE LEVEL OF COMPETENCE "……………………………………………………………………………."	
DISCIPLINE TEACHING UNITS "………………………………………………"	TEACHING UNITS SCORE
1. "……………………………………………"	…,..
2. "……………………………………………"	.,…
3. "……………………………………………"	.,…
LEVEL OF COMPETENCE IN THE DISCIPLINE	.,…

computing the average of the Points achieved in each Discipline Teaching Unit.

Table 5bis,that assigns the "DISCIPLINE GLOBAL SCORE" is realized through the compilation of the following two aspects:
- LEVEL OF COMPETENCE IN THE DISCIPLINE
- EVALUATION OF THE COMPETENCE IN THE DISCIPLINE
Table 5bis

DISCIPLINE GLOBAL SCORE	
LEVEL OF COMPETENCE IN THE DISCIPLINE	………… ………
EVALUATION OF THE DISCIPLINARY COMPETENCE	………… ………

The Evaluation made by the University Teacher must take in account that, on the basis of the score obtained in the Discipline Competence Level, the student will achieve the following assessment:

less than 2,5 ⟶ the Level of Competence is UNSATISFACTORY,
2,5 - 3,0 ⟶ SLIGHTLY UNSATISFACTORY,
3,0 - 3,5 ⟶ SATISFACTORY,
3,5 - 4,0 ⟶ GOOD
4,0 - 4,5 ⟶ EXCELLENT
4,5 - 5,0 ⟶ BRILLIANT.
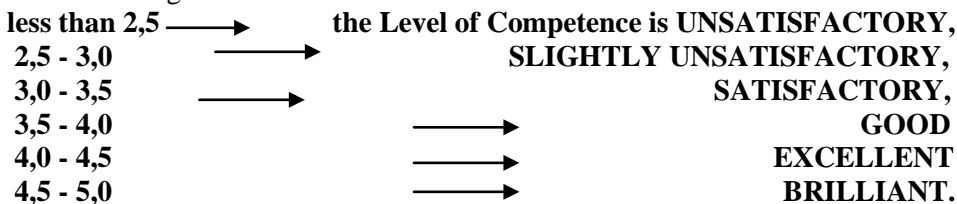
The grade will asigned by the Discipline Teacher according to the evaluation system considered in University and Master Regulations.

Chapter 5

THE I.S.P.E.F. ASSESSMENT
ON THE BASIS OF THE COMPETENCE LEVELS

The competence levels are 5, and:

- **0** is the minimum level, there are no documents

- **5** is the maximum level, the documents are completes, significant and efficient**.**

The I.S.P.E.F. evaluation of knowledge, abilities and the acquired competencies in each subject will be realized on the basis of the documents presented in the Master Final Report, by assigning from 0 to 5 points according to the following criteria:

- **0** corresponds to a lack of documents,

- between **0** and **1,5** corresponds to documents that are GRAVELY UNSATISFACTORY in training path and lacking of a professional thinking;

-between **1,5** and **2,5** correspond to documents that are UNSATISFACTORY in training path and/or in the professional thinking;

- between **2,5** and **3,0** corresponds to documents that are SLIGHTLY UNSATISFACTORY in the training path, with an incomplete, poor or lacking of professional thinking;

-between **3,0** and **3,5** corresponds to SATISFACTORY documents, with a professional path consistent with the requests, but realized with a thinking little efficient and significant of the achieved results and the developed processes;

- between **3,5** and **4,0** corresponds to GOOD documents, with complete training path and with reflections characterized by personal considerations that are coherent and well-structured;

- between **4,0** and **4,5** corresponds to EXCELLENT documents of the training path and reflections presented in an efficient and significant way, useful also for the educational context in which he works;

- between **4,5** and **5** corresponds to BRILLIANT documents of the training path and reflections presented in original and scientific way, with right of divulgation [2]

If the points obtained in the evaluation are less than **3,5/5** (in others university assessments it corresponds for example to: 7/10, 21/30, 70/100), in order to achieve the Competencies Certification, the educational activities of that subject will be completed with a consequent improvement of documents and professional thinking.

The general score at the end of the two Master years will be obtained with the sum of the evaluation of each subject.

So, to achieve a positive result it is necessary to have 3,5/5 score or more, so, if the Master would be structured in 24 disciplines, each student could obtain a score between 84 and 120.

These points must be consistent with the system used by the University, so that the student preparing for a degree can achieve an average understandable in the university system of the country where they are given.

[2] Note: If the score obtained is between two different categories (1,5 - of 2,5 – 3,0 – 3,5 – 4.0 – 4,5), must be considered the highest category.

Chapter 6

THE EVALUATION FOR THE CERTIFICATION SCA – STUDENT CERTIFICATION ASSESSMENT

The evaluation for the SCA Certification is determined only by **DOCUMENTS.**

So, won't be evaluate the potential student's professionalism but, on the basis of the documents produced by him, will be evaluate the professionalism developed and acquired by the student in each discipline and in the professional interventions, during:

- the development of his/her training path (**PROCESS EVALUATION**)
- the acquired competencies (**RESULT EVALUATION**)

The evaluation of the training path and the acquired competencies is characterized by **documents (portfolio):**

- **Personal** of the student, about the activity of courses, seminars, e-learning, study on books and researches, internship in training area; this activity is composed by a portfolio containing all the material produced during the semester about the acquired discipline;

- **of the work** carried out in the study discipline by **the student and his/her university colleagues group** (that can be proved with the work groups' meetings reports) and the learning community network.

This Evaluation is structured according to a double analysis and documental verification:

- **QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE DOCUMENTS**, characterized by the verification and analysis of the documents produced during the training path and in the realization of the tasks necessary in order to attend the exam in the University discipline. This evaluation assigns a score from 0 to 3 points on the basis of the competencies demonstrated through the documents produced.

These score will be added to the Qualitative Assessment score, to obtain the **Level of the competence acquired** by the student.

- **QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE DOCUMENTS**, characterized by the analysis and the verification of the documents produced during the training path and in the presentation of results and competencies reached in the university discipline.

This assessment:

- Is characterized by the identification of the following features: significance, effectiveness, coherence and originality exposed in the student's portfolio
- Assigns a score from 0 to 2 points on the basis of the qualitative characteristics of the training path and the results achieved by the student

The evaluation of the SCA Certification is realize by compiling the two following Sheets:

- **UAAD** - **TEACHING UNITS ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE**

The TUAAD Sheet is a specific instrument for the Assessment of the Discipline Teaching Units. The TUAAD Sheet allows to have the Discipline Assessment on the basis of the analysis and the verification of the training path and of the results achieved by the student in each Teaching Unit of the Discipline.

The assessment of each Teaching Units consist of two levels:

- The Documents QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT
- A brief descriptive and synthetic report that highlights the quality (QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT) of the training path and of the results achieved by the student.

- **GAAD - GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE**

The GAAD Sheet is the specific instrument that certifies the positive or negative result in the achievement of the SCA Certification on the basis of the global assessment of training path and results achieved in every Discipline.

The term Discipline is used both to identify the Academic Subjects and High Quality Professional Training Courses

Chapter 7

THE SCORE IN THE EVALUATION FOR THE SCA CERTIFICATION

The University Qualification can be different from the Evaluation I.S.P.E.F. for the Certification, because the I.S.P.E.F. Evaluation is based only on the DOCUMENTS PRODUCED in the training path and the results obtained by each student.

Moreover the identification of the level in the positive evaluation made by the University Qualification and by the I.S.P.E.F. Certification can be different.

For example, in order to achieve the Certificate of University Qualification the level 3 ("satisfactory") obtained in each Discipline exam is enough; in order to obtain the I.S.P.E.F. Certification instead, is necessary to obtain at least level 3,5 ("good") in each Master Discipline.

The correct method to use in order to assign the level to each university course is:

1) to **assign a "measure" to each Teaching Unit** for example in the course "Observation-Listening,Research-Action,Scientific Documents" (exposed above, in the paragraph D) there are three Teaching Units: the first one represents the 25% of the score, the second the 35% and the third the 40% of the score.It's obvious that

modifying the "measure", also the importance of that theme in the course changes, transforming also the importance relations among the Units.

2) to **divide the global score into the number of Teaching Units and their measures,** for example if the global score maximum is 100 and the Teaching Units are 3-the first one with the 25% of the measure, the second with the 35% and the third with the 40%-then the first Teaching Unit will be worth 25/100 score, the second 35/100 and the third 40/100

3)to **divide the value of each Teaching Unit into the number of levels of competence** The competence levels are six and they vary from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 5. Each level of competence is associated to the correspondent score (level 0 = 0 score, level 1=1 score,…and level 5=5 score)

On the basis of the previous example-first Teaching Unit 25%,second T.U. 35%,third T.U. 40%-the maximum points in the first Unit will be 25,in the second 35 and in the third 40.So,if the student achieved a competence level =2,0 (2,0 points) for each Teaching Unit, then in the first Teaching Unit he/she would obtain 10 score (25/5x2= 10 score),in the second one 14 score (35/5x2=14) and in the third one 16 score (40/5x2=16).

For a better understanding please read "ATUAD CARD ASSESSMENT CRITERIA" and, in particular the paragraph D5.TEACHING UNIT GLOBAL SCORE-Table 4 and 4bis.

4) to **sum up the points obtained in each Teaching Unit**, for example if the 4^ level has been reached in the first Teaching Unit, the 3^ level in the second ne and the 5^ level in the third one then the following assessment will be obtained: 4x5=20 + 3x7=21 + 5x8=40 81 in the aggregate (=20+21+40).

If the evaluation based on two scales of competence levels (disciplinary competencies and cross competencies)is chosen instead of the one based on one joined scale, the score is determined by:

- arithmetic mean $\left(\dfrac{\text{competenze disciplinari} + \text{competenze trasversali}}{2} \right)$;

- weighted average, on the basis of the measure given to each type of competence:

for example, by assigning the 80% of the points to the disciplinary competencies and the 20% to the cross competencies (these points will vary according to the subject typology) and supposing the student having reached :

- For the first Teaching Unit level 4 in the disciplinary competencies and level 3 in the cross competencies (4 x 0,8(80%) = 3,2 , 3 x 0,2(20%) = 0,6 , Total= 3,8);

- For the second Teaching Unit level 4 for the disciplinary competencies and level 2 for the cross competencies (4 x 0,8 = 3,2; 2 x 0,2= 0,4; Total = 3,6);

- For the third Teaching Unit level 4 in the disciplinary competencies and level 5 in the cross competencies: (4 x 0,8=3,2; 5x0,2= 1; Total = 4,2);

- by using the double scale of levels of competences and the different measures of the competencies we obtain that the evaluation of the three Units is 3,8 x 5 = 19 for

the first one, 3,6 x 7 = 25,2 for the second one and 4,2x8=.33,6 for the third one, 77,8 in the aggregate.

This calculation can appear as a complex one for those who aren't good in numbers and calculations but after using it several times in the practice it will be an easy procedure

It's important to highlight that comparing the result achieved by this type of evaluation and the one implicitly assigned by the Professor, a good correspondence between the points will be obtained. The advantage of this evaluation is that it offers the possibility of a documents comparison with the colleagues and this possibility is not allowed by the Professor subjective implicit evaluation.

5) **to add an evaluation from 0 to 10 on the basis of the coherence-effectiveness-significance-originality-completeness-accuracy of the final documents presented by each student to demonstrate the competencies acquired in the specific subject.**

If the final assessment passes the score 100–that is the maximum score available-then the student will have 100 score "with honors" (and he/she will have the right of publication of the documents produced).

On the basis fo the I.S.P.E.F. evaluation, only the students that will have achieved a score of 90/ 100 in the Master, can access the Ph.D.

Chapter 8

MASTER/COURSE QUALIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION OF COMPETENCIESLA

Achieved all the requirements of the Master, the Director of the Master will take to the Rector, through the Office of the University Secretariat to give to the candidate the Certificates of:

- Professional Qualification,
- Competencies Certification

In order to obtain this, the graduate student has to bring personally the required documents to the University Secretary Office, for the qualification and certification decree, that must be released within 60 days from the day of the student's request.

Then, after the communication of the University Secretary Office, responsible to release titles and qualifications of the University and/or the Master, the student can withdraw the qualification and the Certificate in the same Office.

The Master final Report will be realized and evaluate by:

a) the University Assessment Commission that manages the Master that will decide :

- the negative or positive achievement of the **Certificate of Professional Qualification** of the Master

- if improve the student's final score on the basis of the quality of the final Report handed in by the student.

b) I.S.P.E.F. experts that will verify the student's acquisition of professional competencies through the **SCA CERTIFICATION SYSTEM**

In this way,at the end of the Master,the student will achieve a double degree:

- the **University Professional Qualification** (legally valid as a degree, according to the National and International laws in force);

- the **SCA-Certification of competencies** (valid as an International certificate about the quality of the competencies acquired by each student)

Therefore the University manager of the Master will evaluate the positive result achieved in the discipline and the final scoreof the Master professional qualification according to its evaluation system. The Certification instead, will be evaluate on the basis of the score and the assessments exposed in the previous paragraph.

RISK ASSESSMENT IN CHILD PROTECTION.
THE RISK ASSESSMENT SCALE (RAS)

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"In place of infallibility, we must put defensibility – making the most reasonable decisions and carrying them out professionally in a way which can be seen to be reasonable and professional" (*MAPPA Guidance, Scotland, Home Office, 2006, p. 5*).

Abstract: *The assessment of the risk factors in child protection became more and more important in the last decades. And more and more care-workers, care-providers and specialists complain that the traditional methods do not correspond any longer to their expectations and do not permit an exhaustive, dynamic and relevant expertise.*

The social protection itself became a field increasingly complex and suffering rapid changes, mostly due to a modern social life and to new life surroundings and axiological and motivational values. This evolution implies rapid re-structuring of the child care system, in order to adapt the care-taking actions (programmes, interventions, projects) to the rapidly changing realities of different social-areas (milieus) .

The traditional assessment is mostly based on qualitative analyses and descriptive statements. The lack of objective criteria and evaluation scales (inventories) explicitly developed for estimating the child care specific domains remains an impediment for a precise, rigorous and implicitly effective assessment of the risk factors and generally of the intrinsic dynamic of the child protection phenomenon and its specificity.

The paper presents some alternatives to the traditional assessment methods, whose implementation might help to gain more accuracy and efficiency in designing and implementing different child-care interventions and middle and long term care strategies.

There is also presented the newly developed "Risk-Assessment-Scale" (RAS), based on an originally designed software and build up in order to assure a more precise, accurate, objective investigation of the risk factors acting differently in the so-called vulnerable social milieus.

Key-words: *risk factors, risk assessment in child care, assessment tools*

Risk assessment tools

Most of the risk assessment tools on the market can be frequently found in medicine (psychiatry), in criminal justice and youth justice (although arguably less so for young people or women) und in so-called clinical social work[5]. Some of the most commonly used tools in Scotland for instance[6] are the Risk Assessment Guidance and Framework (RAGF), the Offender Group Reconviction Score (OGRS), the Level of Service Inventory – Revised (LSI-R), Matrix 2000 and Tayprep. For young offenders, OASys, YLS and Asset are often used. Another well-known inventory[7] was developed by the Dartington Social Research Unit and since 2001[8] implemented in England, Wales, Norway, Spain, Italy and the USA[9]. The assessment consists of a single sheet of paper, in which six fields are drawn: housing (logging), family relationship, social behaviour, physical and mental health, education and – for older teenagers – work, more needs. For each field the current situation of the child will be described[10]. In a second phase the current needs of the children will be selected and finally realistic goals and targets will be formulated, which have to be achieved for the duration of the care process. The assessment instrument proposed by the Department of Health of the UK for instance uses different modules for each age-group and categorizes the stress factors and the care needs of the children in six fields: physical and mental health, cognitive development and education, positive self-identity, family relationship and social nets, social appearance, emotional and behavioural development and independence (individual autonomy)[11]

Despite numerous researches, a rich literature and of course a multitude of different points of view, the large number of identified risk and protection factors, in some cases difficult to be observed and quantified properly, can be grouped in three main categories: (1) biological risks (genetic, accidents at birth, neurological disadvantages, etc..), (2) psychological factors (difficult temperament, social deficits, impulsivity, oppositional behaviour, social-cognitive disadvantages, etc…) and (3) social factors (challenging milieu, poverty, psycho-pathology of the parents, conflicts, inconsistent education, etc..)[12]. Some authors identified five main groups of risk factors in child care:

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[5] Gahleitner, S. B., Hahn, G., (Hg.) – *Klinische Sozialarbeit. Gefährdete Kindheit – Risiko, Resilienz und Hilfen. Beiträge zur psychosozialen Praxis und Forschung*, Psychiatrie Verlag, p. 8 - 12

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[7] Kindler H. *Wie können Schwierigkeiten und Förderbedürfnisse bei Kindern erhoben werden?* in Kindler. H., Lillig S., Blüml H., Meysen T., Werner A. (Hg.) – *Handbuch. Kindeswohlgefährdung nach § 1666 BGB und Allgemeiner Sozialer Dienst (ASD)*, © 2006 Deutsches Jugendinstitut e.V., München, p. 60-2

[8] Melamid E. & Brodbar G. (2003). Matching Needs and Services: An Assessment Tool for Community-Based Service Systems. *Child Welfare, 2001, 82,* 397–412.

[9] Taylor K.I. - *Understanding Communities Today: Using "Matching Needs and Services" to Assess Community Needs and Design Community Services*. *Child Welfare,* 2005, *84,* 251–264.
Melamid E. & Brodbar G. (2003). Matching Needs and Services: An Assessment Tool for Community-Based Service Systems. *Child Welfare, 82,* 397–412.

[10] Kindler H. – *art. cit.,* p. 60-2

[11] Ward H. (2001). The Developmental Needs of Children. Implications for Assessment. In Horwath J. (Ed.). - *The Child's World: Assessing Children in Need.* London: Jessica Kingsley, 167–179.

[12] Hillenbrand, C. Dr. - *Resilienzforschung und Jugendarbeit „Zukunft und Weiterentwicklung der Jugendarbeit"* - Fachtagung in Königswinter, Universität zu Köln, 2006, erziehungshilfe@hrf.uni-koeln.de

Diagramm 1 - Risk factors in implementation of care interventions from the perspective of the cooperation between families and the responsable formal bodies (child care institutions, formal care services, etc.)
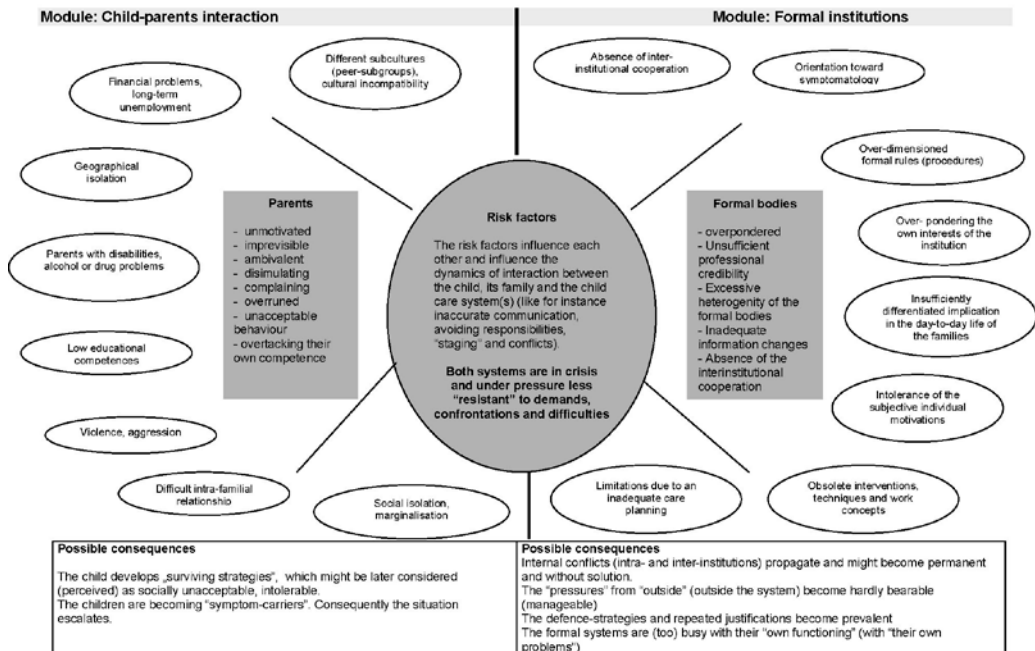
1. Concerning the child:
    - Age and sex
    - General development and health
    - Behavioural disorders
2. Concerning the parents
    - Mental illness (mental disorders)
    - Personal life history and personality
    - Conceptions, way of thinking, mentalities concerning education and child care
3. Familial settings and backgrounds
    - The structure of the family and the socio-economic status
    - Stress situations and absence of social support
    - Partnership and work situation
    - Psychological characteristics of the family system
4. Situational and contextual factors
    - The immediate situational context
    - Special features of the parents' life history influencing the present behaviour
    - Varying impacts of current situations with child endangerment
5. Other factors
    - Poverty and social deprivation
    - Religious embossed education and socialisation practices

- Membership of the parents and/or of the custodians (caretakers) to the so-called "sects" and "psycho-groups" (Kindler, Lillig, Blüml, Meysen & Werner, 2006)[13]

Some of the essential and desirable criteria for effective risk assessment tools[14] are:
- at least one peer-reviewed publication on validation of the tool
- validation against a relevant population to the target group
- based on actuarial and empirical factors contained in the research literature
- able to differentiate accurately between high, medium and low risk
- has inter-assessor and inter-rater reliability
Some desirable criteria are:
- user-friendly;
- resource lean;
- 'easy' to train staff in its appropriate use;
- process of use is transparent and accountable.

Certain principles relating to rigorous risk assessment covering the main three social work categories (community care, criminal justice and child protection), principles that were identified in some recent researches, include that:
• risk assessment should be based on sound evidence and analysis;
• used tools should inform rather than replace professional judgement;
• all professionals involved in risk assessment should have a common language and a common understanding of the main concepts
• information sharing should be based on clearly agreed protocols and on understanding of the use of such information;
• risk assessment should not be seen as a discrete process but as integral to the overall management and minimisation of risk[15].

a) Originally the risk was considered in the social work as the probability of events, both positive and negative. Increasingly the risk was associated in the modern social care with negativity or adversity.[16]

b) Risk factors comprise static (like age, history, health record) and dynamic factors (like, for instance, employment status, traumatic events, income, etc.). The probability that the static factors alone induce future risks is relatively reduced, but in combination with dynamic factors they are more likely to predict risk.

c) The risk management was defined as "developing a systematic approach which allows for the planning of risk-taking strategies and for monitoring and reviewing (…) accountability, clarity and support for staff"[17].

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[13] Source: www.djs.tg.ch. / documents/ Risikofaktoren
[14] McIvor, G. and Kemshall, H. - (a) *Serious Violent and Sexual Offenders: The use of risk assessment tools in Scotland*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive, 2002.
[15] Barry, M., Dr. - Effective Approaches To Risk Assessment in Social Work: an International Literature Review in Social Work Research Centre, University of Stirling, 2007, p. 3
[16] Brearley, P.C. - *Risk in Social Work*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982, p.82
[17] Titterton, M. - *Risk and risk taking in health and social welfare*, London: Jessica Kingsley, 2005, p. 92

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The decision making based on the assessment of risk is not infallible but should be underpinned by "defensible decision making". The following criteria for defensible decision making were identified:
- all reasonable steps are taken;
- reliable assessment methods are used;
- information is collected and thoroughly evaluated;
- decisions are recorded and carried through;
- agency processes and procedures are followed;
- practitioners and managers are investigative and proactive[18]

Risk assessment in child protection
The child protection work has become less optimistic and more reactive in the last two decades, mostly because of the less efficiency and irrelevant outcomes of numerous projects, programmes and activities organised in different care centres (institutions) or at the level of the local and regional formal authorities. The result was a certain public scepticism, moral reticence, blame and culpability.
Child care has been considered a conglomerate of phenomena, of singularities that can be predicted, assessed and "treated" without an exhaustive objective acknowledgment of the social context. The empirical data and the common sense were valued as "suitable enough" in order to certificate the structuring of complex interventions and social care programmes. There was less important how the risk examination was made by professionals. Almost every practitioner and specialist, almost every care provider had anyway its own opinion, based mostly on the own individual practical experience.
Only in the last years the main aim of risk management is to gather evidences, prioritising cases and predicting risks.

It is generally admitted that internationally there is a significant split in child welfare work between child protection (as a neo-liberal approach) and family support (as proactive intervention).
1. Child protection - a neo-liberal approach to private issues as public issues and focusing on risk; the neo-liberalism is described as "privatisation, de-regulation and marketization of the state sector".[19] This approach is typical for UK, North America and Australia.
2. Family support – proactive intervention with children and families, primarily through health and educational services. This type of approach is mainly adopted in continental Europe.[20]

("The difference between the European and British systems is well illustrated by the common characterisation of the first child protection visit in which the British child protection worker comments: 'I am here to investigate a report of suspected abuse against your child'. The European child protection worker comments on the other

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[18] Kemshall, H. - *The Community Management of High Risk Offenders*, in Prison Service Journal, March, 2003
[19] Kemshall, H. (2002) *Risk, Social Policy and Welfare*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002, p. 113
[20] Barry, M., Dr. - *Effective Approaches to Risk Assessment in Social Work: an International Literature Review,* Social Work Research Centre, University of Stirling, 2007, p. 22

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hand: 'I am here to see if I can help you with any problems you might have with your child" [21]).

Diagramm 2 - Risk factors in implementation of care interventions from the perspective of the cooperation between families and the responsable formal bodies (child care institutions, formal care services, etc.)

Risk Assessment Scale – RAS
Module: Child – parents interaction

	(High risk) (5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1) (Low risk)
Different subcultures (peer-groups), cultural incompatibility	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Financial problems, long-tern unemployment			8.	9.	10.
Geographical isolation	11.	12.			15.
Parents with disabilities, alcohol or drug problems	16.		18.	19.	20.
Low educational competences	21.	22.			25.
Violence, aggression	26.		28.	29.	30.
Difficult intra-familial relationship	31.	32.			35.
Social isolation, marginalisation	36.	37.	38.	39.	40.

The risk assessment and analyse are strongly influenced by the inter-agency cooperation, which varies between different agencies in different geographical areas and by a long range of cultural and axiological differences, deep settled in language, attitudes, behaviours. It was also observed that the assessment itself is strongly influenced by the personal professional experience of the care-providers and care-takers. Notably the older, more experimented workers operate at a higher threshold of risk than their recently trained counterparts. The age and the experience of the workers lead to differing assessment outcomes.[22]

The literature on risk assessment in child protection focuses almost exclusively on child abuse and neglect. The risk assessment is also seen by practitioners as focusing too much on the process and not enough on the outcome of assessing risks. This results in:
  a) "bifurcation" (prioritising high risk groups at the expense of other needs/groups), being risk averse (to avoid litigation),
  b) intervening to make defensible decisions,
  c) reducing the professional autonomy of workers[23].

Objectivising the evaluation in child care. An assessment-inventory of risk factors.
The aim of the study was to create an evaluation-scale (inventory), which would be less reliant on the biases of previous descriptive methods and which will allowed a better and more rigorous measuring of certain components of the social surroundings

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[21] Trotter, C., Sheehan, R. and Oliaro, L. *Decision Making, Case Planning and Case Management in Child Protection: A Review of the Literature,* Melbourne, Monash University, 2001, p. 9
[22] Gold, N., Benbenishty, R. and Osmo, R. - *A comparative study of risk assessments and recommended interventions in Canada and Israel*, Child Abuse and Neglect, 2001, 25 (5), p. 607-622
[23] Barry, M., Dr. – op. cit., p. 28

and of their immediate or long term action and influence. The scale facilitates the estimation of the risks and of their strengths.

The method proposed a relatively new approach, but cannot replace entirely the old-style development reports and the subjective traditional estimation, based mostly on empirical observation data, of the individual evolution of a child in care. Our aim was to offer an instrument that might optimise the accuracy of assessing the casual and/or the systemic distortions and risks of implementing a certain set of care intervention, respectively a better evaluation of the collateral factors and of the circumstantial elements which might play a decisive role.

Diagramm 3 - Risk factors in implementation of care interventions from the perspective of the cooperation between families and the responsable formal bodies (child care institutions, formal care services, etc.)
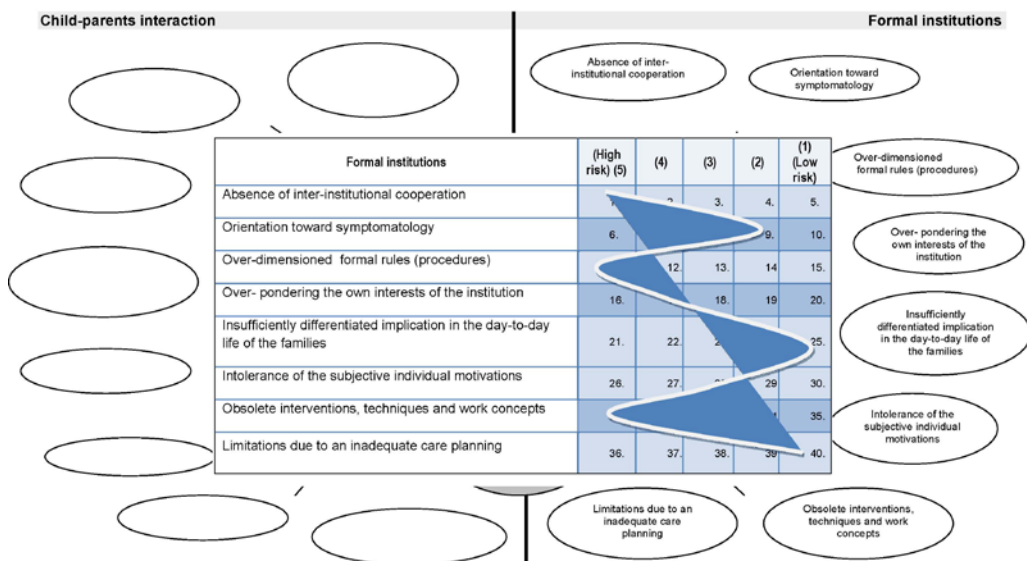
The proposed method includes following components:
  a) Identifying the risks factors;
  b) Initial evaluation of their impact – based on an evaluation scale with six ranks (standardised scores). The scoring (quantifying) will be done in accordance with a standard inventory of items. Each of those items is fully described in an attached glossary containing the detailed descriptions of the most representative characteristics, behaviours or phenomena for each level of the evaluation scale.
  c) Elaborating of actions-plans and strategies in accordance with the existing situation and the estimations based on the assessment data
  d) Intermediate assessment of their impact – in accordance with certain goals and targets of the actions, initiatives and programmes initiated to diminished the influence of some of the identified risks
  e) Final assessment of the real stage and the evaluation of the efficiency of the existing programmes

Basically identifying the risk factors represented the first step in order to analyse the impact of local typical surroundings. We have included in attachment an example of a resulting chart of the most important factors defining the interaction between "vulnerable families" and the local authorities (Diagram 1). The listed factors were identified within an UE Project that took place in sixteen Romanian counties and envisaged the creation of mobile team of specialists (doctors, psychologist, social workers, etc.) acting as task-forces in different "areas at risk".

The second step consisted in measuring the "intensity" of each factor, respectively the strength of its influence in the context of the locally acting conditions and temporary circumstances (Diagram 2 and Diagram 3).

The third stage consisted in inventorying, as detailed as possible, the possible short and long time consequences of the action of the above mentioned risk factors.

Conclusions

The risk analysis represents a method recently "re-activated" in the field of child care and the assessment models are very numerous. Their diversity makes an exhaustive analysis of the assessment instruments existing on the market rather difficult.

The assessment methodology (Risk Assessment Scale - RAS) proposed in this paper is a recent developed instrument, based on an originally designed software.

The Risk-Assessment-Scale (RAS) represents a relatively unsophisticated method of analysing social "realities", risks and possibilities to avoid unnecessary risks in child care and offers some advantages in practice:

- It is an easy-to-use instrument, friendly and unsophisticated but precise and less affected from accidental (sporadic acting) conditions and circumstances.
- The assessment itself is based on accessible data, mostly observation-data and permits to incorporate heterogeneous information, coming from different sources (from political bodies, mass-media, specialised medical and care institutions, etc.).
- The software allows a diversified use of the accumulated information, for instance by structuring collections of data and data-bases.
- The software can be used by different categories of specialists, social-workers, care providers, psychologists, sociologists, etc. and does not require the acquisition of expensive hardware and equipment.

THE IMPACT OF TEACHER EDUCATION ON CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN THEIR ON LEARNING:

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Abstract:*This study aims to understand the effects of two postgraduate programs in teachers' professional development, and its relationships with children's learning. The study investigates the impact of two postgraduate programs of University of Minho, Braga, Portugal, in the development of quality practices in early childhood education, analyzed through children's competence of making choices, planning their actions, and ability to take initiative. The sample of this qualitative case study includes 40 preschool teachers. The PIP Program Implementation Profile (HighScope Educational Research Foundation, 1989) was used to assess the quality of practices, and opportunities given to children to develop their ability to make choices and take initiative. The data emphasize learning pedagogy as a long process that requires learning skills of a complex nature. Highlight the interconnected relationship between teacher education, professional development and children's learning. Emphasize also that not all teacher education guarantees the right of children to participate actively in their own learning (Oliveira-Formosinho, 2004).*

Keywords: *Teacher education, professional development, quality in early childhood education, children's choice and participation.*

Introduction

Teacher education is a central component of professional development throughout the life cycle process. Research points out that only quality practices in early childhood education have a short and long lasting effects in children's lives (Schweinhart and Weikart, 1997; Schweinhart, Montie, Xiang, Barnett, Belfield, and Nores 2005), and stresses also that teacher education is a key factor on the development of quality practices.

This research studies two postgraduate programs for early childhood education. The teacher education paradigms underlying these programs are of different nature: one is context based training, with an emphasis on the liaison theory/practice and the other one has technician nature, with a focus on de development of specialised and technical skills.

The case study of this research is qualitative and evaluative, and allows constructing knowledge about the contributions of two paradigms of teacher education

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to the development of quality practices in early childhood education and children's learning.

The data analysis allowed understanding the impact of two different paradigms of teacher education on the quality of preschool educational contexts and children's learning assessed through the application of *PIP (Program Implementation Profile)* (HighSope Educational Research Foundation, 1989).

Data analysis is sustained in the pedagogical legacy of two major pedagogues of twentieth century – John Dewey and Celistin Freinet.

Teacher education

Societies, over time, have gone through different stages in an evolutionary process that has followed different technological revolutions: agricultural, industrial, post-industrial and information. These processes of constant transformation produced changes at several levels: the organization of society; at work contexts; relations and interpersonal communications; and at processes of teaching and learning (Marcelo Garcia, 1999). The permanent changes in societies are reflected in the situations faced by children and their teachers (Hargreaves, 1998, Day, 2001), and require a conceptualization of education as an ongoing and constant process that begins with initial training and continuous throughout working life.

Chapman and Aspin (2001), editors of the International Handbook of Lifelong Learning, highlight the need for transforming the current educational systems in order to face the new challenges created by knowledge and information society, which leads to a perspective of training over lifecycle.

This emerging society is characterized by easy access to information and the ability to use it properly, that is, to create knowledge. In this perspective, there are several challenges that require the social organization in its various dimensions, including educational institutions, social and professional role of teachers as well as students. One of the features of this society is the constant demand for change, causing individuals spend much of their life in permanent process of learning in order to meet these challenges. It thus becomes necessary to master a range of skills, to reconstruct the previous knowledge, according to new social demands. This new model of society suggests a permanent learning with the purpose of improving skills, knowledge and attitudes to meet the new challenges.

The World Education Report emphasizes the crucial role of teachers as agents of change, and advocates the importance of investment in teacher education and continuing professional development, identified as a critical indicator of quality in early childhood education (UNESCO, 1998).

Teacher education is an important feature of the school and educational systems to promote reforms and transformations claimed by an ever-changing society (Day, 2001; Escudero, 1998; Flores, 2003; Nóvoa, 1992). In this sense, teacher education is conceptualized as a process of training throughout the life cycle (Oliveira-Formosinho, 1998, 2001; Perrenoud, 1993) and contributes to improving the quality of society.

The concept of teacher education is a complex concept and has several definitions. In fact, different authors have written about teacher education, emphasizing

various components and dimensions that lead to different perspectives. Some perspectives emphasize the individual character of training as a process to acquire or improve skills (Ferry, 1991), while others emphasize their collaborative and reflective nature (Shön, 1983; Marcelo Garcia, 199).

Context based training

Research in teacher education emphasizes the advantages of context based training for teachers' professional development and children's learning (Epstein, 1993; Formosinho & Formosinho-Oliveira, 2001).

This perspective of teacher education requires that training is focused on professional practice and promotes the active participation of teachers in their own education (Kishimoto, 2002). The context based training is school's driven and is developed from analysis and reflection of work situations, which allows to identify training needs and develop training projects that integrate teachers, educators and trainers in a cooperative and collaborative process of construction and reconstruction practices.

The context based training adopts active and experiential methodologies (Canário, 1997), involving teachers and educators in the process of research, action and reflection on, and upon experiences. Experiential learning recognizes the agency of the subject and highlights the role of reflection (Dewey, 1952) for professional development in teacher education (Cavaco, 2002).

Dewey (1971) was one of the first authors to emphasize the value of experience for students and teachers' learning. The concept of experience in the teaching and learning process is a key element of his theory. The need for a theory of experience is a key assumption of the new education advocated by the progressive movement and requires the existence of an organic connection between education and personal experience (Dewey, 1971). Dewey states that not all experiences are educational; it requires acknowledging the agency of the subject and the continuity of the learning process.

Another feature of the educational experience is their reflective feature (Cavaco, 2002). The whole experience involves thinking, is not just sensory exploration, involves conscious of the reciprocal relationships between the individual and the physical and social environment. According to Dewey (1971), experience and thought are somehow the same thing. The experience to be meaningful and lead to relevant learning always requires some degree of reflection (Dewey, 1952). The reflective nature of the experience in teacher education emerges in Dewey's theory and is followed and developed by many educational theorists, as is the example of Shön (1983), Zeichner (1993), Kolb (1984), among others.

Method and instruments

The case study of this research lies in the qualitative paradigm and has an evaluative nature. The object of research of this study is to compare two preschool teacher educational programs and understand their contributions to early childhood teachers professional development, with emphasis on what is observable (the quality of contexts and children's initiative) (Stake, 1995).

The research objectives are: i) to understand the contribution of postgraduate programs for teachers professional development, analyzed through the quality of the educational context, ii) to understand the relationship between the educational context (s) created and children's learning.

The data was collected through direct observation with the application of the *PIP-Program Implementation Profile* (HighSope Educational Research Foundation, 1989*)*, and field notes. The *PIP* is a five point Likert scale that allows assessing the quality of early childhood programs. The *PIP* allows evaluating the various dimensions of preschool programs, namely: the organization of the physical environment, space and materials, the daily routine, the nature of adult-child interaction, team teaching and parent involvement. The scale is organized in four sections, with a total of 30 items: 1) physical environment (10 items); 2) daily routine (5 items); 3) adult-child interaction (8 items); 4) adult-adult interaction (6 items). The PIP items are evaluated with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from a low quality (level 1) at a high quality level (level 5). This assessment tool also identifies the training needs of early childhood teachers and other professionals working with young children.

The observations were done in periods of 3-5 hours, and included morning and afternoon sessions. In some classrooms it was necessary to make observations over several days to obtain the necessary information to enable accurate evaluation of *PIP* items.

The data presented and analyzed in this study is related to the following *PIP* items: *12 - The daily routine includes time to plan, work and remember*; *13 - The adults use a variety of planning strategies based on the individual needs of children and help children to achieve their goals and plans*; *14 - The adult uses a variety of recall strategies for individual and small groups of children.*

The programs selected for this study are designated **PA** (Program A) and **PB** (Program B). The content of PA is focused on childhood pedagogy and its dimensions: space structure and organization, daily routine, adult-child interaction; team teaching; observation/assessment/planning; activities and projects; groups' organization. The main goal of the program is to support preschool teachers in a process of co-construction of knowledge, and enhance their reflective skills for the reconstruction of their own practices. This means that training cannot be disconnected from the know-how of the profession, is context based, with direct relation to the contexts of practice, (Dewey, 1971), and to the dimensions of childhood pedagogy (Freinet, 1973). The professional development model underlying the PB is characterized by a concentration on theories, and aims to develop a specialist art's teacher for young children. Training is also characterized by an individual perspective of professional development, has a technician nature, and is focus on a curricular dimension of preschool education: arts for young children.

The total of preschool teachers selected was 40: 20 from PA and 20 from PB. They were selected according to the GPA at the end of the program, and professional experience (minimum of 5 years as preschool teachers). The preschool teachers of this research group work in public and private non-profit institutions.

Results

The data presents the mean for *PIP* items 12, 13, and 14 for **PA** and **PB**, and field notes content analyses.

Table 1 - Opportunities given to children to plan, carry out their choices and plans and review activities with support from adults and peers

PIP ITEMS	PA mean	PB mean
12	4.15	2.7
13	3.85	2.3
14	3.65	3.35

The analysis of the results shows, among other things, that:
- The mean for items 12, 13 and 14 is higher for **PA** than for the **PB**;
- The **PA** mean is, for the three items, above the point 3.5, which is the point that defines the quality of the program;
- The **PB** mean is, for the three items, under the point 3.5, which is the point that defines the quality of the program;

The field notes content analysis highlights that in **PA** classrooms:
- The daily routine includes time for children: choose or plan their activities; carry out their choices and plans; recall and reflect about what they have done.
- During planning time teachers create opportunities for children choose activities, materials and people whom to interact with (adults or peers).
- All the areas and materials of the classroom are available for children to make their plans.
- The range of strategies used by teachers to support the children's planning include: make planning a regular part of the program; ask open-ended questions; listen attentively to children's plans; support, accept and extend all the ways children express their plans, write down children's plans, and enhance children's skills to develop complex and detailed plans.
- Children have, daily, opportunities to carry out their plans with the support of adults and peers. That means that children work with a purpose, it's not free play.
- During reviewing teachers encourage children to recall and reflect about their activities and share with adults and peers what they have done.

The field notes content analysis highlights that in **PB** classrooms:
- Time for children planning, carry out their plans and review and reflect about their activities is not part of all daily routines observed.
- The daily routine doesn't include time for children plan their activities. Some daily routines include time for children make choices – choose an activity or materials to work with. But not all daily routines set up a time for children's communicate their choices.

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- When children have an opportunity to make choices the teachers don't encourage them to make real plans, which means that they don't encourage them to think and reflect about what they want to do.
- Not all daily routines include time for children carry out their choices or initiatives. When children go to the classroom areas they engage in free play, without a purpose or an intention.
- The daily routine doesn't set a time for children reviewing and reflect about their activities and share with adults and peers what they have done. Occasionally, in some classrooms, children are asked about what they have done, but they aren't encouraged to reflect about their activities.

Data shows that in **PA** classrooms children are encourage by teachers to think and reflect about their plans, which foster their capacity to think in alternatives and make decisions about what they want to do. From a constructive perspective, choice is an individual activity that is essential to cognitive as well as social development. Although planning, is more than making choices. Planning is choice with intention. Planning involves deciding on actions and predicting interactions, recognizing problems and proposing solutions and anticipating consequences and reactions. To engage children in planning is to encourage them to identify their goals and consider the options available for achieving them (Epstein, 2003). Planning allow children to work with a purpose and to look for achieving the goals that they have establish.

Recall and reviewing the activities and what they have done involves children in a process of reflexive thinking. Reflection is more than memory or recitation of completed activities. "Reflection is remembering with analysis…Reflection consolidates knowledge so it can be generalized to other situations, thereby leading to further prediction and evaluation" (Epstein, 2003, p. 2).

Dewey (1971), in opposition to the traditional school, claims for a school that promotes children identity and freedom, which requires the capacity to establish and carry out their purposes. According to Dewey the purpose goes behind the impulse. Through a reflexive and individual process the purpose change the impulse into action plans which involves decision making about the future action.

Like Dewey, Freinet (1973) in the *Pedagogical Invariants nº 7* and *nº 8*, point out the importance of the children free choice within the learning process – "Everyone likes to choose his work, even if it is not necessarily the right choice" (p.177); "No-one likes to work aimlessly, like a robot – acting and conforming to ideas which form part of routines in which he is not involved" (p.178).

Following Dewey and Freinet thinking the preschool teachers of **PA** interact with children in an approach that enhance their skills to make choices and decisions and to reflect before and after the action. This process, allows children to establish plans for their future action, to act with a purpose for achieving their goals, and to learn through reviewing and reflecting about what they have done. This pedagogical approach promotes children's participation and control in their own learning and development.

In order to transform children's educational experiences we have to create educational opportunities for teachers. It is clear from this research that different

opportunities have different impact on teachers' professional development, as well as, on children's learning.

Conclusion

To reconstruct educational contexts for young children require creating educational and training opportunities for preschool teachers. The data shows that context based training in preschool education promotes the development of quality educational contexts which enhances children's learning.

The data analysis emphasizes the vital connection between theory and the practices in early childhood education. It also emphasizes the need for training in the specific context of educational practices.

Reconstructing childhood pedagogy requires the reconstruction of its dimensions - space and materials, time, interactions, observation, assessment and planning, activities and projects, the organization of groups. This requires theoretical and practical training and expertise on all pedagogical dimensions.

Following the thinking of Dewey and Freinet, teacher education has an impact on changing practices and thus constitutes a pedagogical innovative articulation between the various areas of science and its integration in the know-how of the profession. The interconnected relationship between theory and practice, between researchers and teachers, allows the reconstruction of practice, the development of educational innovation, the professional development of preschool teachers, and enhances children's participation in their own learning and development.

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Shweinhart, L. e Weikart, D. (1997). *Lasting differences: The High/Scope Preschool Curriculum Comparision study through age 23.* Ypsilanti: High/Scope Press.

Schweinhart, L., Montie, J., Xiang, Z., Barnett, W., Belfield, C. e Nores, M. (2005). *Lifetime effets: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 40.* Ypsilanti: High/Scope Press.

EARLY EDUCATION ALONG THE ROMANIAN HISTORY

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Abstract: *Based on the idea of the recognized importance of early ages for the subsequent evolution of the human personality the paper is focused on an overview of the concerns of Romanian policy of education for introducing the early stages of the psychological development under the formal education. The paper starts with the summary of an official analysis of the Romanian educational policy for pre-school ages in the last decades. A short presentation of what education meant for our ancestors, the Dacians, is continued with three synthetic presentations of what pre-school education represented along the most important parts of Romania's history. The paper suggests the Romanian pioneering role as a country that had explicitly introduced the pre-school stage in the formal education earlier than many other European countries.*

Key words: *pre-school level, formal education, early education, history of Romanian policy of education*

1. Introduction

The importance of early ages for the subsequent evolution of the human personality is argued convincingly in the literature. The concerns of the educational policies for introducing early ages in the context of formal education unfortunately has left room for qualitative growth all over the world. In general it was felt that these ages remain the attention of parental education. But the evolution of human society has made that families are becoming more involved in social and professional life so was born the need for a deeper concern for a beginning of formal education at early ages. Romania is one of the countries that acted as pioneers in this concern for education beginning from early ages.

2. THE LAST DECADE AND CONCERNS FOR EARLY EDUCATION IN ROMANIA

A comparative study realized by Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2001) presents the situation of education in general, and of preschool level in special. The study is focused on the national policies for education in the South East part of the Europe. The preschool education is the subject of analysis as a topic among ten core topics.

Five core characteristics for this area are highlighted for the eleven scrutinized countries: (1) migration among the analyzed countries, and between them and Western Europe; (2) declining birth rate, (3) mixed ethnic composition of the population; (4) poverty; (5) *participation in education with a differentiate degree in the eleven countries*(Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2001: 10, 11)

Romania and Moldavia are the only two countries among the considered ones that have nine compulsory education years. It was in 2001; in 2012 the Romanian Education Act of 2011 has introduced ten compulsory years; the preparatory year (the so called *grade 0* that enrolls children from 6 to7 years old) was included. A great debate about to what level should belong this grade 0, to school or kindergarten, took place. A significant number of arguments had been given for the both possibilities. In my opinion, the problem is not the affiliation of this grade to one level or another, but the philosophy of the *pedagogical* approach. Nobody should forget that this is a preparatory grade ending a stage (the preschool one) and that it prepares children for an effective beginning of primary education.

In Romania the preschool and primary education should belong to the same educational institution. We have trained teachers for both levels of education and forms of continuing special training could be designed and implemented aiming to improve the quality of the educational activity and smooth the passage from childhood to the age of schooling.

The mentioned Report states that Romania and Bulgaria have a significant higher level of participation of children in preschool education among the countries of the sample. It is correct to stress that the last ten years have kept and even developed this situation. The new law of education states the idea of the necessity to extend the generalization of preschool education under the power of the local administration authorities; they are in charge of organizing and running this action.

In the same time, the Report underlines that the private system for preschool education was not enough developed or was totally inexistent in some countries (2001). Romania has in this moment (2012) a significant number of private kindergarten that offer opportunities for learning in international languages or alternative educational approaches. They are allowed to function by law.

Another study, this time explicitly focused on the *Systems of early education/care and professionalization in Europe (Seepro* 2007–2009) states as "main aims" of the project the following: (1) to access, systematize and analyze data on the professional profiles of core practitioners working in early childhood provision; (2) to contextualize these profiles and professionalization patterns within country-specific histories of early childhood education and care, demographic trends and structural features of the ECEC system, and current issues and challenges facing early childhood practitioners (Oberhuemer, P., Schreyer, I. , Neuman M., 2009).

Among the 27 countries involved within this study, on the position 19 is listed Romania. As a consequence, a full Report coming from Romania can be further accessed. Eventually, the project's results were published in a book and they give interesting answers to the thorny question about the necessary professionalization for acting properly on early education level; these answers have been based on a collection

of detailed data provided by each country report and obtained data after interviews with representatives of each country.

The Romanian Report presents in details the situation of Romanian early education, including the stage from 0 – 3 and further the preschool education up to 6/7. Some aspects are important to refer at, and my presentation will select them. The core issues should be reconsidered because of two important reasons. In 2008, after the Report has been done, a new curriculum for preschool education was put in force, and in 2011 a new Education Act gave a new perspective to the entire educational system (Iucu R., Manolescu M., Ciolan L., Bucur C., 2008).

Thus, the Report submitted in January 2008 shows that "from an institutional point of view, the educational system for children up to 6-7 years contains:

• „Creşa", *nurseries* (which can be of state or private) for children between 0 and 3 years: (a) the small group, up to the age of one year; (b) the middle group, between one and two years; (c) the big group, between 2 and 3 years.

• *Kindergartens* (which can be of state or private) for children between 3 and 6-7

years: (a) the small group 3-4 years; (b) the middle group 4-5 years; (c) the big group 5-6 years; (d) the group preparatory for school 6-7 years;

• „Centre de zi", *day care centers* for children under 6 years in a situation of risk, coordinated by the „Directia Judeteana de Asistenta Sociala si Protectie a Copilului";

• „Centre de zi" *day care centers or particular kindergartens* for children under the age of 6, approved by the MECT, which offer some examples of good practice in this field of activity." (Iucu R., Manolescu M., Ciolan L., Bucur C. , 2008: 6).

Generally speaking, the structure of nowadays is the same, excepting the fact that the Ministry of Education is in charge of the *entire system* from 0 to 6/7 years old. The institutions that take care about the children under three years old were coordinated by the Ministry of Heath, before the Education Act of 2011 was put in force.

The same Report shows the program of these institutions:

• „*Nurseries:* (a) with a daily working program - they function in the interval between 7.00 a.m. to 19.00 p.m.; (b) with a flexible daily program according to the parents or legal representatives' requests; (c) with a weekly working program- from Monday to Friday.

Kindergarten: (a) with a *normal* program (5 hours a day) – ensures the education and the corresponding preparation of the children for school and for the social life; (b) with an *extended* program (10 hours a day) – ensures the education and corresponding preparation of the children for school and for the social life, as well as their social protection (food, supervision and rest); (c) with a *weekly* program- ensures for the whole week the education and corresponding preparation of the children for school and for the social life, as well as the protection, food, supervision and rest for the children coming from disfavored social backgrounds and families" (Iucu R., Manolescu M., Ciolan L., Bucur C., 2008: 6,7). This specificity is generally kept today.

All the presented statistics in the mentioned Report highlight the idea that in Romania of those days the enrollment in kindergartens had an acceptable level and the trained staff for preschool education existed.

As a professor of a higher institution who was and still is involved in the process of teachers' training for preschool and primary education I can aver that this training was enough well done, except the sequence of field based training where a lot of room for improvement existed and still exists. After many years of training of this category of teachers only within high – school level, after 1990 their training on short term university programs had been introduced and since the first decade of this millennium a license program is in force. Thus, step by step, the Romanian legislation has introduced the higher education training for teachers of preschool level and an *equal status* for them with the other teachers' statuses. Unfortunately, the ambiguity of the statements about the teachers training system brought by the new Education Act of 2011, seems to keep an unequal status among them. The new law of education states the necessity of a master degree program for training teachers of these two first educational levels, as well, but the law's text is not enough clear about this request. The training of educational staff for babies and toddlers is not clear at all even today. Generally speaking, the training of teachers represents one of the very weak points of the new law.

The brief presentation of some data about the last decade of the early education in Romania as they appear in different documents shows a certain preoccupation for the area. This has deep roots in the history of this country.

3.   ANCIENT TIMES AND THE CONCERN FOR CHILDREN EDUCATION

History tells us a lot of details about our ancestors, the Dacians. A selection of those aspects that give information about the education of Dacians' children aims to show the roots of the education in the early history of Romania. The comments are based more on an inference than on direct evidences for the educational perspective.

Thus, the work *Civilizaţia geto-dacilor* (Geto- Dacians' civilization) shows that the everyday life is the expression of the civilization of a people, "a civilization in actu". It expresses the manner of involving already existing values, goods, knowledge into the real everyday life of the concrete humans. This way of living is shown by the people's way of dressing and living, feeding, getting along with peers; it is involved in their manner to connect inside family life, raise their children, work, spend off time, and establish open relationship with nature, etc. Of all these, I would want to focus only on a few issues, those on *family 's educational climate*, the responsibilities of rising and educating children in relation to specific social needs of the time (type of occupation, type of family, religion, etc.)

Family in Dacians' time, as at other people of that time as well, was a patriarchal and monogamous family, with a high respect for children. Objective evidences of this statement are represented by the Trajan's Column from Rome and Trophy of Adamclisi, which present expressive and convincing images. The growth of young children was especially the mothers' duty. From a certain age, the duties were separated by gender. Thus, the building of the Dacian's houses was a subject of training for boys; these houses were built, as they are revealed on the mentioned Trajan's Column and the Trophy of Adamclisi, directly on the ground and mostly wooden and they had variable shapes: rectangles, round, oval or polygonal. The father

was in charge of training the boys for building them. The care of the life *inside* these buildings, the cooking and the making cloths activities were duties for girls and mothers were the trainers of their daughters.

A special training was necessary aiming to develop the skills involved in actions like prolonging the storage of products by drying, treating with smoke, using salt, freezing, etc. and keeping them in pits burned and barns for all kinds of grain, or actions aiming making timber vessels, ceramic or metal for other products; other special skills were trained like those involved in working with metals and wood, or making ceramics. This training was done inside the family, a small or large family, where people better skilled in an area or another had been mentors for the younger members of the family (Civilizaţia geto-dacilor, n.d; pp. 6,7).

A tumultuous history followed; the people fought with waves of conquerors along it. The Romans conquest (106 – 271/275 AD) meant even the birth of Romanian people, a people with deep Latin roots, in language, traditions and culture. Influences of other nations have left deep traces in the culture of the new Romanian people. Greeks settled on the Eastern lands of Dobrudja; the Tatars who have left descendants in the same area, the Slavs, the Bulgarians, the Turks who dominated for a while the history of this part of the world, all had their influences. Newly formed Romanians knew how to take important aspects from the culture and civilization of people who came on their land or from their neighbors, and to adapt and assimilate these adaptations (H. Daicoviciu apud Cârlan, Gh.V. 2001:13).   Formal education was brought by some of these people. The first schools were in Latin, Greek, and Slavonic. The first school in Romanian language is considered to be the School of Şcheii Brasovului (Transylvania), founded in 1495 or 1583, according to different researchers. This school was able to help the Transylvanian population to withstand the pressure from the surrounding people with a level of education already consolidated. The school of Şchei developed opportunities for local people to be educated in their own language. It gave them the tools to preserve their traditions and culture. Historical documents reveal that the Romanians of Brasov kept intense and permanent connections with Moldova and Wallachia. Nicholas Sulica considers this school as the oldest school in Romania whose existence and development may follow since the year 1400 (Oltean, V., 2004). A later important moment will be those of G. Lazăr's first Romanian High School.

History speaks about *a modern* education in this part of the world since around 1700. In late eighteenth century the so called *royal school*s are mentioned. They were organized in almost all provinces (Istoria invatamantului din Romania compendiu, 1970: 17).

4.   THE EARLY EDUCATION IN THE HISTORY OF ROMANIAN EDUCATION

Closer to our century, one can find written works that explicitly show how the formal education in general, and, particularly, early education of Romanian children were considered. A brief presentation of several evidences is intended.

Thus, in the middle of eighteen century, a new charter is given by the Metropolitan *Nicephorus* in Moldova (on July 6, 1749) which provides, under the

influence of European Enlightenment, the idea of a compulsory school (Urechea, V., 1892: 20, apud Stanciu Stoian, 1957: 23).

Children coming from modest families were supposed to learn: *from three* to twelve years old and above; they were the subject of a census in order to be educated as Christians. More than this, the children of priests were demanded to keep learning until twenty years old and above. Even if a dose of utopia exists in these documents, the concern for education and an obvious awareness of its role should be highlighted. The philosophy of that time, had been influenced by Elements of Enlightenment Age, but scholastic and feudal features are still obvious (Stanciu Stoian, 1957: 20- 24).   The age of three that had been stated as starting age of the formal education is an important evidence of the awareness of the importance of this preschool age for the future development of a child.

No explicit presentations of preschool forms of education appear for the nineteenth century, even if it was a significant time for the development of the formal education in Romanian provinces, and then in Romania as a state. But it is important to highlight the strong concern for *primary education* along the late nineteenth century in Romania. Immediately after the unification of principalities, in 1859, the education in Romania had grown. This has propelled the new born country, Romania, at the forefront of Europe, in terms of the compulsory and freedom of primary education, introduced by the *Education Act in* force since 1864. It is important to emphasize that these characteristics appeared in: England in 1870, France in 1872, Switzerland in 1874, Bulgaria in 1879, Italy in 1877, and Serbia in 1882. Education was considered in Romania by law as uniform, ensuring rural and urban schools alike. Gymnasiums, high schools, theological seminaries, military, vocational, technical, medical and artistic schools, and normal schools (for teachers' training) appeared, or were improved in the countryside and in large cities (Rădulescu, D. C., 2003).

The early twentieth century, after the Great Union of 1918 brings laws that refer to the stage of early education. The early twentieth century, after the Great Union of 1918, had brought laws that specifically refer to this stage of formal education.

The author Petrică Corina gives some details about the Constantin Angelescu's laws that include references to the level of so called *garden for children* and to the special training of staff for this level of education (Petrică, C., n.d.). Thus, the laws of this period consider the primary education as the first level of the general and compulsory education; it was structured on three steps: (a) schools *("gardens") for children*; (b) the core primary school and courses for adults; (c) schools and special classes for children with special needs (Law, 1924, art. 1.) It is obvious that Angelescu understood *the preschool education as a part of the primary level of the educational system and this had happened in 1924 in Romania* (Cristea, G.,. apud Petrică, C., cited work, chapter II, p. 13)

More than this, the law stresses the preparatory role of this stage and considers it as *compulsory and free*. Even if, because of concrete conditions, the law was not entirely implemented, it is important to underline such a modern philosophy at that time. The necessity of a special educational action aiming to help children to adapt themselves to the school life was considered.

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Garden of children (later known under the name of *kindergartens)* represented the first institutional educational context aiming a necessary care for children that was supposed to have been monitored. A complex care process was focused on children's physical, moral and intellectual development and this was seen *as a complementary educational action of the family*. The educational activities were aimed to facilitate normal development of children's body and senses, and thus to prepare them for a successful debut of primary education (Petrică, C., n.d.). The institutions for preschool education were opened for both boys and girls from 4 to 7 years old, with optional attendance between 4 – 5 years old and *compulsory* from 5 to 7 " in all the places where such an institution existed" (Legea pentru învăţământul primar al statului şi învăţământul normal primar din 1924:241).

The school year structure was a defined one: 40-42 weeks, with 20-24 teaching hours per week (Legea pentru învăţământul primar al statului şi învăţământul normal primar din 1924:241).

According to the stated general goal, the syllabus was designed based on detailed aims and educational milestones: "the children will be educated in the spirit of order, cleanliness, discipline, common sense of their own activity; the understanding of knowledge will be based on active intuition of all the things belonging to their immediate environment and free conversations about them" (Legea pentru învăţământul primar al statului şi învăţământul normal primar din 1924; art. 49) ; short prayers, stories, poems, light songs, games and movements accompanied by songs were to be approached; activities as "hand activities in correspondence with their age, drawing freely and exercises aiming to develop children's senses and basic capacities, school trips""(Legea pentru învăţământul primar al statului şi învăţământul normal primar din 1924; art. 49) were asked."The Garden of children" should have a game room, a play yard of and a small garden with trees and flowers, in addition to the classrooms" (Legea pentru învăţământul primar al statului şi învăţământul normal primar din 1924; art. 49).

Ştefan Bârsănescu presents a comment about this article of the law that includes the gardens of children (kindergarten) as an integrative part of an national educational system at the beginning of the twentieth century; he thinks that this idea of the law is an utopia at that time, but, however the author appreciates the intrinsic value of this provision of law (Bărsănescu, Ş., Bărsănescu, F., 1978: 97). It is important to stress that this integration of children in a formal education system is not entirely solved in developed countries of the world a thousand years later (2012).

The structure of the primary education is, according to Bârsănescu, very well articulated and able to ensure a harmonious, systematically conducted development of the students of an age labeled as " spurt development" (from 5 to 16 years old); (Bărsănescu, Ş., Bărsănescu, F., 1978: 97). The meaning of *primary* concept here is not those used in nowadays Romania that refers only to the first basic years of developing the so called *instrumental* culture (reading, writing, basic of math and sciences). Primary education in early twentieth century is similar with *general education in contemporary time*. Maybe, a return to such a view could help the nowadays debates about to what level should belong the new considered grade 0.

Also, it is interesting to mention that the early twentieth century stressed the necessity of a special training for the teaching staff of preschool education level. The Angelescu's Law of Primary Education (1924) showed a special concern about the teacher' training aimed to take place within the so called *normal schools*. Thus, in 1924 this type of schools received a new regulation, an entire title of the law (Title II) being focused on organizing and functioning of the Normal Schools with a unique structure for the entire Romania (Petrică, C. ,n.d.p 17).

The purpose of these institutions was "to train the teachers of the schools for young children and the teachers of primary schools"; a consistent organization throughout the country is demanded. Depending on their specific targets the normal schools were classified into: *normal school for male and female teachers,* and *special normal school*, preparing the *teachers for kindergarten* (Law of primary education: 291, apud Petrică, C. cit., chapter II: 17)

5. THE EARLY EDUCATION ALONG THE COMMUNIST PERIOD

The interwar period with its significant improvement in education was followed by the Second World War with its wounds, and after the war by years of communism, rather numerous in Romania.

The *first period of communism*, with the specific of an almost entire imitation of the Soviet Union model still kept an eye on children education, despite of the reduction of the compulsory education from seven to four years only. In fact, according to Ştefan Bîrsănescu, the only positive aspect of this communist period was the success to enroll in several years almost all the children in a primary four year school system (92,1% of the registered children of 7-11 year old). In 1948 special schools for children with special needs were opened.

 For the interest of this paper's topic, it is necessary to stress the idea that children aged 3 to 7 years old were involved in kindergartens with daily, weekly or seasonal schedule, organized as a network under the elementary school management (Bârsănescu Ş., apud D.C., Rădulescu, D. C., 2006: 3).

A new Education Act was voted by the Great National Assembly (M.A.N) in 1968. This opened *the second stage of communist education*, a more progressive and opened stage. The fundamentals of the Education Act stated to take into account the valuable traditions of the Romanian school and the most important achievements of the universal pedagogy.

Several characteristics of the new stage of education system were defined: (1) the free education (Legea invatamantului, 1968, art. 7) (2) the state trait of school and its laic feature (article 3); (3) unique and free textbooks but written by Romanian not Soviet authors from now on (Legea invatamantului, 1968, art. 63).

The educational system had well defined stages**:** *preschool (for children from 3 to 6);* general education lasting 10 compulsory years (grade one to ten); grade IX and grade X were considered the first years of high school. The high schools were divided into two main types: (a) *high schools for general education* lasting 4 years with two possible trajectories: *humanistic and real* (arts and sciences; (b) *specialty high-schools* lasting 4 or 5 years with a wide number of profiles. The article 10 allowed a modern

language of a high circulation as being the teaching language in some school units. (Legea invatamantului, 1968, art. 33).It is also important to emphasize that after many years the concept of *general culture*, previously removed from the official documents, was not anymore considered as dangerous).

Seven articles of the law are *explicitly focused on preschool education* (17 – 23). They states: (a) the role of preschool education firstly to prepare children for a proper insertion within general school, and secondly to support parents in their responsibilities for children's education; (b) the optional character of preschool education (a regression comparative with the progressive vision of the early twentieth century is obvious); (c) children with special needs can be enrolled in special education institutions; (d) the educative role of kindergarten is completed with a social care role by the statement of the possibility to open institutions with a long day care, called "*cămin" de copii*/ home for children, with a small financial contribution of parents for meals and afternoon care; (e) types of institution that can be approved and issues connected to the management of preschool institutions (Legea invatamantului, 1968, art. 20).

The third period of communist education meant a new political interference in education, with less favorable effects. The beginning of this period was marked by the year 1978 that gave another education law.

This law has kept the main features of the previous one, in terms of 10 years of compulsory education and stated the two steps of high – school as upper secondary education. The first step was considered compulsory and the second one was optional. Thus, this law had political different emphases and has brought a new philosophy about the ideal of the communist education, but it did not introduce structural novelties.

The preschool education was regulated by the articles 24 – 27. The general aim of preschool education was focused on children's development with important emphasizes put on their training for becoming good communists. No important changes were added, but the new designed curriculum (named at that time as "*program for preschool education*" took into account the new philosophy.

6. THE POST COMMUNISM PERIOD

The post communist period was a very tumultuous one from the point of view of education. The existence of a cascade of reforms, started and never ended, represents the core feature of this interval.

The law of 1995 gives some new directions in education and tries to introduce, together with the *curricular* philosophy, a qualitative improvement. Unfortunately, the results were far from what was expected, despite the best intentions. The main causes can be listed: (1) the lack of support of a consistent general strategy; (2) the absence of an adequate involvement of the existing human resources with high expertise; (3) the lack of a proper training of people who designed and of those who were asked to implement the reform. As a consequence, in 2012 we still speak about the necessity of a new reform.

For the preschool level I can say that the curriculum design has been done by people who were not in depth familiarized with the reality of kindergarten. It seems only theoretical knowledge of a field without feeling the spirit of activity in that area is not the most effective basis for achieving a curricular design. That is why teamwork is necessary and an effective integration of both theorists and practitioners of the reference level within this curriculum designers' team.

First of all the law of education in 1995 republished and amended in 1999 is an evidence of this continuing tendency to change without a clear aim, without a strategy of the educational system as a whole. Article 6 of the law [24]has shortened the compulsory education from 10 to 9 years. Another unjustified regression occurred (Education Act, 1995)

The second chapter of the law with two articles (18, 19) presents the core requests for the preschool education. Thus, this level is supposed to involve children from 3 to 7 years old, stating the start of schooling at 7 years old. The previous types of kindergartens are preserved: with normal, extended and weekly schedules. The article 19 states the preparatory grade included into the preschool stage and, in my opinion, this was a wise decision. Even if the presumed generalization of this preparatory year was to lead to consider it as a compulsory year, it should have been kept into preschool stage or, the entire preschool level could have been introduced in the primary stage like in Angelscu's time. The preschool level could have had optional and compulsory sequences. Unfortunately, the new law of education of 2011 that has created the dispute about this preparatory year, as I have mentioned, introduces this grade 0 into the primary school, without a previous preparation of the necessary conditions.

The Education Act of 2011 and the previous new curriculum for preschool education in force from 2008 will be the subject of an in depth presentation because in the long history of this educational stage they represent an important step but, and in the same time, a very controversial one.

7. Perspectives

The new Law of Education (2011) stipulates that not only the preschool stage is encapsulated within the formal educational system but the early stages as well. Once again Romania is a pioneer within the European Context. A special concern and obvious measures must be taken into account for the special training of teachers who are supposed to work with children between 0 and 3 years old. They must be considered as professionals with a very difficult task to cope with.

Equally with pediatricians, this category of teachers experience communication difficulties with children, while their action is huge responsibility for children's subsequent evolution.

The Faculty of Psychology and Sciences of Education of Brasov University in partnership with University "1 Decembrie 1918" Alba Iulia, University "Aurel Vlaicu" Arad, and the Istituto di Scienza e della Formazione Psicologiche della educazione Rome, Italy are pioneers as well, through developing the first master program focused

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[24] Education Act, 1995, Romania

on the training of the mentioned professionals within the context of an EU project with the topic : PERSPECTIVES OF A MASTER TRAINING FOR EXPERTS IN EARLY EDUCATION AND EARLY SCHOOLING at a higher quality [PERFORMER].

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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE LEGAL CONTEXT OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN ROMANIA OF TODAY (CORE IDEAS AND COMMENTS[25])

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Abstract: *A critical analysis of curriculum for the preschool education connected to the in force law of education. The intention of this analysis is to highlight the strengths of the curriculum and to suggest some possibilities to develop a higher quality of its implementation. The paper underlines the importance of the pre-school level as fundamental of the entire school route. The analysis is a detailed one with comments and suggestions for the core issues involved.*

Key words: *pre-school curriculum, aims-goals-objective, experiential fields, capacities and attitudes to learning, competencies at pre-school age*

1. General context

The Curriculum for early education can be considered as a preparatory phase of the new regulations introduced by the Education Act of 2011 for the early education level. A new philosophy about the early education in general, and about the goals of this important ontogenesis stage has been introduced.

The curriculum states, in its introductory part, the idea that the rate of school flop and failure are quite high, like that of leaving school early; the statistics show for EU: 15.2%; Romania: 20.8%, in 2005. The need for a formal educational intervention at very early age is argued starting from this statement (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008).

Another argument is based on Chuna's statement, a Nobel Prize winner for economy, who highlights the role of early learning for the further development of a human being.

Early education starts at age 0 and covers the period up to entry into school, as the concept is understood worldwide ((Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008:4).

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[25] Note: the author's of this paper comments are put in Italic

Year	Rate of enrollment %
2000-2001	67.1
2001- 2002	67.5
2002- 2003	71.1
2003- 2004	71.8
2004- 2005	73.9
2005-2006	74.7
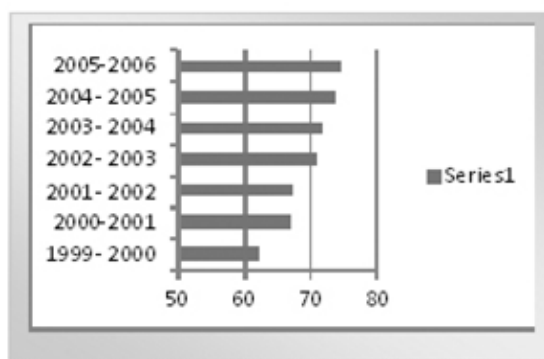
Figure 1: *Rate of enrollment in preschool education 2000 – 2006 (after Curriculum for preschool education 2008: 4)*

Distinctive notes of early education are considered: (1) the child's uniqueness that asks a holistic approach meaning to consider all the components of child's development, (2) the need for a multidisciplinary approach (care, nutrition and education simultaneously approached; *I would also add the necessity of a correlative approach*); (3) mature adult's status as partner of the game, having good knowledge of all the details and rules of the game*; in my opinion, the adult must perfectly know the game's objectives; the adult must be aware about the game's purposes and consequences*; (4) the necessity to see the activities of early education as situational learning opportunities; (5) parents' status as key partner together with the essential role of an effective relationship between family – kindergarten and the community ((Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008).

Data about the increased rate of enrollment in kindergartens are presented (figure 1.)

The Curriculum gives some landmarks of the early education concept evolution along the recent history. Thus, in 2000 the propaedeutics function of the preschool education is stressed. In 2002 the preparatory level (6–7 years old) of preschool is extended and almost generalized and the extension of the compulsory education to 10 years is announced. The interval 2005–2006 gave the strategy for the early education as a result of the cooperation of the ministry of resort with UNICEF.

The introductory part of the analyzed curriculum states the idea of the strong necessity to design a coherent system of early education. UNICEF has as priority for the new millennium the full completion of primary education by all children regardless of sex. Early education is seen as a necessary first step to achieving this goal.

United Nations General Assembly's Declaration has adopted in 2002 a set of principles which offer an optimistic picture of the future world. This world should be one in which children can enjoy their childhood, in which their interests are respected and their status of being born free and equal is considered as fundamental. A proper start in life can be the first step in ensuring completion of primary education by all children. The document avers that youth must ensure the future of humanity (Curriculum for Preschool Education,

2008:5). The authors of the analyzed curriculum declare as fundamentals of its design the Action Plan adopted by the United Nations Assembly.

A brief analysis of the curriculum has three core aims: (1) to highlight its strengths and the real opportunities opened by the new design; (2) to present the issues that need, in my opinion, to be improved; (3) to underline the constraints to be considered when an assessment process of the implementation of the new curriculum takes place. Even if the pattern of analysis is that of a SWOT one, the presentation will follow the logic of the design's steps instead of grouping my comments on SWOT categories.

A first idea is connected to the manner of wording the finalities of the analyzed curriculum (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 6,7).

Unfortunately, these finalities are not consistently formulated; thus, the first three finalities show directions of child's evolution along early education and the last one is focused on the educator's action. Thus, the first of the three finalities speaks about the full, free, and harmonious development of the child's personality, depending on child's needs and his own pace. The action of educator is also added: by supporting the autonomous and creative child's formation. This finality is concerned about the child as an entity. The second finality is focused on the social aspects of child's personality development: developing the ability to interact with other children, adults and the environment in order to gain knowledge, skills, attitudes and new behaviors. *The further wording is put as finality but it contains in fact ways to achieve the previous target: "encouraging exploration, exercises, tests and experiments, as autonomous learning experiences"* (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008:7).

The ambiguity and lack of consistency of this wording is obvious, especially in Romanian. The third finality come back to the child autonomy, identity (The discovery by each child, their identity, autonomy and developing a positive self-image) *which is a normal trajectory because this identity is achieved after and based on the child's confrontation with the social environment.*

The last finality focused on the educator's action aiming to stimulate the child's achievement of knowledge, capacities, skills, and attitudes necessary for starting the school, and further in life.

Unfortunately, it is not obvious the authors' concern for offering a logical, consistent and clear target of the early education process, as a starting point of the necessary process of developing the overall and specific expectations related to the entire educational process along this stage of ontogenesis process. This comment could be considered as being too sophisticated but I wanted to underline that these kinds of ambiguities, which in Romanian are more obvious than I could put them in English and into an explanatory context, have determined questions, and bases of contradictions within the practical area. I had the opportunity to assist to these kinds of debates that revealed the importance of wording within a document as the official curriculum is.

The authors stress explicitly that the contemporary pedagogical ideas and the worldwide and Romanian evolution of the preschool education are taken into account. Thus, the approach of the method of projects, the integrated activities, and interactive educational methodology is mentioned.

Four other anchors are listed: (1) the role of preschool level inside of the Romanian education system; (2) the specific psychological level of nowadays preschool children; (3) the

positive experiences and the difficulties of the activity on this level of education; (4) tendencies and evolutions in informatics and technology (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008:7).

A specific chapter of the document presents the "Child development and education within 3–6/7 years".

The presentation declaredly based on a European document is less focused on the specificity of the psychological development of the generation of 3–6/7 years old of nowadays and more on re–enhancing the general role of this age for the further development of the personality. Even if the wording is sophisticated and sometime harder decipherable some ideas deserve to be highlighted (European Commission, 1995)

The chance of action of the formal education at preschool age to have a positive influence upon child's evolution, regardless of the child's social affiliation and the educational power of the family is highlighted. References to longitudinal studies are made in order to support the role of a formal preschool education.

An entire paragraph is focused on a debate about the effects of the educational group size to work with. The necessity of an attentive action for each child inside an optimum size of this educational group is expressed.

The same mentioned part speaks about the role of adult's behavior for the child's development; some important aspects are highlighted as conditions of an effective educational act: (1) the manner of organizing the educational activity in order to facilitate children's interaction in small groups, or their individual performance; the possibility of an influence upon children's sociability, independence, capacity to cooperate and solving conflicts is stressed; (2) the importance of the manner of introducing and using different teaching/ learning materials, affordable and appropriate to children's specificity; *I would add, to the nature of the activity (especially its purpose and content)*; the reasoning introduced by the authors: "this gives children opportunity to become involved in the elaborated game and at the same time, to develop social skills" *is not enough connected to the core idea and not enough convincing*; (3) the quality of the interconnection between children and adults as a powerful stimulus. *The explanations given for this idea are worded in such a bushy manner that it is really impossible to be analyzed. I infer that the authors were referring to the child's social behavior that can be developed in terms of independency, willingness to interact, on one side, and to the development of child's communication skills that can be stimulated within the context of an effective child – adult interaction* (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008:8).

The document also highlights the importance of involving children's families within their activities. Several interesting ideas are encapsulated in an, *unfortunately, too bushy way of wording.* Thus, the necessity to take into consideration the family's characteristics for designing a differentially involvement of the families in the benefit of the child is well stressed; some special situations are highlighted: disadvantaged families, families that have children with special needs.

Even if the arguments are eclectically organized and delivered, however the conclusion is right: the early education can have a high influence for the further development of a child if it is well and professionally managed.

The more complex the learning situations are the stronger influence of them upon the further development exists.

2. Structure and content

Under the title *structure and content* the authors firstly present some core intentions of their curriculum design. Thus, they speak about the intention to ensure: (1) continuity inside the same curricular cycle; (2) a clear connection and interdependence of the curriculum for preschool education and the curriculum of the first two grades of primary; (3) openness towards optional modules. (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008:8). *No doubt that a direct reference to the requirements of onset of primary education from the very beginning of this curriculum design would have been useful. The connection of these requirements to the declared finalities developed by the curriculum designers for early education stage, as a whole, would have been more compelling than the simple announcement of the intention of continuity. I think a curriculum design must explicitly connect to the next step of the educational process. In the same time it should explicitly refer to its starting points. The early education has as starting point the age 0, when only the inborn characteristics are to be considered, but it has at least two big sequences, and the explicit connection between them should be clearly presented. This is, in my opinion, the manner to support the three intentions without the risk of remaining only on a declarative level.*

This curriculum is defined, as the authors say, by six basic characteristics: **extension, balance, relevance, differentiation, progression, and continuity** (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008:8, 9).

The first characteristic, **extension**, is connected to the offers of training through learning situations belonging to a wide number of so called experiential fields. *It is remarkable that implicitly the authors suggest the difference between the learning situation designed by the educator and the learning experience lived by each child in a very peculiar manner.* The listed experiential areas are: language and literature, science, socio-human (man and society), psycho-motor, aesthetic and creative. *The further wording again somehow unclear, suggests that a wide range of learning outcomes is covered; but an explanation of what these outcomes are supposed to mean is absent.*

By **balance** attribute of curriculum the authors stresses the necessity to ensure the interconnection of all the mentioned experiential areas and the optimum integration of each area within the curriculum as a whole.

The **relevance** reflects the quality of curriculum that ensures its proper answer to the immediate and long term children's needs. (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008:9). *Again the added explanations are sophisticated and eclectic. Also is it difficult to understand why the word* concepts *is here and later in the text into a copulative relationship with* knowledge *(always linked in the text by the conjunction* and *or separated by commas), as long as any concept represents a core element of knowledge.*

Curriculum offers **differentiation** as well, meaning that it is designed to be effective for each child with a peculiar development level, with individual traits even if the child belongs to groups of the same age with general common traits.

Progression and **continuity** represents two characteristics presented together and expressing the intention to ensure consistency inside the curriculum of preschool stage for each age level and in connection to the previous before preschool stage and the further

primary education stage. *This definitely is an extremely good intention and necessary condition for a well designed curriculum.*

These characteristics are well enough chosen and stressed but the whole design of curriculum offers a lot of room for improving their evidence.

However, I would like to highlight a real strength of the analyzed curriculum: the accuracy of its explicitly presented structure based on the D' Hainault ideas and explanations about what a competencies – centered curriculum should mean. After so many years still this philosophy of competencies – centered curriculum is debated and criticized or, on the contrary and worthily , superficially adopted as something in fashion but not in depth understood. The Romanian curriculum for early education is structured based on this philosophy and this structure is also followed in its core points. The authors seem to have understood some fundamental issues. Thus, the development of children's competencies designed as finalities (outcomes) of the educational process does not mean that the contents, the time of learning, the strategies of teaching and those of assessment are not important anymore. They remain elements of the curricular structure, but they should function into a perfect synergy in the manner of leading the learner along the routes of the designed aims, passing with them through the "stations" of reached objectives and goals towards the overall expectation designed by curriculum. These are designed in terms of competencies and their training needs to involve the learners into learning situations designed by their teachers. This design means that teachers must find specifically and attentively chosen contents, deliver them through appropriate methods until the moment when children are able to genuinely live their unique and individual learning experiences; these are expressed through competencies developed on defined standards. The assessment of these competencies can be done in problem solving contexts where they are expressed as a synergistic product of the involved components: knowledge, capacities, and attitudes based on values. In this case the competencies are assessed as entities, in their effective action. The assessment on all the schooling levels can be focused on separate elements of competencies, but this does not mean that the competencies should be neglected and the excessive emphasize on assessing the quantity of knowledge could remain on its traditional status.

Unfortunately, the authors use terms coming from the theory of curriculum in an ambiguous manner, a weakness additionally stressed by the using of the same word in various contexts with slightly or substantially different meaning.

It is difficult to guess the authors' way of understanding the relation between concepts and knowledge, on one side, and between knowledge – skills – attitudes and competencies on the other side. Unfortunately, even after other three years the new law of education keeps the same ambiguity. Thus, the new law of education states that its vision consists in promoting an education "focused on values, creativity, cognitive skills, volitional and actionable capabilities, basic knowledge, and knowledge, competencies, and abilities of direct utility in the profession and society". (Education Act, 2011, article 2, paragraph 1). Reading further the article 4, a repetitiveness of ideas and an uncertain relation between "knowledge, competencies, and abilities" are obvious; while the article 2 connects these concepts by commas suggesting that competencies and knowledge are two distinctive and equal categories, the article 4 establish another type of report between them: "competencies, understood as multifunctional and transferable ensembles (sets), include knowledge, skills/ abilities and aptitudes (..)"Education Act, 2011, article 4

This is an evidence of a certain ambiguity of using the specialized terms in very official and important documents: the Education Act of 2011 and the Curriculum for preschool education (2008).

The education is not aimed to be a process for its sake. The development of the human beings as personalities is necessary for the progress of society. Thus, the society is the wide receiver *of the education's products, and the fields of society are complex and interconnected; they involve both the professional hypostases of human beings and their socio-relational hypostases. Each profession and each social status imply general and specific competencies well defined and ranked, encapsulated in what can be named as* profiles of competencies *for different professionals or statuses. These represent the target of the formal educational process, a process supported by society to meet the fulfillment of these profiles of competencies in the benefit of society.*

The educational process has different levels: each level has a final moment with a specific profile of competencies needed to be reached by the enrolled graduates. This profile should meet in the final moment of the considered level of schooling at least the minimum standards of the competencies requested by the further level of the training process.

In my opinion, it is necessary to clearly connect the originally designed outcomes as expected results *with the eventually obtained ones. A well structured curriculum first establishes the* expected outcomes*; they are called in different documents with different terms:* overall and specific objectives, goals or finalities. *Their design and wording have as a starting point the core requests of the future level of schooling or, at the end of schooling, the professional and social profile of competencies of a specified area, the later training had been done for.*

An important thing must be highlighted. The designing process *of the outcomes is done from* up to down *from society's requests, passing downward through all the levels of education, from the highest level till the early education.*

The educational action *starts with the fulfillment of the concrete* objectives, *and step by step it fulfill through these objectives the* connected goals*, if the route of aims is correctly kept. Thus, the educational action has an ascendant trajectory (*down to up*).*
The Figure 2 shows these directions and establishes the place of early education within the system.

The aims' category expresses this trajectory (in terms of the way, direction of the process.) The *choice of the word aim comes from the value of this word not only as a noun but also as a verb, showing an action precisely directed. In fact, the most important aspect here is to distinguish between targets seen like products and action leading to targets, no matter what words one use to name them.*

This distinction is necessary to properly design and establish the targets in terms of outcomes and then to design the proper path of the educational process leading to the outcomes' fulfillment. Too often this connection is not properly done and the targets are not fulfilled. It's like when one make a great project for spending a holiday in Paris, because Paris seems to be the fashionable or the officially requested final point. But immediately after this we buy tickets for Hong Kong, as my students metaphorically said trying to highlight the lack of match between goals/ objectives and their correlative aims. Important is not only to establish a correct or proper destination but to be able to chose the right track as well. Of course, the students said, the holiday's success further depends on the selected luggage to be

carried (contents to be taught); it also depends on the vehicle used and the adapted driving (methods of teaching/learning, assessing) and on the time spent (adapted speed seen as the learning time). All these are strongly, intimately connected, and the degree of satisfaction for a successful holiday (an effective learning process) depends on each of them, and on all together.
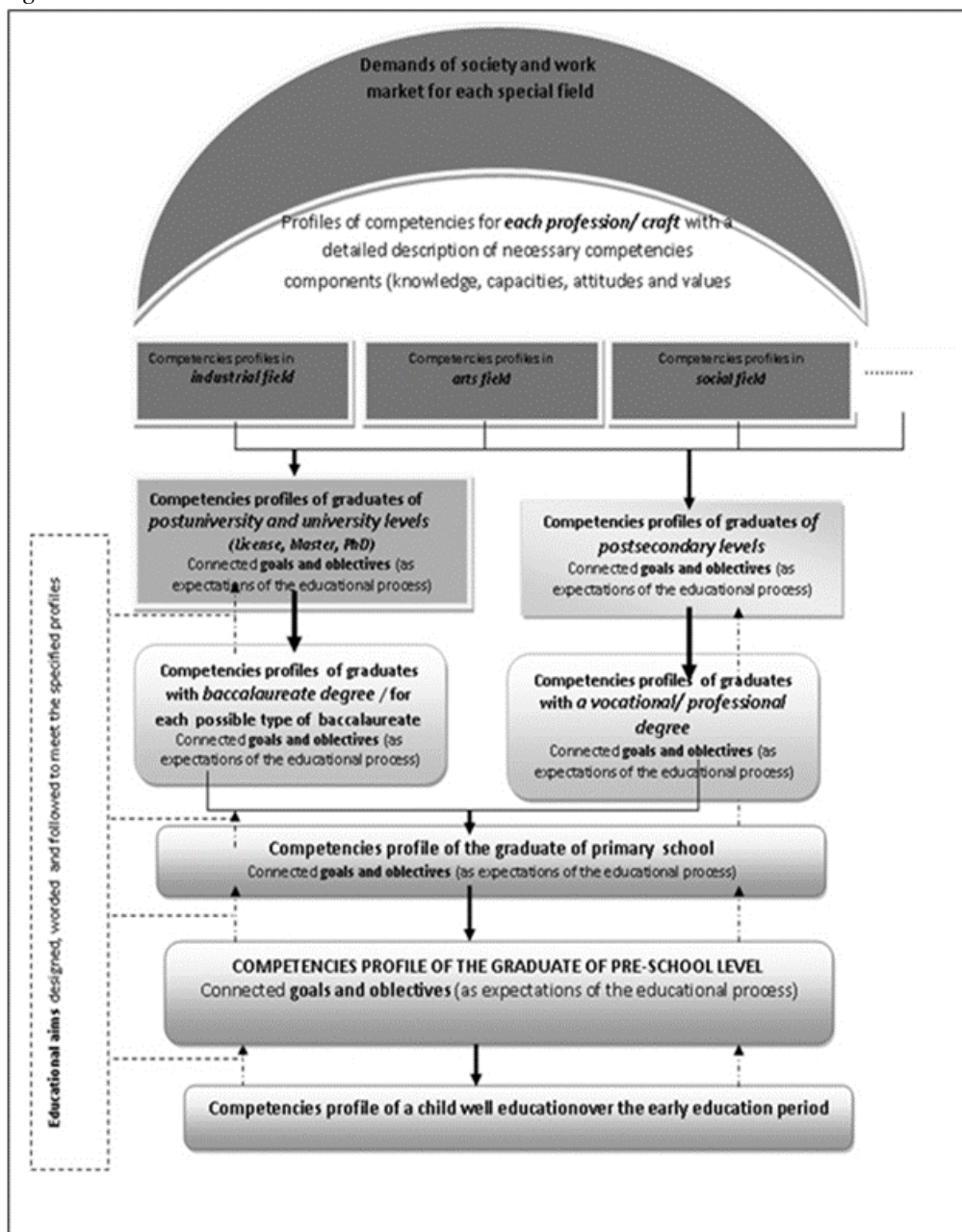
Figure 2: *The place of pre-school level (early education) within the whole educational process*

The figure 3 expresses how the three categories of knowledge, capacities and attitudes *involved in the goals design can be unified: (1) first, by putting them to the same direction of a precise aim; (2) and second, at the level of the product, within the competency structure, a structure resulted from the synergistic effect of these three core components. Thus, this figure explains the relations between the educational process and the level of its outcomes (education as a product).*

The graduate's profile of competencies *is seen as a set of competencies that can be assessed: (1) through the level of achievement of its components: knowledge, capacities, abilities supported by skills (understood as aptitudes), and attitudes involving values. Performance descriptors can be detailed; (2) the synergistic result of these three components – the competency itself, with an effectiveness proved within a solving problem context. The educational process is a long way of developing these competencies, more and more complex, and it is built in a kind of integrative way till the moment when, at maturity, one can speak about a* competent personality. [26]

Looking again to the figure 2, it is obvious that the early education and the preschool level are situated on the bottom of curriculum design, in terms of a deep determination from all the levels that come after them along the ontogenesis. It is totally normal to happen like this. Diachronically speaking, each society is obviously much more developed than the previous one. Accordingly, a new and more performing level of education is requested (professionally, politically, socially, morally, aesthetically etc. speaking.) In this case, the ultimate profile of competencies of a mature personality will have a specific structure, a more dynamic, maybe more complex one, but anyway ready to answer to the demands of a dynamic society; each new generation must be more highly trained and with a higher level of performance. This means that for each previous stages of education a higher level of requirements will appear: a more performing graduate of higher education asks a more performing undergraduate – graduate with baccalaureate, – graduate of lower education, of primary education. As a consequence, new requests are obvious for the early education including preschool level in order to prepare the new generations for such stronger demands. This is especially important as long as the role of early ages is highly recognized as being determinants of the growth of potential of development for future stages in ontogenesis.

On the other side, kids themselves are more and more developed from a generation to another. A higher pressure for changing the curriculum comes from here, as well. That is why it is genuinely difficult to design a new curriculum. Thus, an appropriate curriculum design requires: (1) a clear strategy of the general curriculum design with a well established place and role of these ages for the children further

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[26] *Competence,* understood as a potential of personality, is somehow abstract; it is assessed through its materialized hypostases – *competencies (*the plural form of competency), as I have chosen to call them. The place of manifestation is the life itself, the practice considered within its social and professional context. An implicitly similar view can be detected in the description of the twenty five behavioural competencies edited at the University of Guelph (Behavioural Competency Dictionary, 2010:1). The authors define competencies as "observable abilities and skills, knowledge, motivation or traits defined in terms of behaviours needed for successful job performance."

development; (2) a clear understanding of curriculum theory as a foundation for curriculum to offer the opportunity to develop effective learning situations for children, with a great potential to be turned into effective and unique learning experience by each child.
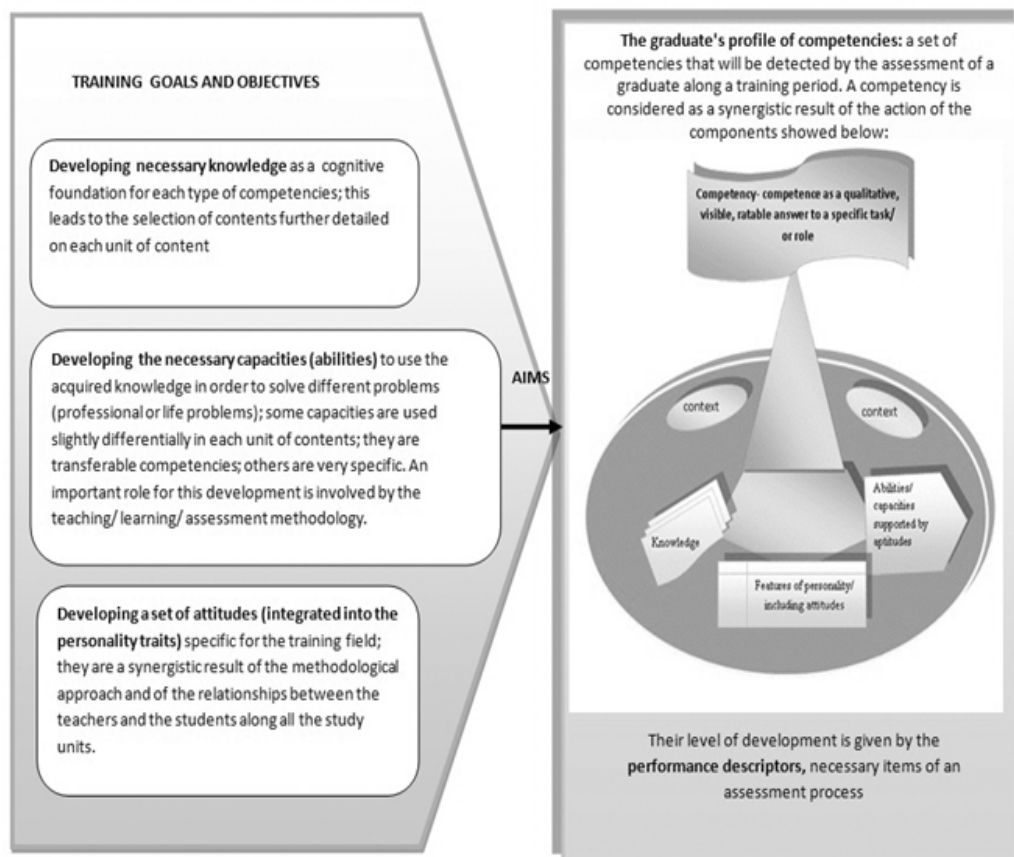
Figure 3: *Aims, goals, objectives leading to outcomes expressed through competencies*

The new Romanian curriculum seems to respect, generally speaking these requests as I have already   mentioned. The age interval is considered on two great sequences: 3 – 5 years old and 5 – 6/7 years old. *Unfortunately, again I have to emphasize the idea that the pedagogical language is not enough consistent and coherent for the entire document not only for the introductory part. The text's wording is somehow bushy, as well.*   However, I have also mentioned as notable that this document seems to have caught the distinction between the learning situation designed and run by the educator and the child's own learning experience. The declared intention to *give freedom* to the teachers, to determine them *to compete* with the curriculum, by developing nuances of its requests and adapting them to the real life of

their children is certainly a genuine strength of this curriculum (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 9).

3. Experiential fields

The documents operates with the concept of *experiential fields* defined like "true ~integrated cognitive fields~(L.Vlăsceanu) that transcend the boundaries between disciplines and in context of this curriculum, meet with the traditional fields of child development, namely: psychomotor domain, the language, socio – emotional, cognitive domain" (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008:9).

Five *experiential fields* are described and considered within the curriculum's construction (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 9,10).

They are presented eclectically; a pattern of presentation aiming to give consistency is not noticed. Some fields are presented by starting from the outcomes they intend to reach, as it is normal, eventually, but consistency in the experiential fields' description cannot be found. That is why I structured this presentation by putting the information encapsulated in the document wording into a common pattern. This pattern has three milestones: (1) **outcomes** (overall expectations) of the experiential field; (2) **characteristics of learning situations** offered to children as being the proper context for their own learning experiences; (3) **domains of knowledge and action** connected to each experiential field.

Aesthetic and creative field is supposed to((Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008:9):

(1) **Outcomes**: the expected outcomes of this experiential field are represented by response behaviors to perceptive learning situations; they are children's own learning experiences, lived in a proper emotional and intellectual manner. They involve: an adequate level of development of sensibility for quality, and beauty; an appropriate level of development of child's behavior according to aesthetic criteria (implicitly presented in text);

(2) **Characteristics of learning situations** able to be turned into **effective learning experiences,** genuinely lived as: (a) opportunities for exploring a wide range of emotions; (b) opportunities for learning to develop creative procedures, based on experimenting practices with an high accent on children's freedom; (c) opportunities to learn new knowledge, to develop new abilities; (d) opportunities to develop a personal bases of values as source for future personal reactions in front of the life they are in contact with.

(3) **Connected knowledge and action domains**: these learning experiences can be lived in any curricular component; explicitly they are presumed to be aimed by learning situation designed within activities of music, drawing- painting, drama, and eurhythmy.

The field of Man and Society(Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008:9):

(1) **Outcomes**: social skills effectively developed within the psychological level of the age; they involve children's active and reflective research of their environment; geography, history, daily life of the medium is considered.

(2) **Characteristics of learning situations** able to be turned into **effective learning experiences**, genuinely lived as: (a) opportunities for understanding the human being and the specific living conditions, interrelations between people or of man with the environment (social or natural) ; (b) opportunities for developing capacities to control events and to put order within the own environment; an involvement of technology appears in this point; (c) opportunities to develop manual and technical abilities; (d) opportunities to learn more knowledge about natural materials, their characteristics and utility for humans; (e) opportunities for developing emotional feelings for nature, society, and work; (f) opportunities to discover themselves, their interests and possibilities as a first step of their own future development; (g) opportunities to discover what historical time means, to understand the ongoing line of past, present and future (the active exploring attitude of the own history and of family or community history should be encouraged; (h) opportunities to learn more about their environment by an active , explorative and reflective action. (i) Opportunities to internalize moral values and develop moral appropriate behaviors. Children's action within their environment is stimulated. Reflection on their own history and the possibilities of intervention in this environment, according to the psychological possibilities of age are supported.

(3) **Connected knowledge and action domains**: these learning experiences can be lived in different educational context; an implicit request to fructify the possibilities of each learning situation appears, no matter to what area of contents this learning situation belongs to, in order to achieve the desired outcomes of this field (family, social and natural environment, any other social or learning context.)

Language and communication (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 10)[27]

(1) **Outcomes:** effective oral and written communication skills according to the age's specific (speaking, understanding oral and written messages, and writing as the normal action involved by children's age); these skills are to be developed in children's mother language; basic communication skills in an international language is aimed as well; children's capacity to effectively express their feelings and thoughts. They involve children's thinking, their fluency in oral communication, correctness of oral and written language (according to the psychological traits of the age) in their mother language and the children's capacity to communicate at least as a basic level in a foreign international language.

 (2) **Characteristics of learning situations** able to be turned into **effective learning experiences,** genuinely lived as: (a) opportunities for listening and speaking within small groups; (b) opportunities to explore the experiences of others and to expand their repertoire of significant experiences; (c) opportunities to learn new knowledge within linguistic area, to develop new communication skills; (d)

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[27] Adapted and reorganized text

opportunities to develop the quality of children communication skills: fluency, correctness, self confidence in communication; (e) opportunities for children to expand their ability to understand complex interpersonal situations and contribute to the development of evaluation capacity; (f) opportunities for a first contact of children with a foreign international language.

(3) **Connected knowledge and action domains:** these learning experiences can be lived in absolutely all the educational contexts because the communication is involved anywhere. Thus, the activities focused on science, arts, sport, and man and society will support children's learning of a specific vocabulary and to express as fluently as possible what they think and discover. But, most of all the approach of literature for children, the specific activities focused on *memorization of poetry, activities of telling stories, communication games, and dramatization* are the core of this experiential field.

Science field (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008:11)[28]

(1) **Outcomes:** basic mathematic skills, effective skills of counting, of operating with sets of objects, capacity of recognizing geometric shapes, skills of using patterns in solving mathematical problems, and skills of creating mathematical problems; basic research skills connected to the real life and children's perceptive environment. These outcomes involve developing the children's representations about certain concepts such as: volume, weight, number, discrimination, classification or quantitative description; developing children logical thinking, reasoning skills, their motivation for mathematics, rigor, and precision; developing competencies associated to a scientific inquiry such as observing, selecting of the significant elements of the mass by detaching by the irrelevant elements, generating hypotheses and alternatives, designing and conducting experiments, organizing data derived from observations; all these will be developed within the psychological limits of the age.

(2) **Characteristics of learning situations** able to be turned into **effective learning experiences,** genuinely lived as: (a) opportunities for learning basics of mathematics; (b) opportunities for developing mathematic skills and effective mathematic thinking; (c) opportunities to learn new knowledge, to develop new abilities in the mathematic area; (d) opportunities to develop connections between the abstract world of mathematics and the real life within a real social context; (e) opportunity to develop mathematical knowledge and skills within the context of the other curricular areas; (f) opportunity to develop basic research knowledge and skills.

(3) **Connected knowledge and action domains:** these learning experiences can be lived in the context of: (a) games conducted with materials such as sand or water; (b) activities focused on simulating shopping in stores; (c) specific mathematic activities focused on learning numeracy, mathematic language, and basic mathematic skills; (d) any other activity within a different curricular area that offer possibilities to be fructify from the mathematical perspective; (e) activities with basic scientific content as: observing of beings / plants / animals / objects nearby environment, modeling clay, making and playing simple musical instruments, applying of scientific

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[28] Adapted and reorganized text

principles in the domestic economy or by comparing the properties of various materials.

Psycho- motor field (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 11)[29]

(1) **Outcomes:** a proper control of body movements, general mobility and stamina, motor and handling finesse skills; basic knowledge of human anatomy and physiology;

(2) **Characteristics of learning situations** able to be turned into **effective learning experiences,** genuinely lived as: (a) opportunities for developing their body general and sequential coordination (eyes–hands, hands–feet, eye–hand–foot, hand–hand etc.); (b) opportunities for developing the correct perception and use of the body scheme perception; (c) opportunities to learn new knowledge, develop new abilities for playing physical games involving complex moving and cooperation; (d) opportunities to develop important traits of personality: stamina, flexibility, sociability, fair play, strength etc.

(3) **Connected knowledge and action domains:** these learning experiences can be lived in specific psycho–motor activities, sports, physical education, drawing and even man and society activities focused on the perception of self within the social context.

The new official curriculum for preschool education   is structured on two levels of age. It encourages heterogeneity (abandoning the system of setting up groups based on chronological age), in the context of child–centered learning. Basically, this statement of curriculum was not put in practice because there are contradictions with other aspects coming from the management perspective.

The text states differences among the defined types of kindergartens without a clear explanation of them. The listed types of preschool institutions are: (a) "normal schedule" - four hours; (b) with extended schedule- involving the eight hours program; and (c) kindergarten with weekly program.

"The Master Plan, as well as the previously presented experiential areas, create opportunities for an interdisciplinary, integrated approach of the proposed contents and provide freedom of the teacher in planning daily activities with preschoolers" (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 12).

 . Even if this wording induces a doubt about the correct understanding of terms interdisciplinary and integrated contents, a valuable idea must be highlighted; I am talking about the idea of the interconnection between contents and methods, a relationship stated as a "bi–univocal."   The role of the educator as a resource person is strongly underlined.

I appreciate the core portrait suggested for an effective teacher working in the spirit of this new curriculum. That is why I have started from the text idea and I completed the teacher's expected way of action underlying the possible effects on the children side (table 1.)

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[29] Adapted and reorganized text

The authors conclude at the end of the introductory part of the curriculum that: "this curriculum continues previous efforts of the Ministry of Education to combine ideas of traditional pedagogy with ideas of alternative pedagogies from worldwide and try to align the innovative trends in the curriculum" (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 12).

I have realized this introduction as a preparation for a brief presentation of what the authors consider as being novelty in this curriculum. The presentation needs some comments rooted in the observation of what happened along the curriculum implementation process.

Teacher	Educational consequences
Gives information and facilitate the access to information	Child's motivation for information should be develop
Make a diagnosis of child's learning or acting possible difficulties	Child awareness about the own strengths and limits and a reflective attitude against the tasks
Gives support to the child for solving tasks	Child learns that with effort and stamina can overcome obstacles; self esteem improvement and trust in asking and receiving help
Organizes small working group for facilitating children cooperation but being able to support each child if necessary	Child openness towards other children and acceptance for cooperation and receiving help; willingness to give help
Opportunities to internalize moral values and develop moral appropriate behaviors. Open door towards community, valuing the learning opportunities no matter where they appear from	Children 's willingness and ability to make transfers of what they learn in kindergarten to the real life; openness for and what the community (family, street, infomal group of friends/ family friends) offers as fields of practice or of new learning opportunities
Manages in an effective way the teaching-learning materials and the space / learning environment	Child learns to use materials for learning, pick and chose materials for learning purposes, organize and use in a proper formative way the environment.
The educator does not contradict the child and does not put any labels no matter what level of performance the child reaches. *This attitude must be extremely well managed because too much freedom or acceptance can lead to perverse effects on children*	Self control, capacity to argue and explain the own view, willingness for challenges, respect for the arguments of the others, accepting the own limits and trying to overcome them by own effort. A bad management of this issue could determine arrogance, daring, negativity, even despotic behavior, in severe cases.

Table 1: *Teaching act and the educational consequences (adapted and completed after Curriculum 2008: 12)*

4. Novelties within the new curriculum

4.1. The first novelty of the analyzed curriculum

Diversifying teaching – learning strategies is considered as a first direction of novelty. This diversification is focused on active and participatory methods by engaging children into a genuine learning experience. The authors stress the necessity to consider that children have different levels of development, different rates of development and learning and different learning styles. *I also stress the necessity to use inter–active methods that facilitate the co-operative learning; this is a very important component of preschool educational level as a preparatory stage for the future school life (the propaedeutics function of the preschool education).*

The **development of a positive motivation** for learning and an increased level of self esteem are considered as an important contribution for children's preparation for school. These are developed if the learning situations designed by the educators are based on children's previous learning experiences, the authors say. They implicitly speak about a double hypostasis of play: as fundamental psychological activity of early childhood and as an educational method/ or designed learning context.

I would present, based on the authors ideas, that these double hypostasis should be understood and used by teachers who design learning situations for children. Thus, firstly the basic form of activity along the early childhood is the play. The ludicrous context *must be used for an effective* incidental learning. *Secondly, the learning force of the child's play must be consciously used by the educator; in this case it turns into a* methodological context *as soon as it is used as a method for learning; sometimes one finds under the name of "didactic play" a learning context containing playful sequences as methods connected to punctual contents. More than this, two perspectives should be involved: the individual play and the group or social perspective of play. Their careful observation by the educator gives enough information to be used for the individual help and for the design of learning situations for a group of children (Figure 4: Child's (children's) play – sources of information for educators.)*

The assessment sequence is considered as another anchor of diversifying the teaching – learning methodology. The authors say that the evaluation process should be focused on the **child's individual progress** and less on reference to group's norms which are not relevant at least for this age. This assessment have to find answers to three major aspects (a) the nature of child's acquisition; (b) the qualitative level of this acquisitions as an expression of the level of the child's preparation for school and for the long process of the ontogenesis development; (c) obstacles of child's development, if they exist (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 13).

4.2. *The second novelty of the analyzed curriculum*

A second novelty underlined by the authors is represented by the importance of the educational environment. Two traits of this environment are highlighted: its intercultural dimension and the possibility of a free expression of the child. The idea of social inclusion is somehow attached to interculturality but there is no explanation of what the authors intends to express. *This problem is very interesting and may be subject to separate works. The problem of intercultural educational environments has some common elements but also some specific differences from context to context that should be carefully considered.*
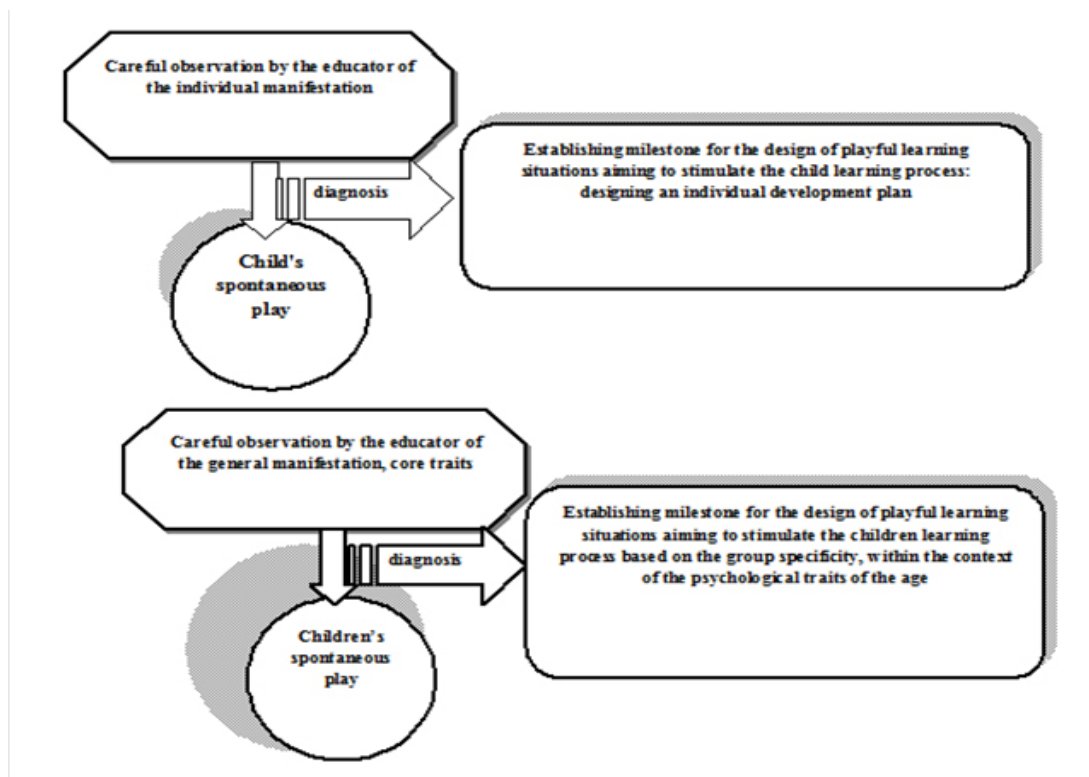
Figure 4: *Child's (children's) play – sources of information for educators*

4.3. The second novelty of the analyzed curriculum

A second novelty underlined by the authors is represented by the importance of the educational environment. Two traits of this environment are highlighted: its intercultural dimension and the possibility of a free expression of the child. The idea of social inclusion is somehow attached to interculturality but there is no explanation of what the authors intends to express. *This problem is very interesting and may be subject to separate works. The problem of intercultural educational environments has some common elements but also some specific differences from context to context that should be carefully considered.*

4.4. The third novelty of curriculum

A third and valuable idea is represented by the parents' role as partners of the educational approach. In fact, it is not a novelty as wording; always it appeared as a wish. Unfortunately, even in this case when the idea is reiterated, the implementation of curriculum only vaguely realized this involvement of parents. The parents' presence in kindergarten's life still remained on a superficial manner; they did not become real partners of the educational approach. *In my opinion, special programs for parents' education should be considered, designed and run.*

4.5. The fourth novelty of curriculum

The focus of curriculum must be on the concept of global development of the child. This is understood as a necessary accent on all the type of competencies necessary both for school and life. Accordingly, the development must be seen on all the involved areas: cognitive, socio- emotional (with moral and aesthetic implications), and physic (psycho- motor). This is the reason of developing the goals of this curriculum based on experiential areas, the authors say (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 13, 14).

The curriculum presents further a number of areas of development without specifying their correlation with the experiential fields, and this has created confusions along the implementation process.

A brief description of the development areas is realized, following the text of the document.

5. Areas of child's development

The new curriculum describes five areas of the child's development considered as being targets of the educational process.

1. **The physical development, health and personal hygiene** are elements of the first listed developmental area. This area refers to the child's body coordination connected to specific skills imply, the child's sensory skills, knowledge, capacities and attitudes on child care and personal hygiene, nutrition, health maintenance practices and personal security. It has two important branches: (a) Physical Development: (a.1.) development of gross–motility; (a.2.) developing fine–motility; (a.3.) sensory-motor development; (b) Health and personal hygiene: (b.1.) promoting health and nutrition; (b.2.) personal care and hygiene promotion; (b.3) promoting personal safety practices (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 14).
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2. **Socio-emotional area** – aimed at the onset of child's social life, child's ability to establish and maintain interactions with adults and other children. Social interactions are important for the development of child's self image and the image of people around. Emotional development is especially expressed by children's ability to perceive and express emotions, understand and respond to the emotions of others, and developing self concept, crucial for this area. This self concept correlate with self image and together they have a decisive influence on learning process.

As dimensions of the area are highlighted: (a) social development: (a.1) developing the skills of interaction with adults; (a.2.) interaction skills with children age close; (a.3.) acceptance and respect for diversity; (a.4.) develop pro-social behavior (b) emotional development: (b.1) developing self–concept; (b.2) development of emotional control; (b.3) development of emotional expressiveness.

3. **The development of language and communication** is the third area of development. *In my view the phrase put as title of this area is not correct. The children's communications competencies are to be developed, not the communication as a general category of human actions*. This area is focused on the development of

language (in matters of vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and understanding the significance of messages), communication skills (including listening skills, oral and written communication, nonverbal and verbal) and pre- acquisitions for literacy and the accompanying development of each of the other areas. (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 15).

As dimensions of the field are highlighted: (a) *Language development and of communication skills*: (a.1) Developing the capacity of listening and understanding (receptive communication); (a.2) Development of speech and communication ability (expressive communication); (b) *Development of reading and writing prerequisites*: (b.1)Participating at educational experiences with books, aiming to learn about books and to value them; (b.2) Developing the capacity of phonetic discrimination, sound-letter association; (b.3)Awareness of spoken / written message; (b.4) Acquiring writing skills, using writing to send a message.

4. **The area of cognitive development**- focused on developing children's ability to understand relationships among objects, phenomena, events and people beyond their physical characteristics. The cognitive development includes logical thinking skills and problem solving capacities, elementary mathematical knowledge of children and those on the world and the environment (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 15, 16).

As dimensions of the field are presented: (a) logical development and problem solving; (b**)** knowledge and basic skills, mathematical knowledge and understanding of the world:
(b.1) elementary mathematical representations (numbers, numerical representation, operations, concepts space, geometric shapes, understanding patterns, measurements); (b.2) "knowledge and understanding" of the world (living world, earth, space, scientific method).
Even if very often used, I do not agree this phrase knowledge and understanding. *Going back to Bloom and Lorin Anderson it is easy to understand that they did not use the term* knowledge *with the meaning of nowadays. Bloom has established six major categories of cognitive behaviors; these are described and presented in relation to the increasing difficulty of the intellectual approach. Six levels of difficulty are presented. Each level prepares the next one and it is indispensable for the building of the next level. The categories that are enumerated by Bloom are the following:* knowledge (described as remind data and information*), comprehension (*described as understanding of the meaning *and involves action like: translate, interpolate and interpret instructions and problems; reformulate problems in individual's own words), application, analysis, summary, and evaluation.*
In the mid '90s Lorin Anderson, a disciple of Bloom, did a review of terminology and hierarchy, by changing the nouns used by Bloom with words having verbal meanings that express cognitive abilities / capacities; thus it becomes possible to replace the polyvalent term of knowledge with the verb remember (remembering information*), its meaning being closer to the nature and degree of complexity of this level of cognitive behavior, as Bloom himself understood it. The next category of*

*Anderson is expressed by the verbal meaning of understand (*understanding information*), which also has a closer meaning to the sense given by Bloom to comprehension stage; this level is characterized by focusing on human individual's capacity to decode meanings and to prove that the information decoding process is a correct one, as a proof of understanding.*

Beyond the two basic levels (knowledge and comprehension at Bloom, remembering and understanding at Anderson), the cognitive abilities gradually increase in complexity via application, analysis, synthesis up to assessment, according to Bloom's steps. Anderson differentiates the two final levels and establishes as last level to create, based on an assessment that involves synthesis. All these levels express together the complex approach of knowledge as phenomenon. (Niculescu, R. M., 2010: 17).

According to the above comments it is obvious that genuine knowledge (even if considered as internalized information and even less when the term means a human specific phenomenon) *cannot exist without understanding. The process of internalizing supposes to decode information and this involves understanding. Only if one considers knowledge in terms of mechanically memorized information the phrase* knowledge and understanding *could be correct. In my opinion this phrase obsessively repeated in specialty works reveals a symptomatic concealment of an excessive valuing of the amount of information memorized. Scholastic concept seems to still have followers.*

5. The last presented area is that of **capacities and attitudes to learning** (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 16). This area refers to the child involvement in a learning activity, child's way of approaching defined learning tasks and context. Children's attitude involved by their interaction with the environment and with other children or adults is also implied. The listed dimensions of the area show the authors focus on the attitudinal aspect of the children's development: curiosity and interest, initiative, persistence in activity, creativity. *In my view, the term capacity in the name of the area has not a right place; in fact the cognitive capacities involved in learning process are developed within all the other domains. This area is focused on the **children's attitudes** and they represent a very important element of the evolving competencies at this age.*

A last explanation tries to make a connection between the previously described experiential fields and this domains/ areas of development with the curriculum authors' mention that it is not necessary a superposition of them but a correlation (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 16).

In fact, children being put into learning experiences should be developed as a whole, as a complex evolving human being. In my opinion, a more clear explanation and even a possible compatibility among these two categories of concepts, very important for the economy of the curriculum, would have avoided a wide number of confusions and contradiction that appeared along the implementation process.

From the document wording presented above, educators can understand that their duty is to pursue the real connections between experiential fields and the areas of development, without seeking their overlap; the aim should be a choice of effective strategies to achieve the overall development of the child and thus the educational aims. It is the authors' advice, but a more clear connection among these concepts

should be provided. I argue this based on the huge number of questions I had been confronted with, which had been generated by the use of two categories of concepts, obviously connected but not in depth understood.

In fact, the very names of these two categories of concepts are significant and make sense of the relationship between them. Development areas as concept are related to the complexity of the personality to which the foundations are put along preschool age. Experiential fields are a result of educational offerings designed to develop each of the components expressed by the areas of development.

The educators are the actors of the design and implementation of learning situations *belonging to these* five experiential fields*: man and society, sciences, language and communication, aesthetic and creativity, psycho-motor. Each learning situation is focused on specific outcomes on the level of the involved children; these outcomes belong to their own* learning experiences *(the source of the phrase*: experiential fields). *The outcomes on their turn are expressed by* competencies *as entities or by the components of these entities:* knowledge, capacities and attitudes based on values. *These three elements act in a synergistic way and have as results competencies elaborated on a proper level for the preschool age. It was a long debate about the appropriateness of using the term* competency *when one talks about children.*

I consider that a diachronically understanding of competencies development along the ontogenesis process gives the right to speak about competencies at this age as concrete evolving competencies *in preschool period. These concrete evolving competencies are progressively developed until maturity and they are qualitatively filtered in what can be named as* competence as an attribute of personality. *Each adult has his level and a specific nature of* competence *that is further expressed through* concrete competencies in practice *(social or professional practice)* (Niculescu, R. M., 2010: 103).

The figure 5 shows the place of preschool age within the ontogenesis process and its specific level of developing children's competencies as expression of the experiential fields connected to developmental areas.

Each experiential field expresses the outcomes of an educational process that emerge as consequences of designed and implemented learning situations in specific fields: man and society, aesthetic and creative, sciences, language and communication, psycho-motor, as the curriculum called them. These experiential fields express sets of outcomes existing on children's level because they live their unique experience within the context of the provided learning situations. The outcomes can be represented by new knowledge, new or developed capacities or abilities, developed attitudes based on internalized values. One cannot speak at this age about beliefs. The preschool child crosses over the period of the authority of hetero – morality. But, it is important to use the specific mechanisms of the age in order to help the internalizing process of the moral religious, esthetics, and other categories of values. They are extremely important for the further children's development. Each experiential field adds more elements to the developmental areas that contribute to the global development of the child. The specificity of these elements depends on the experiential field itself.

Thus, man and society field gives knowledge about people, social and natural environment, history of the nearby environment and its geographical traits; it gives knowledge about self, human body, human activities etc. The use of new knowledge determines the development of children's cognitive capacities and sometimes, psycho – motor abilities, in specific context. Children start to develop attitudes toward life, self, other people, and society. They develop response behaviors and also have a good practice of language by using newly learned words and developing their communication skills. As a consequence, one cannot talk about a strict connection of this experiential field only with one or another of the five developmental areas. There are specific emphases put on one or another accordingly to the contents or contexts of the punctual learning situations.
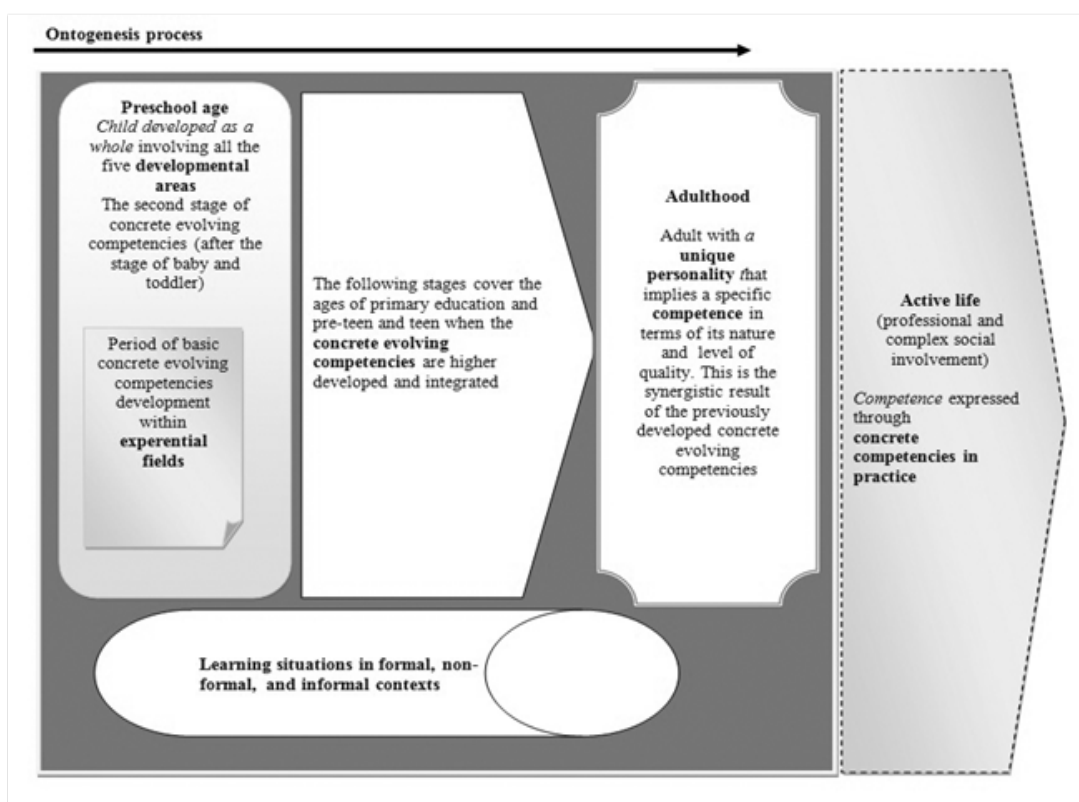
Figure 5: *Preschool age- role and place in ontogenesis. Learning situations – experiential fields and developmental areas*

The science field *by its specific has a great contribution to the development of mathematic and scientific knowledge and to the children's cognitive capacities. But it also involves a specific vocabulary and a specificity of communication itself. Attitudes and feelings are developed, as well. They should be explicitly and carefully aimed by the educators in order to put the bases of a positive motivation for learning science and learning in general.*

The psycho-motor field *seems to be better connected to the developmental area of the physical development, health and personal hygiene. This is true in terms of explicit goals but all the other developmental areas are more or less influenced. The psychomotor activities involve emotions and social relationships, develop attitudes and imply learning and attitude to learning. A number of rules must be learned, the specific terms determine a richer vocabulary and, finally, a good context of practicing the communication skills; thus even the cognitive area of development is implied.*

The aesthetic and creative field that is explicitly covered by the drawing, painting activities, music and dance gives more information, and consequently more knowledge in this domains; the practice of a specific language can be noticed and also a rich context for developing emotions. A lot of social skills are developed depending on the effectiveness of learning situations' design. The development of capacities and attitudes is also aimed even if with a specific connotations according to the content. In the same time, this experiential field is subject of an implicit concern of all the other experiential fields in terms of the use of value of beauty and creativity; beauty and creativity can be found and developed in any context if the educator wants and is able to do this. This is only an example of the way of an intimate interconnection among the experiential fields with complex effects on all the developmental areas.

The language and communication field *is an independent one even if all the others have a great contribution in the connected developmental area. Specific activities focused on vocabulary, correctness of expression, fluency, logic of speaking are to be explicitly developed. Children can learn that their thoughts can be expressed by signs, drawings with a symbolic value, letters connected in words of mother language or another language. They learn to express their thought in a rational manner, fluently, correctly and with appropriate emotions. This is the subject of specific educational activities and they will determine outcomes of unique and personal learning experience. But this developmental area is specifically completed by all the others experiential areas.*

6. Master Plan and types of activities

Curriculum presents the Master Plan with a concrete distribution of hours per week and per categories of activities. *The same lack of consistency and the bushy wording does not help a genuine understanding of authors' philosophy, even if this philosophy, generally speaking, is a very good one and really introduces a new vision.* This is one of the primary reasons of rejection or of an extremely complicated way of implementing the curriculum along the last years. When I say this I refer to the informal opinions I had the chance to meet with, opinions with an extended range. Usually, an interesting set of reasons stop the open expressing of the genuine teachers' thoughts and feelings. But the concrete implementation of curriculum acts under the influence of these genuine opinions. That is why it becomes strongly important to fill the gap between official expression of thoughts and the real level of acceptance.

The Master plan is followed by a so called *Methodology of Implementation*. An in depth analysis of this document is not intended, but several considerations should be done (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 18).

Three *categories of learning activities* are listed: (1*) activities on field of "learning"* (which can be integrated activities or activities on *disciplines*); (2) *chosen games and activities*; (3) *personal development activities.* These categories are encapsulated within the mentioned Master Plan (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 18).

This presentation and the definitions of these categories include a number of terms that previously were used in another manner. For instance the *experiential fields* phrase is replaced with the term "*activities on fields of learning* ". The listing of activities speaks about activities on fields of learning while the further description speaks about "*activities on experiential fields"* (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 18). Even if the two phrases could be synonyms this uncertain manner of using concepts has created confusions and rejections (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 18). Another example is the use of the term *disciplines,* a term not usually found in preschool education.

The definitions of the three categories of learning activities imply a series of terms which are not previously treated in any way, and the understanding of the text becomes difficult.

After a careful reading of the definitions, I try to structure the text based on some parameters which make possible both the deciphering of meaning and the correct use of terms in designing activities.

7.   Defining and describing learning activities

7.1. *Activities on field of learning*

The first category of learning activities involves design, formal management, and assessment. They presume specific contents that can be structured in different manners.

The choice of a certain structure requires considering: (1) the six major themes proposed by the official curriculum, (2) the age of children, (3) children's interests (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 18).

One says that the suggested number of weekly activities refers to a maximum weekly value of integrated activities. It is correct for curriculum to establish it, but maybe an argument for the chosen figures would have been welcome.

The Methodology states that the teachers can design their planning by structuring contents in two ways: (1) on disciplines (subject, knowledge fields); (2) on integrated contents from more knowledge fields (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 18).

In the category of subjects/disciplines (in fact areas of knowledge / action) are listed just in a parenthesis: *language education activities, math activities, learning environment, education to society, physical education, practical training, music education or artistic-plastic activities.*

The integrated contents are seen as a possible alternative of structuring contents, apart on disciplines; the integration can be done in two ways: (a) putting together interconnected knowledge from several domains; (b) considering the

integration between the three listed categories of learning activities, particularly the first two: the activities on experiential fields and the category of chosen games and activities; this can be done under the umbrella of common topics. The concrete manner of integration is a free option of teachers. Unfortunately, the ambiguity of the use of the word interdisciplinary in the original text aggravates the understanding. A staging of activities is introduced with an optional order. The text does not clearly explain the substance and role of this staging (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 18).

7.2. *Chosen games and activities*

The second category of learning activities (chosen games and activities) implies activities focused on consolidation of acquisitions acquired in the first category of activities in the context of a "progressive socialization." They should be organized in small groups, peers, or individually.

Depending on the type of kindergarten schedules 2-3 possible stages of the chosen game and activities are listed (3 activities for kindergartens with an extended or weekly schedule and only 2 for those with normal time.) Suggestions of possibility of organizing centers of interest are done. Examples are listed: Library, Corner of the box / Role Play, Construction, Science, Arts, sand and water, etc., The offer must be as rich as possible; it is determined by the material conditions of space and, not least the age of children (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 19).

7.3. *Personal development activities*

Personal development activities are detailed on three categories: (a) routines, (b) transitions and (c) activities along the afternoon (for kindergarten with an extended or weekly schedule). They include the optional activities as well (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 18).

The introduction of routines seems interesting; they are defined as anchoring activities, a kind of benchmarks of daily activities within kindergarten: the children's arrival, the morning meeting, breakfast, hygiene moments as washing and toilet, lunch, sleep / time relaxing of the afternoon, snacks, and departure. Their daily scheduling approximately within the same hourly landmarks allows the teacher to use them as formative moments. They can be designed as activities aiming to develop both the children's self–esteem and a number of social competencies, extremely useful for the social life: communication skills, self management, making decisions, solving problems, avoid conflicts etc. Although worded in a bushy form, the offered explanations are however useful. (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 19).

The subcategory called "transitions" includes "short–term activities that are transition moments among categories of learning activities in various moments of the daily schedule. They can be imagined in many ways and the curriculum emphasizes the importance of children's age for the choice of the way of action. The given concrete examples can be useful, but are not suggested as restrictive (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 20).

7.4. *Optional activities*

The "optional" activities represent another subcategory that includes chosen activities, as well. But this time the parents make the choice from the offers submitted by the kindergarten. These offers can cover a wider area, according to the presumed interests of parents and children's' and depending on the human and material resources of the educational institution. The Methodology introduces a restriction of the number of run optional activities in the weekly schedule: one activity for children aged 3-5 years and two for those within 5-7 years. They can be run by a teacher or a specialized professional as a partner of the preschool teacher (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 20).

7.5. *The afternoon activities*

The Methodology considers the afternoon activities also as learning activities. They can be: "rehabilitation activities" in areas of learning, recreation, cultivation and development of children's interests and children's potentialities. They must meet the child's own pace of learning and individual's skills, and are correlated with the weekly topic / theme of the project and other program daily activities (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 20.

8. The six core topics

An interesting part of the analyzed methodology consists in the introduction of six core topics, as core directions around which is suggested to be "organized the annual program of study" (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 21). They are presented without an intended interconnection even if it exists. Three of them are mainly focused on the child's individual development and the other three refer more to the child's relation with the environment, the world. In the first category can be listed the topics: (1) *Who am I? / Who we are? (2) What and how to express our feelings? (3) What and how I want to be?* The second category includes*: (4) When, how and what happens? (5) How is / was and will be here on earth? (6) Who and how plan / organize an activity*? (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 21). Another suggestion appears: the involvement of these topics in educational projects whose number is limited at 7 yearly. The description of themes is an inspired graphics one, but in terms of clarity is still enough space to improve (Curriculum for Preschool Education, 2008: 23).

The document presents the relationship between: (a) each of the six topics; (b) the experiential areas; (c) listed goals (called in Romanian *reference objectives*); (d) children's behavior; (e) suggestions for contents.

Another pedagogical confusion should be highlighted. The goals are worded more in terms of objectives as actions / children's behaviors but not always in a correct way. For instance wording like "children understanding of" is not correlated with behaviors able to demonstrate this understanding.

The *learning time* as a curricular component is placed for the formally organized teaching activities in between 15 minutes for small group (3-4 years) up to 45 minutes at high and preparatory group.

The main emphasizes of preschool education are specified. Thus, for the first interval of ages (3-5 years old) the focused should be on the development of autonomy and integration in kindergarten; the second interval (5-7 years old) aims to train children for school.

The relationship between the recommended six topics and the experiential fields is somehow suggested in the mentioned figure but unfortunately two things stand out: (1) an ambiguous separation of two items: *concepts and knowledge* and (2) the totally neglect of some important relationships. Thus, it is not clear how the authors see the relationship of the topics and the developmental areas at the children's level that, ultimately, are essential reason of everything is being done.

The methodology provides some details for each of the interval of age and for each topic in hand. This is the place where the authors suggest in an implicit manner interesting connection but the necessity to put them into an explicit way appears. The figure 6 shows in a graphic form these connections. This is an alternative figure to that offered by the document.

The figure shows the connection between the six topics – the five experiential fields and the outcomes of educational process expressed by *competencies* developed in specified areas.

The educational approach is exercised in the context of one of the six topics, integrated or not, included or not within wider projects. The topics' approach aims to reach quantitative and qualitative standards within each experiential field.

The first Pentagon represents the five experiential fields meant to help the child's development on the five specified areas of development listed by curriculum (expressed by the second pentagon) This development involves concrete evolving competencies. The central image presents these developmental areas having inside the symbol of the triangle that expresses the three dimensional structure of a competency; its basic components are: (1) knowledge; (2) capacities/ abilities/ skills; (3) attitudes based on values. Thus, the center of the schema (the competencies and the areas where they are to be developed) represents the focus of the entire educational process and consequently the heart of the figure.

Along the history of the Romanian education the concern for early age has manifested in a remarkable manner, as I have tried to show throughout this paper.

A final figure (7) captures the evolution of the early education within the Romanian educational system along the last two centuries.

The future will be the evidence of new dimensions given to this preoccupation. The educational approach has to be clarified and better structured on all its dimensions. A more effective way of teachers training should be designed and implemented. Eventually, the educational practice will be the genuine mirror of how effective is this important approach.
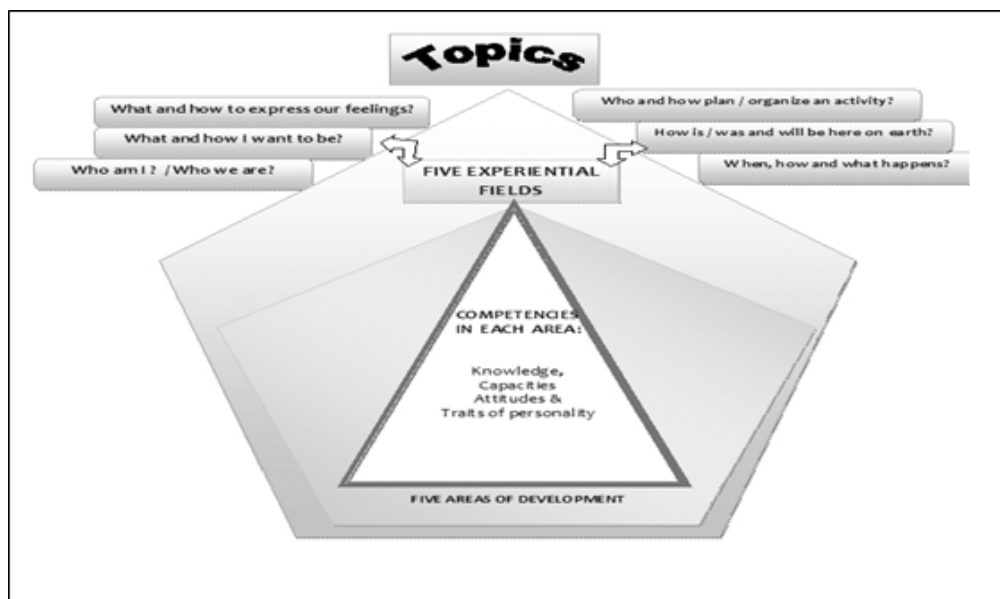
Figure 6: *Topics- Experiential fields and Competencies on Developmental areas*
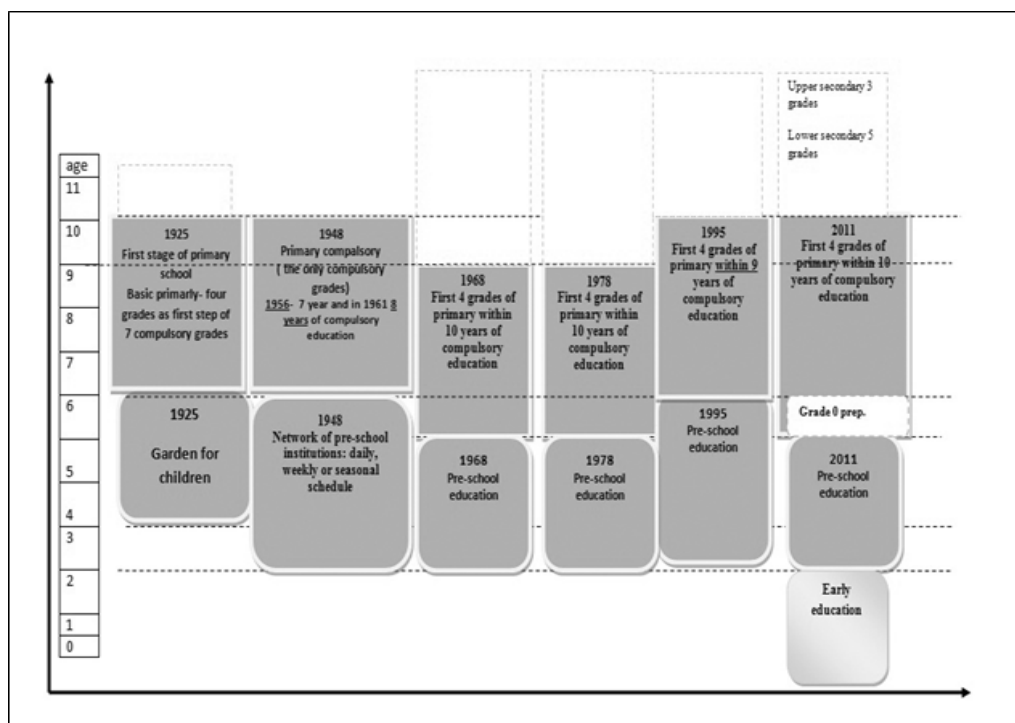
Figure 7: *The evolution of early and primary Romanian education along the last two centuries*

9. FINAL REFLECTIONS

Education is the wind that shapes the rock to reveal the Sphinx from its heart. This is a metaphor of education created by one of my students. He was not a future poet, but a future physician, a young who seems to have understood the essence of what is the miracle of education.

Starting from this wording I tried to establish the mission of the early education (including the formal preschool stage) inside of this complex process of human being's personality creation, with another group of students trained to become future preschool teachers. The number of the answers and their high creativity gave me the measure of the deep understanding of a sacred mission. They have worded the mission of this starting moment highlighting interesting aspects. The type of the wind, the force of its blow, the manner of acting against the stone were landmarks of an impressive set of analogies with the educational hypostasis, contexts, specificities along early childhood. The educational ideal was placed inside the rock symbolized by the idea of the Sphinx but being different from an historical age to another. My students realized an interesting analysis of the different shapes of the final product according to the client's request, the client represented by the society as a whole in its different historical moments of evolution. They said that no matter if this final product, this final Sphinx, as a symbol of value, is a Hercules[30], or a Thinker[31], or a Golden Bird in Space,[32] the first moments of the blowing wind against the rock have at least the same importance like the last moments of finalizing the details. This moment of beginning is the big moment of „ the genuine opening the stone's soul towards the modeling action of the wind". The quality of this opening is determined by the wind itself, and as educators we must be aware about this essential truth.

Acknowledgement

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[30] Marble **statue** of a bearded **Hercules**. Roman Flavian period. AD 68-98.
[31] Auguste Rodin (1879–1889)
[32] Constantin Brâncuşi, (white marble, 1910? -1912) with its subsequent versions

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MENTORING RESEARCH STUDENTS

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Abstract: *Mentoring is a professional relationship between a mentor and a mentee to support and encourage learning in the mentee. Research in educational institutions is a scholarly activity facilitated by a faculty member who is the research supervisor and also a mentor who can introduce the young students to the challenges of academic research. This is possible through a mature relationship wherein a supervisor cum mentor can facilitate best possible learning outcomes for their research students with help of some interpersonal strategies that can be employed by them. These include being available for the students, attentively listen to them, communicate expectations, develop a collective feeling, provide feedback and broaden their horizon by encouraging them to participation and interact with other researchers.*

Keywords: *mentoring, research, supervisor, relationship, strategies*

1. Introduction

Mentoring is a professional relationship between an experienced person who is a mentor and an inexperienced person who is a mentee. Mentoring is to support and encourage learning in order to maximize potential of the mentee. The mentor helps develop specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the less experienced person's professional and personal growth. This relationship can be seen in organizations, corporates, and educational institutions.

Research in educational institutions is an activity which requires intellectual curiosity, logical thinking and a scientific bent of mind. In the academic arena research is conducted for obtaining a research degree but it results in generating a new understanding of existing phenomena and building knowledge. Academic research is conducted by novices or the beginning research students at the post graduate level or by research scholars at the doctoral level.

A student wanting to pursue research must possess some inherent qualities. There should be an intention to be involved in research, interest in the area of research,

motivation to sustain interest and continue working even in the face of adversities. They must be inquisitive and curious to want to find out more and more. The researcher has to gain and accumulate knowledge needed to take further the current ideas already existing in the research area. This requires commitment to one's work to see it through to completion, sacrificing time and resources, and a desire to do best research possible and excel. All this requires a scholarly approach.

2. Need for a Supervisor

In order to analyze a variety of factors such as why the research needs to be conducted, what
is the appropriate methodology, who are the respondents, what are the appropriate questions to
ask respondents, what are the findings telling us, and why so, and how best can these findings
be communicated, need an analytical mind and good communication skills. The researcher must
have the ability to remain calm and posses great interpersonal skills. One has to think fast in case
things do not happen the way you thought they should proceed. Besides, excellent written and
verbal communication skills can help the researcher to put forth their finding for others to know.

Students come from different backgrounds, with different experiences and at different levels of their career development. Facilitating personal and academic development and enhancement of research skills in a research student is a faculty member who is the research supervisor and also
a mentor who can introduce the young students to the challenges of academic research. They are responsible for providing help and support and mentor the students in order to enable them to complete the research and produce a thesis to the best of the their ability. The supervisor thus, plays an important role not only as teacher but also as a mentor during student's period of research.

3. Qualities of a Supervisor

There are some qualities that a supervisor must have. A supervisor must have knowledge and an understanding of current researches in the field, methodologies used, and the ability to critique and appraise the new knowledge. They are responsible for seeing the student through the initial research proposal to the final stage of completion and awarding of the degree. The supervisor's inputs are crucial and are a result of many readings, discussions and reviewing of student's work.

Research students contact their supervisors through face to face meetings, emails, telephone or a combination of all these. Each one expects that meetings are

regular, structured and expectations from each other about the standard of work and progress is spelt out from the beginning. The students are provided information about procedures, regulations, resources available, and importance of ethics related to acknowledging others' works. Supervisors and the students must check the progress, the milestones achieved and meet deadlines together. The supervisor must make note of upcoming seminars, conferences and workshops which are relevant for the student.

The supervisor encourages open communication and constructive discussion. Eventually the supervisor guides the student to become an independent researcher and take up independent projects. Students are encouraged to collaborate, share and discuss their work and experiences with other research students. This helps to develop a research culture. Any misunderstandings between the students and supervisors which may affect the progress of student's research work must be avoided. This requires a mature relationship.

4. Strategies for an Effective Relationship

An effective relationship between the student and the supervisor is integral to the quality of the work. As the work progresses the students become mature and independent. The relationship between the student and the supervisor also changes. In fact this is a must especially if the student has to evolve as an independent researcher. A time may come when the student becomes more knowledgeable and an expert in the area of the research. The supervisor in this case must
encourage open discussion and even sort out any points of disagreement and contention frankly.

A supervisor cum mentor can facilitate best possible learning outcomes for their research students with help of some interpersonal strategies that can be employed by them. The ideas presented here are a few insights gained as a result of experiences acquired through interaction with varied kind of students in the process of supervising their research.

4.1 Be Available for Your Students

The new environment can be a little intimidating for the new researcher. They are not aware of and cannot understand the intricacies of their new and dynamic endeavor. Just by being there and spending time especially in the initial stages will allow the students to clarify any doubts or questions that may arise. Even when the work is in progress, questions and doubts can always come up which get clarified by having discussions.

Discussions can also take place on topics not directly related to the research, but all the same generating knowledge which can facilitate learning. It can be very exciting if both engage and interact. Time spent on discussing future goals or current developments in technology, and even politics can make the mentor student

relationship very comfortable. This kind of connectedness can help the relationship to evolve into a productive educational experience. There has to be openness, trust and mutual respect for one another. Lack of engagement and reserved behavior can come in the way of smooth work flow and can be indicative of a strained relationship. It is therefore, important for the mentors to give their time and be there for their research students who are directly under their care.

4.2 Be Attentive and Listen to Your Students

Merely being available in your cabin is not sufficient. The mentor must be attentive and listen with deep interest in what the student has to share. While interacting with the students, the mentor must ensure that there are no external factors such as phone calls to disturb. They must for sometime suspend the activity they are engaged in and lend a ear. This can be time consuming but in the long run helps in building confidence and accountability. Immediate reply to students' emails or answering their phone call or even texting will help. Keeping contact with students with these methods will help the mentor to know the students' progress in their research work.

Constant communication with the students helps to foster accountability and ensures quality work. Responding to and checking with students when they work on weekends i.e. during off-hours can be helpful too.

4.3 Communicate Expectations

In order to develop an achievement culture there must be an unwritten but well understood 'psychological contract' which is an agreement between the mentor and the student of what both can expect from each other. It is very important for students to know what is expected of them. The mentor must create a schedule and set deadlines for the various tasks that need to be performed. This creates a structure which gives direction to the students. The mentor must communicate clearly the standard of work expected of the student. The students must be given enough time to find answers on their own. Occasionally ideas and hints can be provided.

Mentors form expectations for different students' performance and tend to treat them differently depending on these expectations. However, what is important is that each student has to be led towards mastery even if it means that the mentor must adjust their expectations for each student.

The mentor must create many learning opportunities where the students are asked to read and make notes to find out more and more. Students should be made to connect with literature available in the area of their research. Here lies the need for discipline and developing into an analytical practitioner. Mentors who are keenly attuned to their students notice when their students are in the right direction. The mentor must time and again reinforce expectations. Gentle reminders do the job but

sometimes there must be serious discussions on your expectations. Constant reminders help change students' attitudes as well as their interest in the research.

4.4 Develop a Collective Feeling

Human beings are essentially social and believe in interpersonal relationships, These relationships are synergetic which allow each member to improve and become better individually as well as collectively. This collective progress creates a great community. In order to build and develop a research community especially among the research students the mentor must encourage participation. Each one is clear about their responsibilities. All are accountable for their own work as well as for any other duties that may be assigned from time to time. The more the community of researchers is strong and supportive the better is the result. All the student members produce consistent and reliable work in an enjoyable manner. There is wise decision-making that benefits the whole group. Being together, discussing their work with each other brings fresh thinking and innovative solutions for different challenges faced by them.

The mentor knows that collaboration is essential for reaching common goals. When there are strong relationships there is a heightened sense of collective purpose. There is greater trust among all. They are engaged more, and as a result accelerated learning takes place through sharing knowledge. The mentor must communicate the need to collaborate and respect joint efforts. The students are young researchers, inexperienced and are learning to act professionally. Being in a group helps them to feel belonged and responsible towards the other members.

The mentor can arrange team meetings so that all the researchers become familiar with each others' projects and tasks and subsequently support, discuss and collaborate in the familiar environment. There can be one-on-one meetings in small groups as a supplement to team meetings. The students get time to talk about their worries and concerns to the mentor in a secure environment. Sometimes interpersonal problems can also come up. These can also be discussed.

4.5 Understand Your Students

It should be noted that the student researchers undergo tremendous pressures and stress for many reasons. Students may be overwhelmed by the workload and the time commitment research work may require. Many have family responsibilities and could find transitioning between the different roles difficult. They have to therefore, balance between research work, course work and their family. There are some researchers who might be working part time to earn money. The mentor must be empathetic and understanding towards the students.

Students work at different pace. Some work fast while some may need more time. Students at different levels also work at different pace. Postgraduates may need more time as compared to doctoral students. All struggle to keep up with their research

work. Some succeed and some initially fail. The mentor has to be understanding. Negativity must not creep in. Criticism has to be constructive and balanced with positive reinforcement. It should not be demeaning. Student's perseverance and enthusiasm has to be appreciated. This will help them to overcome difficulties. Finally, they will emerge and evolve as assets for their team and the institution.

4.6 Provide Feedback

Constant feedback is an essential and an ongoing part of the research process. Mentors must provide feedback to research students.This is internal feedback. Some of the ways in which the mentor can give back is by reviewing the process being followed by the researcher. Encourage oral presentations within the department or the research institute in a group so that fellow students can also give feedback.

This feedback will enable research students to make appropriate modifications in their research from time to time. The mentor or the supervisor must critically read their students' work. The students must give sufficient time to their mentor when seeking feedback on the drafts of their thesis.

A student can obtain feedback from external sources too. They can be members of the academic community who are mentors to other students. Getting a different perspective on one's work is always a good idea. Useful, descriptive and objective feedback is helpful in improvising. This can maximize individual's growth.

Since the research students are adults, and may have grievances too. In such a situation an open conversation in an environment of mutual respect and understanding should take place. All grievances and complaints by the students are mainly related to unsatisfactory progress. The mentor and the student must resolve the issues and it is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure academic support throughout the candidature of the student enabling them to achieve a high standard of research.

4.6 Broaden the Horizon by Encouraging Participation

By encouraging participation the mentor can help to explore unfamiliar but relevant topics. Students should be encouraged to criticize and scrutinize research papers and articles. This can take place once or twice a week. Sometimes informal lunches together, or an outing can also be refreshing.

Besides, the mentor must encourage students to participate and interact with other researchers. This can be done by getting involved in departmental seminars, as well as local or national level conferences. The mentor must inspire and encourage students to travel for conferences to other cities or even countries. The participation must be in terms of theoretical or theme or research based paper presentations or posters. Efforts should be made in finding other research opportunities by making contacts with others in the field.

The students may not be aware of such opportunities. It is the duty of the mentor and the department or the university to disseminate such information to the students. If possible let the department or the university find ways to fund the travel of the students. All these efforts indicate an increased interest on the part of the mentor in their students' personal, academic and professional development.

5. Conclusion

All these strategies are helpful as mentors have a lifelong impact on their students. A mentor has a number of responsibilities too towards their research students. Besides keeping a close contact with their students, they must provide information related to the institution and university requirements and procedures. Constant feedback on the drafts of the thesis and finally certifying at completion that the research thesis is worthy of examination takes the relationship to its logical end. But a positive teacher-student relationship can inspire students to learn and achieve for life and build a lifelong relationship.

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THE IMAGE OF 'THE OTHER' REFLECTED IN ACADEMIC LITERATURE TEACHING MATERIALS

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Abstract: *As Romania belongs to the Balkan area, academic studies concerned with particular aspects related to this geographical space constitute a part of the curriculum of the Philology Department within the Petroleum-Gas University of Ploiesti. The paper focuses on the teaching materials used in this field of study, trying to offer an insight into the manner in which the image of 'the other' is presented in them. We consider that our pilot research may foster a positive attitude towards relationships among peoples in today's society.*

Key-words: *literature, positive attitude, Balkan area, students' opinions.*

Introduction

The present study aims to identify the extent to which Philology literature courses and other teaching materials in the field reflect the relations of the Romanian people with other neighbouring countries, particularly the way in which they contribute to the development of positive attitudes and beliefs such as tolerance, collaboration and mutual respect. These are indispensable values that each university should take into consideration and develop by means of their academic programmes if they want to be part of the present multicultural society, a world of multiple interconnections.

Main hypothesis

In order to accomplish our aim we had in view the following hypothesis: if approached in an academic environment, Balkan studies can configurate a specific identity of a group of nations characterized by 'soul uniqueness' (Rădulescu-Motru, 2001, p.13) which, however, participate in developing a broader European context. To check the validity of such a hypothesis, we formulated several research questions:

RQ1. What are the main subjects in the field of literature that deal with the image of 'the other' within the context of Balkan studies?

RQ2. What do the students know about the image of 'the other' as reflected in their learning materials?

RQ3. How do the studies in the field within our university contribute to the development of students' awareness as Balkan citizens?

Participants and research instrument

The participants in the study were 40 Philology students enrolled in the undergraduate and postgraduate studies within Petroleum-Gas University of Ploiesti.

The used research method was a pilot questionnaire containing 10 items, both open and closed, meant to discover students' perception of the manner in which

courses and the teaching materials express the image of 'the other' and succeed in cultivating their interest in other cultures.

Data analysis

The collected data on the way in which the image of 'the other' is reflected in the literature teaching materials that our students study during courses and seminars indicate that a high range of subjects cover this topic. Accordingly, 41.00% of the respondents show that they learn about it during Romanian literature courses as, historically speaking, Romanian writers have been linked with the geographical and cultural Balkan space, rendering it in their work throughout the centuries. It is also relevant that not only literary subjects such as Comparative Literature and Romanian Literature in Exile cover the field, but also other courses, be them compulsory (Intercultural Communication) or optional (Strategies for Cultural Communication, European Identity and Mentalities).

Q 1. What subjects in your academic programme include the image of 'the other' and the relations of the Romanians with other neighbouring countries?	
A) The History of Romanian Literature	41.00%
B) Comparative Literature	19.00%
C) Literature of the Romanian exile in Europe	13.00 %
D) Intercultural communication	12.00 %
E) Other, please mention	10.00%

In regard to the following question, it should be noted that more than half of the surveyed learners (56.00%) reveal that the most frequently studied cultural background is Greece, which can be explained by the fact that they have the opportunity to investigate it more closely in a large array of subjects focusing on the ancient cultural period (The Greek Antiquity, Greek Philosophy, Political Thinking and Democracy, and Aesthetics). Referring to the 22.00 % of students who mention the impact of the Turkish environment on the Romanian culture, we may state that this is due to the political ans social relationships between the two nations during history. It is significant that 19.00 % of the respondents mentioned The Republic of Moldova and Russia as subjects of interest, the former being connected with the historical destiny of our countries, and the latter being part of the comparative studies based on the great Russian writers (Alexander Pushkin, Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy, Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Anton Pavlovich Chekhov). The very low percentage of students mentioning Bulgarian and Serbian environments (3.00%) reveal that courses pay almost no attention to the cultural exchanges among these nations.

Q 2. What are the cultural environments and nations mentioned in the materials you have studied:	
A) Greek	56.00 %

B) Turkish	22.00 %
C) Bulgarian	2.00 %
D) Serbian	1.00 %
E) Other, please mention	19.00 %

As shown by the respondents' answers to Q3, we can assert that they are familiar with the fundamental concepts provided by these subjects, on the one hand being aware of the meaning of the concepts of 'identity' and 'nationality' (52.00 %) and, on the other hand of a nation's belonging to a greater geographical and historical space, namely the Balkan or the European one (48.00 %).

Q 3. Which of the following concepts have you come across more often during these studies?	
A) literary balcanism	14.00 %
B) Balkan mentality	22.00 %
C) Europeanization	12.00 %
D) identity	28.00 %
E) ethno-cultural patterns	24.00 %

Another positive aspect of our analysis is that a high percentage of our students are motivated to deepen their knowledge on this subject matter, finding it useful and interesting (55.00 %). As to the students who had a neutral attitude (33.00 %) or are dissatisfied with the studies (9.00 %), this can be justified according to the reasons they mentioned: too much reading involved, overloaded timetable, lack of diversity of the materials, more enthusiasm about the Western studies and, most of all, their courses do not include present aspects related to the intercultural exchanges among the neighbouring nations etc.

4. How do you perceive such types of studies?	
A) very interesting	23.00 %
B) somewhat interesting	35.00 %
C) neutral	33.00 %
D) not very interesting	7.00 %
E) not at all interesting	2. 00 %
In a few words, motivate your choice.	

The answers to Q5 somehow reiterate students' perception on the studies dedicated to the image of 'the other' as the majority of them (54.00 %) consider that their content is interesting to explore. The percentage of students exhibiting a neutral

attitude towards the topic under consideration (32. 00 %) is almost similar to the one shown in the table above, probably due to the same causes already illustrated.

Q 5. How do you find the content of the courses dealing with such topics?	
A) very interesting	18.00 %
B) somewhat interesting	36.00 %
C) neutral	32.00 %
D) not very interesting	9.00 %
E) not at all interesting	5. 00 %

It is remarkable that the answers to the question aiming at the the way in which other Balkan countries are reflected in their courses show that students are very content (43.00 %) and satisfied (48. 00 %), whereas, in this context, the proportion of the discontent ones is not relevant (9.00 %).

Q 6. To what extent do the courses succeed in reflecting the image of 'the other' Balkan nations?	
A) to a great extent	12.00 %
B) quite satisfactorily	31.00 %
C) satisfactorily	48.00 %
D) to a low extent	7.00 %
E) not at all	2. 00 %

Although students appreciate the content of the courses, the answers to Q7 point out their dissatisfaction with the teaching methods used during the classes. A possible explanation of the the respondents' unfavourable opinion (50.00%) about the instructional process lies in the fact that most teachers do not tend to employ active learning strategies, preferring traditional approaches which, in their view are monotonous and unmotivating.

7. To what extent do your teachers make use of active learning strategies during the courses and seminars dealing with these topics?	
A) permanently	8.00 %
B) very often	15.00 %
C) quite often	22.00 %
D) rarely	50.00 %
E) never	5.00 %

A worth mentioning finding of our analysis is that respondents are fully aware of the usefulness of studying the image of 'the other' as it provides them with the

opportunity of developing positive values which are necessary in a multicultural society such as tolerance, mutual respect, appreciation of Balkan culture and civilization, interest in intercultural communication etc.

> Q 8. What major values are cultivated by studying the image of 'the other' as part of your academic curriculum?

With regard to the respondents' personal perception of the Balkan nations they came across during their studies, most answers referred to the Greek cultural pattern and its strong influence on the Western world. As a result, they perceive the Greeks as great philosophers, founders of democracy and sciences, promoters of sporting competitions (The Olympics) etc. In reference to the Turks, the majority of the students see them in the light of the relationships between the two nations during history, especially mentioning the linguistic borrowings (for example the presence of certain words in Romanian) and cuisine similarities. At the same time, students share several stereotypes on the Balkan peoples not necessarily based on their studies, but on their personal experience. Thus, the Greeks are seen as very communicative, and direct, talkative, easy-going, great dancers, lively and enjoying life and parties. The Turks are considered good traders, hospitable people and liking to display opulence (jewellery, clothes, houses etc.). Their dances and music are also appreciated (belly-dancing and Oriental music). The clichés regarding the Bulgarians emphasise their stubborness, nationalism and the fact that they are generally poor and, from many points of view, not different from the Romanians, while the other nations are barely characterised. For instance, the Serbians are aggressive, the Albanians are quick-tempered and the Macedonians stick to traditions. As for other nations, the respondents did not mention anything.

> Q 9. What is your personal perception on different Balkan nations as a result of the courses you have studied and your personal experience?
> GREEK   TURKISH   BULGARIAN SERBIAN
> ALBANIAN   MACEDONIAN   Other

Among the most relevant personalities enumerated by students in their answers are: the Greek ancient philosophers (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle), ancient theater (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes) and the modern writers Nikos Kazantzakis and Giorgos Seferis; some of the rulers of the Otoman Empire, the political figure of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and the Nobel prize writer Orhan Pamuk. Special mention should be also made about the Romanian writers who reflected the Balkan culture and civilization in their work from the very beginning of the history of the Romanian literature such as: the chroniclers, Dimitrie Cantemir, Anton Pann, Ion Heliade Rădulescu, Lucian Blaga, Ion Barbu, Mateiu Caragiale, Eugen Barbu, and

Mircea Cărtărescu. What students indicated as topics frequently presented in their courses includes fundamental concepts and aspects such as: literary balcanism, Balkan aestheticism, Balkan human typology and prototype, Balkan mentalities etc.

> Q10. Mention some of the personalities or topics which, in your opinion, are the most relevant within your studies focused on the Balkan world.

It should be noted that the answers provided by the survey prove learners' solid knowledge about the major aspects of the courses and seminars they attend.

Discussions and Conclusions

By analyzing the results of our pilot study, we noticed two contradictory features of the phenomenon under discussion. Firstly, it is worth mentioning that the philological curriculum includes subjects designed to offer learners an insight into the concept of 'the otherness' seen in its dual nature, as a relationship between 'myself' and 'the other' (Clément et al., 2000, p. 74), that is the dichotomy of similarity and difference in point of national and cultural identity as opposed to the neighbour's specific characteristics. However, we observed that these subjects can be divided into two categories insisting on different fields of research, on the one hand on Balkan literary studies, which are predominant, and, on the other hand on culture and civilization studies, which are optional. This is due to the fact that the first group of subjects is taught at an undergraduate level, which aims at developing a broader cultural horizon of the students, while the second one is studied by postgraduate students who attend more specialized courses enlarging upon the concept of 'interunderstanding', which means a rational agreement among the participants in the communicational situation (Habermas, 1987, p.91).

At the same time, it is remarkable that students show great interest in such types of studies, a fact proved by the high percentages of their favourable responses. Moreover, their motivation is reflected by very good knowledge of the field, being familiar with the most important elements that are part of Balkan studies. In acquiring such good knowledge, students benefit not only from complex lectures delivered by their teachers, but also from a wide range of published courses and books in the field of Balkan studies written by the our academic staff ("Literatura Română Medievală şi Modernă. Ultimele decenii ale secolului al XIX-lea"/ 'Medieval and Modern Romanian Literature. The last decades of the 19th century', "Literatura română de lângă granite"/ 'Romanian Literature in the Neighbouring Area' - Mihaela Cojocaru, The theory of communication – Gabriela Vasilescu, Irina Dumitrescu) and other well-known Romanian balcanologists ("Balcanologie" / 'Balcanology', "Balcanismul literar românesc" / 'Romanian Literary Balcanism' - Mircea Muhtu, "Balcanii şi balcanismul" / 'The Balkans and Balcanism' – Maria Todorova etc).

It is important to mention that both lectures and written courses or materials that students get into contact with during their studies on the Balkan phenomenon reflect the image of 'the other', meaning the neighbouring nations, under the form of a

historical Balcanism that consists in the particular study of a set of borrowings and various influences at different levels such as customs, linguistic terms, political, social and commercial relations, and most of all, literature, whose major development depended on this historical and geographical area. Moreover, Romanian literature and several related fields managed to configurate a so-called Balkan mentality pattern and a certain kind of aestheticism characterized as 'a *forma mentis*, recognizable in the social dynamics as well as in the one of the aesthetic values' (Muhtu, 1999, p.17).

Secondly, in spite of the positive aspects that we highlighted, there are certain drawbacks in the process of teaching Balkan studies in our university. One of them regards the fact that teaching materials only privilege the historical cultural and literary components of the Balkan programme of study, ignoring the contemporary image of Romania's neighbouring nations (with some exceptions the topic being somewhat studied during the postgraduate subject on Intercultural Communication).

The data we collected even indicate a certain hierarchy of the investigated phenomenon. Thus, Greek culture and civilization occupies the highest position of the hierarchy as teachers mostly insist on presenting it as a basis for the development of Western thinking, literature and art, which explains their concern with the classical period of the Greek culture. Nevertheless, there are some exceptions. For instance, learners may also study 20th century Greek literature within the comparative literature programme. The following cultural background that is familiar to our students refers to Turkey and Russia, the latter one, although not part of the Balkan space proper, is perceived as a neighbouring country, too (actually, the former Soviet republic, Ukraine). As we mentioned above, the second position in this hierarchy can be explained by the historical interconnections between Romania and Turkey/Russia, leaving durable traces in Romanian literature, culture and civilization. As to other Balkan nations, they do not represent a point of interest of the specialists in our university and, consequently, there are very few published materials on the mutual relations between Romania and Bulagaria/Albania/Serbia/Macedonia etc. Within such a context we can understand why when asked about their perception of the contemporary image of our neighbours, the students only based their answers on the personal experience and not on a theoretical academic study.

A second drawback regards the teaching methods themselves, in their responses students emphasizing their discontent with the old-fashioned approach during classes. In other words, they would like to benefit from more diversified and updated teaching materials, based on an interdisciplinary approach, which make use of active learning strategies that can transform the student into a direct participant in the teaching and learning process. Elaborating this position, Jeremy Harmer (2007, p. 396) argues that 'learner training, in other words, is a first step on the road to self-directed learning. Together with activities where students are encouraged, or even (sometimes forced), to take responsibility for what they are doing, learner training gives those who are prepared to take it the possibility of real autonomy.' It is a fact that our students prefer discussing contemporary issues that reflect the present realities in an interactive environment, instead of insisting on the study of already known topics.

In conclusion, the results revealed students' interesting opinions and useful suggestions that could lay the basis of a more complete analysis of the phenomenon

investigated in the near future. Our findings show that there is a satisfactory trend dealing with the image of 'the other' in the Balkan area, image understood as a passage from 'a society to a group self-consciousness' (Wunenburger, 2005, p.37), but the teaching staff should develop and intensify their concerns with regard to the diversification of the pedagogical techniques and teaching materials which should include more topics dealing with present intercultural aspects. In spite of these deficiencies, there is substantial evidence to support the idea that students' awareness about their belonging to a specific historical and geographical area which is integrated in a larger European context is quite obvious, showing beliefs in high values like tolerance, respect and the joy of being similar, although we are different.

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INTEGRATED EVALUATION OF COMPETENCES

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Abstract: *The article discusses the issue of pupils` evaluation of competences in terms of difficulty awareness that this approach implies for all actors involved: pupils-teachers-parents. The integrated approach of evaluation of pupils in the 2nd, 4th and 6th grade is regarded as an initiative of reforming the national evaluation system. Pupils face situations of integrated knowledge, abilities and attitudes but the evaluation doesn`t facilitate experiences of learning integration at a curricular level. In this context, we are in the situation of wanting to change evaluation methods before we prepare the form and change the learning methods.*

Keywords*: change, evaluation strategy, competences, integrated evaluation*

Introduction
Most of the current educational systems are oriented towards competence development. This orientation brings about the curricular reform of Romanian education. A reshaping of the quality of education and teaching staff is necessary; therefore teachers should get used to integrated teaching strategies, the increase and awareness of cognitive process in learning and with the modernization of the evaluation process.

It is necessary to reshape the quality of education and of teacher training according to alternative teaching methods, with the increase and awareness of the weight of cognitive processes in learning and the upgrading of the evaluation process. From this perspective, the upgrading of teachers` evaluation skills can be analysed on two levels (Ketele, J.-M., 1992, pag.28-29): as strategy for change and as a manner of applying and perceiving evaluation and self-evaluation.

In either case, any strategy for change affects the organisation and the people in charge with it, only if its aim is to change the methods that skip coding. These new methods can only change the meaning of rules, namely their interpretation and emphasis; therefore we cannot address to teachers ignoring the interests of organizational power. On the other hand, we cannot hope convincing teachers to change their methods in a manner that would emphasize tension associated to organisation rules.

A reform of formal evaluation rules may have only limited effect on practice, taking into account the interpretation margin left to the teacher. If teachers know how to keep their habits in spite test changes, they would interpret the new rules consequently and would betray their spirit. Any strategy for change in evaluation can

face only reluctance if it ignores the polyvalence of current practices and their real functions both for teachers and for different levels of organisation.

A strategy for change should make harmonization between learning and evaluation easier. Thus, evaluation shouldn`t conflict with the organization of work and the teacher`s didactic approach.

Any strategy for change should take into account the subjective coherence that teachers aim for. This coherence occurs as the result of their global image about children and the level of excellence assigned by the evaluation procedures. Formal evaluation brings these levels closer, but if it is not properly understood, it can bring about severe dissonances.

The practices are different; any strategy to change them, which ignores this diversity and its fundaments, is subjected to failure because different attitudes and practices cannot assign the same meaning and consequences to a unique message.

- *traditionally*, as internal factor, intraclass; evaluation expresses a sort of absolute power that the teacher has on children and internal self-evaluation is placed on the same level with the premises of self-reflection associated with the power of judgement; (Vogler, J., 2000, pag. 31) the teacher`s evaluation is beyond any doubt and self-evaluation is therefore pointless.

▪ As external factor, intraclass; school is a institution which functions in an ideal environment.

▪ As internal factor, interclasses, evaluation reflects the human quality of pupils in terms of: potential, peculiarities and learning diligence.

▪ As external factor, interclasses school used to be a differentiated institution according to the children`s socio-economic-cultural background.

- *modern*, as internal factor, intraclass; evaluation is connected to the pupil`s achievement of educational objectives. Self-evaluation targets sporadic exercises of paper self-correction. (Kelemen G., 2014, pag 190);

▪ As external factor, intraclass, evaluation involves measuring school performance by comparing the students` answers.

▪ As internal factor, interclasses; evaluation of school performance according to the characteristics of Gaussian curvature.

▪ As external factor interclasses; evaluation of school performance by relating it to final exams (national exams, baccalaureate).

- *contempory*, as internal factor, inter and intraclass; evaluation and self-evaluation involve a formative action by means of which pupils but also teachers have to be actively involved in the process.

▪As external factor, inter and intraclass; school has to become a differentiated institution at the level of the microsystem (to develop each pupil`s abilities and specific skills) and to function in a socio-cultural environment which is beneficial to the process of adjustment and social integration.

In conclusion, changing the evaluation and self-evaluation methods involves firstly a change in the significance of the evaluation concept and secondly a unitary change of rules which are a direct consequence of the evaluation system.

Thus, any reshape at the level of the microsystem should begin with the reshaping of perception, of initial training, of evaluation and self-evaluation at the level of educational microsystem. Reshaping all these elements is a Sisyphean labour because any initial training of evaluation and self-evaluation ability faces diachronically the primate of acronicity. Therefore, along with the development of perspectives on teaching and learning, one should constantly upgrade the evaluation and self-evaluation skills by teachers` continuous training of teachers.

Strategies of competence development

Formative evaluation [formatrice] is another interesting concept which describes a notion close to formative evaluation. It shows the fact that it is used to designate not only mere evaluation of the « finite product » but also the pupil`s mental operations which are involved in the learning process. They suggest:

- Training understanding as a clear representation of goals;
- Training understanding as the elaboration of a planned project in collaboration with the teacher;
- Training understanding as self-evaluation. (ibidem)

Reflexive evaluation is a manner of evaluation which involves self-evaluation and self-correction and is a summary of activities of previous understanding. The objective is to make the pupil to internalize knowledge and rules by:

- Discovering their own errors,
- Understanding the origin of errors,
- Error correction.

Formative evaluation or strongly personalized formative evaluation (Bonnioll, J.,J., Nunziati, G., 1990, cited by Ungureanu, D., 2001, p. 301-303) suggests a technological model of training that is based on pupils` and teachers` anticipation of methods and means used to achieve goals and objectives. It means that pupils can set their own evaluation criteria (which do not necessarily involve self-evaluation). Pupils intuit that teachers use them; consequently pupils can search for appropriate methods, manners and learning strategies which describe and prescribe formative aspects of this evaluation.

Whatever would be the manners of comprehending, perceiving and apperceiving evaluation, they are described by the evaluation methods. If applied unitary, they are reduced to evaluating in a punctual manner the learning process. They also involve balanced evaluation and try not to involve the pupil in this activity, but to train him/her partly or to develop mechanisms of using evaluation and self-evaluation for a real optimization of the instructional-educational process

However, *only by formative evaluation is the preparation of self-evaluation* a frequent process because by its means "The child acquires the knowledge of

appreciation criteria taken into consideration, which allows him to evaluate his own results". (Cardinet, J., 1994, p.19)

Formative evaluation has in common with criteria evaluation the fact that both evaluate pupils` skills by using reference standards. Unlike criteria evaluation which aims for a minimal competence, namely a minimally accepted performance standard, formative evaluation aims to reach more complex standards and the development of polyvalent skills. Therefore, in formative assessment, standards are grouped in "sets of standards" which are accepted and revised to detect the skills of the evaluated pupil asked to solve a task. (Wolf., A., 1995, according to Ungureanu, D., pag.266)

In conclusion, it is necessary to reconsider the methods used in formative assessment, given that we observe certain delays or gaps between formative education and formative evaluation, to the detriment of the later. (Ungureanu, D., 2001, pag. 267)

There are various definitions of competence, but under procedural aspect they share functional terms, which grasp: „a set of resources" – cognitive, motor, affective and others. They are linked to knowledge, self-knowledge, attitudes and abilities, action schemes and habits which "mobilize" integrative and dynamic to „be able to face" various problem situations in learning, problem-solving, projects that students respond positively to. (Le Boterf, Paquay, Rey, Wittorsky etc.).

Being competent is generally understood as being able to mobilize an integrated set of resourced in order to solve problem situations. Competence involves contextualization of acquisitions and is characterized by three essential dimensions: (Bosman, Gerard şi Roegiers, 2000): originality, efficiency and integration. „The pupil is no longer motivated to use almost automatically one single register of his knowledge: he can solve the situation, namely be competent, only by interacting everything he has learnt so as to build an original and also efficient solution." (Gerard, F. M., Pacearcă, Ş., Evaluation of competences. Practical guide, 2012, pag. 52).

Models can be generated to build competences as consequence of learning activities and learning situations which students are exposed to. A learning situation favours the development of pupils` competences and involves sequential, gradual involvement in ten types of activities:

1. Cope with problem-situations (new and challenging);
2. Exploring resources (made available through learning);
3. Acting internally or externally
4. Interacting (for research, confrontation, analysis, understanding, etc.)
5. Reflexive attitudes, activities
6. Co-evaluative activities
7. Structuring new acquisitions
8. Integration to inter or transdiciplinary systems and contexts (to fix new long-term acquisitions)
9. Activities of building meaning and
10. Preparing transfer possibilities.

In order to evaluate competences by assignments which involve complex problem solving with practical and/or social significance, we ask our pupils to integrate something without previously teaching them how. „An evaluation situation determines the students` acquisition level of a competence (of integration) by mobilizing their

knowledge and/or skills, referring to some well-set criteria, so that the results would lead to proper decision making."(F. M. Gerard, Ş. Pacearcă, Evaluation of competences. Practical guide, 2012, pag. 61). This requires students to be confronted regularly with problem situations that can be solved only by mobilizing all previously learned acquisitions.

Conclusions

The evaluation of acquisition integration can be done only after learning integration. Therefore, evaluations at 2nd, 4th and 6th grades are only a rough guide which determines a reshaping of curriculum and organizational structure of the educational process. Thus, it could offer pupils enough opportunities to learn how to integrate knowledge, skills, contextual attitudes, life situations, significant problems and how to improve teacher training in competence-based curriculum.

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STUDY ON METACOGNITIVE METHODS AND TECHNIQUES USED BY THE STUDENTS OF THE LAND FORCES ACADEMY FROM SIBIU

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Abstract: *In this study we aimed to identify the main metacognitive skills that military students have developed as a result of their involvement in the academic and training activities carried out in the academy. For this we built a questionnaire consisting of 46 items divided into two major dimensions of metacognition. Data obtained from the questionnaire were subjected to factor analysis that resulted in detaining thirteen factors representing categories of metacognitive methods, techniques and strategies used by the students of the Land Forces Academy from Sibiu.*

Keywords: *metacognition, factorial analysis, military students*

Introduction

The concept of metacognition was introduced by Flavell and his colleagues in the 70s. The concern for this issue begins with studies on child development, of knowledge about their memory (metamemory), understanding (metacomprehension) and communication (metacommunication). Later, the research area widens and studies about the metacognition appear, which Flavell defines as "knowledge and cognition about cognitive phenomena" (apud Coutinho, 2006, *162*).

Schraw and Moshman (1995) indicate that in the literature there is a fundamental distinction between *metacognitive knowledge* (the individual knowledge about his own self) and *metacognitive control processes* (processes used by the individual to regulate his own knowledge).

The components of *metacognitive knowledge* are as follows (Tarricone, 2011, *194-195)*:

1. *Declarative Metacognitive Knowledge* (knowing about knowing) includes:

1.1. *Knowledge of self and others (Person)*

1.1.1.Knowledge of intra-individual (knowledge of self, knowledge of self-system, knowledge of metacognitive reflection, knowledge and beliefs about one's motivation)

1.1.2. Knowledge of inter-individual

1.1.3.Knowledge of universals of cognition (universal properties of human beings)

Knowledge of self includes the knowledge of the personal attributes (including memory), capabilities, characteristics, abilities, strengths and weaknesses, self-knowledge, self-awareness, self-discovery, self-understanding, beliefs about self-knowledge, about memory ability, capability and effectivenes etc.

Knowledge of self-system includes self–esteem, attributional beliefs, emotions, self-efficacy (including memory self-efficacy), self-concept, self-appraisal or self-reflection, self-beliefs etc.

1.2. *Knowledge of task and context* (including Sensitivity) (Task)

1.2.1.Knowledge of task demands (including Sensitivity) (knowledge of task demands, sensitivity to task demands, knowledge of beliefs about task or situations)

1.2.2. Knowledge of task information

1.2.3. Knowledge of cognitive goals (task objectives)

1.3. *Knowledge of strategy* (Strategy)

1.3.1. Knowledge of strategy attributes

1.3.2. Knowledge of strategy (influenced by person and task variables)

1.3.3. Knowledge of strategy (influenced by task demands and context)

1.3.4.Knowledge of strategy (facilitated by and influences monitoring and control)

2. ***Procedural Metacognitive Knowledge*** includes:

2.1*. Knowledge of self and others (Person)*

2.1.1.Knowledge of intra-individual (self-knowledge and self-system)

2.2*. Knowledge of task and context* (including Sensitivity) (Task)

2.2.1.Knowledge of task objectives (cognitive goals and subgoals)

2.2.2. Knowledge of task complexity (demands) (influenced by person and strategy)

2.2.3. Knowledge of task content

2.3. *Knowledge of strategy* (sensitivity to strategy application and initiation)

2.3.1.Knowledge of strategy application and initiation (Sensitivity)

2.3.2. Knowledge of strategy appropriateness

2.3.3. Knowledge of strategy transferability and adaptation

3.***Conditional Metacognitive Knowledge*** (knowing when, where and why) includes:

3.1. *Knowledge of self and others (Person*:

3.1.1.Knowledge of intra-individual (self-knowledge and self-system)

3.2. *Knowledge of task and context* (conditional – when and contextual - Sensitivity tot Task)

3.2.1. Knowledge of task demands

3.2.2. Knowledge of task tipe and context

3.3. *Knowledge of strategy* (sensitivity to strategy initiation)

3.3.1.Knowledge of strategy application and initiation (Sensitivity)

3.3.2. Knowledge of strategy appropriateness

3.3.3. Knowledge of strategy transferability and adaptation

Schraw and Moshman (1995) show that the way individuals structure their knowledge about cognition in general and especially about their own cognition was very little studied by researchers in the field. These authors consider that „individuals construct metacognitive theories for two reasons: (a) to systematize their metacognitive knowledge, and (b) to understand and plan their own cognitive activities within a formalized framework." (Schraw şi Moshman,1995, *352*). Metacognitive theories integrates individual beliefs and postulates on which he will succeed „to predict,

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control, and explain their cognition, the cognition of others, or cognition in general" Schraw şi Moshman, 1995, *357*)

Metacognitive knowledge bases are made in early childhood and develop throughout adolescence. Skilled learners often show a high level of development of declarative, procedural and conditional metacognitive knowledge.

The category named by Tarricone „Regulation of cognitions or Metacognitive Skills and Executive Functioning" includes the following elements (Tarricone, 2011, *196)*:

1. *Regulation of cognitions and Executive Functioning*

*1.1.*Monitoring and Control* (includes executive functioning and metacognitive skills)

1.1.1.Regulation of person knowledge (intra-person monitoring and control, inter-person monitoring and control, intra- and inter-reflection and reasoning)

1.1.2. Regulation of task knowledge

1.1.3. Regulation of strategy knowledge (monitoring and control of strategies)

1.2. *Self-regulation*

1.2.1.Regulation of intra-individual (person knowledge –self knowledge and system-knowledge)

1.2.2. Regulation of task knowledge (task objectives, task demands)

1.2.3.Regulation of strategy knowledge (strategy applicability, regulation and transfer)

2. Metacognitive Experiences

2.1. *Metacognitive Feelings* (of person, of task and of strategy)

2.2. *Metacognitive Judgements* (of person, of task and of strategy)

Metacognitive feelings are not the same as emotions or affect. Metacognitive feelings of person include feelings of confidence and feeling of satisfaction. Metacognitive feelings of task involve awareness of the connection or the disparity between task goals and outcome and include: feeling of familiarity, feeling of difficulty, feeling of satisfaction. Feeling and knowing phenomena influence strategy selection and application.

Metacognitive judgments of person include estimate of learning/feeling of knowing judgments. Metacognitive judgments of task include estimate of solution correctness and metacognitive judgments of task include estimate of effort expenditure.

Regulatory competence improves the individual's performance both in learning and problem solving, facilitating a better use of cognitive resources and learning strategies. It also increases the individual consciousness on failure or success as well as metacognitive experiences. Monitoring and control improve performance in memory tasks and in thinking.

The two components of metacognition - *metacognitive knowledge* şi *regulatory proceses* are interdependent.

Methodology

In this study we aimed to identify the main metacognitive skills that military students use in the academic and military training activities. For this purpose we constructed a questionnaire consisting of 46 items divided into two major dimensions

of metacognition - *metacognitive knowledge (declarative, procedural and conditional) şi metacognitive regulatory proceses (monitoring, control and evaluation).*

Students were asked to evaluate to what extent a series of statements about the use of methods, techniques and metacognitive strategies in academic and military training activities are true, in what they are concerned. A Likert tipe scale was used, with values from 1 to 5, where 1 means "very little" and 5 means "very much".

The questionnaire was applied to a total of 200 students from years of study II and III, from the Land Forces Academy in Sibiu, in October-December 2013. Within this sample there were summarized 48 (24%) girls and 152 men (76%), aged 20 to 23 years old, meaning an average age of 21.27 (s.d. = 3.34). The questionnaire was anonymous.

The statistical tests indicated that the structure of the questionnaire is suitable for factorial analysis (KMO = 0.692., Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: $p<.001$). The result is shown in Table 1. Our data is suitable for factor analysis.

For factor analysis we used Principal Axis Factor (PAF) and we rotated the matrix of loadings to obtain orthogonal (independent) factors (Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization). The prime goal of factor analysis is to identify simple items loadings (>0.30) on factors that are interpretable, assuming that items are factorable.

For all procedures reported here we utilised SPSS 16.0.

Table no.1.KMO and Bartlett's Test Criterion

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,746
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5,163E3
	df	1035
	Sig.	,000

Results

The factor analysis procedure identified 10 factors. At this level of analysis, statements with factor loading less than 0.4 and those that load several factors simultaneously were considered inappropriate. The results are shown in Tables 2, 3 and 4. The data was divided into three tables because of restrictions imposed by the terms of editing.

Table no. 2. Factorial Structure - Rotated Factor Matrix (Factors 1 - 4)

	Factors				
Item	1	2	3	4	Communality
Studying in a systematic way	,835				,808
Working in a systematic way	,757				,718
Evidence of objectives to be achieved during the task	,505				,572
Determined effort in homework/work/ portfolios	,401				,473

Checking the depth of the study		,681			,703
Monitoring the progress during the study		,677			,712
Monitoring the understanding of the subject being studied		,656			,675
Effort for intellectual development through learning			,647		,681
Correlation of learning tasks with personal goals			,516		,571
Setting personal goals related to learning			,471		,380
Identification of resources required for achieving success in learning			,464		,610
Final verification of the understanding of the studied items				,664	,651
Change of inefficient strategies				,628	,535
Verification of the understanding of the tasks				,515	,671
Identification of interesting items from the compulsory topics				,431	,512
Eigenvalue	12,183	2,673	2,227	1,991	
Percentage of total variance	26,485	5,811	4,840	4,329	

Table no. 3. Factorial Structure - Rotated Factor Matrix (Factors 5 - 8)

	Factors				
Item	5	6	7	8	Communality
The habit to learn from other people's experiences	,690				,836
The habit of inspiring from the methods of study and work of successful people	,659				,622
The habit of finding ideas in discussions about other people's learning methods	,539				,550
The use of self-suggestion to solve the tasks that seem pointless		,591			,510
Identifying the causes of aversion towards some tasks		,543			,597
The habit to awaken positive emotions toward the tasks		,487			,566
Cooperation with others to solve work tasks			,667		,691
The belief that it is important to learn			,518		,678

while they are in school					
Cooperation with others in learning tasks			,443		,555
The habit of identifying what they have learned from those with they work or learn			,412		,501
Optimal use of time				,636	,559
Optimal dosage of effort				,609	,702
Eigenvalue	1,883	1,713	1,668	1,471	
Percentage of total variance	4,093	3,724	3,626	3,199	

Table no. 4. Factorial Structure - Rotated Factor Matrix (Factors 9 - 13)

	Factors					
Item	9	10	11	12	13	Communality
Knowledge of methods to increase the involvement in the study	,706					,604
The habit of reviewing the benefits derived from studies carried out up to a certain point	,496					,511
The habit to treat seriously all parts of a task	,444					,740
Clearing bottlenecks which occurred in the collaboration with colleagues		,706				,669
Using feed-back given by instructors and teachers on various working methods		,423				,615
The habit to reward themselves for success			,680			,648
Identifying those factors that increase personal effectiveness in learning			,427			,487
Obtaining an accurate image of their own intellectual abilities				,630		,579
Assessment of individual work efficiency compared to that of solving through cooperation with others, before starting the task				-,464		,634
Control of negative emotions				,454		,544

in learning or solving tasks						
Identification of irrelevant information in a learning or working task					,602	,428
Identification of valuable elements in a learning or working task					,450	,471
Eigenvalue	1,387	1,289	1,199	1,174	1,098	
Percentage of total variance	3,016	2,803	2,606	2,552	2,388	

The first factor is loaded with items that relate to the students' habit of working and studying systematically, to keep track of goals they are going to achieve while working on a task and to maintain a sustained effort to solve a homework/paper/portfolio. We called this factor "systematization of activities." This factor explains 12,183% of the total variance.

The second factor is charged with three items referring to the verification of the study depth (avoidance of the superficial), monitoring the progress during the study, verification of subject understanding. We called this factor "study efficiency". This factor explains 2.673% of the total variance.

The third factor consists of four items referring to: the students' conscious effort to develop intellectually by learning, to correlate workload goals with personal goals, to establish personal goals related to studio, other than those imposed by teachers and identify the resources needed to be successful in what they study. We called this factor "intellectual development through study". This factor explains 2,227% of the total variance.

The fourth factor is loaded with four items: verifying the understanding of the studied material and of the tasks to be solved, changing ineffective work or study strategies, identification of interesting elements from materials received for compulsory study. We called this factor "Checking understanding." This factor explains 1,991% of the total variance.

The fifth factor is loaded with the following items: the habit of learning from other people's experiences as well as from the talks about their study methods, inspiring oneself from the methods of study and work of successful people. I called this factor "indirect learning." This factor explains 1,883% of the total variance.

The sixth factor is loaded with items that relate to the students' use of self-suggestion to solve tasks that seem pointless, to the identification of aversion causes when faced with some workloads and to the habit of awakening positive emotions when they have something to study or solve a task. We called this factor "Managing cognitions and emotions." This factor explains 1,713% of the total variance.

The seventh factor is composed of items that relate to the practice of students to cooperate with others when they have done a load of work or when studying, to identify what they have learned from those with whom they work or study and to their belief that it is necessary to study while they are in school. We called this factor "cooperation in study and work". This factor explains 1,668% of the total variance.

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The eighth factor is loaded with two items that are related to the efficient use of time and the optimal dosage of effort to face a working or learning task easier. We called this factor "optimal dosage of time and effort". This factor explains 1,471% of the total variance.

The ninth factor is loaded with three items that relate to: the knowledge of methods to increase the involvement in study, the habit to treat seriously all parts of a task and to review all benefits derived from studies made up to a certain point. We called this factor "Auto-adjusting the level of involvement in the task." This factor explains 1,387% of the total variance.

The tenth factor is loaded with two items related to students' solving of bottlenecks in cooperation with their colleagues and the use of the trainers' and teachers' feed-back on their working methods. We called this factor "Managing relations during the task". This factor explains 1,289% of the total variance.

The eleventh factor is loaded also with two items that refer to the students' practice to reward themselves for their own success and the identification of those factors that increase personal efficiency in studying. This factor was named "Managing personal effectiveness". This factor explains 1,199% of the total variance.

The twelfth factor contains the following items: obtaining an accurate image of their own intellectual capacities, the control of negative emotions while studying or solving a task, the evaluation, before solving a task, of individual work efficiency compared to that of solving through cooperation with others. This factor was called "Accurate picture of their own abilities". This factor explains 1,174% of the total variance.

The thirteenth factor is loaded with two items that relate to the identification of irrelevant information as well as of valuable elements of a task or work study. We called this factor "Simplifying tasks". This factor explains 1,098% of the total variance.

Conclusions

In the university system, teachers expect students to come up with a high level of metacognitive development. Throughout the previous school years, metacognitive skills have been developed and practiced; along the university years, the student must bring them to a higher level and to work on deficient issues.

Although it is recognized that age and experience have an obvious influence on metacognitive skills acquired by individual learners, however, metacognition must be explicitly taught and learned. Metacognitive skills development must start early in training and the educational system should aim for the highest levels of intellectual training. The ultimate goal of teaching metacognitive strategies is the students' acquisition of cognitive autonomy.

After analyzing the data obtained by our study, we noted thirteen factors that represent potential categories of metacognitive methods, techniques and strategies used by students from the Land Forces Academy of Sibiu. Therefore, we concluded that they use to work and study in a systematic way, using methodns to streamline the study, to check understanding of what they studied, to simplify tasks, to manage cognitions and emotions, to cooperate in the study and activity, to calibrate the optimal

effort and time resources, to regulate the level of involvement in the task and manage personal effectiveness and relationships during the task. All these are part of the regulatory processes of metacognition.

Regarding metacognitive knowledge, students work in order to develop intellectually through study and to form an accurate picture of their intellectual capacities and resolutions.

Military students are mostly young people going just out of adolescence, so they enter the military system with varying degrees of maturity. If the student is a graduate of a military high school, we can count on the fact that he has a higher level of maturity than his age, due to the specific training and living conditions in this type of school. In any of these situations, the students' cognitive and psychosocial development is not over and that is why the university, through its teachers must cultivate and develop students' awareness about their cognitive abilities and their successful use.

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE SIGNIFICANCE
OF INDIVIDUAL SOCIAL VALUES

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Abstract: *This research aimed to investigate the individual importance of certain social values in the context of the complex processes of Romania's integration in the European Union. Based on the questionnaire applied in three high schools in Arad, we observed how young people relate to social norms and values, as well as the concordance/discrepancy between desirable and real attitudes. The responses of given by the subjects enabled the creation of correlations and associations between different attitudes and behaviors, and also allowed us to draw conclusions to improve the educational efforts undertaken to this end.*

Keywords: *social values, attitudes, behaviors, opinions, education.*

1. The conceptual framework

The changes that have occurred in our country in the economic, political, social, educational and institutional fields necessarily imply studying how the democratic values promoted by society are perceived and implemented. In this context, a rich literature that addresses various topics has accumulated: the values and the structure of personality, the values/attitudes/behaviors distinction, the relationship between beliefs and interests, the role of values in the process of socialization and social integration, the valoric restructuring of social participation, multiculturalism and inter-culturalism in social relations, social values in the context of a dynamic competitive economy, personal values, prejudices and social models etc.

On the other hand, one have made distinctions between the values of economic, legal, political, ethical, aesthetic, historical and religious values, as well as redefining the value as a constituent element of the individual with an important social determinant expressed by rules, customs, ideologies and traditions (Voicu, 2011) or as an element assimilated by individual perceptions and the collective beliefs specific to each culture and internalized through socialization (Barus, Enriquez and Levy, 2002).

Based on these aspects, the present study attempts to capture the significance of individual social values by students from three high schools in Arad. The set of questions that were asked to young people in the sample were structured around the following major themes: the importance attributed to social values (social participation, human solidarity, responsibility, caring for others, tolerance and freedom of

expression), the place where they discussed these values, the importance of equal opportunities for promotion based on personal merit, equality before the law, ethnic or gender discrimination, the model of success in life, the factors which determine success in life and the perception of their opportunities for study or work in the European Union. In this set of questions were added views on different forms of tolerance and prejudice that manifest themselves in social and group relations.

2. Research hypotheses

Between the years 2005 – 2006, a research based on a CNCS grant[33] was developed, whose theme was youth civic culture and multiculturalism in the context of Romania's accession to the European Union. The question that was put was that of investigating the level of civic culture of young people during the process of accession to the EU. The interpretation of data gathered by the questionnaire applied in the first and second year of the survey revealed a certain discrepancy between the subjects' responses to certain items (cf. Şimandan and Balas-Timar, 2007). The subjects offered responses that they considered desirable, but the control questions revealed opinions and attitudes that they wanted to hide. It emerged that the social values indicated in the questionnaire were selected based on the respondent's intention to provide a positive self-image. The correlation of these items with those that aimed at tolerance and especially prejudices revealed a social reality according to which the young used in their daily lives a number of biases that they wanted to deny so as not to damage their positive self-image. Likewise, the problem of success in life, of the source of success in life and of international mobility emerged, as the youth, concentrating on each item, allowed researchers to identify the difference between the declarative and the behavior levels of the subjects.

Six years later we posed the question of selecting items from the original questionnaire, focusing this time on the levels of the citizenship, of emotional intelligence and social intelligence (cf. Goleman, 2006; 2007).

The hypothesis that we started from was that after the EU accession, young people aged 17-19 have mastered the essential concepts of citizenship. It was assumed that they relate differently to the social reality, so that the discrepancy between the declarations and the behavior was reduced significantly. As a result, they have internalized the democratic values and apply them both in social interactions and the formation of their own selves. We also took into account the increased interest in recent years to improve teacher training and civic education, tolerance and multiculturalism, which is reflected in the work of students and hence the formation of a young generation of EU citizens.

3. Methodology

In determining the method of research we have started from the assumption mentioned above, namely the correlation of the data obtained in this study with the

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[33] Research grant CNCS 238 A/ 2005-2006

findings of the study in 2005-2006. In that research the methods used were the standardized questionnaire and the focus group. By reducing the number of schools and subjects to ensure scientific rigor, we chose to apply the questionnaire.

In developing the initial questionnaire, we included questions of opinion and control questions (see Rotaru and Iluţ, 2006; McQuenn and Knussen, 2006), which investigated the issue mentioned before. The issues considered were democratic values, respect, tolerance and multiculturalism, as well as: free association on the Romanian society, the level of mass-media information, knowledge about the culture and personal data. For the present study we selected a set of questions on democratic values, respect, tolerance and multiculturalism (Appendix 1).

This version of the questionnaire was applied to a total of 121 subjects from three high schools in Arad. The high school students in the sample were selected from classes XI and XII as we considered young people aged between 17-19 years. We chose this age group because young people already have the school and life experience necessary to know these concepts.

Moreover, the studies which aim civics, social intelligence or emotional intelligence generally choose this age. It is also the period in which the individuals form their self-image and shape their identity, being able to analyze themselves and to relate to their peers in terms of social values.

The three schools were: The "Csiky Gergely" College, the Economic College and School of Food Industry. We have selected two high school units with technology profile given the fact that in the county of Arad 49.61 % of the high schools are technological high schools, 50.39 % are represented by classes with vocational profile.

The sex ratio was: 81 girls (67%) and 40 boys (33%). Depending on ethnicity, the situation is as follows: 88 Romanian students (73%) and 33 Hungarians (27%). Regarding their school profile, the distribution is as follows: technological profile 84 respondents (69%) and theoretical profile 37 (31%).

Table no. 1 – Personal data of the respondents

Q28. Sex	1.boys	2.girls	
	40	81	Total= 121
Q.29 Age	17 years: 34	18 years: 69	19 years: 18
Q32. High school profile	theoretical	technological	
	37	84	Total= 121
Q37.Nationality	1Romanian	2.Hungarian	
	88	33	Total= 121

4. Results and interpretation

4.1 *Ordering democratic values according to the importance given to them*

After analyzing the responses to this item, it was established that subjects view the hierarchy of democratic values as follows: 1. assuming responsibility; 2. freedom of expression; 3. human solidarity; 4. caring for others; 5. tolerance; 6. social

participation. What follows is an analysis based on the order in which they appear in the questionnaire applied.

As can be seen in Fig. no.1, 44% of the respondents placed social participation last in the hierarchy. In fact, the only situation in which the percentage is so high and allows an accurate identification in the hierarchy.

It would therefore seem that the really important values are solidarity and concern for others, but more at a declarative level, since participation itself is positioned last as a social value.
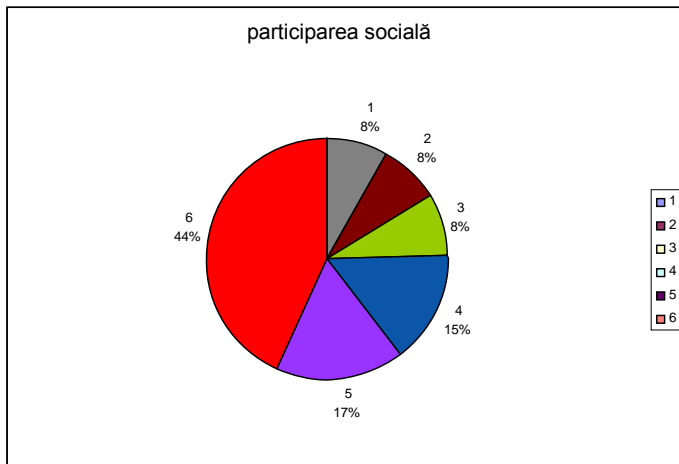
Fig. no.1

Human solidarity can be seen third in the hierarchy, although in Fig. no.2 it seems to be the fourth, because respondents ranged from placing it as the third or fourth value, unlike caring for others, where the oscillation is between the third and fifth position. But solidarity also means spirit of understanding, and in the case of the item of bias we noticed that young people take this into account and are influenced by them, a fact which raises questions regarding the placement of solidarity at the top of the hierarchy of values considered.
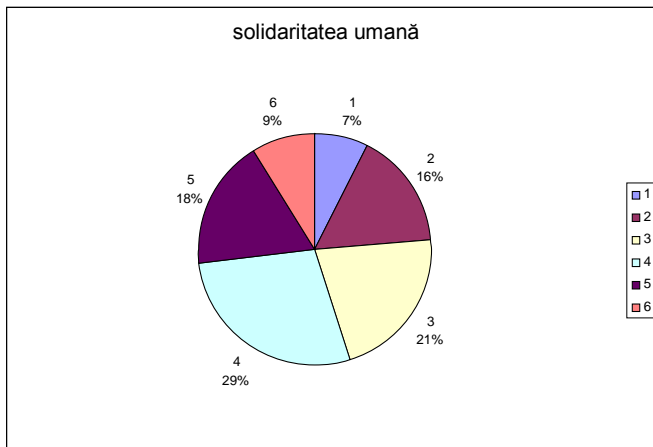
Fig. no.2

Accountability can be considered the first in the hierarchy of social values because more subjects oscillated in placing it on the first or second place, unlike freedom of expression, where the same oscillation is found in a smaller number of respondents (Fig. no.3). The proximity between accountability and freedom of expression suggests that the young oscillate between values that regard their own freedom and social involvement.
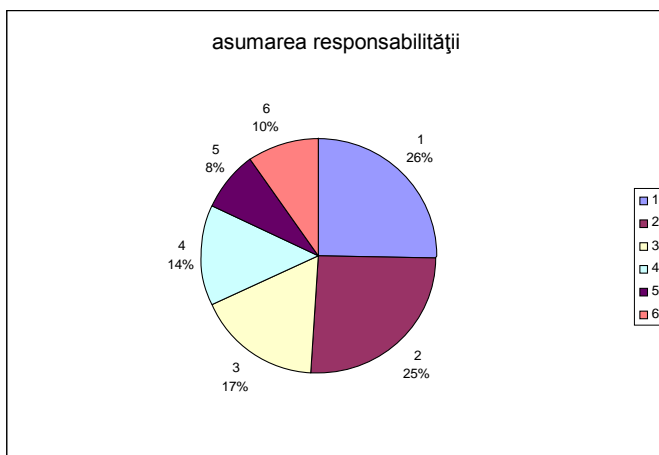
Fig. no.3

Caring for others comes as the fourth democratic value (Fig. no. 4), but the correlation of this response with the data items regarding tolerance and prejudice rather show the intention to provide a desirable and socially promoted response.
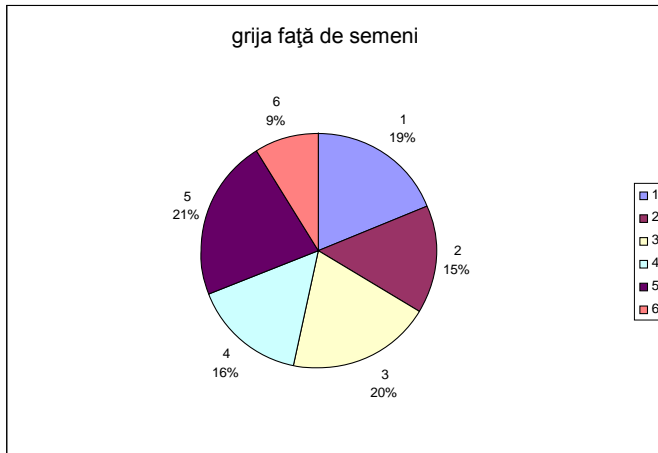
Fig. no. 4

Regarding the perception of investigated subjects, *tolerance* can be considered the fifth in the hierarchy of social values if we take into account the percentage of 20% (Fig. no.5).

Considering all the responses, it appears that this value poses questions for the youth, since it covers all the hierarchy with relatively close percentages.

So if one would raise the issue of tolerance within the group, their views would cover a wide range of responses, which suggests that this democratic value, paradoxically, can cause tension in the group.
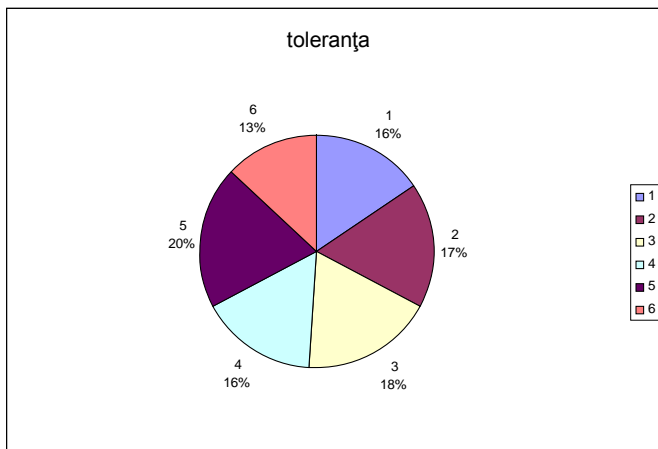
Fig. no.5

According to the opinions of the participants, *freedom of expression* is considered an important democratic value for approximately half of the respondents (Fig. no.6). It can be questioned whether for the youth this value refers only to *their* freedom of speech or the freedom *of all*. The second part of the questionnaire, which poses the question of tolerance and prejudice, nuances this choice of the respondents.

From this point of view it is presumed that the commissioning of prejudice in social relations has a direct effect on the freedom of expression of others.
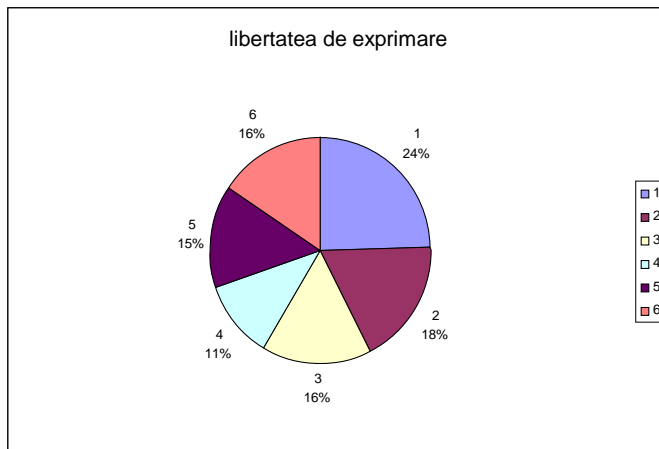
Fig. nr.6

Fig. no. 6

The hierarchy of democratic values has been established taking into account the responses of all subjects, but it is useful to compare them with the responses of the three high schools respondents.

As it is clear from Fig. no.7, the Economic College students placed social participation in the sixth place, while the students from the other two high schools reveal more varied responses.
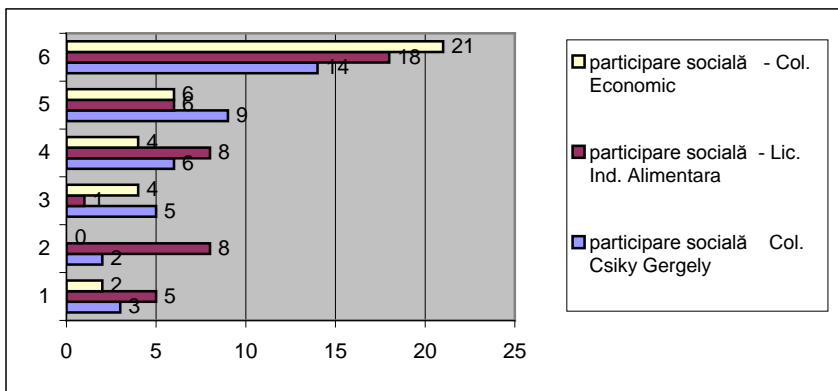
Fig. no.7

In the case of human solidarity the responses fall within the normal distribution at all three schools in the study, outlining the "Gauss bell", which indicates the third place of this value (Fig. no.8) based on the measurement of the central tendency.
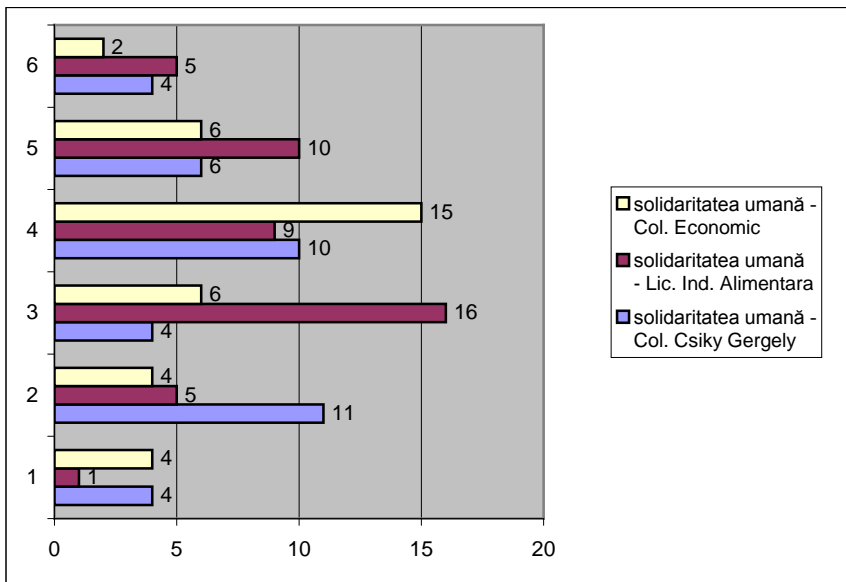
Fig. no.8

Regarding accountability, Fig. no. 9 shows its position among the top three democratic values. The mechanisms of social desirability function for all respondents, regardless of high school or profile.
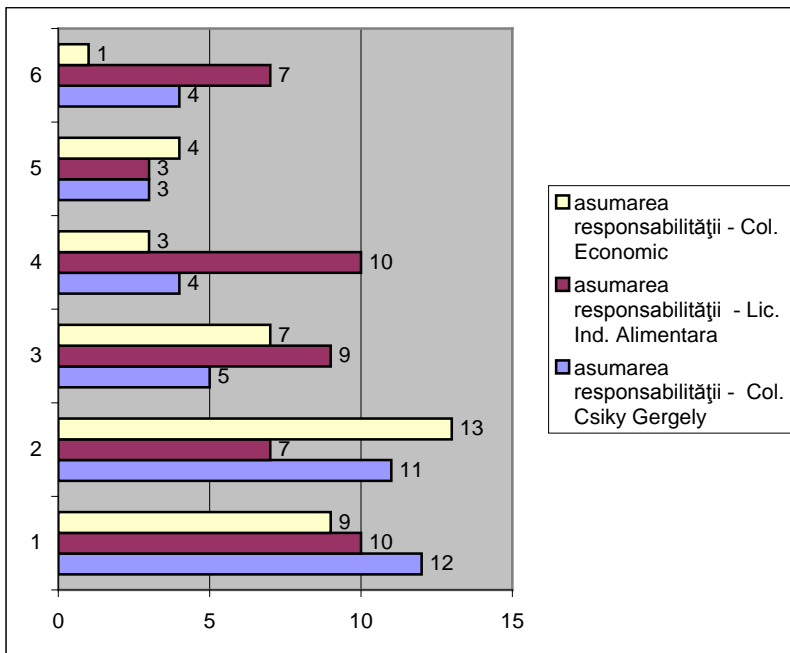
Fig. no.9

Caring for others comes as the first value in the hierarchy established at the level of each high school unit (Fig. no. 10), but considering all the answers, it comes to be placed in the position of the fourth democratic value. It is the only situation where there is a big difference between the answers given by respondents from each school.
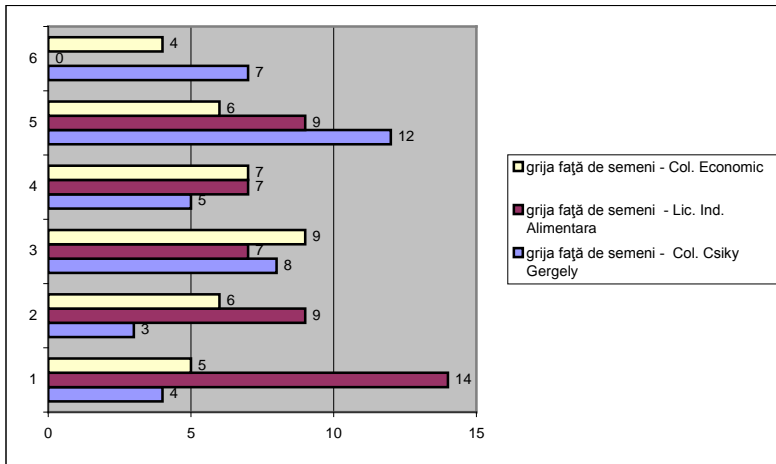
Fig. nr.10

By looking at Fig. no.11 one can notice the formation of the "plateau" (if we consider all responses), while the subjects from the Economic College tend to place this value on the fifth place (although the other positions meet an approximately equal number of answers).
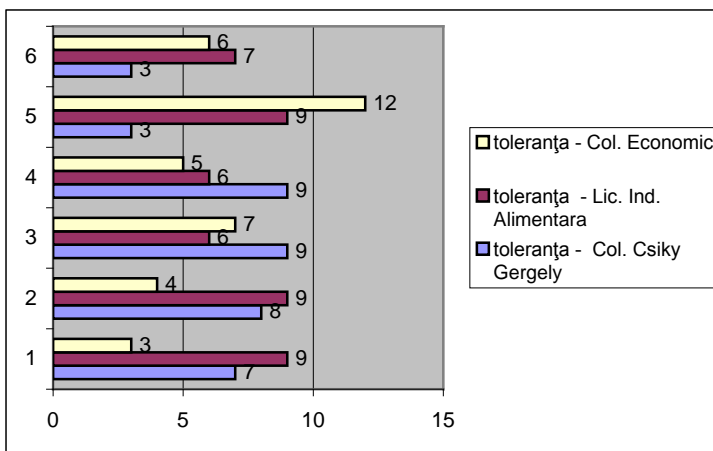
Fig. no.11

Freedom of speech is regarded by respondents as the second democratic value considering the central tendency. If we look, however, at the responses in each school it is observed that the subjects from the Economic College place it at the forefront of

hierarchy, whereas the Food Industry High School and The Csiky Gergely College subjects opt for all options in close percentages.
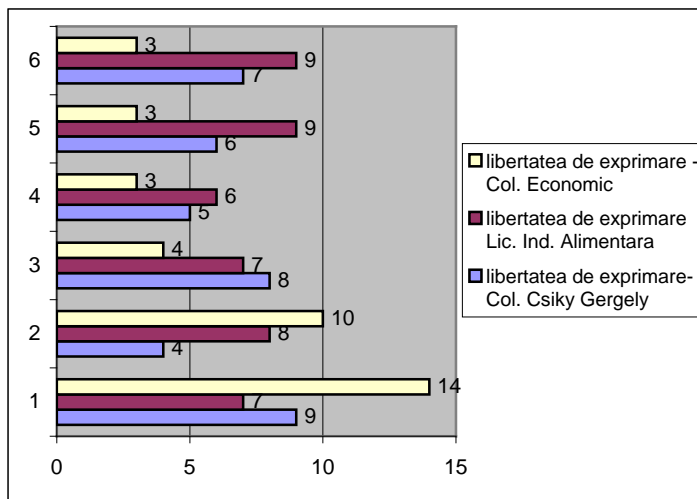
Fig. no.12

4.2. *The educational environment indicated by the subjects in relation to the social values*
After analyzing the responses, it was found that 64 % of the subjects discussed democratic values at school, 18% indicated the family as the main source of information, 10% selected their group of friends as having an essential role in relation to these value, while 8% indicated other sources. It is found that 36% of respondents chose the school as the main source of information and training, given the fact that ever since primary school, students study the elements of civic education. It is important that the family and the group of friends should contribute to the development of the individual, but then the question is what has been studied in the school discipline mentioned above. Thus, we can say that for 36% of the students' civics classes, counseling and orientation and others alike were ineffective. Even if it is not only up to the school to form an individual's personality, it must ensure objectivity on democratic values to counteract trends that may affect the functioning of social relations.

4.3. *The importance of social values*
By analyzing the responses of subjects to the "very important" question, it appears that the answer that ranks first is equality before the law with 23%, while the last social value is discrimination of sex by 14% (Fig. no.13). Most likely, the respondents were directed to those social values that affect them directly within their social reality and which are related to the elimination of inequalities in all aspects: equality before the law, equal educational opportunities, as well as an equal pay to equal work. This time, the answer is not only a social goal, but a set of values wanted by the respondents in relation to their integration into the labor market, in a society built on democratic and equitable principles.
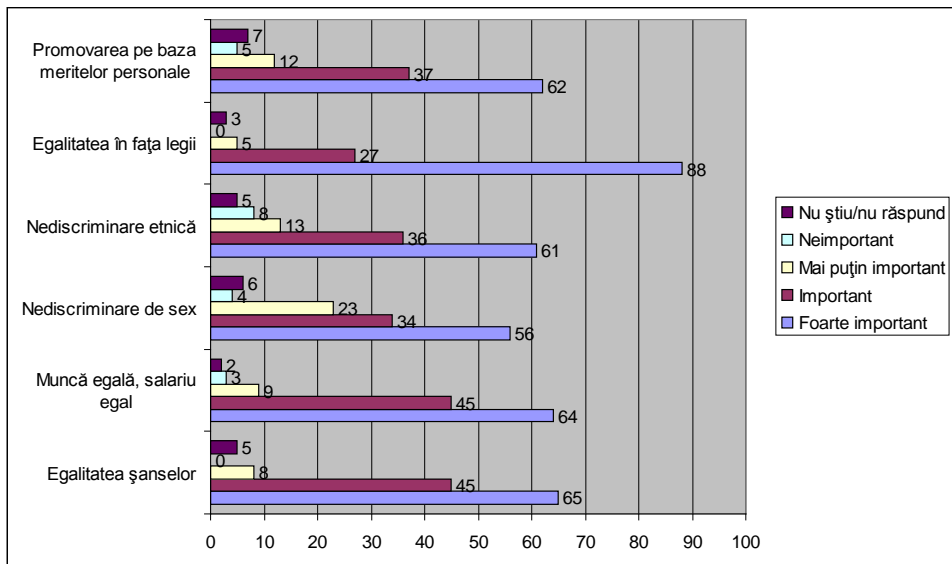
Fig. no.13

4.4. *The model of success in life*

On this item, 34% of respondents chose the option "I have no model", and 43% chose the option, "I do not know / I do not answer" and only 23% have taken a model of success in life. The model of success also falls within the category of desirable answers desirable: mother, father and family. In this item, the youth chose those answers that do not affect the image that others formed about them. On the item of the source of success in life, most respondents chose the option "the ability to 'handle'", which largely justifies that they have not indicated a role model to reflect this option of theirs.

4.5 *The importance of the types of success in life*

The hierarchy of the types of success in life, in the view of the respondents, is: 1. success in one's personal life; 2. professional success; 3. financial success (Fig. no.14). By relating this hierarchy with the respondents' option of "ability to 'manage'" as a source of success in life raises questions concerning the indication of success in one's personal life as being the most important to the individual. Respondents felt that this hierarchy would show their attachment to moral values and would suggest rejecting the concern of earning money by any means, strengthening the positive image of the company served.
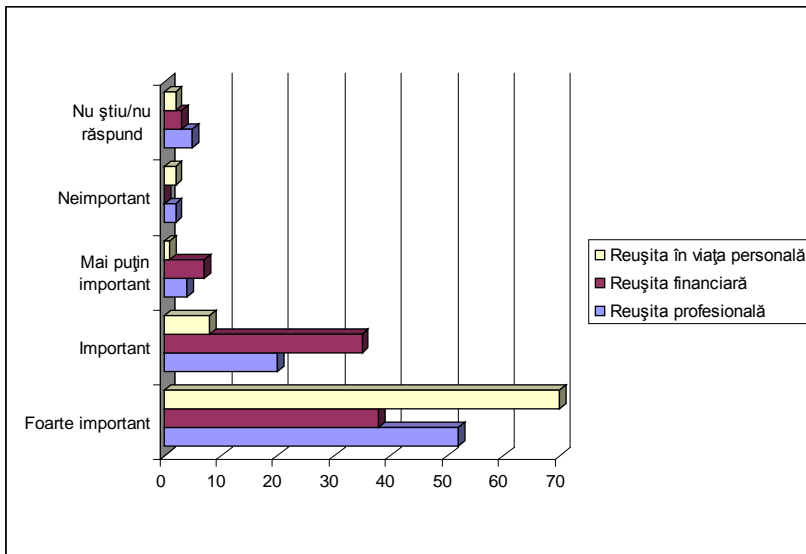
Fig. no.14

4.6 *Factors that ensure success in life*

Analyzing the responses of subjects to the "very important" issue of ranking the factors which ensure success in life, the situation is as follows: 38% chose one's own effort, 34% chose the ability to "manage", 17% indicated opportunities (chance, luck), 8% preferred their parents' social status and 3% have opted for the intervention of other people (Fig. no. 15).
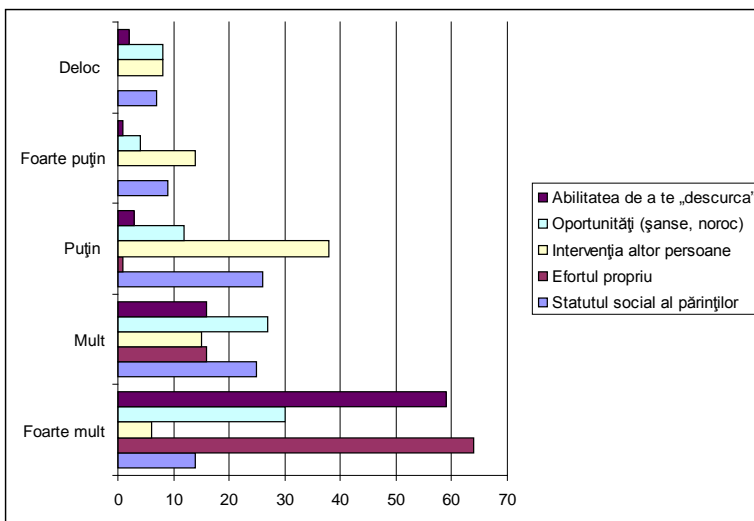
Fig. no.15

4.7 *Factors influencing the growth opportunities for study / work in the European Union*

In terms of increasing one's opportunities for study/work in the EU, young people especially indicated: accomplishment by one's own effort (31%); quality work (18%); respect for the given word (17%); teamwork – team spirit (14%) as shown in Fig. no.16. The factors which were considered the least important were: acceptance of job changes (2%); accepting a job in another city (1%), indicating that, in the respondents' opinion, what matters is the emphasis put on both personal qualities and good quality work. Instead they seek stability and are less willing to change jobs. This situation poses questions concerning their preparation for the European labor mobility.
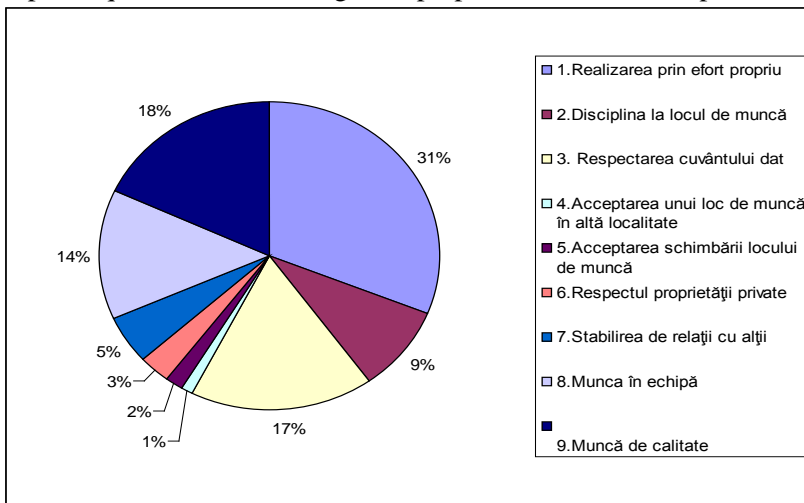
Fig. no.16

4.8 *The importance of different forms of tolerance*

From the analysis of the data gathered, we realize that the subjects' responses polarize upon the "very important" and "important" options: religious tolerance, ethnic tolerance, gender tolerance and racial tolerance, while the majority of respondents consider national tolerance and cultural tolerance as "important". In the case of political tolerance we notice the interesting "important" - "less important" opposition in equal percentages. Regarding tolerance of alternative sexual orientations, the subjects' responses were divided equally among the five options (very important, important, less important, unimportant and I do not know/ I do not answer), so that 15% of them opted for the option "I do not know/ I do not answer". This form of tolerance divides the group of respondents, indicating that they do not have or do not wish to take a clear position, which is a signal that tolerance is a delicate issue which is not fully resolved in the public perception of the individual.

4.9 *The importance of the types of biases in the social representations of individuals*

After analyzing the influence of prejudice on social representations, one can conclude that, on most forms of tolerance, the subjects indicated the answers that they thought were expected. For example, national tolerance is considered "important", while prejudices of nationality matter "much" and "very much". Therefore, those who considered a certain form of tolerance as "very important" should have indicated "not

at all" in the case of the influence of the prejudices, an issue which was not revealed by the subjects' responses. In this case we were able to once more distinguish between the declarative and practical-applicative levels, because, by focusing on prejudice, the participants to the research neglected the desirable response given previously.

Conclusions

The responses given to the questionnaire six years ago should indicate a change in the social behavior and in the representations of the youth after the EU accession. It was found that the same difference occurs, not at all insignificant, between socially acceptable answers to the questions and the answers that truly reflect their way of thinking and acting.

This raises a set of problems reported in the specialty literature (Iluţ, 2004; Gavriliuc, 2006; Neacşu, 2010; Hatos, 2011; Login, 2012) and which were identified in our research. It is mainly about:

•the need to pursue within the educational practice not only the acquisition of values and social norms but also how they are reflected in daily attitudes and behaviors;

•the consideration of the multiple influences of the socio-economic context, the family's financial status, age, interests and personal aspirations, the level of the "emotional competence" and "social intelligence" of the individual, as well as the ways in which society promotes certain values and social patterns;

•understanding the causes underlying the distinction between the values of superficial affirmation and the values of authentic affirmation, at the same time with the increase of the importance of educational activities conducted in schools with a focus on: clarifying values, the consequences of practicing certain values, the importance of the individual significance of social values, rational behavior in relation to others , acceptance of ethnic, opinion or cultural differences;

•understanding the fact that the values transmitted through social mechanisms refer to the means of action considered desirable, their role consisting in guiding human action in setting objectives and goals to be achieved, strategies, methods and ways of individual and collective action; hence, the acceptance of a gap between the interests, attitudes and individual behaviors in relation to the system of values and norms promoted by the society;

•developing systems for continuous training of teachers on the social significance of values and how they should be treated and promoted in daily behavior, the importance of understanding the individual and group specificities of the youth, identifying the normative significance of different social values, the relation between personal values, the system of preference and the hierarchies that are established between these values depending on contexts and individual social practices.

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APENDIX 1

THE YOUTH AND CIVICS - DEMOGRAPHIC VALUES

A1.Arrange the following democratic values according to how important they are to you: *(mark in the table the corresponding number from 1=the most important to 6, in descending order)*

Code	Answer option	Order
A1.1	Social participation	
A1.2	Human solidarity	
A1.3	Assuming responsibility	
A1.4	Care for others	
A1.5	Tolerance	
A1.6	Freedom of speech	

A2. Where have you discussed the democratic values enumerated above?
(only one answer, by circling the code)

    1. home   3.at the university   5.others

    2. at school   4.in my group of friends

A3. How important are the following social values to you? *(circle the code which corresponds to each option chosen)*

Code	Answer option	Very important	Important	Less important	Unimportant	I do not know/answer
A3.1	Equality of chances	1	2	3	4	9
A3.2	Equal work, equal pay	1	2	3	4	9
A3.3	Sexual un-discrimination	1	2	3	4	9
A3.4	Ethnical un-discrimination	1	2	3	4	9
A3.5	Equality before the law	1	2	3	4	9
A3.6	Promotion according to personal merits	1	2	3	4	9

A4. Which person is a model of success in life in your opinion? *(only one option)*

    1. I don't have a mode.   3. I don't know/answer

    2. His/her name is:............................

A5. Which is, according to you, the importance of these types of success? *(circle the code which corresponds to each option chosen)*

Code	Answer option	Very important	Important	Less important	Unimportant	I do not know/answer
A5.1	Professional success	1	2	3	4	9
A5.2	Financial success	1	2	3	4	9
A5.3	Personal success	1	2	3	4	9

A6. Your success in life depends on: *(circle the code which corresponds to each option chosen)*

Code	Answer option	Very much	Much	A little	Very little	Not at all
A6.1	Your parents' social status	1	2	3	4	5
A6.2	Personal effort	1	2	3	4	5
A6.3	Other people's intervention	1	2	3	4	5
A6.4	Opportunities (chance, luck)	1	2	3	4	5
A6.5	The ability to „manage"	1	2	3	4	5

A7. The increase of your chances of studying/working in the European Union depends upon: *(pick three options from the list below by circling the code)*

1. Accomplishment through personal effort
2. Discipline at the work place
3. Respecting one's word
4. Accepting a workplace in another town
5. Accepting to change your workplace
6. Respecting personal privacy
7. Establishing relationships with others
8. Team work
9. Good quality work

A8. Which is, in your opinion, the importance of the following forms of tolerance? *(circle the corresponding code for each option chosen)*

Code	Answer option	Very important	Important	Less important	Unimportant	I do not know/answer
C1.1	National tolerance	1	2	3	4	9
C1.2	Ethnical tolerance	1	2	3	4	9
C1.3	Religious tolerance	1	2	3	4	9
C1.4	Cultural tolerance	1	2	3	4	9
C1.5	Political tolerance	1	2	3	4	9
C1.6	Gender tolerance	1	2	3	4	9
C1.7	Tolerance for alternative sexual orientations	1	2	3	4	9
C1.8	Racial tolerance	1	2	3	4	9

A9. How much do these types of prejudices matter to you? *(circle the corresponding code for each option chosen)*

Code	Answer option	Very much	Much	A little	Very little	Not at all
C2.1	Prejudices connected to nationality	1	2	3	4	5
C2.2	Prejudices against old people	1	2	3	4	5
C2.3	Gender prejudices	1	2	3	4	5
C2.4	Prejudices against alternative sexual orientations	1	2	3	4	5
C2.5	Racial prejudices	1	2	3	4	5

PERSONAL DATA

(the questionnaire is anonymous; the data will be used for scientific purposes; circle the answer option and fill in where data is required)
Q28. Sex:
1.masculine   2.feminine

Q.29 Age......... years

Q32. **The profile of your high school**
....

.

Q33. The specialty that you enrolled for in your high school
....

Q37.Nationality:

1. Romanian   3. German
2. Hungarian   4. others/which

Q39. Date of the interview..........................   **Name of the respondent..........................**
Q40. Town...   **Phone...**
Q41. County...
Q50. Operator code....................................

INTEGRATING ACTIVE LEARNING METHODS DURING UNIVERSITY LECTURES

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Abstract: *This article explores the possibilities of faculty members to reconsider the format of the traditional lecture by integrating active learning methods for students. The format of an interactive lecture is promoted when the teacher's activities alternate with the students'. Our goal was to select examples of active learning methods that can be integrated during university lectures in different academic disciplines with the continued effort and support of the teachers. Examples applying to the three moments of the lecture: beginning, middle, and end were considered. As most of these methods were demonstrated in a pedagogical workshop for faculty members, some of their opinions about these methods are also shared in this article.*

Keywords: *active learning, interactive lecture, student-centred teaching*

1. Introduction

One of the most popular teaching methods in higher education is the lecture. The advantages of this method are obvious: it is a convenient and efficient way to deliver content to large number of students, the teacher has the control over the content and the class, it allows the teacher to offer key information and to organize it for the students. But the big problem with this instructional approach is that the students passively receive the information -active leaning and involvement of the students are neglected. Listening to it does not mean learning. Being a spectator is not the best state for the learning process to occur. In recent years numerous studies have demonstrated that traditional lectures, which rely on passive learning, are not as effective as active, student centred learning strategies (Tanner, 2009). Students learn more when they participate in the process of learning, whether it's through discussion, practice, review, or application (Grunert, 1997).

Considering the new trends in education which value the student-centred instructional approach, we support the idea that the faculty members should reconsider the format of the traditional lecture (where students are expected to sit for hours, listening and, theoretically, absorbing information presented by the instructor) and enhance it by integrating active learning activities for students in order to promote learning knowledge, developing skills or attitudes (Bonwell, 1996). The students can be actively involved by the teachers in what is going on in the university courses, by determining them to do a lot of things: read, write, discuss, apply, solve problems, analyse, synthesize or evaluate information. Active learning means that students are encouraged to participate actively in learning and they are involved throughout the

course's duration in activities that help them construct their understanding of the material that is presented.

Instead of the traditional format of the lecture, where an expert delivers a great amount of information to a passive audience, we support the format of an interactive lecture where the students are provided with multiple, brief opportunities for engagement, thinking and responding –here, the goal of teaching is to promote and to support the learning process. The interactive lecture involves both teacher and students activity.

2. The context

This view of university teaching in terms of generating students learning can be more widely accepted by the faculty if they are assisted in their pedagogical development process according to this perspective. Pedagogical workshops can be a good way to familiarize the university teachers with the new methodological trends in education and to encourage them to implement these. Such a workshop called „Students centred strategies" took place at the University Lucian Blaga of Sibiu during the 2013-2014 academic year. A hundred-nine faculty members were involved, organised in series of 20-25 participants. This workshop was part of a more complex training program for faculty members, a program which involved other activities too. One important aspect approached during this workshop was the active learning methods during university lectures.

Based on literature describing student-centred and active learning approaches within lecture courses ((Bonwell, 1996, Steele, Meredith, Temple, 1998, Biggs, 2007, Felder, Brent, 2009) we presented the participants with a real experience of active learning methods during university lectures. In order to give the participants an organized structure we considered examples for the three moments of the lecture: beginning, middle, and end.

2.1. Active methods and activities for the beginning of the lectures

During this phase it is important to create a context for new learning, to provide stimulus for future explorations and to help students to evoke prior knowledge, sentiments, and impressions. The students can be encouraged to activate their own prior knowledge and identify gaps and questions. Curiosity should be aroused. This is the initial point of engagement for students and is very important because of the connections that can be made between what is already known and new content to which they're exposed.

Here are some suggestions for this phase of the lecture:

1. **Opening question:** the teacher presents an "opening question", gives students a moment to think about their response, and then asks a few members of the class for answers. This strategy is easy to initiate, takes very little time, works in small or large classes, and effectively focuses students' attention on the day's topic. It also provides the instructor with useful feedback on what students know and don't know about the material being presented.

2. **Free write**: students write down, in a limited time, everything they know about an announced topic.

3. **Resuming** the previous course and formulating **questions** about the current one. Individually or in pairs the students are asked to resume the previous course's idea and to speculate, to formulate questions regarding the current course. A photo, an image can be used to encourage students to speculate about the course's subject.

4. **Semantic mapping**: writing a word that names the topic in a circle in the centre of the chalkboard and asking the students to identify and write down the terms, notions they already have about the main topic and connect the information resulting from their ideas.

5. **Focused listing**: students recall what they know about a subject announced by the teacher, by creating a list of terms or ideas related to it. Then the students are invited to share the contents of their lists before moving on with the lecture.

6. **Brainstorming**: students are asked to recall what they know about a subject by generating terms and ideas related to it. Students are encouraged to stretch what they know by forming creative connections between prior knowledge and new possibilities.

7. **Think/Pair/Share**: engages students with material on an individual level, in pairs, and finally as a large group. It consists of three steps. First, the instructor poses a prepared question and asks individuals to think (or write) about it quietly. Second, students pair up with someone sitting near them and share their responses verbally. Third, the lecturer chooses a few pairs to briefly summarize their ideas for the benefit of the entire class. Used at the beginning of a lecture, a Think-Pair-Share strategy can help students organize prior knowledge and brainstorm questions.

8. **Anticipation guide**: a list of statements about key concepts of the course that students read with which they can choose to agree or disagree. Discussions will follow.

9. **Know/Want to know/Learn** (K-W-L): Teachers activate students' prior knowledge by asking them what they already know; then students set goals specifying what they want to learn; and after reading or listening to the lecture students discuss what they have **l**earned.

2.2. Active methods and activities during the lectures

In this phase the students are exposed to new information, ideas, to new content, but this should be done not in a way that places the students in the role of passive recipients of knowledge. For preventing this to happen the teachers may break the lecture into 3-4 mini-lectures, each lasting 15-20 minutes. Research has shown that student concentration decline after such an interval. After every **mini-lecture** the teachers pause and provide the students with opportunity to process the information actively, using different active methods. Here are some suggestions:

1. **Think-Pair-Share**: stop periodically during the lecture and ask students to think about the content just delivered, then to pair up with a peer and discuss briefly (maybe answering a question, maybe applying the content), then finally, to share with the class. Used in this phase, it gives students an opportunity to think about and work

with material just presented before moving to new information. That also help the instructor gauge how well students have understood the content.

2. **The note check**: the teacher asks the students to compare the notes they've been taking with a peer's notes. Then, they work together for a few minutes to add to their own notes.

3. **Stump your partner** - Students take a minute to create a challenging question based on the lecture content up to that point. Students pose the question to the person sitting next to them. To take this activity a step further, ask students to write down their questions and hand them in. These questions can also be reviewed to appreciate student understanding.

4. **Short debate** – the students are asked to sit in groups of three and roles are assigned.   For example, the person on left takes one position on a topic for debate, the person on right takes the opposite position, and the person in the middle takes notes and decides which side is the most convincing and provides an argument for his or her choice. This can be followed by a debrief activity by calling on a few groups to summarize their discussions.

5. **Jigsaw**: the student class is divided into multiple teams of students. Each member of these groups becomes a subject matter expert in 1 of 4/5 areas selected from a current course material (in expert groups). Back to original group, each member teaches his/her subject matter and learns from the others who were part of different experts groups.

6. **Study case** – the students work in groups of four or five to discuss different case studies of similar difficulty. They work through and analyse their case study. Groups are invited to share their analysis.

2.3. *Active methods and activities at the end of the lectures*

The end of a lecture should summarize the information, provide closure, and ask students to connect the information to themselves, their own values, and to realise its application to the world. This can be achieved in a variety of ways.

1. **The Lecture Quiz** – the student are asked to process information from the lecture, perhaps applying it in some way. The quiz can be used as support for discussion and review.

2. **Three steps interview** – based on some questions posed by the teacher, one student interview another within specified time limits (step1), the two reverse roles (step 2) and the two pairs combine, conduct the interview and share with the whole group the ideas of their partners (step 3).

3. **One minute papers -** at the end of class, the instructor poses one of these questions: What are the two most important points from today's session? What was the "muddiest" point from today's session? What would make the material clearer for you? Students are given 1-2 minutes to write brief responses which are turned in anonymously as they leave. The instructor addresses student responses during the next class.

The methods presented above support students' engagement with the material, participation to the class and collaboration with each other. Exposed to these methods, the students no longer listen and memorize, but they actively process the information,

analyse arguments, and apply concepts to a real-world situation; they become aware of the connection between ideas and so on. These methods and activities can be incorporated into traditional lectures with the continued effort and support of the teachers, because the methods take them out their comfort zone. The methods can be applied to lecture courses in all academic disciplines.

3. Participants' reflections

During and at the end of workshop the participants have been encouraged to reflect upon these methods and about the practical possibilities to incorporate them in their lectures. Most of these methods and activities were demonstrated, and the faculty members had the opportunity to experiment with them from the perspective of playing the student's role. The participants showed interest and enthusiasm for the methods. Most of these were unknown for the participants and they really appreciated the opportunity to gain more knowledge and skills into the methodological field. Here are some of their reflections at the end of the training activity, extracted from the workshop diary completed by the faculty members:

- *I consider this workshop very useful for my didactic activity in university. I have learned a lot of methods and I am going to implement them into my classes. Lately, I have been looking for ideas in order to bring more life into my lectures and to activate the students. Now I have found some solutions and I am keen to see how they will work. I even have some preferences: opening question, think/pair/share, one minute paper, but I think I will try the others too.*

- *I thought I knew how to teach. The participation to this workshop made me aware of my methodological limitations into my teaching practice. I am glad I have found so many ideas and possibilities to get the students involved into the courses. I have already identified some instructional contexts where I am going to try out what I have experimented today.*

- *Very inspiring for my teaching…This kind of training experience should be organised every year. I am thinking of using the jigsaw strategy and the other cooperative learning strategies with my students.*

The participants also expressed some concerns, some obstacles they perceived, related to the active learning methods and activities for students. The main concerns were related to:

- *The fear not to cover the course's content in class, because of the time required for these methods*. It is true that the faculty feel the pressure to cover the curriculum. But too often this becomes an excuse for a content based instruction, which neglects the possibilities for the students to interact with that content, to analyse, to debate, to process and use information. Ironically, the students learn less, because they receive the content in a passive way. Pre-class readings, writing assignments, brief in-class activities completed individually, with a partner or in small groups are ways for students to cover the course's content. In addition, many methods do not require a long time to implement. Some of them need only require a few minutes, and the effects count.

- *It is difficult to implement active learning methods when working with large class sizes*. Some methods (for instance Jigsaw) may be difficult to be used in groups

larger than 35-40), but this is not true for other methods: think/pair/share, small groups debate, focused listing and so on.

• *The classroom configuration impedes the implementation of active learning methods*. It is true that many lecture halls have fixed furniture, with rows of benches, students arranged one behind the others, designed for one-way delivery rather than conversation. These traditional arranging may be quite uncomfortable for the students especially when they are involved in more structured groups activity, but it works for pair or individual activities. In our opinion, this obstacle can be overcome and can't be used as an excuse for not implementing active learning strategies.

• *Active learning methods work for seminars, lab-activities, but not for lectures.* We have to admit that some faculty members were reluctant to the idea to try active learning strategies during a lecture. The view of university teaching as transmitting information usually by lecturing is still widely accepted. The curriculum is seen as a list of items of content that, once expounded from the podium, have been 'covered'. How the students receive that content and how deep their understanding is might not be specifically addressed. This describes what Biggs called teachers at level I (Biggs, 2007). The teachers who promote a student-centred model of teaching, with teaching supporting learning are at level III, according to Biggs' theory related to levels of thinking about teaching (Biggs, 2007). In our opinion, the focus on what students do, how learning takes places and how well the intended outcomes are achieved should be a priority for every faculty, no matter what kind of didactic activity is conducting for the students. Using these active learning methods only during seminars or lab-activities and not during the lecture time means to postpone the students' opportunities for learning. In addition, such a view does not promote a coherent and dynamic relationship between the teaching and learning process.

4. Conclusions

The participants were encouraged to start step by step, for instance by implementing the methods which require minimal needs for change in time, material resources or classroom configuration. It takes time to develop expertise with new instructional approaches. Establishment of support groups was suggested to be an effective way for faculty to share experience in the field of professional practices in university. Most of the participant were open to these active learning methods and realised the need of continued pedagogical development in order to be effective in their didactical activity. As an instructor gains comfort and experience with strategies, lectures will likely become more active and will be useful experiences for the students (Lom, 2012). Indeed, mastery over a variety of teaching strategies increases the possibilities to design instructional activities that foster deep learning and that value the students' needs, experience or learning styles.

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ICONIC REPRESENTATION AS STUDENT'S SUCCESS FACTOR IN ALGEBRAIC GENERALISATIONS

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Abstract: *Problems of finding general rule in the case of linear correspondences are often encountered in the research papers, where they are supplied with iconic means which support induction. And as the researchers report it, students have a tendency to focus solely on the numeric data even when visual patterns are given. The objective of our research is the examination of the influence of various iconic representations designed to help students establish and express general relations between quantities. This research is of empirical nature. The research was based on the testing technique. The obtained results show that iconic representation of the structure of algebraic contents influences greatly students' ability of making generalisations and establishing algebraic relations and simple rules of correspondence. The very activity of drawing and iconic representing of the pattern members can also be seen as potentially significant for the discovering of the rule of correspondence and its generalisation.*

Keywords: *algebra; generalization; pattern; iconic representation.*

Introduction

Many researchers see the use of patterns to be a means of promoting and encouraging generalisations as a significant algebraic activity (Hargreaves, Shorrocks-Taylor, and Threlfal 1998; Lee 1996; Warren and Pierce 2004; Warren 2005; Warren and Cooper 2008; Specht 2005; Mason, Johnston-Wilder, and Graham 2005; Moss and Beatty 2006; etc). Some researchers particularly emphasize the fact that generalisation of numeric patterns and symbolic formulation of relations between variables cause specific problems for beginner-level students (MacGregor and Stacey 1993; Mason 1996; Lee 1996; etc). Houssart investigated nature of teachers' understanding of numerical patterns. He concluded that teachers do not express enough understanding of this contents (2000). However, as Waren states it (2005), few reference books focus on generalisation of patterns and younger students' expression and justification of such generalisations. On the other hand, certain studies show that children are capable of functional thinking even at an early age (Blanton and Kaput 2004).

The impact of the use of visual means on the development of students' mathematical abilities is an interesting field of research, although it seems that no

consensus has been reached in this area. Many studies stress the importance of visualization in the problem-solving processes, while certain results suggest that visualization must also be accompanied by analytical reasoning. Numerous authors consider the use of different representations for illustrating problem situations as the important component of algebraic thinking (Kieran 1996; Duval 1999; Rivera 2010). In that manner, Kieran defines algebraic thinking as "an approach to quantitative situations that emphasizes the general relational aspects with tools that are not necessarily letter-symbolic, but which can ultimately be used as cognitive support for introducing and for sustaining the more traditional discourse of school algebra" (1996, 275). Patterson and al. (2004) point out that algebraic representation is not always optimal for learning, so alternative representations (graphical and tabular) that might be functional need to be investigated.

MacGregor and Stacey (1993) based their research on the assessment of generalisation of linear patterns made by students aged 9-13. They reported on the strategies which the students used in "close generalisation"(the activities pertaining to drawing closer pattern members) and "distant generalisation"(the one that includes discovering the rules) and concluded that drawing was a decisive factor in their strategies for exploring patterns. Garcia Cruz and Martinon (as quoted in Barbosa, Palhares, and Vale 2007) conducted research with students aged 15-16, with the aim of establishing and analysing the manner in which students discovered generalisations, i.e. whether they preferred numeric or geometric strategies. This research showed that drawing had a double role in the abstraction and generalisation process. Drawing represents a certain environment for students using visual strategies to make generalisations, and on the other hand, it represents a mode of assessing the correct reasoning of the students who prefer numeric strategies. Mason (1996) noticed that, when the patterns are introduced, although they are given "geometrically", the emphasis is still laid on constructing value tables from which the formula is derived, which is tested on one or two examples. Mason, Johnston-Wilder and Graham (2005) promoted the use of the "look what you are doing" strategy. Each drawing activity, when expressed as an instruction on how to "draw" a pattern, represents potential data generalisation.

Barbosa, Palhares, and Vale (2007) conducted a research with sixth-grade students (aged 11-12) with the aim of examining the strategies that the students used when they worked with patterns. The authors believe that the results of this research verified the claim that students preferred analytic approaches to mathematical activities and that they "turn into numbers" even the problems which are visual in nature.

Stalo and associates (2006) examined the role of verbal, visual and symbolic representations of patterns in students' success when working with patterns of different levels of complexity. The results of this research indicate that when working with complex patterns, visual representation enables students to predict expressions in the distance and form generalisation in relation to the verbal representation form. Visual representation enables these activities since it helps students recognise the relations that are not visible in verbal representation. It has been revealed that representation role

had a smaller significance in simple patterns, probably because the students managed to recognise the same pattern which they have experienced before in the case different representations.

Warren and Cooper give three major reasons for exploring geometric growing patterns in the elementary school classroom: "they are visual representations of number patterns, they can be used as an informal introduction to the concept of a variable, and they can be used to generate equivalent expressions" (2008, 113).

Concerning current techology, Pierce and al. (2007) cite research results according to which majority of teachers believe that the use of CAS as a tool to support learning algebra, is of the most benefit for high ability students, while presenting an obstacle for low ability students.

In the assessment of students' abilities to work with patterns, Radford focused on semiotic and cultural perspective, which is based on the idea that learning is achieved with the use of different semiotic systems. Radford (2000) carried out an experiment in which he tested eighth-grade students, who were working on examples of patterns in small groups. He analysed students' activities which lead them to express meanings of algebraic generalisations and he noticed that such activities develop in three steps:
(1) Arithmetic testing;
(2) The expression of generalisations in a natural language (in the message form);
(3) The use of standard algebraic symbols for expressing generalisations.

Radford concludes that "to learn to generalise geometric-numeric patterns amounts to learning to see and to interpret a finite number (usually very few) of concrete objects or signs in a different way" (Radford, Bardini, and Sabena 2005, 685).

Specht (2005) conducted research with the aim of clarifying the reasoning process of younger students when working with patterns. In her research with fourth-grade students, she concluded that understanding the tasks which demanded generalisation of the change of quantities required four levels of understanding variables above all:
(1) Recognition and understanding that symbol x could be used to express general solutions and relations (which means that it is not solely reduced to the use and expression of an unknown number);
(2) Acceptance of a symbolic (algebraic) expression as the solution to the task;
(3) Understanding of the meaning "x could be any number";
(4) The development of the equality sign concept is not limited to the understanding with the meaning "to find a solution".
Having conducted research with fourth-grade students, this author states that students of that age are perhaps not capable of expressing generalisations using algebraic symbols.
This claim was refuted in the research conducted by Warren (2005). She carried out a teaching experiment in which 45 children (from two classes) took part all of

whom were on average nine years and six months old. Based on this research, the author (Warren 2005) concluded that students had a tendency to seek an additional strategy when they were looking for a rule in value table. Generalisations expressed by students could be put in four categories:

- The use of big numbers to express generalisations;
- Simple comparison of numbers and counting (for instance, two n's put together give one m);
- Verbal expression of generalisation;
- Formal record (m = 2n).

The results showed that younger children were not only capable of considering the relation between two sets of data, but also of expressing such relation in a very abstract form. These results oppose the results of research conducted by Pytlak (2011). In the research carried out on a group of fourth-grade students (aged 9-10), the author examines whether the students of that age are capable of discovering and applying certain rules. The results of research reveal that students can notice rules and express them verbally, but that symbolic expression of rules is difficult for students at that age.

Gray and Tall defined proceptual thinking which include: "flexible facility to view symbolism either as a trigger for carrying out a procedure or as the representation of a mental object that may be decomposed, recomposed, and manipulated at a higher level" (1994, 125). They also emphasized the importance of understanding algebraic expressions not only as concept, but as process.

Pitta and Gray conducted a research with "low achiever" and "high achiever" students aged between eight and 12. They concluded that: "The mathematics of the low achievers remains abstract; its symbols need concretizing and its pictures focusing. By not understanding the nature of the abstract nouns or the symbolic nature of icons and numerical symbols we suggest they may not form the generalisations and relationships that are the hallmarks of proceptual thinking" (1996, 42).

The research of visualization process and the role of mental images in mathematical reasoning reveal the importance of selected representation in the development of concepts. Patterns can be given to students in different manners: symbolic, verbal, visual. Based on results, it cannot be claimed for sure that visual representation of data helped in discovering the rules of a given pattern and encouraged generalisation. However, we tend to believe that such results (often obtained with examinees in final high school grades) are mostly conditioned by students' previous experience, which is based on working with numbers. We believe that adequately selected and structured images, which represent numeric models, can assist in discovering rules and suggest meaning. Therefore, in the case of more complex patterns, we believe that it is useful to link numeric data to appropriate images.

Research Method

The objective of our research is the examination of the influence of various iconic representations designed to help students establish and express general relations

between quantities. There is a traditional approach to patterns in Serbian mathematics coursebooks. This approach means stating several members of the patterns whereby students are expected to continue the sequence, notice and express the rule of correspondence. The aim of this research is to determine the following:

(1) How much the process of visualization and iconic representation of the structure of sequence members influence the success of students when revealing and generalising the rules of correspondence.

(2) Which strategies students use in the process of discovering rules and which means they prefer in expressing generalisations.

According to the treated topic, this research was conducted in the field of mathematics teaching methodology and, in terms of the applied research methodology, it is of empirical nature. The research was based on the testing technique. For the purpose of research, we constructed knowledge tests (which are standardized). We obtained an adequate sample: realization that requires cooperation with teachers and their commitment, and therefore the research was conducted in cooperation with teachers who showed willingness to participate. The sample comprises two classes (58 students) of fourth-graders (aged nine to ten) from a primary school in Belgrade.

Students did two tests in three days. The first test consists of three specially programmed tasks. Patterns were given numerically, i.e. by stating the first four pattern members of a sequence (3, 8, 15, 24…).

In the second test (parallel version) the task were modified in the way that the structure of the pattern members of a sequence is represented in the iconic form (example in Figure 1). Iconic symbols are the bearers of meaning of concepts. Our aim was to examine in what manner and to what extent they contribute to the understanding of wider content.

Look at the figures and try to spot how the number of squares changes.

fig. 1   *fig. 2*   *fig. 3*   *fig. 4*   ...
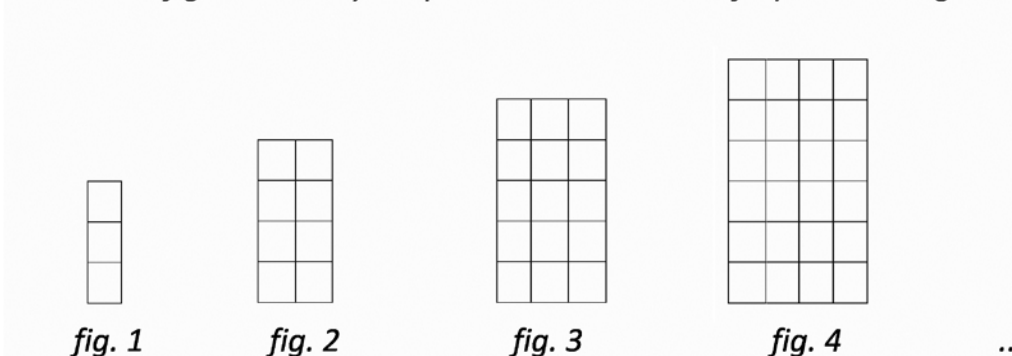
Figure 2 Iconic representations of patterns - example of a task

The tasks were created in such a way that the students had to go through the following phases in order to express generalisations:

• The expression of generalisation by revelation of the members' structure on "distant positions" using numerical expressions;

- The expression of generalisations in the terms of the natural language;
- The use of standard and algebraic symbols for expressing generalisations.

Research results

Comparing students' test results, we have concluded that there is statistically significant difference at the level of 0.01 (Table 1) in students' achievement in this study on generalisation by revealing members in distant positions using numerical expressions.

Table 1. Numerical and iconic representations of patterns – difference in achievement when revealing members of a sequence in distant position (McNemar test)

	I1a & II1a	I2a & II2a	I3a & II3a
N – sample volume	58	58	58
p - value	.000	.000	.000

Among the studied differences in students' achievement regarding pairs of task components, statistically significant differences were found in the following:

(1) I1a and II1a (p = 0,000<0,01): a significantly greater number of students (N = 34) solved the I1a, than II1a (N = 17);

(2) I2a and II2a (p = 0,000<0,01): a significantly greater number of students (N = 36) solved the I2a, than II2a (N = 15);

(3) I3a and II3a (p = 0,000<0,01): a significantly greater number of students (N = 36) solved the I3a, than II3a (N = 15).

Comparing students' test results, we have concluded that there is statistically significant difference at the level of 0.01 (Table 2) in students' achievement in this study on generalisation by natural language.

Table 2. Numerical and iconic representations of patterns – difference in achievement of expressing generalisations in the terms of the natural language (McNemar test)

	I1b & II1b	I2b & II2b	I3b & II3b
N – sample volume	58	58	58
p – value	.000	.000	.000

Among the studied differences in students' achievement regarding pairs of task components, statistically significant differences were found in the following:

(1) I1b and II1b (p = 0,000<0,01): a significantly greater number of students (N = 32) solved the I1b, than II1b (N = 8);

(2) I2b and II2b (p = 0,000<0,01): a significantly greater number of students (N = 33) solved the I2b, than II2b (N = 9);

(3) I3b and II3b (p = 0,000<0,01): a significantly greater number of students (N = 32) solved the I3b, than II3b (N = 7).

Comparing students' test results, we have concluded that there is statistically significant difference at the level of 0.01 (Table 3) in students' achievement in this study on generalisation by algebraic symbols.

Table 3. Numerical and iconic representations of patterns – difference in achievement of expressing generalisations of algebraic symbols (McNemar test)

	I1c & II1c	I2c & II2c	I3c & II3c
N – sample volume	58	58	58
p – value	.000	.000	.000

Among the studied differences in students' achievement regarding pairs of task components, statistically significant differences were found in the following:

(1) I1c and II1c ($p = 0,000 < 0,01$): a significantly greater number of students ($N = 35$) solved the I1c , than II1c ($n = 0$);

(2) I1c and II2c ($p = 0,000 < 0,01$): a significantly greater number of students ($N = 33$) solved the I1c, than II1c ($N = 1$);

(3) I3c and II3c ($p = 0,000 < 0,01$): a significantly greater number of students ($N = 36$) solved the I3c, than II3c ($N = 3$).

The obtained results show that iconic representation of the structure of algebraic contents influences greatly students' ability of making generalisations and establishing algebraic relations and simple rules of correspondence.

The discussion of the results

Let's analyse the first task which pertains to the expression of generalisations in patterns if pattern members of a sequence are represented in the iconic form (example in Figure 2).

Look at the figures and try to spot how the number of squares changes.

fig. 1   fig. 2   fig. 3   fig. 4   ...

a) How many squares will there be in the 10th figure? How did you calculate that? _____
b) Can you spot and describe the regularity in which the figures are represented (in relation to the number of squares in them)?

c) Notice the rule according to which the number of squares increases in each figure and try to write the expression which describes the number of squares that will appear in the n-th figure:
_____

Figure 3 Expression of generalisations in patterns if pattern members of a sequence are represented in the iconic form

High percentage of students (83.6%) successfully expressed the structure of members shown in the picture with the use of numeric expressions. The best way to encourage the generalisation is the writing of the first numbers of squares in the form: 3, 2·4, 3·5... The students also successfully (81,8%) expressed the generalisation by revealing the structure of members at "distant positions" with the use of numeric expressions, i.e. they correctly concluded that at the 10th place there will be 10 · 12 squares. The fact that iconic representation of structure of pattern ·members is highly important for the understanding of structure and the formation of necessary mental images and representations is enhanced by the fact that the students, although they were not required to do so in the task, they independently draw the next pattern (Example - Figure 3). The activity of drawing and iconic representation of the structure of pattern members is a potential generalisation.
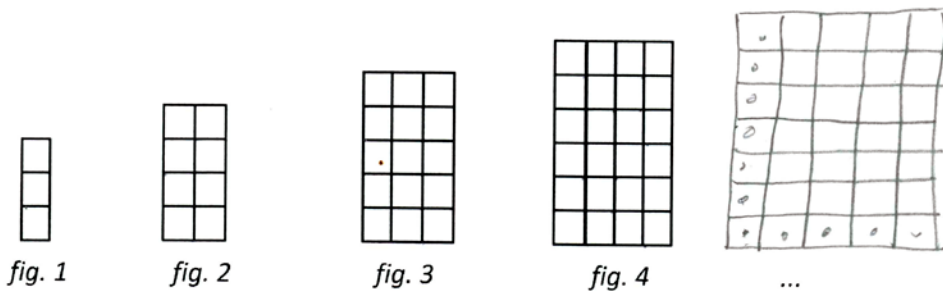
Figure 4 Expression of generalization by drawing

In the next step, the students (58.2%) generalised the rule of sequencing pattern members (expressing generalisation in a natural language), i.e. they verbalized their observations as a result of intuitive understanding in the field of images and arithmetic research. Based on this, the students used standard algebraic symbols to successfully (60%) express the rule of sequencing pattern members. The results showed that students can express their generalisations in various manners: expression of rules by drawing members at "closer positions", discovering members at "distant positions", verbal description of the rules, the expression of rules in abstract symbolic language $(n·(n+2))$. The recognition and formulation of stated generalisations provide an opportunity for genuine and significant mathematical activity.

When pattern is represented in the numerical form (3, 8, 15, 24…), students (29.3%) made generalisation revealing members of a sequence in distant position. But, in this case the students have written number (120), and not an expression that suggests a generalisation. Based on this, we believe that link between structured images, numbers and symbolic expressions may help developing proceptual thinking. Images refer, that correspondence is not only a concept, but a process.

Students described that generalisation in the terms of the natural language (13.8%), as adding of successive odd numbers, beginning with five. None of the students could generalise the rule and to expression of generalisations of algebraic symbols.

The obtained results show that iconic representation of the structure of algebraic contents influences greatly students' ability of making generalisations and establishing algebraic relations and simple rules of correspondence.

Conclusions

Working with patterns is regarded as a significant algebraic activity. The discovery of an unknown rule and its generalisation gives an opportunity for students to develop abstraction and generalisation abilities and it is also a manner of active work with a variable. Students' success in this research indicates that they can deal with certain algebraic generalisations which significantly surpass the content envisaged by the syllabus. Our research supports the results which show that younger children are capable of learning this content in a certain framework and in certain ways. Students can express their generalisations in various manners: by drawing, arithmetically, verbally and symbolically. In the process of developing the meaning of symbolically expressed generalisations, iconic representation has a significant role. The activity of visual representation of quantitative relations is of great importance for development of meaning of algebraic symbols and procedures. So, when introducing new mathematical terms, teachers have to turn attention to the creation of meaning, and by carriers of meaning we consider iconic symbols. Therefore, operating with symbols has meaning when it is accompanied by evocation of mental images or drawing iconic symbols which represents full meaning. Conventional notation helps abstraction and generalisation. Symbolic mathematical language is precise and concise. However, if symbols are introduced without adequate basis which give meaning for symbol manipulations, students can develop early formalization and for them symbolic language can become semantically empty. A premature use of symbols independently of their meaning always leads to formalism. Results of our research showed that students are mostly successful in working with tasks where mathematical structure has schematic representation. Question is, whether the students would use visual models for representing relations in process of solving other algebraic problems. Also it is significant to answer the question what is the character of students spontaneously incurred visual models.

Patterns are such contents which offer the possibility of developing abstraction and generalisation skills, as the development of efficient schemes for problem-solving, which students can apply on generalised relations between quantities in algebraic problems. Working with numeric patterns which have iconic representation students are able to develop better understanding of number expressions, expressions with variable and functions. The concept of numeric patterns (we refer to the patterns in which the rule is expressed by a linear expression or a very simple quadratic one) can have its place in the first grades of elementary school with the expectation that the real effects of such lessons will be visible in higher grades. Elaborating this type of problems, we hope to develop students' abilities preparing them for the following stages of learning mathematics. Therefore, this type of exercises should not be considered to be either formal or insignificant.

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THE LEGITIMACY OF THE UNIVERSITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EXPANTION OF MASIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSES (MOOCs)

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Abstract: *How does a MOOCs potentially challenge our notions of what a legitimate university is? Is this a legitimate question in the context of MOOCSs becoming more and ore similar with face to face programmes - online credentials are on their way (with checks for cheating).These courses are merely 50% as effective as a face-to-face one but a fraction of the cost (professor Daniel Mc Farland on Coursera.org). Is this the beginning of the end of the face-to-face university programmes? 455 students enrolled on Organizational Analyses on coursera.org have answered that question .*

Key words: *MOOCs, university, neo-institutional theory, organization, legitimization*

While organizational models have been studied in depth as it relates to schools and businesses, massive open online courses MOOCs, present a fascinating case where organizational theories can be applied to understand how the online courses operate as a form of organization.

As such, I will first review the concept of MOOCs and I will analyze it in the relation with the neo-institutional theory of organizational development..

A **MOOCs** is a model of **educational delivery** that is, to varying degrees, massive, open, online, and a course. Most MOOCs are structured similar to traditional online higher education courses in which students watch lectures, read assigned material, participate in online discussions and forums, and complete quizzes and tests on the course material. The online activities can be augmented by local meet-ups among students who live near one another. MOOCs are typically provided by higher education institutions, often in partnership with "organizers" such as Coursera, edX, and Udacity, though some MOOCs are being offered directly by a college or university. MOOCs arise from the confluence of several important trends, and they raise important questions and spark essential conversations about **curriculum design, accreditation,** what constitutes a valid learning experience, and who has access to higher education.(ELI-Seven things you should know about MOOCs, http://www.educause.edu/ELI).

Given their impact and their massive number of learners, MOOCs tend to become a form of specific organization, highly depended on the environment. Why is MOOCs an organization? Because it has :

- **Technology**: courses, curriculum, reading materials, video lectures, quizzes, learning tracks, enrollment and graduation procedures in order to fit to educational environment, to be recognized as quality higher education providers
- **Participants:** universities**,** teachers, learners, experts in e-learning learning, adult learning, instructional design
- **Goals: surviving in the educational market through institutional isomorphism toward the successful face-to-face universities; become legitimate, recognized by the society as trustable education providers**
- **Social structure:** Formal structure conforms to the educational environment. The Courses respect the enrollment procedures, scientific information are delivered through video lectures, enhanced by supplemental readings and evaluated to periodically and final quizzes. **Often there is a loose coupling between technical core and i**nstitutionally defined organizational structure. For example the formal organizational structures correspond to those of an university but sometimes, the delivered knowledge is not academic level. The logic of confidence makes inspection less necessary, and practice may be very different from "ceremonial" classifications or structures.

In accordance with the principles of Neoinstitutional Theory, any MOOCs platform strive to *legitimize itself in the environment higher education providers*

How does a MOOCs like Coursera potentially challenge our notions of what a legitimate university is? Is this a legitimate question in the context of MOOCSs becoming more and ore similar with face to face programmes - online credentials are on their way (with checks for cheating).These courses are merely 50% as effective as a face-to-face one but a fraction of the cost (professor Daniel Mc Farland on Coursera.org). Is this the beginning of the end of the face-to-face university programmes? 455 students enrolled on Organizational Analyses on coursera.org have answered that question .

Stephen Dowle, information system engineer and former Royal navy submariner affirmed that Traditional universities serve three purposes: (https://class.coursera.org/organalysis-002/forum/thread?thread_id=75)

- The transmission of Knowledge
- The creation of knowledge (ie research)
- Reproduction of the hegemony (along with other institutions).

The majority of posters on the Coursera forum were of the opinion that the traditional university will continue to exist and remain relevant.

In the short to medium term the Coursera students do not see MOOCs replacing universities in these last two functions. As regarding the transmission of knowledge we could remark that :

- Those students wishing to benefit from research opportunities or wishing to take up key posts within the hegemony will continue to seek out universities for first degrees; this will particularly benefit elite universities
- Some of the content delivery within universities may include elements of MOOCs but this will be set off against traditional face to face education all intimately

tied to an argument over value for money (why should I pay top fees for something I can get for free or vastly less cost elsewhere?)

• MOOCs role will be primarily reaching out to those who: don't have access to traditional university education; could attend traditional university but looking for a cheaper option; don't have aspirations either to do research or join the hegemony.

• Universities could benefit by creating new delivery models that build on MOOCs (eg by enhancement).

What could happen of course is that MOOCs merely serve to bolster the privileged position of universities.

Regarding the legitimacy of physical university campuses some subjects consider that MOOCs and Universities will find ways to coexist (through a dialectic) as they each specialise and offer differentiated value propositions. Universities, as the "incumbents", will be altered in the process, but will survive with potentially altered legitimacies.

Richard L Powers thinks that: MOOC's add flexibility and may challenge universities through competition, but they don't challenge the legitimacy of universities.

Some of the reasons that were given for universities retaining legitimacy / relevance were:

• University gives so much more to the young individual than just specific knowledge in the chosen field. (Vanessa Brigh)

• As online industry conferences have not replaced in-person events, the traditional university will survive and continue to thrive.

• At a university, especially in the undergrad programs, useful connections for future activities can be formed.

• Today Alumni network of Harvard, Stanford and other good universities creates a very powerful network which provides networking platform much beyond today's MOOCs platform can offer.(Jatin)

One important aspect is the certification of a highly reputable University where you have to attend full time. In certain sectors such as law or medicine, such certification is very important.(Yan). For many, the traditional campus provides a passport to the employment process.. This is represented by the official transcript/degree.

Certain aspects of conventional universities can never be matched by online universities/institutions such as grooming of personality in a conventional university environment, learning opportunities outside the books and class rooms, networking opportunities, discipline, confidence building, interpersonal skills, interaction with "real world", impact of the company of learned teachers/scholars etc. (Waheed Iqbal)

As regarding the role for MOOCs alongside Universities the subjects saw MOOCs as an efficient way to learn a specific topic, but not a attending a Bachelors or Masters.

Some of the roles that MOOCs can play alongside universities:

• These courses should help younger students to "try before they buy", test out their true interests and get a feel for their preferred universities before embarking on a residential degree course.(Philippa jane Stone)

•MOOCs is the ultimate public relations/advertising opportunity for universities ever invented.

•MOOCs stimulate innovation within Universities, by "forcing "them to create new delivery models that build on MOOCs (eg by enhancement). MOOCs and other similar formats realize the immense potential of technology to deliver education cheap and as required to a vast audience of people. This would challenge the modern universities to become better and threaten the existence of weak universities.

The respondents stressed the main advantages of MOOCs in relations with adult learners such:

•Working professionals (who do not have the time or need to attend university, but wish to obtain specific knowledge);

•Underprivileged or working class (who either cannot afford university, or have other conflicting commitments - family, full time employment);

• Life-long learners (who have no interest in attending or paying for university);

•.Test-drivers (students wishing to get their feet wet prior to commitment).

An interesting point of view of John Roth is that MOOCss are substantially recreational, at least for now. They represent a substantial threat to **non-fiction book sales**; being way better than reading bad literature. Raising the quality of recreation could be a serious boon to a society.

There are areas that MOOCs would need to address:

•MOOCs will need to legitimize their certificates if they are to have any currency in the workplace.(Andrew Lugton)

•Dropout rates on MOOCs. The main issue for MOOCs providers is how to avoid big dropout rates.

•Evaluation. Making the evaluation valid by avoiding cheating is another aspect to be addressed. One subject affirmed that if cheating on exams is such a big issue associated with on – line learning then why don't we prepare for the tests with on – line courses and conduct the exams on – site like TOEFEL exams.

•The accessibility and knowledge of the use of the technology, as this being the vehicle for communication and delivery.(Urania Joseph). We cannot forget that there is still a massive proportion of population around the globe that have no access to these communication vehicles.

•Due to the lack of a screening process as a qualification to enrol, the quality of peer interaction is hard to control.

How it will be? What will prevail? Human face-to-face interaction or computer mediated transmition of knowledge? "The smell" of books or their online measured "impact factor'? Only time can tell. Until then, I must confess that, as learner of Organizational Analysis course on coursera.org, I couldn't wait for another week to come in order to see what the video-lectures will be about, or to share ideas with my world wide colleagues on the course's forum.

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIS IN ESTABLISHING MORPHOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS DETERMINED BY SEX

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Abstract: *Starting with the fact that the age and the sex of a child are essential factors at every development stage of a child, especially so for the development of morphological dimension, this research has reached two conclusions: based on the research results the influence of sex as a development factor to the physical development of the seven-year-old children has been established. The conclusion is that there are differences in physical development of children regarding their age. Morphological dimensions are determined by sex and the difference is statistically significant. The influence of the sex as a factor to the figures of a child's physical development can be expected regarding the fact that development rate and characteristics of physical development of boys and girls differ. The results of this research correspond to the results of similar research conducted in the past both at home and abroad.*

Key words*: morphological dimensions, sex, child age.*

INTRODUCTION

Information technologies in sport and physical education are used nowadays to solve problems connected to bio-mechanical movements analyses, motor control assessment, nutrition status as well as processes of organising and management of sport institutions [1], [2].

Processes characteristic for general growth and development are generated by many different factors: internal (called endogen) and external (called exogenous). General growth of each individual is a result of related influence of the given factors. After birth, the development of a child depends on biological and neurological conditions, but then the environment becomes the decisive factor for the development of functions which are to be enriched and completed under certain conditions and influences in order to turn dispositions carried by a child into abilities. It is hard to distinguish what is inherited and what is acquired. The development of a child is a result of mingling effects of internal and external processes. Internal processes are connected with maturing and depend on the inheritance while external ones are mostly related to learning and are assumed under the influence of environment. Sex is a very important factor which determines growth and development. Sexual maturing is a complex side of physical development and, depending on it, both sexes experience visual changes of proportions and clear differences in the build of the body parts.

Morphological and physical changes are gradual, related to each other, with the variable beginning of changes for both groups and individuals. As for the children and youth of the same age we can see boys and girls of different biological maturation, different growth rate and visual differences in body development. Comparing the differences between boys and girls in development of morphological functional abilities we can notice certain sex differences. In many texts the data that deny the differences in quality of motor abilities between pre-school age boys and girls can be found [3], [4] while, at the same time, other authors claim that such differences exist. Physical development of boys and girls at the age of 5 and 6 is different in some basic morphological characteristics. Boys have much higher average values of body height, body mass, arms length and body volume.

METHOD

Research subject

Research subject is the sex as a factor assumed to be a determiner of pre-school children morphological dimensions development

Goal, tasks and hypotheses of the research

The goal of the research was to collect data on the basis of which it would be possible to estimate physical development of pre-school children based on the tested indicators of morphological dimensions.

The task of the research was to collect data by measuring:

•Morphological dimensions-indicators of morphological growth: body height, body mass (bone, muscle and fat tissue);

Collecting data about age and sex as the factors assumed to have an effect on physical and motor abilities development.

Hypotheses

Based on the defined aim of this research the following hypothesis has been established:

- It was assumed that sex as a factor of development is a determiner of the pre-school children morphological dimensions development.

Methods, techniques and instruments of the research

The following kinesiology techniques were applied in this research:

•Techniques of estimation of morphological status (anthropometric measurements of morphological dimensions were done by the method recommended by the International biological program [5], [6] and measuring and estimations of body structure by Mateigki, which include measuring of 16 morphological parameters that are the base for calculating the indirect variable of body structure (muscle, bone, fat tissue, non-fat components and dry rest).

•In the phase of collecting data about sex as a factor of the physical

development of pre-school children, the questionnaire has been used.

Sample subjects

The sample subjects for this research were taken from the population of the seven-year-old children. 141 healthy children without any body malformations were covered by this research. There were approximately the same number of boys and girls.

Mode of data processing

The data obtained by the research (by listed instruments) were processed by a computer program. The basic descriptive statistic data of tested variables were established, and a t-test was used to test the differences between the two independent sample groups.

RESULTS

Interpretation, analyses and discussion of indicators of physical development of the seven-year-old children.

Table 1. Descriptive statistical indicators of morphological dimensions

Morph. dimensions	Nr. subject	M	δ	SK	KU	Min. value	Max. value
BH (cm)	1141	124,07	4,95	-0,006	0,542	108,00	139,30
BM (kg)	1141	23,550	3,85	1,061	1,514	16,00	36,50
B (gr)	1141	4951,51	682,70	0,339	0,274	3406,67	7159,19
B (%)	1141	21,16	1,78	-0,042	0,196	16,93	25,38
F (gr)	1141	4129,68	1952,03	1,870	3,694	1936,35	12538,86
F (%)	1141	16,98	5,30	1,420	2,536	8,84	39,80
M (gr)	1141	9555,61	1643,31	0,719	0,970	6127,12	14877,65
M (%)	1141	40,61	2,93	-1,861	11,766	22,00	49,43
NFC (gr)	1141	19403,27	2552,72	0,962	3,133	13764,22	31448,86
NFC (%)	1141	82,91	5,37	-1,369	2,257	60,20	91,16
DR (gr)	1141	4896,00	1245,80	1,339	9,263	625,40	11464,68

The estimation of developing level of morphological status of seven-year-olds shows that the obtained average values of the examined parameters (table 1) are as expected, that is they don't digress from the results of similar researches in our or foreign books. However, in the sample itself, there are deviations in average values of some morphological parameters and they are shown in the table.

Sex of children and indicators of physical development

It was examined if there is a difference between boys and girls concerning the parameters of morphological dimensions. The results are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Sex and morphological dimensions of children

Anthropometric parameters	Sex	No. of samples	M	δ	T-test	Degree of freedom	Threshold of significance
Body height	Female	72	123.93	5.22	-0.332	139	0.740
	Male	69	124.21	4.70			
Body weight	Female	72	23.319	4.24	-0.736	139	0.463
	Male	69	23.800	3.40			
Bones	Female	72	20.76	1.70	-2.705	139	**0.008**
	Male	69	21.56	1.78			
Fat tissue	Female	72	17.76	5.24	1.805	139	0.073
	Male	69	16.17	5.27			
Muscles	Female	72	40.97	2.47	1.480	139	0.141
	Male	69	40.24	3.33			
Non-fat component	Female	72	82.03	5.36	-2.001	139	**0.047**
	Male	69	83.27	5.26			
Dry rest	Female	72	463.22	1180.16	-2.622	139	**0.010**
	Male	69	5171.26	1261.16			

The average values of examined morphological dimensions are statistically considerably different for boys and girls. It is concluded that the components of body structure of children (percentage of bones, non-fat component and dry rest) are determined by the sex of a child. The difference is significant on the level of 0,01 for the bones; 0,01 for the dry rest and 0,05 for the non-fat component in favor of male sex, the percentage of fat tissue is close to statistical significance in favor of female sex.

By the series of research in our country and abroad [7], [8], [9] it was concluded that the sex of children can be an important factor affecting the general development of a child, his physical development. In our research, in order to check the hypothesis the sample is divided on two smaller samples to obtain the statistical analysis of results.

CONCLUSION

From the shown results, their analysis and discusion we drow the most important conclusions.

The data we came to by the estimation of the morphological status of the seven-year-olds are similar to the results obtained by other similar researches on the samples from our or foreign children at indicators of body height and body weight. As for the components of body structure: bones, mustles and fat tissue (their values are examined for the first time at the age of 7) the obtained figures comlete the estimation of morphological status of children.

The influence of sex as a factor to the indicators of children physical development could be expected considering the fact that boys and girls are different in tempo and characteristics of their body development. Between them (boys and girls) there are quantitative and qualitative differences which are established in bones, non-fat components and dry rest, whose indicators were higher at boys and the percentage of fat tissue at girls which came close to statistical significance. Besides, the strength of

upper and lower limbs, was higher at boys, but concerning the slimness girls were better, but not so much to reach the statistical significance.

Observing the influence of sex to the components of physical development we can conclude that this hypothesis is partially confirmed. Morphological dimensions are determined by the sex of a child and there is a statistically significant difference between them.

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PARENTAL PERSPECTIVE ON PRESCHOOLERS' LEISURE ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: *Parents are responsible for children's leisure activities. Preschoolers spend most of their free time, playing different games inside their homes or in parks or in some other special equipped places. The research aims the next 2 hypothesis: (1) Parents involve their children in few sports, cultural or artistic leisure activities; (2) Parents consider that there is a gender criterion when choosing leisure activities, so that boys prefer sports while girls rather prefer to involve in artistic or cultural activities. The research method used is questionnaire based survey. The questionnaire investigated 162 parent's opinion about how their preschoolers spend their free/spare time. The obtained results (according to parents opinion) agree with top choices activities that take place outdoors in parks or other sites designed for children leisure activities. The basic activities consist of games, but it is necessary for parents to participate at a parenting program where they should be informed about the importance of both sports and cultural or artistic activities in children's life.*

   Keywords: *leisure activities, preschool children, parents, outdoor activities, indoor activities*

1. Introduction

Family has an important role in non-formal education - in stimulating the development and assuring the wellbeing of the child through different types of learning experiences. The changes and challenges in the post-modern world demands more than before education for spare/free time – one of the so called "new educations" (mentioned in UNESCO programs, also). The parents decide and are responsible for choosing appropriate ways for children to spend spare time or to spend this time together with the children. Especially for the preschool period of the child the influence of spare time activities is significant for further development. Being dedicated in large part to play and games the parents have to choose from a great deal of possibilities - whether to playing at home or in parks or in special places with children's play equipment or other types of locations with special materials and devices.

2. Literature Review

There are different perspectives of defining leisure: the activity, the game as a recreation (Raymore, Godbey, Crawford, 1994), that state of mind, as the quality of

life. The concept of spare/free time describes functions like: rest, fun, personality development, education (Veal, 1992). Compared to a generation ago, children spend less time playing outdoors, participating in fewer outdoor activities. Tucker, Irwin, Gilliland, He, Larsen, and Hess (2009) found that on average, children are involved in about 160 minutes of physical activity/day. Tucker (2008) found that nearly half of preschoolers do not engage in 60 minutes of physical activity per day. The level of physical activity in preschool children is less than that recommended (Cardon, van Cauwenbergh, Labarque, Haerens of Bourdeaudhuij, 2008). Sandercock, Angus, and Barton (2010) found that there are major differences in physical activity levels of children in urban and rural areas.

Singer, Singer, D' Agostino, and DeLong (2009) reported that the most common activity performed by children is watching TV, followed by outdoor playing (Wen, Kite, Merom, Rissel, 2009, Anderson, Economics, Must, 2008, Hofferth, Sandberg, 2001; Taylor, Murdoch Books, Gerrard, William, Taylor, 2009; Sisson, Broyles, Baker, Katzmarzyk, 2010). Most of the activities children are sedentary, indoor activities in a higher proportion than the outdoor (Gubbels, Kremers, van Kann, Stafleu, Candel, Dagnelie et al., 2011; Taylor, Murdoch, Carter, Gerrard, William, Taylor, 2009). Despite the fact that physical activities are designed to reduce negative emotions (anger, fatigue/tiredness, sadness), improve attention (Bowler, Buyung -Ali, Knight, Pullin, 2010) and improve physical and mental health. Children who practice sports are more positive in what concerns school, home, social life (Wood, Hine, Barton, 2011). The main obstacles to physical activity include parental fears about safety both in personal and community level, time constraints, financial constraints, safety regulations on environmental design (Dwyer, Higgs, Hardy, Baur, 2008), road safety (Timperio, Crawford, Telford, Salmon, 2004; Carver Timperio, Crawford, 2008; Handy, Cao, Mokhtarian, 2008), delinquency or strangers (Wridt, 2004). Physical activity can be encouraged by: parental models (Jago, Thompson, Page, Brockman, Cartwright, Fox, 2009), the models offered by teachers, access to safe playgrounds and playing opportunities, friends from the neighborhood (Dwyer, Higgs Hardy, Baur, 2008), social cohesion in the neighborhood (Aarts, Wendel - Vos, van Oers, van de Goor, Schuit, 2010).

Free/spare time varies from child to child, depending on age, gender, personality, family. Male children are more active than female children (Dyment, 2005; Tucker, 2008; Hinkley, Crawford, Salmon, Okely, Hesketh, 2008; Nilsson, Andersen, Ommundsen, Froberg, Sardinha, Piehl - Aulin, 2009). Also, independent mobility and physical activity were significantly higher in/at boys (Page, Cooper, Griew, Davis, Hillsdon, 2009). Boys prefer: outdoor activities and green spaces (Wheeler, Cooper, Page, Jago, 2010), sports (football, basketball, cycling), video games, watching television, and girls prefer: cycling, watching TV, dancing, reading (Fjørtoft Kristoffersen, Sage, 2010). Fjørtoft Kristoffersen and Sage (2010) observed that areas with asphalt areas facilitate running sports and football game. They are used more by boys. Girls choose forest areas for physical activity. All the girls are exhibiting risk-taking behaviours; they tend to show greater fear to engage in new

activities (Little, 2010). Girls are more likely to engage with the family, while boys are more likely to do business with friends outdoor. Parents have an important role in the formation/ development of pro-active behaviours; they are the guys who buy more sports equipment, tools and vehicles while girls buy more dolls, cartoon characters, furniture and other manipulative toys (Pomerleau, Bolduc, Malcuit, Cossette, 1990).

Neighborhood design should be performed in order to stimulate physical activity, through the existence of parks, playgrounds (Bell, Wilson, Liu, 2008), a kind of play equipment pieces, different forms of vegetation and/or height (Cardon, van Cauwenbergh, Labarque, Haerens of Bourdeaudhuij, 2008), the neighbourhood and recreational opportunities (Tucker, Irwin, Gilliland HE Larsen, Hess, 2009). Heitzler, Martin, Duke, and Huhman (2006) estimated that the messages and the interventions that aim to increase children's participation in organized physical activity during leisure must continue to focus on promoting the benefits associated with being active. It is very important the support of parents and ensuring safe and enjoyable opportunities for their children to be active.

3. Purpose of study

Starting from this premise, the research objectives focused on identifying those sports and cultural-artistic activities of all leisure time activities for parents and preschoolers, namely the analysis of leisure activities in children's gender. We started from the following assumptions: 1. sporting and cultural-artistic ones succeed as a favourite leisure activities spent in playgrounds or parks for children 2. there is a gender perspective in choosing variants leisure, so boys prefer sports activities and girls cultural-artistic activities.

4. Methods

As research method, we used survey based on a questionnaire. The questionnaire investigated the possibilities and ways of leisure by preschool children on dimensions: information about the child's life, information on opportunities for leisure, free/spare time information about the child and socio-demographic data. The questionnaire was developed and validated specifically for this research (Cronbach Alpha = 0.893). Lot of research included 162 parents of preschoolers. Of these, 79.6% (129 subjects) were female, while the remaining 20.4% (33 subjects) male. In terms of marital status: 148 parents (91.4%) said they are married, 7 parents are unmarried (4.3%), 5 parents (3.1%) are divorced and two parents (1.2%) are widowed.

Most parents: 41.4% belong to the small group of children (3- 4 years), 33.3% of children in the middle group (4- 5 years) the remainder, 25.4% were parents of children in the high group (5-6 years). Most parents, 58% have one child, 38.3% have two, 3.1% have three children and only 0.6% has more than three children. Regarding income, 59 parents (36.4%) said that the family's monthly income is around 400 Euro, and 42 parents (25.9%) that the income is over 400 Euro, 31 parents (19.1%) have an

income of 350 Euro, 4.9% (8 subjects) claim to have 200 or 300 Euro, the remaining six parents (3.7%) claimed to have an income of 250 Euro.

5. Findings and results

Hypothesis 1: Sports activities and cultural ones succeed as a favourite leisure activities spent at Children's playgrounds or parks. One of the questionnaire items investigating ways of leisure by preschool children. Table 1 shows the spare time leisure modalities for preschool children. The results confirm the top choices for leisure activities in parks or on developed play sites for children for children's play. There were 80.9% elections (of which 53.1% often) for activities in parks, namely 93.8% elections (of which 71.6% often) for activities in playgrounds for children.

Tabel 1. Leisure activities for preschool children

No.	ACTIVITIES	YES			NO	Don't know/ No answer
		Often	Sometimes	Seldom		
1	Pools/Swimming Pools	14.8%	21.6%	24.1%	33.3%	6.2%
2	Sports Clubs	6.2%	6.2%	12.3%	64.2%	11.1%
3	Gyms/places to practice sports	6.8%	12.3%	16.7%	53.7%	10.5%
4	Rinks/Ice-skating places	8.0%	14.8%	22.2%	46.4%	8.6%
5	Cinemas/places running movies	1.2%	4.9%	23.5%	59.3%	11.1%
6	Puppet theaters/auditoriums for children	7.4%	32.1%	24.7%	27.8%	8.0%
7	Places to practice arts activities	6.8%	19.1%	17.3%	45.7%	11.1%
8	Libraries for children	1.9%	6.8%	17.9%	61.1%	12.3%
9	Children's play-centers	1.2%	6.2%	7.4%	71.0%	14.2%
10	Kids Clubs	4.9%	13.0%	11.7%	61.8%	8.6%
11	Parks	53.1%	22.2%	5.6%	9.9%	9.2%
12	Parks with playgrounds	71.6%	21.0%	1.2%	2.5%	3.7%

Sports activities are necessary for growth and development. Only 76 copies of the 162 children investigated (46.91%) in sport and, of these, 21 children (12.96%) practice two sports. Sports activities are practiced twice per week by most of the children (27.2%) once / week - 11.1% of children, three times / week - 3.1% of children and only 1 9% of the children, five times / week. Most of the children practice swimming (29 children - 17.9%), 19 children (11.7%) football practice, 11 children (6.8%) practice sportive dances, the remaining 10 children (16.2%) practice handball, basketball, karate, tennis, aircraft use, hockey, skiing, skating, gymnastics.

Parents (60.5 %) say they prefer to walk, or rather to take the children to swimming/ swimming pools (swimming classes) (14.8% of parents, often). Another 45.0% of parents (of which only 8% often) go to the rink (note that the locality where research was conducted is a mountain one) and 35.8% of parents (of which only 6.8% often) states that go to hall sports / places where you can practice sports. When parents say they go with their child to sporting activities, in fact, most of the time the child is taken to sports activities, i.e., preschool is enrolled in a group of sports: karate classes, dance classes, sports, and so on). A small percentage of parents, 24.7% (of which 6.2% often) states that the child goes to sportive clubs (in fact the child is practicing sport: football, tennis, basketball, and so on).

Cultural-artistic activities are favourite pastimes/ spare time activities of/for preschool children as parents surveyed say. However, if they have to choose, they prefer dolls theatre (64.2% elections - which often 7.4%) and places where you can practice arts activities (music, dance, arts, creative, etc.) 43.2% elections - of which 6.8% often. Parents reported much weaker when it comes to cinema attendance (29.6%), libraries (26.6%) or the Toy Libraries (14.8%). If we make a comparative observation between the three age groups, we find that parents of children small group (3-4 years) prefer to go with children in parks and playgrounds designed for children while parents of large group (5 - 6 years) diversify walking with children in various sports (sports clubs, gyms, rinks) and cultural-artistic activities (libraries, creative circles, ludoteques). A possible explanation of this situation is the desire of parents of small group of children to form and develop motor skills, and then, when the kids grow up to be able to orient them towards sports activities and/or cultural- artistic.

Confirmation that playgrounds for children and/or parks are preschoolers favourite comes from the results of another item questionnaire investigating parental preferences for leisure time spent with their children. Parents prefer to go out with the kids in parks or playgrounds (87% of them often and very often). The immediately following activity ranks: walk in the park is chosen by 85.8% of parents (139 parents often and very often), the percentages are substantially equal. Both are activities aimed at leisure in nature, but it has not a very high degree of involvement from parents/ but it does not show a very high degree of involvement on the part of the parents. In the third place, there is a task that requires dynamism and parental involvement: play different games along with the child. The percentage of parents who carry out this activity is 80.9% (131 of parents). The following two events are static activities: reading of stories, poems, writings for children, and so on, carried out by 72.2% of the parents often and very often (131 parents) and watching various TV programs carried out by 47.3% of parents often and very often (77 parents).

The cultural-artistic activities are not visible among leisure preferences of parents. However, if they choose, prefer dolls theatre (64.2% of parents) and places where you can practice artistic activities (music, dance, fine arts, creative, and so on) 43.2% of parents. Parents reported much weaker when it comes to cinema attendance (29.6%), libraries (26.6%) or the Toy Libraries (14.8%). Regarding sports, we can say

that the situation is much better. Thus, 60.5% of parents say they prefer to walk, or rather to take the children to swimming/swimming pools (swimming classes), 45.0% of parents go to the rink and 35.8% of parents say they go to gyms/places where you can practice sports.

Hypothesis 2: There is a gender perspective in choosing leisure variants so that boys prefer sports activities and girls prefer cultural-artistic activities. Results related to preschoolers practicing sporting activities are poor, 46.9% of preschool children in sport (N -162). Of these 24.07% are male and 22.84% are girls. You cannot say that preschoolers are significant differences between different ages. Percentage increased slightly for sport registered preschoolers aged 5-6 years (16.05%) compared to those aged 3-4 years and 4-5 years (15.43%).

The three groups of pre-schoolers, were comparative analysed according to their age (group 3-4, group 4-5 years and 5-6 years group), and gender (female and male). The boys aged 3-4 years are the most active (22.97%), followed by the boys aged 5-6 years (16.22 %). For girls, those aged 4-5 years are most active (17.04%), followed very close to/by those aged 5-6 years (15.91%). There has been also investigated the practice of a second sport by pre-schoolers. Only, 19.01% of the investigated preschoolers the practices a second sport, 8.64% of these are boys and 4.32% girls. More active in this respect are boys aged 4-5 years (3.7%), when it come to girls, the most active girls are the one aged 5-6 years (1.85%). If we look at the sports practiced, the most popular are: swimming (17.9%), football (11.7%), sportive dances (6.8%) and karate (4.3%). The boys prefer football (9.88%), swimming (7.41%), karate (3.09%), while girls prefer swimming (10.49%) and sportive dances (5.56%) as the first option for sport. The preschool parent's profile which guides them to practice sport looks like this: parents belong to category of age 30-39 years (77.6%), married (89.5%) have a safe child (56.6%) and a monthly income of 400 E (40.8 %).

Preschoolers practice in a much smaller percent cultural-artistic activities, only 12.3% of them (N -162). Girls have a higher percentage (8.64 %) than boys (3.7 %). The most active are preschoolers aged 5-6 years (6.17%), followed by those aged 3-4 years (3.70%), the lowest being represented pre-schoolers aged 4-5 years (2.47%). Analysing the gender girls aged 5-6 years given the highest number of practitioners (6.42%), followed by those aged 4-5 years (5.68%), and followed by the boys aged 5-6 years (5.41%). If we take a look at the cultural-artistic activities practiced, from the popularity side, those are: painting, drawing (8%), ballet, i.e. a musical instrument (violin, piano, percussion instrument) (2.5%). Both girls and boys prefer painting, drawing of these kind of activities (5.56 % - girls respectively 2.45% - boys). The preschool parents which guide them to practice cultural-artistic activities have a similar profile to those who directs them towards the sport, i.e. category: age 30-39 years (83.3%), married (91.7%), have only a child (54.2%) and a monthly income of 400 E (45.8%).

6. Conclusions

The results confirm the top choices for leisure activities in parks or on children's play developed sites. There were 80.9% choices for activities in parks, 93.8% respectively choices for activities occurring in places for children's play designed. Percentages ahead of the 60.5% of parents who claim they prefer to walk, or rather to take the children to swimming pools/ponds, or 45.0% of those parents whose children go to the rink and the 35.8% of parents states that they go to gyms/places where you can practice sports. More precisely, there were 46.9% children practicing sports, i.e. 12.3% of children performing cultural-artistic activities.

Preschool boys practicing sports are slightly higher percentage than girls (24.07% vs. 22.84%, N -162). Boys aged 3-4 years are most active (22.97%), followed by those aged 5-6 years (16.22%). Boys are more active then the girls investigated. Among the investigated preschoolers 8.64% boys are practicing a second sport versus 4.32% of girls. Boys exhibit more activism (3.7% compared with 1.85% boys girls). The boys prefer: football (9.88%), swimming (7.41%), karate (3.09%), girls prefer swimming (10.49%) and sportive dances (5.56%) as the first option for sport. 19.1% of children practice a second sport, 51.3% of whom were boys . The preschool parents profile which guide them to practice sport belongs to the age category 30-39 years (77.6%), married (89.5%), have only a child (56.6%) and a monthly income of 400 E (40.8%). Girls practice cultural-artistic activities in greater proportion than boys (8.64% vs. 3.7%, N -162). In terms of age, girls aged 5-6 years given the highest number of practitioners (6.42%), followed by those aged 4-5 years (5.68%), and then then followed by boys aged 5-6 years (5.41%). Cultural-artistic activities practice includes: painting, drawing (8%), ballet, i.e. a musical instrument (violin, piano, percussion instrument) (2.5%). Both girls and boys prefer painting, drawing of these activities (5.56% girls, respectively 2.45% boys). Preschool parents which guide them to practice cultural-artistic activities have a similar profile to those who guide them for sport, i.e.: belonging to the age category 30-39 years (83.3%), married (91.7%), have only a child (54.2%) and a monthly income of 400 E (45.8 %).

Acknowledgements

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INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION
TO PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract: *The motivation is one of the most important element in the self-adjustment of the individual. Ones of the motivation forms ar innate but others, more complex and numerous are formed during the human life depeding on the external environment particularities and on the specificity of the necessity states. In the learning process, the motivation is primarly extrinsic and than it becomes intrinsic. The author presents her results on two samples of primary school children, regarding the transformation of extrinsic learning motivation into intrinsic learning motivation. The results show that using adequate methods we can contribute to a faster transformation of the extrinsic motivation into an intrinsic one, which is more significant for a real learning and understanding.*

Key words: *extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation, learning process, primary school children.*

The motivation is an important leverage in the self-adjustment individual process, a driving force behind the entire psychic and human development. This means that the selection and the assimilation, as well as the sedimentation of the external influences will be produced depending on the motivational structure of personality. The motivation sentizes in different ways the person to the external influences, making it more or less permeable to it. In this way we can understand why one and the same influence produces different effects to different persons, or to the same person in different moments of its life. The motivation by its propellants and tensional character restructures and replaces, sediments and increases the psychic construction material of the individual (Butler, McManus, 2002).

Some of the motivation forms, relatively simple and few in number, were formed during the phylogenesis and are given to the human being by birth. Others, more complex and numerous, are formed during the life, being dependent both on the external environment particularities and of the internal needs state specificity already existing, of their manner of assimilation and sedimentation. Basically they are not anything else but the external stimulations which repeatedly act on the individual and by satisfying some adjustemt requirements, were taken, internalized and transformed into internal conditions. The independence degree from the current situation, however, is variable and never absolute (Cosmovici, 1996).

In the real existence of the human being are made in fonction different motivation forms, which are usually classified, two by two, in opposite and contrary pairs. Thus we have: positive and negative motivation; intrinsic and extrinsic motivation; cognitive and affective motivation and so on.

The classification in extrinsic and intrinsic motivation takes into account its producing source. If the generating source is inside the subject, in his personal needs, if it is solidar with the activity unfold by the subject, than we speak about a direct or intrinsic motivation. The specificy of this kind of motivation consists in its satisfaction by the achievement of the activity itself. If the generating source is outside the subject, being suggested or imposed by another person, than we speak about indirect or extrinsic motivation

The achievement motivation is based on a trend that seems to have a series of native premises which are represented by the attempt to creatively influence the environment by the tendence to affirmation and by the desire of affirmation. It is manifested in the attempt to achieve skills and the desire to achieve successful performance in a valued social action. In both its forms, these aspirations fosters the child's progress.

The achievement motivation takes a maximum intensity when the individual knows that his actions will be judged by a standard. The desire to achieve success depends, of course, on the performance attractiveness. As much the performance is more attractive, the greater will be the effort of the individual. The second factor that influences a person's efforts is the difficulty of the task to solve. The strangeness consists in the fact that the performance is more attractive when it is very difficult, unless it is easy to achieve (Costin, 2014, p.61).

The desire to gain success, however, is counteracted by the fear of failure, so that the behavior of a person in a competition will be influenced by the dialectical positive trends in their struggle with the inhibition of fear created (Lieury, 2002).

The reasons that make the child to come to school, to listen the teachers and to learn might be divided into two main groups (G. Kelemen, 2014):

- extrinsic motivation – when the student falls into school discipline without a direct interest in what is taught, but to receive, directly or indirectly, certain rewards, especially moral ones;

- intrisic motivation – where the learning and the acquiring knowledge interests directly the student.

In the case of extrinsic motivation there are:

The desire for affiliation, the child goes to school and learn conscientiously especially to please the family which is interested in what is made at school, praises him and sometimes rewards him. To this is added, sometimes the desire to meet the expectations of the teacher and of the professor. Also in this category is included the wish to be as the other kids in the neighborhood, the concern to do what generally people of his age do – so it is manifest a tendency towards conformism.

Normative trends are represented by the habit to obey the rules or obligations, and the conformism stems from them. The parents, the teachers and the society are asking him to submit to a social indoctrination and the child learned to listen, to comply. (Cosmovici, Iacob,1999).

The fear of the consequences of disobedience may accompany the comply to duty. The fear, the dominant sentiment in schools 100 years ago, disappeared completely during the communist dictatorship, when, if the student does not learn, the teacher was punished in various ways. In the civilized countries (Sweden for example), without in any way bully a child, everyone knows that if you do not promote on merit 8 or 9 classes mandatory, you can not get any job. And then there is an imminent danger for the lazy. This minimal concern is needed to be able to fight the indifference of some school children, fueled by the indifference of their families.

The ambition, the desire to be among the first is also a stimulant in some cases. It is frequently meet in small classes where many students shake, raising their hand to answer a question. Some families exaggerate pretending that their boy or girl must be necessarily among winners. Exaggeration of this kind can lead to a negative attitude of competition and hostility towards rivals. It is more accurate to stimulate race with itself, the desire to achieve better results increasingly, without looking with envy at the performance of others (Roman, Balaş, 2014).

In the center of intrinsic motivation is curiosity, that means the desire to know much more. The curiosity is based on a native impulse and is present mainly in the first years of school. Keeping it awake depends on the skill of the teacher and is an important factor of the assimilated knowledge durability. Curiosity becomes permanent when it is combined with beliefs about the value of culture, which facilitates the communication with others and provides a great wealth of experiences, sources of satisfaction and equanimity. In the same motivational framework appears the aspiration for competence, the desire to become a good professional. In this case, the effort is channeled into subjects related to the future job of the subject (Moldovan, Ignat, Bălaş-Timar, 2011).

The teacher and the professor use all these reasons that appear with a variable weight from one student to another, but he must cultivate by all means the intrinsic motivation.

Research hypotheses:

In our research we started, based on the theoretical documentation that we had consulted, from the following hypotheses:

- if there is any intrinsic motivation to young school children, then it can be highlighted and probably varies by age of the child;

- if there is intrinsic motivation in small school child there must be ways that it can be developed at an optimal level for learning.

Consistent with these hypotheses, we have established the following **objectives** to support the research plan:

- to find a way to be able to highlight the intrinsic motivation at little schoolchildren;

- to appreciate the differences existent on intrinsic motivation among children in the first grade and fourth grade;

- to build a method that can develop the intrinsic motivation;

- to appreciate the usefulness of the practical application of this method.

Groups studied

For practical verification of the proposed hypotheses, we studied two groups of children in primary education, more precisely two classes, with an equally effective school:

- the first group consists of children from the first class - number of pupils was equal to 20 of which were 13 boys and 7 girls.

- the second group was composed of students from grade IV, all numbered 20, of which 14 boys and 6 girls.

Methodology

We initially applied a questionnaire to the children to see to which of them can be highlighted the intrinsic motivation.

In the second phase we worked closely with the class I, under the form of games to stimulate the curiosity, for 2 months. The class IV had to follow the normal program without any intervention.

At the end of the experiment we used a questionnaire applied to both classes again to ascertained whether the method we used had any results in the development of intrinsic motivation in subjects in the experimental group.

Results and discussions

The questionnaire in the initial phase, shows that at the children in the first class, the learning intrinsic motivation is present only in two subjects, which states that they want to learn to know more, to read more about certain animals or phenomena which interest them (see figure 1).
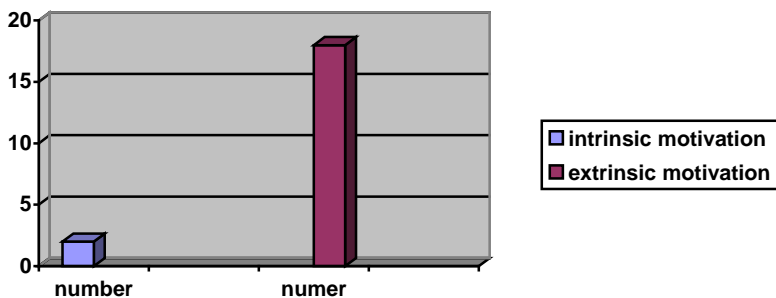
Fig.1. The presence of the intrinsic motivation to the children from the first class

Somehow we expect this result, because all references in the literature reveals that intrinsic motivation occurs in children later in terms of chronological age. In this context, the situation shown in Figure 1 is normal.

The other 18 children in the experimental group meet extrinsic motivation and their situation is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

The causes of extrinsic motivation to the children from the first class

The causes of extrinsic motivation	Number
- not upset her mother	8
- not upset the teacher	6

- to obtain material rewards - sweets, toys	2
- to go on the weekend trip	1
- to obtain approval for playing on the computer	1
Total children	**18**

We can easily notice that the majority of children (a total of 8 students) learn not to upset her mother. At this age the attachment to the mother person is still very strong. Do not forget that the first assessment was made in the first semester and the children did not have the time to become too attached to the teacher. At this age, the beginning of the road to the school, the mother still remains the main figure in the affection order.

A number almost as large (6 students) learn to not upset the school teacher. For these the importance of the maternal figure begins to be gradually replaced by the importance of the figure of the teacher. According to most studies in the psychological literature in this period of the school life, the teacher becomes the central figure, the most important person, who knows everything, who also teaches him to read and write.

The other five children learn to obtain different types of material rewards (candy, toys, weekend trips, permission to play on the computer). We must support, firmly, that this attitude of the parents (to conditionate the learning and its results of various material rewards) is completely erroneous.

Due to this compliance, children will be dominated over the life by the exaggerated importance of the material values at the expense of the intellectual and spiritual ones. At the age when the children should develop the curiosity, the desire to know as much about the world and nature surrounding, this category of parents inhibits the child by making mercantile impulses learning.

For children in fourth grade, the presence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is shown in Figure 2.

Fig. 2. The presence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation
at the fourth class children.

The situation is roughly similar. Most of the children from the fourth class (16 students) learn extrinsic motivated versus only four students who are intrinsically motivated. Of extrinsically motivated students, the explaining reasons given by them is shown in Table 2.
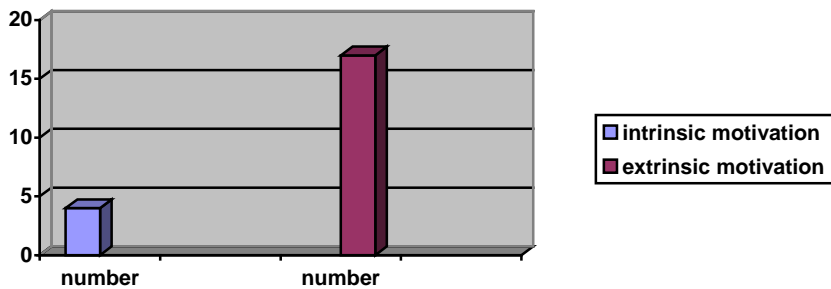
.

Table 2
The causes of extrinsic motivation to the children from the fourth class

The causes of extrinsic motivation	Number
- not upset her mother	4
- not upset the teacher	8
- to obtain material rewards - sweets, toys	1
- to go on the weekend trip	1
- to obtain approval for playing on the computer	2
Total children	**18**

In class IV the teacher is already the central figure in the school-children life, so most students presenting extrinsic motivation explains this by not upset the teacher (8 students). The ones for whom the mother still remains of primary importance is declining (4 students). The number of children that motivate the learning by the material rewards is about the same. In the fourth grade, the students have come to know better the teacher, to attach to her and to understand that her account matters to the position that they will get in the team of students. Therefore, we consider, the number of students who are learning to not upset the theacher is greater than those who do not want to upset their mother. Gradually, the importance of the maternal figure and of the family, lose ground in the favor of the teacher, at this age, and later (in the preadolescent period) in the favor of friends.

The number of children who have intrinsic motivation is more than twice in the class IV than to class I. This can be explained, on the one hand by the development and the maturation of children in natural way to the grade IV and on the other by the tact and skills of the teacher to develop the children's intrinsic motivation, the curiosity to know, in which the only reward is the satisfaction that you know more, that you learn something new, that you understand a thing that until then you could not understand.

For two months, we worked closely with the experimental group (consisting of children from the Class I) to stimulate intrinsic motivation. We used the mehod of didactic games. These games were built after the model of the computer games where to go from one level to another is necessary to solve a problem, or to find a specific explanation or information which is the key to access the further level. Thus we considered that it will be stimulated the desire to know, to solve problems, to gain information, allowing access to further action.

Games have been used daily for about an hour and was found from the begining, the children's interest in this type of activity. Often, children show increased impatience forward from one day to another, if the game continues for a period of time.

We have encountered cases where the children went home and tried to read for themselves about the things they encountered in the game, and they asked their parents to get as much information about the objects, beings or phenomena tro which they were confronted in the situations created the teacher. Some even have called to the school library, asking the librarian books related to the situations encountered.

Activities undertaken enjoyed much attention from the children who were involved body and soul in finding any information or correct answers to pass to the next level.

The class IV continued school work normally without working with them to develop intrinsic motivation.

At the end of the two months that we have given the experiment were applied to the children the same questionnaires as in the beginning, in order to make an assessment of the effects of the methods used. The results of the experimental class are shown in Figure 3.
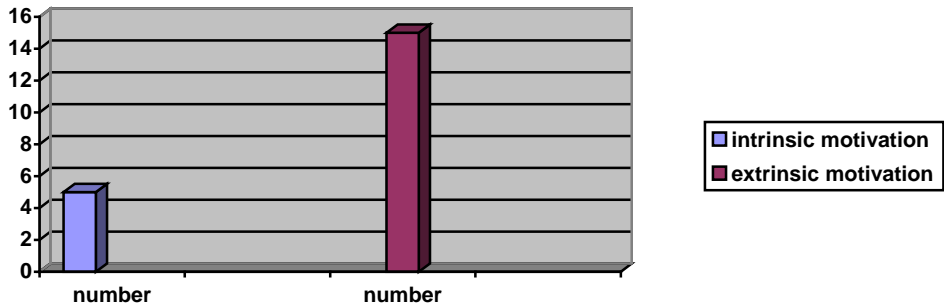
Figure 3. The learning motivation after the experiment to the first class.

We can observe that there is an increased number of children who presents intrisic motivation, after the two month of the experimental methods.

The comparative situation between the beginning and end of the experiment, for the group of children of the class I is shown in Figure 4.
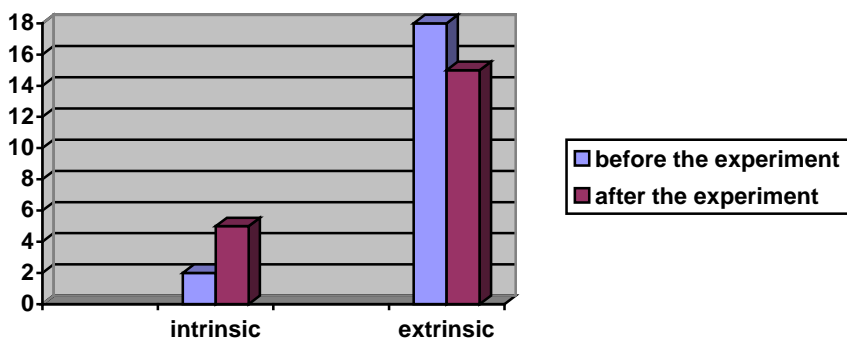
Figure 4. Comparative presentation of learning motivation
before and after the experiment for the children in class I.

It is found that the number of children who are intrinsically motivated for learning increases by 4 and thus decreases with four the number of children who exhibited extrinsic motivation in learning. We believe that the results obtained were satisfactory, since the duration (two months) of the experiment. If we extrapolate, and

such activities would be made permanent, the number of children that would be determined to learn by intrinsic motivation would increase significantly.

During the experiment, we even found some cases very encouraging for the development of children. Those who had found information and solutions, tried to explain to those who had failed to obtain such information or who had blocked the work of solving the task. We believe therefore that the proposed activities not only increased the number of children with intrinsic motivation, but sometimes strengthened and initiated actions to help those left behind, to share information and collaboration.

For the control group, to which was held normal educational process without introducing activities to stimulate intrinsic motivation (kids class IV) we notice a much smaller increase in the number of children with intrinsic motivation (increase only by 1 unit) in the time interval in which the experimental group is provided by the experiment worked. We consider that this increase is only the effect of maturation and normal development of children, without any other influences on the transformation of extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation.

In order to have an overview of the progress of the two classes, and in particular of the effectiveness of the method used, we tried putting them in a single graph (see Table 3 and Figure 5).

Table 3
Synthetic presentation of learning motivation before and after
the experiment in the two classes

	Class I		Class IV	
	before	after	before	after
Intrinsic motivation	2	6	4	5
Extrinsic motivation	18	14	16	15
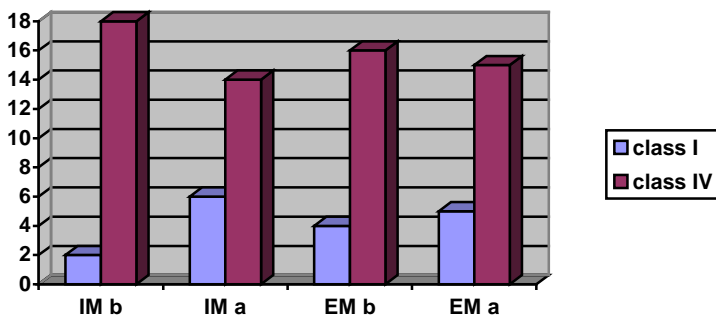
Figure 5. Synthetic presentation of learning motivation before and after
the experiment in the two classes

where: IM b = intrinsic motivation before
       IM a = intrinsic motivation after

EM b = extrinsic motivation before
EM a = extrinsic motivation after

This image is an argument for the utility of the new experimental method introduced in the first class. If at the control group, by developing simple, natural and psycho-biological maturation has been registered a progress by only one unit in the experimental group (which still was lower in age and maturity level of bio-psychic) is an increase of 4 units. This growth allow us to ascribe the method used by us and we state that intrinsic motivation to the young school-children can be improved significantly, resulting in internalization of the reasons for which they want to learn and thus to an improved knowledge process.

Conclusions
Our research showed that there is intrinsic motivation to the children from the primary school and that this motivation can be highlighted in an experimental manner. The use of the didactic games is a method which could lead to better results regarding the improvement of the intrinsic motivation.

In addition, stimulating children's curiosity was achieved net enrichment of their vocabulary, have developed strategies of thought and action that can help them to solve the experimental tasks proposed.

In this way, the hypotheses made by us at the beginning of the research found check in practice and the targets which arose after formulating hypotheses, were fully met.

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A SURVEY OF PSYCHO – EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION STRATEGIES AND STYLES IN EDUCATIONAL CRISIS SITUATIONS

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Abstract: *An investigation offers the opportunity to gather current data, revealing views of teachers, their needs, interests, motivations and aspirations in relation to the optimal management of educational crisis situations. Educators who consider that intervention strategies and styles effectiveness in educational crisis situations is determined by focus on the intervention outcome, show idealized influence at an organizational level, promote intellectual stimulation frequently using situational rewards and monitoring deviations.*

Key words: *problem situations, educational crisis, strategies, intervention styles, reactive, proactive approach.*

1. **Metohdological foundations of the research**

Educational research and managerial approaches have always been linked to the problems generated by situations of educational crisis and their implications in organizational development. Naturally I ask a series of questions, which constitute the objectives of this study:

▪ What is the current significance of the educational crisis?

▪ What is the does proactive mean in effectively managing these situations and understanding the dynamics of school organization / group of students?

▪ How does the quality of intervention strategies and style in problematic situations influence the development of the organizational environment?

▪ How does realizing group processes increase the quality of the educational process and implicitly the management strategies we use?

▪ How can we encourage students to prevent and mediate and solve crisis situations by acting creatively?

The field of this investigation was the stage of knowledge and application of intervention strategies and styles on an educational level, their purpose being of efficiency and effectiveness. Identify how to address problem situations by teachers, is a vital component in the ascertaining study entitled*: Impact of intervention strategies and pedagogical styles in educational crisis situations on personal and organizational development.*

The ascertaining stage has the role of determining the level of knowledge, skills and attitudes of educators regarding the optimal development of the educational environment, by applying effective intervention strategies and styles in crisis

situations, the degree of recognition and self-assessment criteria of managerial effectiveness, at the start of the educational experiment, both for the experimental sample as well as for the control sample. In this stage were administered questionnaires, to subjects in the experimental group and the control group in order to take measures of improvement.

In this regard, we resort to establishing a sample of subjects, also choosing a method of statistical representativeness and a way to connect with teachers from the selected institutions. For the selection of the subjects involved in this questionnaire-based survey, we used the technique of parallel samples (M.Bocoş, 2003) with equivalent properties in terms of teaching staff category-*with management /non-management capacities* (Table 1) and *level of professional development - junior/ final degree/ second degree* (Table 2). 190 teachers from pre-university educational institutions, rural and urban, in Arad, were selected.

Table 1. Sample structure equivalent to the category of personal

Subject sample	Staff category		Total
	Teachers with managerial functions	Teachers with non-managerial functions	
Experimentel group	23	72	95
Control group	24	71	95
No. Of subjects	47	143	190
Percentage	24,74%	75,26%	100%

Table . 2. Sample structure equivalent to the level of professional development

Subject sample	Level of professional development				
	Debutante	Tenured teacher	Second degree teacher	First degree teacher	Total
Experimentel group	16	29	38	12	95
Control group	16	28	39	12	95
No. Of subjects	32	57	77	24	190
Percentage	17,11%	30,27%	40,01%	12,61%	100%

Regarding the content, we mention that we were trying to reveal the following key issues:

▪significance given to psycho - educational intervention strategies and styles by teachers;

▪the extent that educators have the necessary information for implementing effective intervention alternatives in these educational crisis situations; concrete management approach methods;

▪realization of intervention effectiveness and self-assessment of management performance;

▪optimization the training of educators from a transactional and transformational approach perspective of problem situations.

2. Correlation analysis between the dimensions of the investigation survey of management approach styles

A relevant issue in terms of the prediction is the statistically significant relationships between the variables investigated in this research. Therefore, we investigated the relationships between the dimensions of the questionnaire *"Investigating intervention strategies and styles of educational crisis" (ISSISCE)* and its subscales. To determine which relationships are important and what is their purpose, we calculated r Bravais - Pearson correlation coefficients.

Below you can find the correlations between the dimensions of the ISSISCE questionnaire encoded in the table as follows: E1= *reactive intervention strategies and styles;* E2= *proactive intervention strategies and styles*; FH1= *transformational management approach*; FH2= *transactional management approach*; FH3= *passive/ avoidant management approach*; I1= *construction of meanings and perspectives of intervention*; I2= *focus on the outcomes of the intervention* and H= *management performance self-assessment*. In Table 3 the coefficients of correlation between the results obtained for all the dimensions in the pre-test phase of the subjects in both groups are listed (experimental group and control group).

Table 3. Correlations between the dimensions of the ISSISCE questionnaire for results obtained during pretest phase

		E1	E2	FH1	FH2	FH3	I1	I2	H
E1	r	1,000	**,396**	**,238**	**,239**	**,125**	**,178**	**,177**	**,155**
	p	,	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,002**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**
E2	r	,396	1,000	**,185**	**,209**	,034	**,209**	**,129**	**,164**
	p	,000	,	**,000**	**,000**	,404	**,000**	**,002**	**,000**
FH1	r	,238	,185	1,000	**,532**	-,001	**,349**	**,074**	**,163**
	p	,000	,000	,	**,000**	,883	**,000**	**,086**	**,000**
FH2	r	,234	,209	,532	1,000	**,107**	**,258**	**,188**	**,238**
	p	,000	,000	,000	,	**,046**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**
FH3	r	,125	,034	-,001	,107	1,000	**-,095**	**,331**	**-,104**
	p	,002	,404	,883	,014	,	**,027**	**,000**	**,017**
I1	r	,178	,209	,349	,258	-,095	1,000	**-,051**	**,238**
	p	,000	,000	,000	,000	,027	,	,228	**,000**
I2	r	,177	,129	,074	,188	,331	-,051	1,000	,055
	p	,000	,002	,089	,000	,000	,228	,	,190
H	r	,155	,164	,163	,237	-,104	,237	,055	1,000
	p	,000	,000	,000	,000	,017	,000	,190	,

Analyzing the results we noted the following correlations:

▪Strategies and styles of intervention in educational crisis situations oriented reactively correlate positively with all the other dimensions investigated.

▪Psycho-educational intervention strategies and styles proactively oriented correlate positively and significantly with: reactive intervention strategies and styles, transactional management approach, transformational management approach, intervention significance and perspective elaboration, focus on intervention results and management performance self-assessment.

▪Transactional Management Approach in educational crisis situations correlate significantly and positively with: reactive intervention strategies and styles, proactive intervention strategies and styles, transformational managerial approach, intervention significance and perspectives elaboration and management performance self-assessment.

▪The transformational management approach in education crisis situations correlates significantly and positively with all the other investigated dimensions.

▪Passive/hesitant management approach of problematic situations correlates significantly and positively with: reactive intervention strategies and styles, focus on the results of psycho-educational intervention.

▪A passive/hesitant management approach in educational crisis situations negatively correlates with intervention significance and perspectives elaboration, namely management performance self-assessment.

▪Intervention significance and perspectives elaboration correlates significantly and positively with most other dimensions, except for passive/hesitant management approach of problem situations, with which it correlates negatively ($r = -, 095$ $p= .03$) and with focus on intervention results it does not correlate significantly as far as statistics is concerned.

▪Focus on psycho-pedagogical intervention results correlates positively and significantly with most of the other dimensions, except for intervention meanings and perspectives elaboration and management performance self-assessment.

▪Management performance self-assessment significantly and positively correlates with both conceptions regarding intervention strategies and styles in problem situations, transactional and transformational managerial approach as well as intervention significance and perspectives elaboration. Negatively it correlates only with passive/hesitant management approach in educational crisis situations.

Based on these correlations it can be noted that the subjects of this investigation relate to the styles and strategies of intervention in problem situations, as part of a transforming process, dominated by activism and initiative or a process of passive adaptation, focusing on constraints. So, without absolutely adhering to a certain conception of intervention strategies and styles, reactive or proactive, educators, depending on the context, they relate differently to these circumstances. From this perspective, the distinction can be made between subjects that promote a transformational management approach and design intervention strategies and styles both proactive and reactive, by situational adaptation and those who exhibit a passive/hesitant management approach in educational crisis situations, designing intervention strategies and styles just in terms of reactivity.

Teachers who practice a transformational management approach, via intervention strategies and pedagogical styles, develop an educational climate focusing on educational change and innovation, while those who prefer a passive/hesitant management approach in educational crisis situations is not actively involved in solving individual and group problems.

The conception educators have regarding pedagogical strategies and styles of intervention is closely related to management performance self-assessment. If educators get a high score for transformational and transactional approaches, then they

are likely to estimate a higher level of management performance. If educators get higher scores for the passive / hesitant managerial approach in educational crisis situations then subjects will estimate a lower level of management performance. Surprisingly, the correlated study does not highlight the existence of a link between the design educators have on strategies and styles of intervention in problem situations and the exclusive preference for a certain educational environment, which reveals that the impact educational environmental has in this field is reduced.

We calculated the correlation coefficients between the subscales of the ISSISCE questionnaire, to study the relationships between the investigated aspects (Table 4). There were statistically significant correlations at a threshold of $p < .01$ for *reactive intervention strategies and styles* (E1) and *proactive intervention strategies and styles* (E2) with the following scales*: intervention significance and perspectives elaboration* (I1); *focus on the results of the intervention* (I2); *management performance self-assessment* (H).

Table 4. The correlation coefficients between scales of conception regarding intervention strategies and styles in educational crisis situations and managerial efficiency, i.e. management performance self-assessment

		E1	E2	I1	I2	H
E1	r	1,000	,396	,178	,177	,155
	p	,	,000	,000	,000	,000
E2	r	,396	1,000	,209	,129	,164
	p	,000	,	,000	,001	,000

Between the two concepts on pedagogical intervention strategies and styles there is a positive correlation, which indicates that teachers view them as not being dichotomous. A higher score for designing proactive intervention strategies and styles increases the scores for designing reactive intervention strategies and styles. Educators agreeing with the statements concerning the design of intervention strategies and styles in educational crisis situations is reflected in their expectations regarding improved efficiency and management performance. The higher the level of agreement between educators in relation to statements in the questionnaire aimed at the designing of pedagogical intervention strategies and styles, the higher the anticipated level of management performance.

Next we shall present the ISSISCE questionnaire subscales coding, as follows: v= *age*; *for the transformational managerial approach*: F1= *idealized influence*; F2= *inspirational motivation*; F3= *intellectual stimulation*; F4= *individual assessment*; *for the transactional managerial approach*: F5= *circumstantial rewards*; F6= *proactive involvement*; F7= *developing strategic practices*; F8= *monitoring violations*; F9= *performance evaluation*; *for the passive/hesitant managerial approach*: F10= *passive adaptation*; Fll= *responsibility and action taking avoidance*; F12= *no systematic reaction to problem situations*; F13= *perception inertia*.

Table 5. The correlation coefficients between conception scales of intervention psycho- pedagogical strategies and styles and managerial approach

		v	**F1**	**F2**	**F3**	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12	F13
E1	r	-,001	**,214**	**,229**	**,157**	**,110**	**,224**	**,165**	**,183**	**,144**	**,189**	**,097**	**,120**	,063	**,095**
	p	,851	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,012**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,001**	**,000**	**,025**	**,005**	,145	**,027**
E2	r	-,014	**,175**	**,204**	**,125**	,050	**,264**	**,136**	**,151**	**,121**	**,122**	,000	**,106**	,015	-,012
	p	,698	**,000**	**,000**	**,002**	,237	**,000**	**,001**	**,001**	**,003**	**,003**	,897	**,015**	,670	,718

Statistically significant correlations are observed at a threshold of p <.05 between the dimension scales *educators' outlook on psycho-pedagogical intervention strategies and styles* and all the scales referring to *managerial approach*, except for the subscale related to *the lack of systematic response to problem situations* (Table 5). Increased adherence to the designing of reactive psycho - pedagogical intervention strategies and styles determines an increase in scores for all subscales of transformational and transactional management approach. Designing reactive intervention strategies and styles causes lack of systematic response to problem situations.

An increase in scores is recorded for designing *proactive intervention strategies and styles in educational crisis situations* (E2), which determines a change in scores concerning the subscales of *managerial approach*, except for the following subscales: *individual assessment* (F4), *passive adaptation* (F10) and *lack of systematic response to problem situations* (F 12).

Table 6. The correlation coefficients between the scales regarding the methods of management approach in educational crisis situations

		v	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12	F13
F1	r	,001	1,00	**,372**	**,412**	**,257**	**,275**	**,292**	**,264**	**,304**	**,290**	,021	**,109**	,073	,035
	p	,844	,	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	,579	**,012**	,088	,392
F2	r	**,140**	,372	1,000	**,451**	**,336**	**,239**	**,322**	**,173**	**,305**	**,318**	**,105**	,034	-,001	,050
	p	**,001**	,000	,	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,015**	,409	,888	,231
F3	r	,061	,412	,451	1,000	**,409**	**,337**	**,394**	**,161**	**,537**	**,385**	**-,110**	-,079	-,065	,059
	p	,165	,000	,000	,	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,012**	,068	,127	,165
F4	r	**,104**	,241	,336	,409	1,000	**,253**	**,259**	**,219**	**,382**	**,360**	-,086	-,075	-,053	,035
	p	**,018**	,000	,000	,000	,	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	,047	,082	,212	,390
F5	r	**,093**	,275	,239	,337	,253	1,000	**,563**	**,371**	**,412**	**,445**	**,072**	**,172**	-,027	,058
	p	**,031**	,000	,000	,000	,000	,	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,090**	**,000**	,495	,169
F6	r	,045	,292	,290	,394	,259	,563	1,000	**,364**	**,490**	**,416**	**-,089**	**,147**	-,015	,072
	p	,280	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,041**	**,001**	,664	,096
F7	r	**-,094**	,265	,173	,161	,219	,371	,364	1,00	**,227**	**,380**	**-,164**	**,325**	**,341**	**,187**
	p	**,031**	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**
F8	r	,013	,304	,332	,537	,382	,412	,490	,227	1,000	**,489**	**,158**	,020	-,032	,006
	p	,699	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,	**,000**	**,000**	,616	,427	,778
F9	r	,074	,290	,318	,385	,360	,445	,416	,380	,489	1,000	**,122**	,055	**,090**	**,087**
	p	,085	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,	**,005**	,193	**,040**	**,044**
F10	r	**-,005**	,021	,105	-,110	-,086	-,072	-,089	,164	-,158	-,122	1,000	**,411**	**,457**	**,309**
	p	,795	,579	,015	,012	,047	,090	,041	,000	,000	,004	,	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**
F11	r	**-,081**	,109	,034	-,079	-,075	,172	,147	,325	,001	,055	,411	1,000	**,421**	**,400**
	p	,061	,012	,409	,068	,082	,000	,001	,000	,583	,193	,000	,	**,000**	**,000**
F12	r	**-,108**	,073	-,001	-,065	-,053	-,027	-,015	,341	-,032	,090	,457	,421	1,000	**,353**
	p	**,013**	,088	,888	,127	,212	,495	,664	,000	,427	,040	,000	,000	,	**,000**
F13	r	**-,034**	,035	-,050	,059	,035	,058	,072	,187	-,006	,087	,309	,400	,353	1,00
	p	,405	,392	,231	,165	,390	,169	,096	,000	,778	,044	,000	,000	,000	,

The correlation coefficients between scales aiming at the methods of management approaches in educational crisis situations are presented in Table 6. The following can be observed:

- There are significant correlations at a threshold of p <.05 between scales referring to methods of management approach of problem situations, correlation coefficients values being between 0.087 (at threshold of p = .044) for the correlation between perception inertia and management performance evaluation and 0.490 (at a threshold of p = .000) for correlation between proactive involvement and monitoring violations scales.

- There are significant positive correlations between the age of subjects and inspirational motivation, individual assessment and circumstantial rewards respectively.

- There are significant negative correlations between the age of subjects and the development of strategic practices, lack of systematic response to problem situations and focus on the results of the intervention.

These findings lead us to consider that the component subscales referring to scale management approach in educational crisis situations influence each other (eg. changing the value of the subscale *idealized influence* (F1) has influence on the value of the other subscales included in *the transformational managerial approach* (FH1) and *the transactional managerial approach* (FH2).

In this regard, it can be noted that transformational management approach in educational crisis centered on idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individual assessment is made more effective by developing strategic practices through proactive involvement, monitoring violations and evaluation of psycho-pedagogical intervention performance. As the subjects' age increases, there is a decrease in the values regarding the lack of response to problem situations and passive/hesitant management approach. As the subjects' age increases, there is a higher level of anticipatory involvement efficiency, and of management approach focusing on the inspirational motivation and individual assessment.

There is a negative correlation between *idealized influence* and *responsibility and action taking avoidance in educational crisis situations*, the greater the subject's preference for idealized influence the lower the wish to avoid taking responsibility and action. Between *the inspirational motivation* (F2) and *individual assessment* (F4) variables there is a significant influence in the sense that increasing interest of educators towards proactive educational intervention styles and strategies, greater importance is given to assessing the interests and potential of each member of the organization. Educators' efforts to stimulate intellectually their educational partners is correlated with a decrease in their interest in relation to monitoring and sanctioning violations.

Subscales related to circumstantial rewards, proactive involvement, monitoring and evaluation of deviations intervention performance assessment correlates with individual assessment and idealized influence. Higher scores for the development of strategic practices (F7) variable are correlated with a decrease in the passive adaptation to new problems manifested in educational contexts.

Educators' concern to improve pedagogical intervention, using circumstantial rewards if obtaining early performances, is associated with a significantly higher level in terms of avoiding accountability and action. Focusing on the results of the intervention, on the process of individual performance evaluation is associated with a lack of systematic response to problem situations and a certain inertia of perception. Even if educators frequently use deviation monitoring strategies and the intervention performance evaluation at individual and organizational level, it can be noted that they exhibit a certain inertia of perception regarding educational crisis and do not react systematically to solve problems efficiently. In this case we can say that these people are marked by a certain fear of the unknown, which generates a sense of restlessness, because the awareness of their own managerial shortcomings.

Below we present the correlation between intervention strategies and styles effectiveness in educational crisis situations, achieved either by focusing on the outcomes of the intervention, or by constructing meanings and perspectives of action and management approach scales (Table 7).

Table 7. The correlation coefficients between the scales referring to management approach in educational crisis situations, managerial efficiency and intervention performance self-assessment

		v	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11	F12	F13
I1	r	,005	**,290**	**,286**	**,279**	**,194**	**,251**	**,241**	**,088**	**,201**	**,202**	-,064	-,043	-,083	**-,099**
	p	,853	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,044**	**,000**	**,000**	,130	,299	,055	**,023**
I2	r	**-,095**	**,093**	,044	**,115**	-,024	**,124**	**,149**	**,205**	**,147**	,081	**,239**	**,318**	**,230**	**,220**
	p	,005	**,033**	,292	**,007**	,537	**,003**	**,001**	**,000**	**,001**	,061	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**	**,000**
H	r	,853	**,202**	**,122**	**,133**	,038	**,228**	**,113**	**,149**	**,232**	**,196**	-,067	-,001	**-,103**	**-,140**
	p	**-,095**	**,000**	**,003**	**,003**	,356	**,000**	**,009**	**,001**	**,000**	**,000**	,120	,876	**,010**	**,001**

Effectiveness of intervention strategies and styles in educational crisis situations achieved by constructing meanings and perspectives of action correlate positively and significantly with the scales included in the transformational management approach dimension, and the transactional managerial approach dimension respectively. For a passive / hesitant managerial approach in educational crisis situations, we have a significant and negative correlation between the construction of meanings and perspectives of action and perception inertia (r = -0.099 p =. 023). Subjects who are preoccupied about giving a new meaning to problem situations and creating new learning opportunities generated by these, obtain high scores in the transformational managerial approach dimension, and the transactional management approach in educational crisis situations dimension respectively and show no perception inertia.

Effectiveness of intervention strategies and styles in educational crisis situations obtained by focusing on intervention results significantly and positively correlates with the following aspects of transformational and transactional management approach: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, situational rewards, proactive involvement, developing strategic practices, monitoring

deviations. There are significant positive correlations between focusing on results and all the scales belonging to the passive/ hesitant management approach of problem situations.

A significant negative correlation can be noticed between intervention strategies and pedagogical styles effectiveness in educational crisis situations achieved by focusing on results and the age of the subjects, which indicates that the more advanced the age of the subjects the more they exhibit an attitude of rejection towards intervention strategies and styles centered excessively on tasks and results.

Based on the correlated study we can conclude that subjects which exhibit a passive/hesitant management approach in educational crisis situations relate to intervention strategies and styles by effectiveness focusing on tasks and outcomes, while subjects who use a transformational and transactional management approach are less influenced by excessive focus on the results of the intervention.

Next we shall analyze the correlations between management performance self-assessment and the scales involving management approach methods in educational crisis situations. It is noted that self-assessment correlates significantly and positively (at a threshold of $p < .01$) with all the scales involving transformational and transactional management approaches, except for individual appreciation. Expected managerial performance is higher once subjects start preferring transactional and transformational managerial approaches in these problem situations. Individual assessment is not reflected in management performance. Significant negative correlations are recorded between management performance self-assessment and lack of systematic response to problem situations, namely perception inertia. The more the subjects anticipate a higher level in terms of management performance, the more systematically they react to solve problems.

3. Conclusions

Relevance of the information obtained and the impact of changes caused in relation to the studied phenomenon largely depend on locating the research in real school life. While conducting the study different methods and tools were used for data collection, both qualitative (interviews and focus groups) and quantitative (questionnaire) that were made during visits to all schools in the sample group.

Statistical processing and interpretation of the obtained data after using the methods and tools of investigation, analyzing descriptive results and inferential processing may cause a reconfiguration in the experimental design, and the selection of new formative methods and tools.

Consequently, the active and creative involvement of educators and learners in interactional processes, but above all in psycho - educational intervention, in order to adapt and change, become necessary conditions prior to achieving educational aspirations. The group of students which develops an effective social organization, characterized by transactional and transformational management strategies and styles, a division of tasks and delegation of responsibilities, information and communication systems, shall show an adaptive advantage in the organizational and social environment.

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PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE. ARE TEACHERS READY TO GIVE UP THE PAST?

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Abstract: *From times immemorial, the teaching and learning of foreign languages has been under the attention of scholars from all over the world. Firstly, Greek and Latin were seen as foreign languages that needed to be learnt if one wanted to be literate and educated. Further on, especially in Latin countries, French replaced Greek and Latin. The methods of acquiring the foreign language have also changed. Nowadays, English has become the lingua franca of our generation. But unlike Greek and Latin which were learnt to enable one to read classic masterpieces in the original, English is learnt for communication purposes. Thus, the methods of teaching a foreign language have been subject to tremendous changes, especially in the 20th century. One method replaced the other, each one was considered better than the previous one and teachers changed their way of teaching according to the latest research and tradition in the field of methodology. But the question that arises is whether this actually happens in the classroom too. Do teachers teach according to one method or is their manner of teaching a mixture of different teaching approaches? In our study, we want to prove that a foreign language teaching is an excursion into the history of foreign language teaching.*

Keywords: *second language teaching, teaching approaches, methods, skills.*

Introduction

The methodology of foreign language teaching has been subject to many changes especially in the 20th century when emphasis was laid on teaching foreign languages. In this study we will focus on teaching English as a second language but the approaches can be applied to other foreign languages, too.

Teaching sciences like Mathematics, Chemistry or Physics has been using almost the same methods since the beginning of the previous century. Methodologists and teachers have inserted elements of novelty in the process of teaching but the approach is mainly the same. In teaching foreign languages, old methods have been replaced by new one, as the direction and the purpose of learning a foreign language have changed.

We want to list some of the main approaches in teaching English as a second language and the direction set by them in the process of teaching. These are only some of the approaches used in TEFL and they have not been chosen randomly but according to the influence they had on language teaching in our country.

- The grammar-translation method

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- The Direct Method
- The audio-lingual method
- The Communicative Approach
- The Lexical Approach

The purpose of our study is to determine the extent to which teachers of English from the County of Arad are familiar with traditional and modern techniques of teaching English as a second language and to determine whether they use only one approach of TEFL in their lessons or the historical perspective on the topic plays an important role. We have questioned a number of 50 teachers from primary, secondary and high schools from Arad while working on this article. They had to answer a number of limited questions which we considered relevant for our study [1].

1. How often do you use technology in your classroom?
2. Do you consider your manner of teaching rather traditional or rather modern?
3. What approach to TEFL do you consider the most effective?
4. What techniques used in TEFL are you familiar with? Which ones do you also use when teaching?
5. Do you see a TEFL classroom exclusively based on one approach? If not, name a combination of three approaches that you base your lesson on.

The results of our questionnaire will be revealed later on in our article. At this point, we want to show the answers provided by teachers of English for questions 1 and 2.
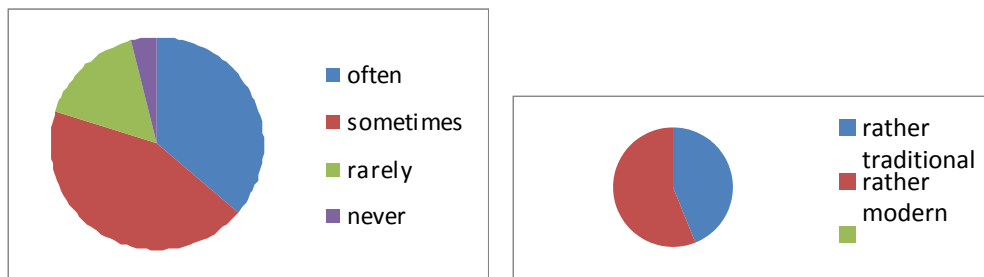

Fig. 1. Results for question no 1 and no 2

As revealed by the charts above, most teachers consider their manner of teaching rather modern and make use of technology in their classroom. But will the answers to the following three questions validate or invalidate these two charts?

2. Some approaches to TEFL

As already mentioned above, we have chosen some approaches to TEFL that we consider relevant for English teaching in our country. Based on discussions we had with teachers of English about the way they design their lessons, we focused our attention on the aspects presented below.

Linguists and teachers of didactics have developed and put into practice several methods/approaches to foreign language teaching throughout the 20th and the 21st century. Some of them were simultaneous, some followed one after the other, but each

one tried to prove that the previous was not very effective and that the new one brings a new perspective on foreign language teaching.

2.1. The grammar-translation method

This method was mainly used for teaching "classical" languages like Greek and Latin. In the 19th century it started being used also in teaching foreign languages and despite its shortcomings it is still used in some textbooks and by some teachers.

As the name itself reveals, this method is based mainly on the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary and on the development of translation skills. The GTM emphasizes the superiority of written language over the spoken one, as it develops reading and writing, which are considered the main skills. Thus, learners cope quite well with the written message, they understand what is transmitted but when it comes to understanding an oral message or to face-to-face interaction they lack the necessary skills. Successful learners are considered those who can translate from one language into the other though they cannot communicate orally.

Another principle of GTM is the authoritarian role of the teacher. The only type of classroom interaction is teacher-student and criticism, irony and even physical punishment are quite common. Students have to learn grammar rules, which they acquire deductively, verb conjugations and lists of bilingual vocabulary. The mother tongue is the main medium of instruction and it is also used to compare structures in the foreign language.

A typical grammar-translation lesson goes along the following steps [2]:
- the teacher model reads the text
- students take turn in reading the text, while the teacher corrects every mispronunciation
- new words are written on the blackboard and in the students` notebooks
- students have to memorize these words
- the teacher presents grammar in a *deductive* manner
- the text is translated into the mother tongue

The activities common for GTM are:
- re-telling the story
- literary analysis of the text (description of plot and message, character portrayal)
- reading comprehension questions about the text
- synonyms and antonyms search
- fill-in the blanks exercises
- literary essays, translations and composition writing on a given topic.

2.2. The Direct Method

The Direct Method was developed by Maximilian Berlitz towards the end of the 19th century as a reaction to the Grammar-Translation Method. Its main objective is to teach students how to communicate in a foreign language. The method is called *direct* because meaning should be connected directly with the target language without translation into the mother tongue. The Direct method aims to provide students with a

practical, useful knowledge of the language and its theoreticians believe that knowing a language means being able to speak it.

Berlitz states that mother tongue should no longer be used in foreign language teaching because [3]

• there is no word for word translation

• someone who learns a foreign language by means of translation cannot get accustomed to think in it, therefore his speech will always be artificial

• idiomatic expressions and language peculiarities cannot be understood by means of translation and they often carry different meaning.

All four skills are practiced when teaching with this method. The teacher uses techniques such as:

• conversation

• reading aloud

• question/answer exercises

• self-correction exercises

• conversation practice

• fill-in the blanks exercises

• dictation

The principles that govern the Direct Method are [4]:

• explanations are given only in the target language and the teacher demonstrates what s/he wants to say. S/he never translates into the mother tongue;

• the vocabulary that should be taught is connected to everyday life;

• grammar rules are not given by the teacher. The students discover them inductively.

• much emphasis is laid on oral interaction, correct pronunciation and grammar;

• vocabulary is taught through already known words, demonstration, authentic objects (realia), pictures and mime;

• the listening and speaking skills are developed;

• self-correction plays an important role in teaching;

• the syllabus is designed based on situations and topics not on linguistic structures (i.e. contextual teaching);

• the purpose of learning is communication, therefore students learn how to ask and answer questions.

As compared to GTM where the teacher`s role is not very active because s/he just translates words or corrects errors, the Direct Method teacher asks questions to the students, encourages them to participate in class, to interact with other classmates and corrects their mistakes immediately. The type of interaction used in the classroom is teacher-student, but also student-student.

As an evaluation technique, the Direct Method uses self-assessment very often. There is no formal evaluation, because it is replaced by interviews and written texts.

2.3. The audio-lingual method

The audio-lingual method was developed in the 1950s – 1960s in the USA. Its main aim was to teach students how to use language communicatively but in an automatic way. They should develop language patterns and use them in communication.

The main supporter of the audio-lingual method was J. Skinner, who believed that foreign language learning is a process of habit formation through the acquisition of specific language skills. He stated that complex language skills should be broken down into language habits and that the language be introduced in the form of language patterns and structures. Therefore, the vocabulary and grammar are introduced in the form of *situational dialogues* (*At the dentist. At the airport, At school,* etc.) that are first read by the teacher or listened to on an electronic device. Then the students read the dialogue and eventually it is learnt by heart through repetition and imitation. Later on, some lines are put into slightly different contexts. The method introduced the usage of CDs and cassettes in the classroom, as well as the development of language labs. Grammar is taught inductively.

The techniques used by this method are:
- dialogues
- role plays
- pattern drill exercises
- fill-in the blanks
- tick the correct answer
- grammar and vocabulary exercises (change of a sentence pattern into another, to change affirmative sentences into negative, to transform active into passive, direct speech into reported speech)

There are assigned a limited number of written exercises and the explanations are given in the target language. The teacher is a model of pronunciation and s/he corrects the students` mistakes immediately to prevent bad habit formation.

2.4. The Communicative Approach

In the late 1960s it became clear that the audio-lingual method with its drills could not produce good communicators. Learning a foreign language is not only about memorizing words and structures, but it should be about developing fluency in students/learners. Therefore, the main objective of the communicative approach is the students` fluency. Stress is also laid on „real" communication [5]. So, the teacher sets up real-life situations which unlike the situations in the audio-lingual approach leave students in suspense as to the outcome of an exercise. All four skills are developed when teaching with this approach. Grammar is also regarded as important, but the rules are no longer so important. Grammar is learnt through practice. The students` mother tongue is used in the classroom whenever explanations in the target language are too time consuming and the teacher uses all sorts of modern techniques like: conversation, debates, role plays, written communicative activities, drama, etc.

Johnson [6] and Larsen Freeman [7] list some activities based on the communicative approach:

• *the information transfer principle* which refers to the ability to understand and produce language. The activities can be: write some purposeful notes from a listening comprehension, write sentences from diagrams, give a personal opinion about some pictures

• *the information gap principle* takes account of the different levels of information between people when communicating. The teacher can use activities such as: students have different pieces of information and have to exchange them through questions and answers, which involves negotiation.

• *the use of authentic material* i.e. the learner has to face language as it is

• *join scrambled sentences* or a conversation, a picture story) into the original order

• *language games*

• *role plays*

• *problem solving activities*

The teacher is the facilitator and the manager of students` activity but also their partner, the interaction taking place mostly between students. Another novelty introduced by the Communicative Approach is the usage of authentic materials. Authentic materials are newspaper and magazine articles, posters, flyers, leaflets, brochures, mostly everything connected to English spoken in real-life situations.

The Communicative Approach brought about changes in the *textbooks* and the *curriculum* for English language teaching. The textbook were restructured, they contain authentic texts with emphasis on communication. The textbook no longer provides one text for one lesson which should be learnt; they offer several texts centred on the same topic. Thus, the textbook is no longer "The Bible" of teaching, but the curriculum. The textbook only offers a framework for different activities. There are several textbook for each level and the teacher can choose the one that s/he considers suitable for his/her students. As the curriculum has changed, the new, communicative textbook contain units built around the same idea or language function, therefore the units don`t have to be taught in the given order. The teacher has to take into consideration the curriculum objectives, not the sequence of the lessons. Each successive textbook takes up almost the same linguistic/ functional material at a higher level. That is the reason why topics like Clothing, Food, Holidays and Travel, etc. come up every year but with a more complex vocabulary and structures.

As far as the errors are concerned, they are tolerated in communicative activities, when fluency is the aim of the activity and not the accuracy. Evaluation is both oral and written.

Like all teaching approaches, the Communicative approach faced some criticism like too much emphasis in early stages on speaking and listening to the detriment of reading and writing or the acquisition of bad linguistic habits because grammar is only rarely explained and practiced.

2.5. The Lexical Approach

The Lexical Approach was first described by M. Lewis in the 1990s [8]. The LA promotes the idea that the development of students` proficiency should be acquired through lexis (i.e. words, word chunks). Under the notion *lexis* we should understand:

- lexical chunks: *to make a long story short, in my opinion, at the end of a day*, etc.
- collocations: *do the hair, do the cooking, do the homework,* etc.
- idioms: *dead drunk, make toes curl,* etc.
- similes: *as blind as a bat, as hungry as a wolf*, etc.
- connectives: *finally, to conclude,* etc.
- a conversational gambit: *Guess what, How are you*, etc.

The main objective of the Lexical Approach is to develop a syllabus based on lexical rather than grammar principles.

The course materials used are: course packages, collections of vocabulary teaching activities, print-out versions of computer corpora in text format, computer concordance programmes.

The activities that a LA class consists of are: extensive and intensive reading and listening activities, repetition and recycling of activities, guessing the meaning of vocabulary items from the context, working with dictionaries and other reference tools, translation activities carried out chunk-for-chuck rather than word-for-word. The textbooks in use at this moment, in our country can be adapted to the LA approach. The teacher can re-examine them for collocations and add extra exercises. The teacher can also develop activities where students can discover collocations in the classroom or as homework.

3. Results and discussions

In the section above we have shown the most important characteristics of the approaches used by the teachers of Arad. The selection has been made based on the answers to question no 3 from the initial questionnaire. The results are the following:
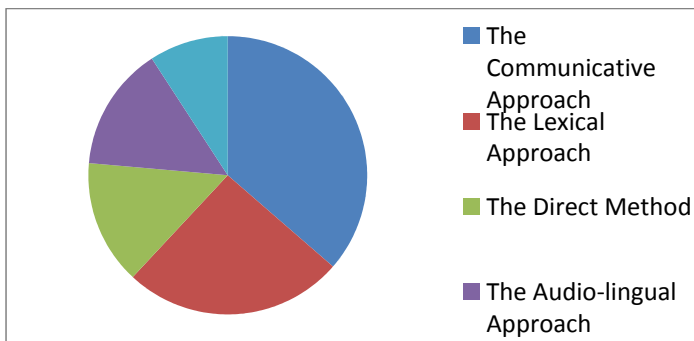

Fig. 2. Approaches used by teachers

As seen from the chart above, not all teachers consider the modern approaches to TEFL the best ones. There are also teachers who use the GTM or the Direct Method. Though most teachers regard the Communicative Approach as the most effective and

admit using it as a starting point and the main approach for their lessons, they also acknowledge using other approaches throughout their lessons, such as the GTM. They translate most of the texts or unknown words into the students 'mother tongue, they use pattern-drill exercises or fill-in the blank type of exercises (Audio-lingual Method) and they teach idioms, collocations or lexical chunks (Lexical Approach).

Therefore, we asked the teachers to refer to the manner they teach a reading comprehension lesson. The chosen text is *The first white man in the kingdom of Buganda* [9], a text for upper-intermediate/advanced students. After discussing with the teachers we have drown the conclusion that most of them would use as a *warmer* the conversation technique, where students would answer and discuss on some questions related to the topic. In the end they could draw a mind-map on the topic of *Adventures/discoveries.* As we can see from the teachers` preferences, most of them use techniques specific for the Direct Method (conversation, speaking activities) but also for the Communicative Approach (mind-map technique, giving personal opinion on the subject). Then, students are divided into groups and asked to solve a quiz. This is a technique common in the Communicative Approach (quizzes and group work as type of interaction).

The teachers agreed that cutting the text into paragraphs would be a good opportunity to develop the students` reading skills. Therefore, in groups, students are asked to join the scrambled text into the full text. This technique is used in the Communicative Approach lessons; just like the preference for authentic materials (the text used for these activities is an authentic text, not a piece of literary work). After solving this task, students take turns in reading the text (Grammar-Translation Method technique), the teacher translates the new words into the mother tongue and writes the words on the blackboard (GTM). This stage is followed by vocabulary exercises. Most teachers use the matching type of exercises (word and its synonym), fill-in the blanks exercises and Q/A exercises. These types are common for the Direct Method but also for the Lexical Approach, it only depends on the manner they are designed and the vocabulary they practice. In the end of the lesson, most teachers would use a *role play*, technique developed by the Audio-Lingual Method.

For homework, most teachers said they would ask their students to re-tell the story using the new vocabulary (GTM).

As seen from the answers provided by the 50 teachers that answered our questions, none of them uses just one method of teaching. Their lessons are a blend of different methods and the teacher choses the techniques that s/he considers useful for his teaching act. As for as the techniques are concerned, teachers use both traditional and modern techniques like: brainstorming, role-play, jigsaw, explanation, project, mind-map, demonstration, etc. We have made a chart with the techniques most frequently used by English teachers of Arad and we will see that traditional techniques still play a very important role in teaching. We do not consider them as old-fashioned, but we would recommend a moderate usage because the modern/ interactive techniques develop the students speaking and listening skills, favour communication and nowadays that is the most important purpose of learning a foreign language.

Below, we have summed-up the teachers` answers to questions no 4 and 5, related to the techniques they like to use when teaching and to the combination of approaches they use in their lessons.
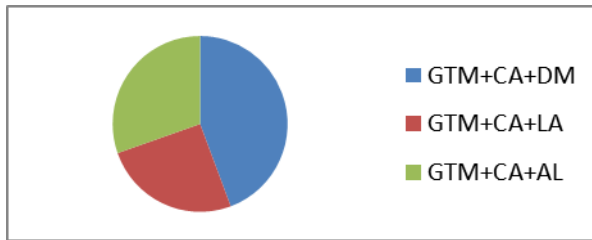

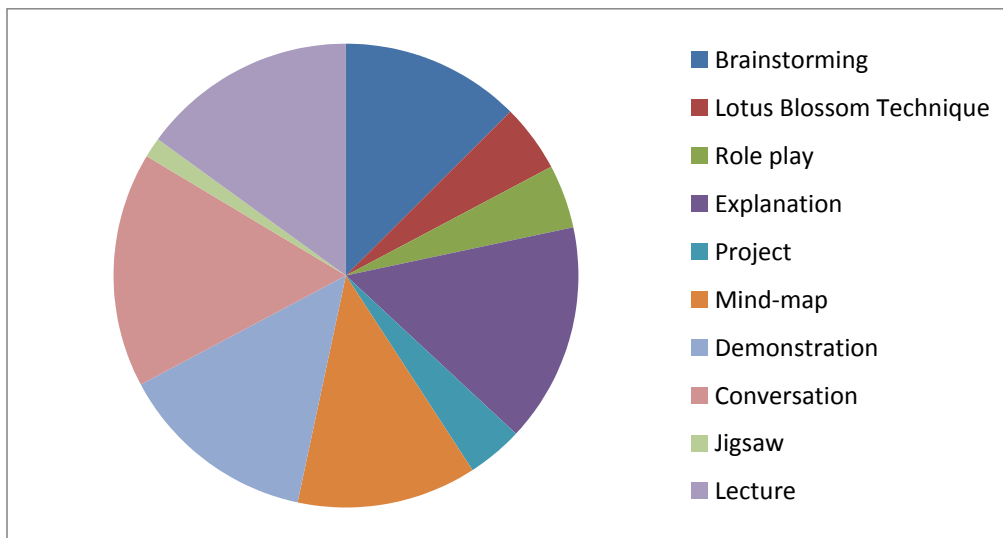Fig. 3. Results for question no 5 (approaches used for teaching)

Fig. 4. Results for question no 4 (Techniques used for teaching)

4. Conclusions

The purpose of our study was too see whether teachers still use traditional techniques when teaching English and if they make use of only one approach in their lessons or they blend several approaches. We have noticed that they combine what they consider useful from different approaches. A fact worth mentioning is the usage of the Communicative approach but also of the GTM by all teachers. The explanation can be given by the curricula and the textbook the teachers use. The textbooks are designed on the principles of the CA, they provide suggestions for teachers and additional material and therefore all teachers use this approach in their lessons. As far as the GTM is concerned, our teachers are used to translate almost everything into the students` mother tongue because they have been taught this way and maybe because it is handier for all. In our opinion, if the objectives are reached, teachers can blend approaches as they consider it useful for their learners.

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The second issue under research were the techniques used when teaching. Unfortunately, teachers still prefer traditional techniques like conversation, lecture, demonstration, explanation etc. As Roman and Balas [10] as well as Kelemen G. [11] state there are many teachers who prefer frontal teaching methods because they say that the curriculum is too dense to use modern methods which are time consuming. These teachers see their students as empty pots that need to be filled with ready-made information and do not take into account the fact that children can learn from each other. The results of Fig. 4 reveal the teachers` preference for traditional techniques but show also that there are some teachers that use interactive techniques when teaching. In our opinion it is important to let go of the past and only use traditional techniques when necessary (there are situations when they should be used) because learning a foreign language should be an active, interactive and challenging process, not a boring acquisition of words, phrases and skills. Teachers should get used to these techniques step by step and try to familiarize their students with interactive lessons, group work and debates in a foreign language.

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STUDY TYPE DETERMINANTS DEVIANT BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS IN TEENAGERS FROM DIFFERENT RESIDENTIAL AREAS

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Abstract*: Due to their physical and emotional fragility, teenagers are the first victims of disorders comportment (Cucu, 1979). To be prevented and recovered disorders comportment, consider an analysis of the causes that favored the installation and their expression. Can be taken for prevention and intervention (Modrea, 2006).*

This paper aims to study the risk factors that can lead to deviant behavior disorder type repercussions on the further development of these teenagers (Dragomirescu, 1976). If modeling personality, normal adolescent behavior is a complex problem intractable, the more difficult is the problem of influencing adolescent disorders comportment that abnormalities in the sphere of knowledge (Șchiopu, 1979). Teenagers with conduct disorder through social and educational - formative influences, can form positive character traits to dominate over the negative ones, their dominance leading to a balanced personality harmonious (Gavrilă, Gavrilă, 2010).

Keywords: *teenagers, deviant behavior disorder type, gender, residential areas.*

Research Objectives

Objective: To study aims to establish the relationship between targets adolescents, gender and environment background.

Specific objectives:

1. Setting goals hierarchy of adolescent life.

2. Determination of differences in life goals of adolescent girls and boys.

3. Determination of differences in adolescents according to the objectives of origin urban areas / country areas.

Research hypotheses

1. First places in the hierarchy of objectives values of adolescents are occupied by education, relationships with others and autonomy.

2. Significant differences between girls and boys on targets teenagers.

3. There are significant differences by area of origin teenagers from urban / rural areas the importance of the objectives.

4. Actions to achieve the objectives are relevant for urban adolescents compared to those in countryside.

5. No significant differences between boys and girls in seriousness actions to achieve the objectives.

The study

The study was conducted with 60 subjects teenagers, high school in the 11th grade of high school, two high schools in Arad (a class in the city of Arad, and a class in a village in the county of Arad). They were aged 17 to 18 years, with a mean age = 17.21 standard deviation = 0.4155. Among them 33 are boys and 27 girls. Regarding the background: 29 students from urban areas and 31 in the country.

The research methodology

For this study we used the following tests:

1. The scale targets adolescents (Importance of Goals Scale);
2. The scale goals preferably pairs (Paired - comparisons Survey);
3. Questionnaire actions to achieve the goals (Say-Say Correspondence Survey).

Instruments (questionnaires) were completed study of teenagers in the classroom during school hours, at the tutorial. Were given the same instructions and whenever was needed.

The research results

For the first case we study ascertaining to have a comparative study hypotheses 2-5. For hypotheses 2 and 5, the independent variable is the self teenagers (boys and girls). The dependent variables are the hierarchy of objectives (hypothesis 2) and seriousness of actions to achieve goals (hypothesis 5). For hypotheses 3 and 4, the independent variable is the area of origin (rural or urban). The dependent variables are the hierarchy of objectives (hypothesis 3) and actions taken to achieve reliability goals (hypothesis 4).

Hypothesis 1. First places in the hierarchy of objectives teenagers are occupied by education, relationships with others and autonomy.

The data were selected from the responses of subjects to the scale preferably pairs goals. Preferences were collected for each category of goals and was performed for each subject hierarchy of goals. Each category of targets received, for each subject, a rank of 1-7.

Table 1 presents synthesizing feedback from subjects in our sample: tier 1 representing the most important objective, and rank 7 - least important objective.

Table 1. Summarize the importance of teenagers give goals

Rank	Synthesis subjects chose a certain rank for each objective						
	Human	Career	Freedom	Education	Reputation	Physical	Personal
1	35.0	31.7	23.3	10.0	6.7	3.3	10.0
2	23.3	28.3	26.7	3.3	11.7	6.7	1.7
3	21.7	15.0	21.7	1.7	10.0	20.0	3.3
4	6.7	15.0	20.0	15.0	16.7	8.3	8.3
5	6.7	10.0	3.3	18.3	36.7	18.3	10.0
6	5.0	0	5.0	26.7	16.7	21.7	13.3
7	1.7	0	0	15.0	1.7	21.7	53.3

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To strengthen the above data, we conducted chi sqare operation for each class of objectives. The results clearly show that, for each variable, there are statistically significant differences between responses (rank from processing of subjects can be seen in Table 1). The distribution of choice ranks for each of the seven categories of objectives is not equal, but different weights chosen subjects these ranks. Table 2 shows the values of chi sqare and their statistical significance.

Table 2. Comparing surgery election weight ranks for each category of objectives

Category targets		Chi sqare	p
1	Objectives human	38.933	.000
2	Objectives relating to career	10.667	.031
3	Objectives relating to freedom and autonomy	17.800	.003
4	Objectives relating to education	13.267	.039
5	Objectives related to reputation	31.700	.000
6	Objectives relating to the physical condition	15.600	.016
7	Personal goals	78.833	.000

From the choice of subject is observed that a hierarchy of objectives as follows adolescents (Table 3).

Table 3. The hierarchy of objectives teenagers

	Hierarchy of Objectives
1	Objectives human
2	Objectives relating to career
3	Objectives relating to freedom and autonomy
4	Objectives relating to education
5	Objectives related to reputation
6	Objectives relating to the physical condition
7	Personal goals

These data confirm the hypothesis 1. (First places in the hierarchy occupied adolescent education goals, relationships with others and autonomy).

Hypothesis 2. Suppose that significant differences between girls and boys on targets teenagers. To prove this hypothesis we conducted independent samples comparison operation using the Mann Whitney test (U test), which is used for nonparametric ordinal data. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Comparisons between boys and girls for the importance weight goals

Category targets		Mann Whitney U	p	Average rank	
				Boys	Girls
1	Objectives human	417.000	.661	29.64	31.56
2	Objectives relating to career	338.000	.099	33.76	26.52
3	Objectives relating to freedom and autonomy	442.000	.957	30.39	30.63
4	Objectives relating to education	273.000	.009	35.71	24.13
5	Objectives related to reputation	349.000	.139	27.58	34.07
6	Objectives relating to the physical condition	238.000	.002	24.21	39.19
7	Personal goals	424.000	.734	31.14	29.72

From the above table it is observed that statistically significant differences between the two groups of subjects. In two sets of goals: education (U = 273.500, p = .009, p <. OI) and physical condition (U = 238.000, p = .002, p <. OI).

From these data the following results:

• Girls attach a greater importance to goals related to education than boys.

• The boys attaches importance on fitness goals in a lesser extent than girls.

Hypothesis 3 implies that there are significant differences between teenagers in urban and in rural areas on the importance of goals.

To prove this hypothesis we conducted independent samples comparison operation using the Mann Whitney test (U test), which is used for nonparametric ordinal data. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Comparisons between adolescents in urban and rural areas where the importance weight goals

Category targets		Mann Whitney U	p	Average rank	
				urban	rural
1	Objectives human	926.500	.771	31.16	29.89
2	Objectives relating to career	312.000	.036	25.76	34.94
3	Objectives relating to freedom and autonomy	394.500	.404	32.40	28.73
4	Objectives relating to education	208.500	.000	22.19	38.27
5	Objectives related to reputation	217.000	.000	38.52	23.00

| 6 | Objectives relating to the physical condition | 355.500 | .157 | 27.26 | 33.53 |
| 7 | Personal goals | 261.500 | .002 | 36.98 | 24.44 |

From the above table it is observed that statistically significant differences between the

two groups of subjects in four categories of objectives: career (U = 312.000, p = .03 G, p <.05), education (U = 208.500, p = 000, p <. 0I), reputation (U = 217.000 p =, 000, p <. 0 1) ~ and personal goals (U = 26 1.500, p = .002, p <. 01).

These data show the following:

•urban adolescents given a greater importance on career goals teenagers than in country areas;

•urban adolescents attach more importance to goals related to education than adolescents in rural areas;

•teenagers rural attaches greater importance on reputation goals than urban adolescents;

•teenagers rural attaches greater importance to personal goals than urban adolescents.

Hypothesis 4. Actions to achieve the objectives are relevant for urban adolescents compared to those in rural areas. To examine this hypothesis was conducted operation chi square (crosstab), which aims to determine whether there is an association between two nonparametric variables. They were pursued following: actions to achieve the objectives:

•have or no role to protect self-esteem;

•are realistic or not realistic;

•contribute or seriousness in this endeavor;

•they have more for themselves than for others.

For all these aspects have received significant.

The association between the origin and actions to achieve the objectives of protecting or self-esteem shows that the group of 19 teenagers from urban studio esteem protects against seven rural and 10 urban -esteem does not protect compared to 24 in rural areas.

The value of chi square = 11.249 at p = .001 significance threshold of p < .01. It can be argued that urban teenagers performed several actions to achieve the objectives that are designed to protect self-esteem than adolescents from rural areas.

The association between the origin and actions to achieve the goals realistic or unrealistic a value of chi square = 1.777 at a significance level p = .000, p <.01. It can be argued that urban teenagers take more actions to achieve the objectives realistic than rural adolescents.

The combination of the area of origin and actions to achieve the objectives involving serious or not at the value of chi square = 14.299, at a significance level p = .000, p <.01, it can be argued that urban adolescents take more serious actions to achieve the objectives than teenagers from country.

The association between the origin and actions to achieve the objectives that are more for himself or for others more than the value of chi square = 22.656, at a significance

threshold of p, .000, p <.01, one can say that teenagers urban done more for themselves than actions to achieve the objectives of rural adolescents who acts for others.

A summary of the results for this hypothesis would be: urban teenagers take more actions to achieve the objectives that are designed to protect the self-esteem that are realistic and serious to rural adolescents. Teenagers from rural areas selfless acts achieving goal compared with adolescents from the city.

These data confirm the hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 5. No significant differences between boys and girls in seriousness actions to achieve the objectives.

To examine this hypothesis was again performed surgery chi square (crosstab) and were followed the same issues. Not yielded any significant results.

The association between the origin and actions to achieve the objectives of protecting or self-esteem shows that 19 boys esteem protects against 15 girls and 10 boys' self-esteem does not protect against 14 girls in the study group.

The value of chi square = .025 at a significance level p = .875, p> 0.5. It can be said that teenagers do not realize guys more actions to achieve the objectives that are designed to protect self-esteem than adolescent girls.

Association between mode of origin and actions to achieve realistic targets show 20 boys to 15 girls and 13 boys unrealistic action against 12 girls.

Association between mode of origin and actions to achieve the objectives involving serious or not, show 19 more serious in achieving boys against 18 girls and 14 boys from frivolity to nine girls.

The value of chi square = .519 at a significance level p = .741, p> 0.5. It can be said that teenagers do not realize boys more serious actions to achieve the objectives than girls.

The association between the origin and actions to achieve the objectives that are more self- or more others, show that boys do not realize itself more actions to achieve the goals (18) than girls (17). The value of chi square = .433 at a significance level p = .511, p> 0.5.

A summary of the results for this hypothesis would be: no significant differences between boys and girls in the way that works to achieve objectives (protection of self-esteem, realism, responsibility, selfishness). These data confirm the fifth hypothesis.

Conclusions

Research hypotheses were fully confirmed.

It confirms the existence of differences in personal goals and objectives between teenagers from urban areas and the rural origin. While urban adolescents have an individualistic approach, focused on their own personal development and the pursuit of consistent realistic and ambitious goals related to autonomy, education and strengthening self-esteem, teens set their predominantly rural nature collectivist goals and objectives, while pursuing personal development, but also a positive impact on those that establish close relationships. Despite the altruistic motivations of adolescents in rural areas, objectives and goals set by them appear to be vague, less realistic and less consistently pursued than those in urban areas. It is possible that the differences

stand early confrontation and adaptation to different requirements imposed differentiated residential type: individualist with a highly competitive environment that fosters the development by competition for urban versus integration and adaptation to the environment anticompetitive fosters and promotes the development of cooperative values and harmonious relations with others, such as rural areas. These findings may have significant pragmatic implications.

For example, data suggest that, for a real equality of opportunity in the competitive environment, such as labor market, the educational counseling and career development should seek to develop independence and decision-making autonomy to adolescents in rural areas, while for a harmonious social integration in the counseling of adolescents in urban areas should not be lost sight of strengthening values of altruism, respect and helping each other, so that in adulthood it can establish cooperative relationships with others, and both for development individual and the environment that will integrate groups.

There could be highlighted differences between the type of goals set by adolescents by gender of the person. Has seen a similarity between adolescents and adolescents both in the type of targets, the strategic approach to achieve these objectives and personal implications, regardless of the their origin.

The results suggest that the residential environment from which the subject has a greater potential influence on personal development strategy established by the teenager than membership feminine or masculine. This is expected in a society democracy in different ways and means of personal development are equally accessible both men and women.

It is noted that the first places in the hierarchy of objectives teenagers is education, relationships with others and self. The results clearly show that, for each variable, there are statistically significant differences between the responses thus choosing the distribution of ranks for each of the seven categories of objectives is not equal, but different weights chosen subjects these ranks. Girls attach greater importance to goals related to education than boys and attaches importance on fitness goals to a greater extent than girls. A summary of the results obtained shows that: the urban teenagers take more actions to achieve the objectives that are designed to protect the self-esteem that are realistic and serious to rural adolescents. Instead, the most selfless acts from country to achieve the goal compared with adolescents from the city.

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CHILD DEVELOPMENT TROUGH BIBLIOTHERAPY

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Abstract: *This study represents an application of some ideas and suppositions regarding the aim of bibliotherapy, the use of story within the education of the students' behavior, more exactly the development of their attention. Being a qualitative application we focused on presenting the objectives of using bibliotherapy in class, the main actors being the students to show how important the obtained educational act is, by using the story. The survey was made on 30 first grade students, the parents being also present. The results showed behavior changes expressed by spontaneous, receptive and active participation.*

Key Words: *attention, story, bibliotherapy, behavior, student, development*

1. Argument

A child's stories reflect his personality. If we pay attention to his stories, we decode his level of attention, what happens to him or what has happened to others. What has interested him, what has remained in his memory for a long or short period? The world of stories is a place where the child can be what he wants (hero, princess, fairy, queen a horse with wings) he can tell how to solve the problems of his positive characters; he exercises his evil behavior by imitating the negative ones. Maybe" once upon a time "the child wants" to be the strong knight or he may try to find friends, he feels himself lonely, he is afraid of the dark or of his parents' conflicts, he wants to express himself but for a while he si not able…That child must be helped, that child must be encouraged, taken away his grief, his self-respect must be given back to overcome his trauma.

It was September, after a school day. A girl is taken by her grandfather from school.

"How was school today?" asks the grandfather kindly.

"There is no sense to go to school ", answers the girl disappointed.

"Why?"

"Well, I don't know to read, I don't know to write and I am not allowed to tell a story!"

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2. The story and the controlled behavior of the children

During the daily overloaded program always in a hurry, stressed, trying to do the best of the information we get, everything in an infernal rush we forget that the man's most important task is to overcome his solitude and for this he has to tell his story to someone who listens carefully and tries to help him. It would be great to start communicating with our mind and our soul at the same time and those who listen to us to do it not only with their sense but also with their heart.

 A simple and pleasant way of oral communication, the story, has accompanied mankind along centuries. People told and tell stories in their attempt to understand the world imagining what could have happened or what should have happened.

The students with experience in listening and telling stories-myths, legends, fairytales-are eager to start writing their own stories. The abilities of a critical thinking and vocabulary are improved by using stories. The need of the children to be listened to and to get the whole attention of the others is unbelievable. And how do we teach them to listen if we ourselves don't learn to listen to the little ones, to offer them models of active listening and give them as many stories as possible. We must teach them first to see with their eyes, then with the eyes of their mind, to listen with their ears, then with empathy, to understand and be in harmony with the world in which they live.

Attention can be defined as a psychophysiological process of orientation, concentration and selective increase of psychical functions and activity upon an object phenomenon ensuring the best brain activity. We are bombarded with millions of stimuli but only certain stimuli attract our attention.

The first condition to have a good lesson is to be able to attract the students' attention which implies a selective trial of the psychological activity regarding an object or phenomenon. The filter or selection of the messages takes place not only in the brain but also in the inferior levels of our nervous system. The concentration of our attention determines the growth of the efficiency of the cognitive and practical activity.

The student can maintain his concentrated attention for a fact or an object on average 15-20 minutes maybe more if he observes or examines it. There are, of course, variations regarding the degree of concentration without interrupting the direction the basic orientation of attention. The difficulty within the lesson consists in maintaining a constant attention. A correct organization of the lesson can avoid or eliminate to a certain degree all these forms of inattention. Among the efficient ways in this direction the care for a concrete task is mentioned to determine each student to be busy and to use various methods within the lesson.

Up to the age of three the child doesn't know to play with other children because of the small capacity of cooperation but also because of lack of distributive attention. Starting with this age he is more and more interested in books where he looks at images inventing all kinds of happenings but more than anything else he likes to tell stories. (Schwartz, Kelemen, Moldovan 2008)

At this age he also starts to be interested in TV, but the child mustn't stay more than an hour in front of the screen (and watching program for his age) because the conclusion is that a passive watch may stimulate intellectual laziness.

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Playing, generally speaking, as well as drawing, music, modeling or role play contributes to the stimulation of his fantasy. Being very fond of fairy tales, stories the education of the child is very successful. (Kelemen 2010)

The teacher's involvement in the story which is full of characters is welcomed because the child will find new models outside his parent's home and thus we succeed to get his attention for the desired activity.

3. BIBLIOTHERAPY-THEORETHICAL AND APPLICATIVE PREMISE

3.1. **Definition** Starting from the Greek words" biblion"(book) and "therapeia"(treatment), THE EXPLICATIVE DICTIONARY OF THE ROMANIAN LANGUAGE defines 'bibliotherapy'' as "the treatment of nervous states of mind with the help of proper reading "and other sources defines it as synthesis of bibliotheconomy, psychology and psychotherapy.

From an article by the librarians Margarita Iulic and Valentina Vacarciuc we find out that already in ancient Egypt the library was considered " the soul's balm/consolation" and at the entrance to Ramses II. Library there was a note "medicine for the soul" The same authors show that "the treatment with books was used for the first time in the libraries of Greece. Pitagora the great scientist, mathematician and famous healer both with herbs and music used successfully literature, poetry in the treatment of diseases.

Only in the 20th century bibliotherapy obtained its scientific value and the book became:

A method of therapy by instruction (general information)

Arttherapy (fiction)

Pretext for group-therapy (literary analyses organized in group)

Occupational therapy (organizing books on shelves)

3**.2. Objectives of bibliotherapy** (Drugaş, Ioana, Bîrle, Delia, Bonchiş, Elena, Decsei-Radu, Alina, Bochiş, Laura, Ilisie, Carmen, *We educate and cure through stories,* The Oradea University Publishing House, 2008**)**

Through bibliotherapy we try to obtain the following results:

- to offer book readers information about problems. Children identify their problems and validate their feelings regarding them

- to grant support in order to assess the core essence of problems. The adult provokes children to talk about themselves, to communicate their feelings, thoughts and aspirations

- to discuss about new values and attitudes

- to determine them to empathize with other persons that have been confronted with similar situations. Thus, children realize other persons have face same issues at they have and they can become more exteriorized

- to offer a palette of possible solutions for the problems with which children struggle. Pupils will adapt themselves to problems' data, will renounce to their defensive, martyr-like position and will search for similar constructive solutions to resolve their conflicts with others of with themselves

3. Applicative study – bibliotherapy used to educate pupils' attention
3.1. The study's goals

The study described below applied bibliotherapy principles to the concrete needs of my classroom (1st grade at the 30 Gymnasium School, Timisoara) and was constructed around the following goals:

- developing pupils' concept of individuality (each child will establish a connection with a certain type of character, will aspire to certain qualities, will admit the same defects some characters display, will live situations similar to the ones encountered in stories pupils has listened, told, retold or created)

- ameliorating children's understanding regarding human behaviour and its motivation (stories encourage and praise specific situations whilst ostracizing characters that committed certain acts, but interpretations may be subjective; one requires a lot of attention and understanding in valuing characters' behaviour)

- getting children used to analysing stories in a just manner (as a human value and especially as an expressive agent, as a story provider – according to a certain ranking)

- stimulating children to free themselves of the emotional and mental pressure (it is known these elements can be augmented inside a child mind as opposed to an adult for whom some details do not bear such significance or can be easily discarded; children, on the contrary, tend to amplify their importance)

- encouraging children to understand that their personal problem is not unheard of, but that predecessors, contemporary persons and successor will confront themselves with such elements that disturb their inner peace

- informing pupils that more than one solution can be applied to their problems, and that it's necessary to keep an opened mind to find an imaginative and favourable solution

- encouraging pupils to freely discuss with their colleagues, to express themselves in public about the story's analogy with their own problem

- stimulating children to sever the tie that connects them to the magic of television and prefer excursions into the wonderful and inexhaustible world of imagination

- determining parents to spend quality time with their children and not leave them unattended in front of the TV – a very effective and yet devious nanny

Expected behaviours:

- stimulating the reading habit, tempting their parents as well to rediscover the benefits of reading which fully reward the efforts of the creative imagination

- pupils need to sharpened their attention they will use to analyse information, syntheses, value debates, analogue debates, and conclusions that follow

- 7-8 year old children should create their own stories through play cubes that are adorned with pictures depicting places, positive characters, magical characters, miraculous objects

- children have to hunt down until complete obliteration all parasite expressions they and their colleagues use on a daily basis; thus they will cure themselves of annoying repetitions and will be obliged to employ intelligent periphrases and self control

3.3 Hypothesis

If in school, the teacher get children used to stories, she/he will open the library's territory, ensuring pupils `invade` the school's library and other such locations that treasure literature, culture; this way, children will be encouraged to prefer reading to other activities.

3.4. Content sample

3.4.1. Stories-sources from folklore and the spiritual womb of the people

Since time immemorial, the majority of Romanian people have been intelligent, honest, generous and have kept and passed on everything they learned from the School of Life (ethics, aesthetics, values) through folklore.

The community has created the term of magical, ceremonial and spectacular nature for the poetry of habits, the forming function for epic text, the gnosiological - legend function, educational-jest function, formative and aesthetic function or party-fairy-tale function. From fairy-tales, stories, jests, folklore ballads, songs with social messages and wise sayings told by the elderly, children learn about beauty, kindness, courage, truth, justice, hard work, modesty, integrity, love for your country and family, behaviour models and moral values integrated in an attractive and suggestive context

First of all, the school is called to revitalize traditions, to the folkloric culture, to rediscover their national and cultural identity. School takes over the family's and past community's tasks. Here, we work with computers but we also sharpen children's minds with riddles, sayings, proverbs, we regenerate the imaginative power of stories, we highlight in red linguistic mistakes. We rejoice whenever we see our children shining in our traditional clothes, we remind them, as much as we know, the symbolic importance of colours and motives that embed our traditional shirts, when they learn the songs of poems in our ancestors' language and they assimilate the wisdom, common sense and good taste coming from the ancestral stem of the Romanian spiritual matrix.

Just as the psychologist Anca Munteanu said (1998), *'a child bears within himself, in his ascendance, something from the dust of the road he travels on',* it is necessary to focus ourselves with patience, faith, science and love on his entire being, in order to properly know him. We need to constantly supervise all influences that reach him. But to guide him, it is necessary, at the same time, for the disciple to remain himself, unaltered by models he tries to accommodate himself to Life.

Stories help children grow up beautifully and harmoniously:

- they develop the language, the thinking capabilities, the imagination, the memory - in one word- the intellect

- they combat children's stress

- they offer a moment of relaxation

- they help children learn more about themselves and the others

- they make children aware about common interests and opportunities to fulfil them

- they provoke value judgements on Good and Evil, helping at taking decisions

- they facilitate expressing their own feelings and emotions

- they are a game in disguise, through which children learn the significance of real life

- they develop trust in their own forces

- they highlight positive life aspects (beauty, joy, love), motivating the fight against evil (always defeated in stories)

- they choose imaginary friends with powerful and positive characters - possible role models for children

- they develop children's affective lives (they offer access to characters' feelings and emotions, provoking sympathy, empathy, compassion, love)

- they help children defeat phobias or other adaptation or behaviour problems - here, therapeutic stories play an important part because they focus on these inadvertences that need, or perhaps only the child believes they should be faced, analysed and overcome, for a better harmonisation with the social environment closest to him.

Our initiative to use stories to develop the attention, to capture stories through sounds (listening to parents reading or through the voice of professional story-tellers, actors or counsellors), visual contact (through reading and direct contact with books) also has a more cunning yet not mischievous sub layer, that is full of affection: I wanted to offer the child every evening, some quality time with his mother or father or why not, with both of them, but also with brothers, a sort of ritual to celebrate time spent together, even in order to fulfil the task assigned by the teacher for the success of an experiment.

We know stories can offer a helpful hand, alleviate pains, calm despairs and rebellions provoked by less desirable moments, but which touch certain families: death, divorce, fury, and traumas with an impact that is more or less immediate and grave.

Why do children want stories to be told to them? They probably feel the healing power of stories, they feel that their messages are springs of examples regarding how they should behave, relate, cope with life or because they need the physical proximity of an adult, his soothing voice, a proximity that offers peace, tranquillity, comfort, a positive and special emotional state.

A child prefers *action literature, with powerful conflicts, suspense, mysterious intrigues, memorable heroes, a literature without too many psychological aspects, with lots of dialogues and few descriptions, without a scholarly speech (...) that excludes sad endings, and prefers a refreshing message, excludes banality's realism, the common human, a common reference point (Bodiştean, F., 2007)*

3.4.2. Story as a didactic method

Kieran Egan (2007), in *Teaching as a story*, supports the concept that imagination is a powerful learning tool, although quite neglected, especially after primary grades, and that learning practices and the curricula need to be rethought, with a more balanced analysis of children's intellectual capabilities. Kieran Egan offers an alternative to teaching, and desires to exemplify how routine can be transformed into an enthralling story, so that the teachers reclaims the powers of story-tellers, orators from traditional communities. He reminds us that, in the narrative space, learning is natural, pleasant and efficient, but that, in the last years, as we all know, it has been smothered by the industry of television and Internet.

The author highlights that the story's formula is cultural-universal, that each person, from any place in the world, is attracted by stories because they reflect a powerful primordial form through which we give sense to the world and experience; it's not just accidental fun, it has a strong influence over a child's mind.

There is the possibility to introduce *teaching as a story* in the current education system, just how it happened with other modalities of interactive teaching, that belong to alternatives such as Step by Step or Freinet etc? We will discover how each discipline from curricular areas has a variety of themes that will be approached through this perspective - of teaching as a story.

We are constantly put in the situation to recompose matter for pedagogical purposes. Each notion needs to be understood at a certain moment, can have its own story, but organising teaching in this manner is not as easy as it seems. High rigurosity is needed, otherwise you can easily deviate from the subject, and be led on treacherous grounds even by children, through their questions that derive from curiosity, thirst for knowledge and desire to clarify notions.

A. Story as a developing frame for cognitive processes

The biggest challenge for every teacher is to capture the attention of his pupils and to be listened by them. If a child cannot listen, it will be hard for him to do his homework or to make friends. To know how to listen is an important communication skill, both in classrooms and outside them. *Listening* is totally different from *hearing* something. *Listening* implies sharpening one's attention to what it is said and processing that information. When children only *hear*, they cannot understand what they were told and do not react according to the request. We have the sensation they either have not heard us, or, even worse, they do not pay any attention to us - which worsens the child-adult relation. That is why, the listening capacity is essential for building harmonious relationships with others and for an effective learning.

Reading is one of the easiest ways to make sure children learn how to listen. When we read to a child, we determine him to listen to understand the story as it gradually reveals itself. When we read a story, to ensure that the child is listening intently, we can enrich the information with something wrong, for example *the bear barks* and follow his reaction. If he is amused or corrects us, he is obviously attentive at what we transmit him.

B. Teacher's stories - awaking and maintaining the attention

A teacher's stories are expositions of literary works (long or short stories) created by the teacher with his entire class, as compulsory activity or during games and activities chosen by children. Through their contents, these literary works contribute to enlarging children's knowledge sphere through:

- carefully following the contents of that literary work
- following and discovering characters' traits and behaviour
- discovering relations between characters

These elements contribute to familiarizing children with the language structure, with its richness and expressiveness; children assimilate new and colourful words and

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expressions, rhythmic and rhymed constructions, sayings, proverbs and correct grammatical structures.

C. Non-didactic story - psychotherapeutic story: solitary and in a group

Through these stories, we identify and modify irrational beliefs that generate pathology and suffering, and, at the same time, we inoculate rational beliefs, that transmit a state of mental, emotional and behavioural health for children, helping them to develop harmoniously from a psychological point of view. The following aspects are analysed: confronting and exorcising fears, tolerance to frustrations, being aware of self-esteem and augmenting it, accepting your own mistakes, discovering one's value, the capacity to solve problems in a rational way, how to accept themselves, the traps of rage.

The therapeutic fairy-tale is close to self-suggestion. The message can be deduced, thanks to metaphors with several connotations. Sempronia Filipoi (2004) established the following effects for the therapeutic fairy-tale:

 - it illuminates, addressing intuition, not ration and logic, enlarging the patient's inner space. The old intrigue, the seemingly insurmountable conflict of the character that the patient is confronting himself-is destroyed in the therapeutic fairy-tale, affectively enriched, bringing a ray of hope that cracks the impossible by appealing to affective intelligence.

- it conveys behavioural models and moral values: the patient absorbs the therapeutic message, he incorporates if in his own thoughts,…, changing his position is only suggested, has a hypothetic role;

- the therapeutic message is taken over the same as a dream's message - says something that somehow resemble what the patient feels;

- it shields patients of resistance to the therapist's actions;

- brings unexpected solutions, with positive emotional effect, that contradicts logic and the ordinary;

Unlike the traditional fairy-tale, the one with a therapeutic message is a special fairy-tale designed to contain an idea, which can be masked, indirectly expressed, and suggests a change of attitude or behaviour. This idea is presented in an unusual, unexpected context that takes the child by surprise, transferring him from reality to fantasy, where everything is possible. The child can easily slip towards this direction that coincides with his opinion about the world, especially is a special, quiet ambiance is created and you choose an appropriate moment to present the fairy-tale.

D. Combining bibliotherapy with forms of art-therapy

The term *art-therapy* refers to a form of psychotherapy that proposes intervention through art as a treatment strategy. Therapy through art-education constitutes a system of artistic activities, with educational and therapeutic purpose. When we say art-therapy, we think at: painting, drawing, modelling, collages, singing, dancing, and practical abilities, all of this making good team with bibliotherapy.

For example, after the story *The sunflower and dandelion*, we utilized collages to develop visual sensations. We analysed flowers from the chart, by naming their components. Children described the elements that compose the two flowers, by

referring to shapes, colours, dimensions. We had previously prepared for them materials from which collages were made. At the end, we engaged them into discussions about how they felt during this activity and what they learned.

After this, we used the collage as a follow-up, but we wanted to develop audio sensations by employing musical toys - an immense book that, on had on its first cover a device with miniature images that, when pressed, would recreate sounds made by farm animals.

After cutting images with story animals, children had to listen very carefully and name the animal that produced those respective sounds, then he had to go to the polystyrene wall and place, in the farm's courtyard, the image with the animal he just heard. At the end, we discussed aspects regarding the way children felt during this activity. We complicated the game by adding images with animal cubs as well. It was nice to notice which were the children most connected with their parents (the ones that placed cubs next to their parents) and which were the independent ones (that lost cubs in the courtyard regardless of the distance from their mothers)

The game of *Component parts,* (Drugas, I., 2010) seems to adapt to any type of story, as some sort of puzzle re-enactment, so at any time, we can propose a character, be it positive or negative, draw it and offer it to a child (broken into pieces) to reassemble it. If it misses a piece, to complicate the game, the child must draw it by himself, and if we have additional elements compared to the image known (from books or the teacher's sketching), the child must observe what the character has additionally as opposed to the original.

4. Dimensions/actors of pedagogical intervention
4.1. The child

We cannot act as teachers if we do not respect diversity in unity: each child has a different life and school start, we can harmonize children's voices, but we do not want to bring them to the same level, but to polyphonically harmony, *each child is a distinct individuality, with distinctive psychoeducational requirements.* (Dughi, T., Roman, A., 2008)

The classroom where we teach contains children ranging from most timid ones, to noisy exteriorized children, superb children, still maintaining the sweetness of mama's little baby, intelligent, tempestuous, willing to snitch, generous to forgive, not forgetting anything until next argues. We have here children with families based on understanding and respected, on love, but also children that bear with dignity of embarrassed silence the mark of the fresh breaking of parental union or fatherless situation.

We have learned the hard way to accept and practice inclusive education and we was much helped by empathy in order to achieve this goal. For a long time, we have created pupil hierarchies based on their performances in Maths, Romanian Language, even Music and Drawing, Physical Education, labelling them as clever, of less intelligent, but we have now come to the moment when we see in each child his parents' most important reason to Live. We know tend to catalogue children as diverse, each having his own chance and opportunities, provided by school itself (Dughi, Roman, 2008), and we see in each the talent, as a superior step of aptitudes,

characterized not only by the successful completion of an activity, but also by the capacity to create original works.

4.2. The teacher

Themes approached in the didactic stories we used, of group biliotherapy, are connected with developing positive character features: hard working, friendship, kindness and combating negative ones (mischievousness, laziness, lie, irony, bragging), but I have not let everything in the reader's and counsellor's plain view; I have myself assumed lots of sharing moments with non-didactic stories, that present problematic stories which aggress the psychic of a child: fear of darkness, of loneliness, heights, physical abuse, parents' divorce or the demise of someone dear, appearance of a new family member, loss of friendship

4.3. The counsellor

Because, at the age of childhood, story has an important part, we considered bibliotherapy to be the most natural way to enter children's world, but especially, the way through which we can reach their souls.

Following organized lecture, that helps understand social interactions, the surrounding environment, one's own person, but finds solutions for solving problems, bibliotherapy is based on a dialogue initiated by the counsellor, to help the child express his emotions, thoughts, feelings. Using essential story ideas and exploiting to a maximum point his creativity and experience, the counsellor guides the child- through the obtained interaction- towards the purpose of the sessions, purpose that can be resolved only by entering and opening the child's soul gates, but, beware!, the key has to be wilfully used by the child! He must be let to believe that he has taken a decision, the counsellor is prohibited from offering him a solution.

The most delicate moment in utilizing therapeutic stories is the one in which the child identifies himself with the character that possesses an analogue difficulty, through deciphering the therapeutic metaphor. This means of entering the child's soul is in fact a figure of speech that presents under a different shape the real problem with which the subject-patient confronts himself. The metaphor can be used by the child as well, not only by the counsellor, as a way of verbal, behavioural or psychological expression, in constructing stories with the help of cubes: we witnessed the birth of a story, that was created by Razvan, a tiny pupil, that has a height complex revealed in a very clear manner, but also solved: the character is small and constantly subjected to the danger of being squashed, but saves himself by using his agility to sneak to safety.

4.4. The story-teller

The story-teller needs talent and art. The classroom teacher, involved in all education forms and in the writing work imposed by formulating intentions and the results of his acts in the educational domain - blurs his talent as an artist or appeals, with modesty, or for a much deserved pause, to the school counsellor, actors, or a story-teller (a professional), according to his needs. I decided it would be a good moment to use bibliotherapy to educate and develop children's attention, soliciting

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parents' support and collaboration, both financially, as well as to offer information that pupils do not know or do not pay much attention to about their life so far.

The fact that this method is outside the daily conventional activities can result in an improvement of relations' dynamics, encouraging assertive communication, diminishing aggressiveness by improving conflict-solving strategies, and will develop the equality sentiment but also the ability to *carefully* listen to those around.

The story-teller brought to our classroom courtesy of the school psychologist, Missis Lia Dobos, is an artist, an entertainer and an educator. She is called (Florina) Ina Bulzan, and masters the art of communicating through stories told by heart, whilst drawing of showing images from those stories. From her, we found out that she tells the same story in a different manner every time, interacting with the present audience, choosing different stories and images for a different public. With Ina, during stories she revealed to my pupils, we used in parallel music, dance, songs, reading by images, painting, cutting, collages, role play, marionettes, in one word, art-therapy.

We observe ours pupils from beyond the teaching table, we can see the affective links between them, we notice more clearly communication barriers and their motivation arising from the character „backstage" of each child. In the meanwhile, Ina's story improves children's capacity to concentrate their attention, develops their thinking, language, imagination, exteriorizes them and determines them to laugh more often. Together with Ina and Lia, we provoked pupils to create stories, starting from inscribed cubes - ideograms of positive and negative characters, magical elements, fairytale locations.

4.5. The framework - A drop of story - the stories' club

The stories' club is that magical place/time where a child can freely step into the world of imagination. The stories' club means:

- a high variety of stories: from different cultures, from the animal world, fairy-tales, fables
- puppets, masks, cartoons, collages - made by children
- imagination exercises (the story bag - with cubes)
- role games
- retelling exercises

5. Instead of conclusions - benefits for pupils

Children stand to gain from story-telling, being narrators, as well as audience. Studies show that, when children listen to stories, a lot of abilities are developed: attention, will, imagination and language. Their activity at the stories' club was not static: they rose on their feet, they built imaginary places, they crossed them by making onomatopoeias, interjections, exteriorizing sensations and feelings, impressions. Silence bores children- it is considered as being lost time. They need to be involved in the story, and not remain simple spectators. They are spectators enough, at home, forgotten in front of TV screens by busy parents. Now is the group moment, of revealing impressions, of expressing oneself.

When we read to them, children captures the epic line, improved their speech-by retelling, but never crossed the boundaries of the given text, unless we challenged them

afterwards, through questions. When they retold a narrated happening, they offered a framework, they showed signs of sympathy of antipathy towards the story characters, they enunciated the moral of that certain happening. Fearful and shy pupils, that at first refused to be involved in any activities, valorised their attention through answers at questions which stories interactive.

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THE CONSTRUCTIVIST VALUES OF COMPREHENSION IN TEXT DIDACTICS

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Abstract:*The article explores the idea that constructivist education implies the building of relationships, the prevalence of the logic of liberty and plurality, the offering of cognitivist and constructivist models, which thus produce learning through research and construction. By stating the role of the real-life environment, knowledge is being created, based on the exploration of possibilities, skills, and attitudes. Therefore, the issue of pupils' participation in this construction, comprehension, and interpretation, through dynamic interactive relationships, while appealing to research or solving problematic situations, is as relevant as ever. By adapting the constructivist methodology for pedagogical use we are able to objectify knowledge by confronting it with other solutions and interpretations.*

When they are approached in the education space, texts become manifestations of norms with various degrees of power, since every text contains a "packed" meaning. Therefore, text interpretation is an activity situated within the relation between the text taken as reference, a real situation and a course of action that is being deliberated on. The degree to which a text that is being interpreted by a student may help in the understanding of a real situation, in order to help choose a specific course of action, constitutes the main methodological problem of text didactics. Thus there are several distinct taxonomies of comprehension we denote in the context of text comprehension: meaning-generating comprehension, cognitive comprehension, and significant comprehension.

The study illustrates the fact that denotative texts may have different functions in the educational process, but their main attributions are still two: informing and forming. The educational consequences of the denotative text materialise in the building of students' capacity for observation. It is through such texts that the student will better access the realities of life. And therefore text didactics, as a dimension of general education, is concerned with educating the student through the application of various types of texts in educational practice. When used in education these texts have the mission of supporting the students' search for answers to the challenges of today, their self-assessment and self-formation as readers that had been both informed and formed based on this type of text.

Keywords: *constructivist methodology; learning through construction; comprehension; pro-text; denotative text; text network.*

Education is the *power instrument* that configures in multiple senses the engagements, conceptions, and convictions of fresh school graduates. Education *creates the image* of what the world means, what are knowledge, truth, principles, the limits of existence, at both praxeological and theoretical levels. This is why education ought to cultivate an implicative attitude vs its own explicit and especially tacit engagements.

Currently the methodology of text exploration finds itself relegated to a somewhat superficial domain, concerning reading, establishing, and synthesising information. However, the new structure of the world reclaims a new approach to the text. The current methodology of text exploration may be represented as a multidimensional structure with relational values and parameters, which can be approached through text exploration from various perspectives: on the surface as well as in depth, contextually as well as constructively. Only in working with the text in this manner does the student become aware of its power and significance, and thus operate in a **pro-textual** manner, that is *for*, *in favour of*, *in support of*, *in the interest of*, *in defence of*, *relating to*, *connected to*, and *concerning* — the text.

The changes in the paradigm of learning bring forth its following essential features, such as *durability*, *flexibility*, *functionality*, *rationality*, *power of generalisation*, *orientation towards application*, and generates new models of teaching. It is important that these new processes are being learnt through constructivism, in a cumulative, active, reflection-filled, contextual, internally motivated manner. The activation of learning occurs due to the differentiated construction of comprehension. The student is being formed predominantly from the perspective of efficient integration in the socio-professional, cultural, and spiritual reality, in the huge diversity of contexts and complex situations (Korsin, 2003).

In this way the constructivist orientation in education brings forth the student's autonomy, the focus on the construction of comprehension, the diversity of the problematic situations to be solved, the exercise of cognitive capacities, and alternative verification. These conceptual changes fuse in various ways with methodology in the classroom. Therefore, the student is expected to perform independent searches of adaptation according to affirmed interests, preferences or contexts; to formulate hypotheses on improving the way of learning certain topics, information, within certain opportunities; to attempt transforming known information and experience into elements of new creation; to verify access to new texts, situations, authentic projects taken from real life; to assume certain responsibilities, initiatives inside and outside the classroom etc.

Constructivist education involves developing competences, answering complex questions, creating relationships, the domination of the logic of freedom and plurality, and offering cognitivist and constructivist models. It is mainly oriented towards processes, although the goals remain important. This is how *learning through research*

and construction occurs: by affirming the role of the real environment, knowledge is being constructed and created based on an exploration of possibilities, abilities, and attitudes. These learning experiences form the basis of students' participation in construction, comprehension, and interpretation, through dynamic interactive relationships, appealing to research or solutions for problematic situations. Obviously, school learning is based on the following *dimensions of learning*: real life, lifelong education, and profound learning (Joiţa, 2010).

Undoubtedly, learning through *construction of comprehension* implies essentially a research methodology that would respect its rigours in order to formulate and verify hypotheses: logic, objectivism, argumentation, identification and interpretation of data/information and meanings, mental and practical processing, confrontation in various contexts, communication, and collaboration. The **constructivist methodology** *demonstrates how one gets to build the comprehension of meanings, significances*, general and specific scientific truths. It also indicates applicable procedures and means. Through the pedagogical adaptation of constructivist methodology one identifies information via individual search, understands essences and meanings through mental processing, and objectifies knowledge through recourse to confrontation with other solutions and interpretations.

Poststructuralism, with its basic doctrines of decentralisation, multiplicity, polilogue, and intertextuality, has an important place in the constructivist approach. Poststructuralists examine the world through the prism of its perception and understand it as an "infinity open in infinity, as an infinite text". The text is perceived as an epistemological model of reality (Tschirova, Goncharova, 2007). Poststructuralism holds a *pantextual position*, through which conscience is reduced to the written text, since human existence cannot be conceived outside the text. This leads to a negation of the subjective individuality of the person. In poststructuralism the place of the author is occupied by the "scriptor", born at the same time with the text and, unlike the author, free of feelings or impressions, having only cognitive orientation.

We must mention here the ideas of Roland Barthes, who presents a developed explanation for the differences between **text** and **creation** (as cited in Tschirova, Goncharova, 2007):

• The text is not an indivisible entity, but a field of methodological operation; creation is a material element one can "hold in hand", whereas the text may be "held" on one's tongue and is only perceived during the making process;

• The text cannot be included in any genre category, which makes classification difficult;

• The text is detachable, it works through the sphere of significance;

• What is fulfilled in the text is not merely one permissible meaning, but a multitude of meanings. The reading of a text is a unique act through which quotations, references, echoes and languages pass, thus creating a powerful stereophony. It is due to this multilayered texture that the text, unlike creation, may be read in an unexpected way:

•Creation is determined by reality, its "father" and "master" is the author. ***The text has no paternal "registration", its metaphor is the network***. The text spreads as a result of the combination and systematic organisation of elements, this is why it may be read regardless of "paternal will";

•Creation is an object of use. The text "purifies" this object, "extracting" from it the play, the work, the process and the practical activity. It requires us to tend to a substantial reduction of distance between writing and reading. Reading is playing with the text. The reader effectively collaborates with the text, while creation is being examined by the critic in the same way a verdict is contemplated by an "executioner";

•Creation cannot be rewritten. This determines its refraction from the reader, who is thus deprived of pleasure. The text, on the other hand, is connected to satisfaction, i.e. to pleasure without a feeling of rejection.

We can see therefore that the evolving character of text significance in the process of research development is determined by a slow switching from monologism to dialogism, from the "dictatorship of the author" to the *triumph of the exegete*. As we have discovered above, through exegesis one discovers the construction of a new meaning, a synthesis of a new significance, a *re-symbolisation*.

In constructivism a relationship is established between two dimensions of knowledge — the mental and the material one. The mental dimension ensures the understanding of the problem or of the situation, while the material one specifies a representation of the model that had been constructed internally, abstractly — into a product, an artefact, which gives a relative image or a description over the mental construction. It is important to note that this stage of knowledge enhances understanding, verifies it and completes it through interpretation, reflection, and evaluation, thus leading to a development of self-knowledge as well as the exercise of certain capacities, abilities, attitudes, and competences. One's own construction as learning reflects comprehension (Joiţa, 2010).

The Romanian term for "comprehension", *înţelegere*, is etymologically linked to the Latin preposition *inter* ("between") and the verb *lego,-are,-avi,-atum* ("to tie"), thus meaning *to connect something to something else*. The words *intellect* and *intelligence* have the same origins. Comprehension is spontaneous when connection is easily established between current and past information (should such connections not be too numerous and varied). This is what usually happens when we perceive an object — we understand at once what it is, what its use is etc. However, comprehension may also be discursive, when it occurs over a lengthy time interval, sometimes even extending through years, should relationships be too numerous, requiring incursions in various directions. Unidirectional knowledge either distorts or stops comprehension.

This is how comprehension is constituted as a way of being *next to the entity*, *at the entity* and even *of the entity*. The meanings that exist in the text belong to the existence of the entity that understands them and understands itself through them. The semantic activity will thus become linked to reflexive activity as a *cogitant* one,

although no longer will this be a *cogito* of the subject that interprets himself through interpretation, but instead an *existent* one that discovers that he may exist as himself in the understanding of his own existence. The text is the screen through which the reading student penetrates the world and thus rediscovers himself in a different dimension, while the distance is abolished by the very closeness of the student to the text and to himself. To understand means to place oneself in the situation of a privileged text reference: the text communicates at me and communicates *me*. My reading is actually my existence in the world of text: it means exposing oneself to the text and receiving from it a vaster self that would be the existence proposal which responds in the most adequate way to the offer of the world. If the text is offering me a world, then reading is the answer I give to this offer. My vaster self is the result of this increase in horizon, created within me by the works of the text (Ştefănescu, 2010).

In this reference framework the structural analysis of a text is meant to lead from superficial semantics to a profound one, this being a necessary stage between superficial and in-depth interpretation or between pre-comprehension and comprehension itself. The reading student understands what the text says, not what the author had meant to say, i.e. he understands the textual world uncovered through in-depth semantics. ***He does not understand something hidden behind the text, but something exposed in front of it instead, which the text offers as a possible world.*** To understand a text means to follow its movements from meaning to reference, from what it says to that what it speaks about. To understand means to be situated in this dynamics or itinerary of the text, which means nothing else but a relationship with whatever it is talking about. Comprehension is the very move between meaning and its own reference: it departs from an explanation of the text (superficial semantics) in order to reach its opening into a whole world (in-depth semantics). The personal involvement of the interpreting student represents the involvement of his comprehension in the creation of this world, which belongs ***to him, too***.

When examining the issue of comprehension from the positions of psychological hermeneutics, A. Brudnyi (cited in Tschirova, Goncharova, 2007) believes that the comprehension of a text includes three parallel processes: (a) montage; (b) trans/centring: (c) forming the text concept. In this case, *montage* means movement "along the text": from a relatively finalised element (such as a sentence, a paragraph, a chapter etc.) towards another one, which is placed just after it. *Trans/centring* is connected to the restructuring (in the reader's conscience) of the situation that is reflected in the text, namely to the switching of the reflexive centre from one element to another. This switching may sometimes have an intermittent character, despite depending on the montage of elements. The *forming of the text concept* is treated as the formation of a general textual meaning, and it depends on the reader's activism. A. Brudnyi suggests that we should change from hermeneutics, as the science about comprehension, to posthermeneutics, the science of comprehension. The tendency to facilitate the understanding of the complex text phenomenon by dividing it into simple components, such as levels, aspects, structures, stages of

development/reception/comprehension, narrative and interpretative strategies and tactics, narrative instances etc. is reflected in the activity of the exegete.

We find that there is no uniform acceptance of the concept of comprehension, since the complexity of establishing an area of reference for this category is connected to its relegation to the domain of the intuitive-figurative rather than to that of the logical-abstract and rational. Comprehension is "hard to catch" and does not manifest itself in any special way when occurring without difficulty. We only remember comprehension when we cannot comprehend something. That is, the very fact of not understanding makes us reflect upon understanding.

As I. Pânzaru has discovered, by understanding narration we understand the meaning of people's deeds and thus understand the people themselves (Pânzaru, 2012). By being proclaimed in public space, the texts become manifestations of various norms of different power, since every text has meaning "packed" in it. Text interpretation is therefore *an activity situated within the relationship between the text taken as a reference, a real-life situation and a course of action that is being deliberated upon*. The measure to which a text debated by someone may assist in the understanding of a real-life situation, in order to help choosing a course of action, constitutes the main methodological issue of text didactics.

In this way, text comprehension involves a process of conclusion at all levels: word meaning, phrases, semantic and constructive structures. The thought moves "along the text", but also from the centre of thinking towards other levels, thus creating an effect of "inclusion in superior structures", which proves the existence of meaning as a potential for development. Therefore, the movement of thought during the comprehension process occurs in a *horizontal*, *linear* direction, from one textual unit to another, as well as *vertically*, passing from specific units to those of a different order — metaunits, metameaning, metaconnections, towards their gradual increase. Our thought aims continually towards deeper and deeper levels, turns back in order to correct the hypotheses that had been formed, then proceeds forward once more, establishing connections both within every semantic level and the elements of different levels. In the case of vertical thinking what occurs is a phenomenon that L. Murzin has called the *law of incorporation*: the influence of each subsequent meaning over the previous one eventually forms an *incorporated complex*, as result of the augmentation of textual units (cited in Ulanovich, 2001). The subsequent components do not merely join up, but "merge" with the preceding ones, thus influencing each other at the same time.

The horizontal movement of thought presents itself as *nonreflexive understanding* at the text's semantic level (Ulanovich, 2001). The *vertical movement of thought* appears as the joining of several consecutive semantic units into hierarchically organised microsentences, thus exercising the complex function of putting into order a huge number of semantic data. This process is based on the actualisation of the recipient's cognitive base. One after another, it includes into

comprehension large quantities of background information. The vertical movement of thought implies ***reflexive understanding*** (the understanding of previous understanding). Seen as an activity, reflexive understanding has the following levels: semantic, cognitive, and phenomenological (de/objectified). Semantic comprehension occurs when reflection is oriented towards that domain of the individual's experience which connects to memories concerning the shape and semantics of linguistic signs. In the case of cognitive comprehension reflection is oriented towards the area that deals with the experience of knowledge and cognitive activity. Therefore, the phenomenon of comprehension possesses polivalent types of existence.

In the opinion of G. Bogin (2001), text comprehension means relating the student's experience to the text in order to have its contents assimilated. The experience being related to the text is as much individual as it is collective: an individual's understanding may develop through another's activity, while the achievements of this other may be obtained by the former, too. Comprehension can be perceived as a process of seizing the internal connections in a text's contents; as seizing the meaning of a text; of assimilating certain alien emotions, thoughts, decisions, which had been objectified in the text; of reproducing the situation enacted by the author etc. To understand a text, to assimilate its contents means to direct one's whole experience towards the text; to accept its contents so that it becomes part of one's subjectivity; to divide its contents as a reflection of alien experience in consensus with one's own experience; to pick from this division whatever one needs for one's own activity.

In the context of text comprehension there are several distinct taxonomies:
1. ***Semantising comprehension***, i.e. decoding the text units that manifest themselves in the function of significance;
2. ***Cognitive comprehension***, i.e. assimilating the contents of cognitive information, which is represented in the form of certain units of the text, with which semantising comprehension has a connection;
3. ***Significant*** (phenomenological, de/objectifying) ***comprehension***, which is constructed on the de/objectification of ideal realities, which are presented outside the means of direct nominalisation, but become objectified in nothing else but the text's means (Bogin, 2001).

The final purpose of text comprehension is helping the human being to communicate, overcoming the lack of understanding of individual by individual. It is specifically in the text, rather than in the linguistic system, that human subjectivity is objectified.

Schools tend to accentuate prevalently cognitive comprehension, which is universalised. Comprehension is usually defined based on this type of understanding (to understand, to have a correct representation; to establish relationships between phenomena based on existent knowledge etc.). Through comprehension reflection over the whole experience is organised — the experience of memorising, the experience of

learning, the experience of sensation and perception. These experiences cooperate with comprehension.

Wittgenstein (cited in Petrovici, 2010) suggests that comprehension is obtained through extra presence: thus words can be understood, if they are accompanied by ideas. **We would like to go further and state** *that ideas can be understood, if they are accompanied by text.* However, when understanding fails to occur, there begins an authentic dialogue between the reader and the text itself. Not only is this possible, but it is actually necessary, because the text is not an object, but a monument to the phenomenon of comprehension (Râmbu, 1998).

The text can be seen as a whole world, and therefore *it is never alone, bearing the syntagm of existential, epistemic and actional paradigms*. The criterion of correct understanding is represented by the agreement of parts in a whole (Petrovici, 2010). Understanding occurs while interpretation is being assumed; every type of interpretation constitutes a development of understanding.

The issue of comprehension, as A. Sasu (1985) finds, is not an issue of knowledge, but rather of the *way of being*. We can state therefore that the relationship between text comprehension and the *development of a student's personality* is essential. Since no text exists by itself, being always destined to generate or to accelerate a development, a change, it is important to identify the knots, hubs, connections, ideas and consequences that are being configured in such a way as to fit the student's expectations. Therefore, forming a student's protextual position will lead to:

- Developing an initiative of learning, making information an instrument of learning and searching;
- The possibility to perceive reality through the intelligible text;
- Making more dynamic the concept of textuality, which makes the text be a text;
- The student learns how to "look" at a text, how to search in it and how to find what he is looking for;
- In interpreting texts the student acts spontaneously, standing on a superior step of meaning formation;
- A new type of consumer, who takes active part in the conception and "making" of the product he is going to consume/use;
- A professional consumer, who gets to possess the knowledge, skill and exigency of a professional concerning the produce he is consuming/using, which implies forming the student as a ***prosumer*** (producer + consumer).
- Manifesting the state of ***text brio***, when the student may state he loves the text as a rare species of language.

In this context, the didactic exploration of the text under the aspect of *network-type learning* offers certain educational advantages through the structuring of a cognitive network as a pertinent pedagogical product, which is theoretically and

praxeologically founded on the principles of cognitive veridicity, processuality and utility with relation to the student that is going to benefit from it, who accedes through the text to the realities of life and wishes for a successful social inclusion.

If we speak of the ***denotative text***, we must mention that not only should it "catch" the reading student and keep his attention, but also there must be no mistakes or hesitation concerning its attribution, i.e. of the message it is sending. Generally, a text is an identity, and the identity of a denotative text is the message, which is obviously stressed upon, being always "on top" of the text.

The phenomenon of a denotative text that has a powerful impact but no specific message corresponds to the situation of a highly competitive market. If a whole category of texts becomes a "commodity", then one will no longer be able to obtain in such a category a text with an identity, except by inventing a way to re-involve the reader through some pertinent added value or by creating a new message that will pull out part of the category from the commodity status. If the denotative text expects a strong involvement of the reader and if all messages invest in information, then from an educational point of view it would be a good strategy to examine the reading student's "tiredness" with reading and its comprehension.

A denotative text's author's ideas are the result of a multiphase process, where every phase is fundamental, since they oblige the author to have specific ideas before proceeding to creation. It is due to these ideas that the obtained message will or will not be efficient. Therefore, both the author of a denotative text and its readers must be creators before reaching the phase of creation itself. This is a thing that can be learnt.

Denotative texts have various functions, but their main functions are two: *information* and *formation*. A huge volume of information is being diffused through a denotative text, which in the educational context should correspond to certain criteria: it must contain new information; be pertinent, i.e. hold information related to problems that had already been tackled in other texts; take into account the possible social impact; involve a piece of rare information.

Text didactics, as a dimension of general education, is concerned with educating the student through the application of various types of texts in educational practice. When used in education, these texts have the mission of supporting the students' search for answers to the challenges of today, their self-assessment and self-formation as readers that had been both informed and formed based on this type of text.

The text has a pluri- and interdisciplinary dimension, exploring contributions from various areas of knowledge — anthropology, ethics, philosophy, informatics, neurobiology etc. Involving the text in the educational process is a challenge, which focuses attention on the approach, understanding, and exploration of "unsubstantial" information, in some specialists' opinion. However, others believe that it leads to

problem-solving and finding solutions to real complex situations taken from the students' own daily lives.

Seen from an educational perspective, the analysis of a denotative text should be approached as a product of the reflexive attitude of relating its contents to the real world around us. The educational consequences of the denotative text materialise in the building of the students' *observation skills*. With the help of such texts the student will access life realities easier.

The denotative text, like any other text, may be read in the two ways specified by Roland Barthes: the first moves quickly, ignoring language games, it goes quickly to avoid being bored; the second one passes over nothing, weighs, sticks to the text, reads with application and uplift, surprising the *feuilletage of meanings*. This type of reading suits modernist texts and also denotative texts, which ought to be read not in "gulping", but in "rediscovering" in them one's own life. And in order to avoid getting lost in nonsense, the readers of the denotative text should be "aristocratic readers", perhaps to a larger extent than when reading a designative text (Barthes, 2006).

It is well known that for a text to be considered successful it is not enough that it should contain merely interesting ideas, according to A. Şerbănescu (2001). Its reception by the student depends largely on the author's ability of organising ideas in order to make them clear. Even very interesting, good, original, unusual ideas get lost in a muddled text the reader is unable to follow through the author's fault. What the author sees as clear and perfect, the reading student might find "tangled". The true value of a text transpires in the comparison the reading student makes between his own mental scheme and the one presented by the author. *The reading student expects to find in the denotative text his own daily experience and one of the models that shape his existence.* Therefore, through networking interpretation the student may try to use his knowledge and *make a connection between the world of the text and the real world*.

The problems that may arise concerning the reception of the denotative text may be caused by a failure to seize the *central knots* of the text. This is why it is desirable that the students be used to find the deposits of meanings created by text knots. Understanding means finding similitude between the knowledge sedimented in the student's mind and the knowledge offered by the author, in the text. The more a sentence in a text is important for its argumentative decoupage, the more chances it has to be retained by the reading student. The quality of text comprehension depends largely on the student's ability to seize text knots, to sense the importance of certain ideas as related to the discussed subject.

Organising a text involves ordering the ideas in such a way that they may become easily integrated by the readers in their system of knowledge. The text contents may be organised in a natural order, as imposed from within (temporal, spatial), or in an external order that had been reclaimed by the human mind. The author's attention needs to concentrate on "finding" a place for each element of the text in order for it to

enter an optimal relation with other text elements, while the student's task is to "see the architecture" of the text, from within as well as from outside.

Speaking from a constructivist perspective, ***through the text, from the text, towards the text*** we mean installing a learning community which makes the value option *in favour of the text*. For in the paradigm of postmodern education the student's person is placed in a direct and complete relation with reality. The student thus becomes an exegete of the world, accepting the reality, finding solutions, being convinced of the need for a thing, a deed, and attitude to express. In this chain of logic, the denotative text ought to be accepted as a desirable, feasible and opportune offer.

Since reading precedes all the analytical discourses for the installation and negotiation of meaning, the students will go through the text with the means of a reading process with double processing value. First, through ***zero-level reading***, the text will be read in a basic manner and an idea, image, topos, symbol or any other distinctive textual sign will be memorised. The student decides individually upon his choice, without having to explain publicly the ration of his actions. This information will be uncovered at a later stage, already with an argumentative support generated by the convictions of an initiated reader.

Conclusion

Thus we have found that the constructivist values of comprehension in text didactics are generated by a methodological architecture that brings forth the denotative text, which has a direct or indirect relation with the student's real existence, his surrounding reality. In this case the student perceives the text not as a piece of didactic content, but as a fragment of life, which "shows" him how to act in certain life situations.

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PSYCHO-INTERFERENCE PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH ANXIETY OF SEPARATION

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Abstract: *The investigation of the child as a subject of scientific research is primary for the human adaptation. The erosion of the family core in the actual social and economical context favours the establishment of aggression, anxiety and desolation from early ages.*

Key word: *anxiety, separation, parents*

The instability of a secure background that a child needs in order to have a harmonious growth determines fluctuant emotions, inconsistence in atitudes, excitability and hiperactivity, all these being directly associated with the feeling of desolation. It is assumed the fact that a child's expotion to different situations of stress, family conflicts, overtensions determines a high level of anxiety.

Anxiety, or more exactly, the anxious condition, becomes a very popular phenomenon for children and adults as well. Anxiety represents a psychological phenomenon that was defined in many different ways, but there is a common point of view, that one, of an ambiguous affective condition, diffused, agitation, oppression, tension, worry and reasonless fear, all these representing an unease. All these authors came to the conclusion that these have as important elements: the attitude of expecting any kind of danger, the feeling of imminence of a danger, constantly being alert and having the feeling of helplessness. The already accomplished research had in its sight the decline of anxiety and desolation of the child through a training program.

In order to present and describe this interfference, we decided to use in our study the following term: the psycho-interfference program. The reason for choosing this term is because this interfference was the type of a guideance having the following objectives: the promovation of a better condition, the personal development and prevention. (Baban, 2001)

The major problem towards our intervention was anxiety, directing its attenutaion.

After obtaining the parental agreement, there was selected a group of several children, those having the highest levels of anxiety, assessing two meetings on week of almost two hours.

1. Objectives and hypothesis

Objective: testing the efficiency of the psycho-interfference program for this group of children aged between 7-11 years by comparing the result of pretesting and postesting.

Hyphotesis HS1: There are signifcant differences between the phase of pretesing and posteting anxiety.

The tested Subhypothesis is:

HS1: The level of anxiety is decreaing because of the participation in the psycho-interfference program.

2. Variables

The independent A Variable   A = the psycho-interfference program

a1 = pretest

a2 = posttest

3. The description of the test sample

Ten children, aged 10, pupils in the third grade participated to the training. The participation to the training has been made only with the parents agreement.

4. Instruments

For testing the efficiency of the psycho-interfference program through the decreasing of anxiety was used: ''The asserted anxiety Scale of the child'' erected by McCandles, Castaneda, Palermo (Nut, 2003)

The employed methods in this program were adapted to any kind of sever symptom of anxiety.The steps followed in the program were:

FIRST SESSION

Objectives: Meeting the participants at the training

Activities:

Free disscusion in order to creat connections between the participants;

The active listening of every personal share;

To clearly undersand his or her situation from true sources;

To make the difference between acts and prejudices towards the others behaviours

SECOND SESSION

Objective: To learn to make the difference between his own responsability and blaming others.

Activities:

To look up in the dictionary for the words reaction and response;

To emphasize the distincitons between reacting and responding;

Pupils are given examples of different types of behaviour and asked to make the difference between reaction and response;

THIRD SESSION

Objectives: To learn techniques of relaxation for the management of problematic situations

Activities:

Discussions about the importance of relaxation in an effective management of problems;

Explanations for the difficulty of making decisions when you are upset or worried;

Exercises of progressive relaxation achieved;

FOURTH SESSION

Objective: To understand the fact that being neglected by others doesn't mean you are not good enough.

Activities:

Children are being told the story of '' The ugly duck'', following a discussion towards the resulted lesson;

They are asked to give examples when they felt bad or wanted to feel differently if the others opinions are always true.

FIFTH SESSION

Objectives: To understand the difference between the real danger and just the feeling of fear, and to discuss the best methods they can conquer fear.

Activities:

Children are asked to define fear. They are being explained the fact that anyone of us have several fears sometimes, for different reasons. They are also asked to draw an image of something that gave them a certain fear and maybe it still does.

Before the discussion they are explained that some things they are afraid of, such as a burning or an accident can occur, but other types of fears such as a monster, the dark man are only in their imagination.

While presenting their drawings they discuss if their fear is ''a real one'' or just an ''imaginery fear''.

Through this activity children will have been able to make the distinction between a real fear or just an imaginary fear and understand that there is no evidence for the imaginary fear to be a real one. It is important for them to see that the others have also fears and share together the solutions for a typical situation.

SIXTH SESSION

Objectives: To learn that there are many other different ways of expressing emotions;

Activities:

Several groups are formed, each child receiving a card with several situations: '' How do you feel?''

All the situations are read to them, and children are asked to identify the word that describes the best the way they feel in that particular situation.

After the identification of the word, every team is asked to mime the way they would express that particular emotion;

It is mentioned the fact that there can be multiple ways of expressing the same emotion.

SEVENTH SESSION

Objectives: To learn that they have to do everything in the best way possible, regardless of the result;

Activities:

Pupils are asked to give examples of moments when they tried to do something they thought was difficult and believed they couldn't make it.

The discussions towards the content of the activity were the following:

-before trying the experiment, how many of them thought they couldn't make it;

- in case of an unrealised experiment, they would have wanted not even try it;

- what do pupils believe, to try and probably not succeed or not trying at all;

It is important for them to understand that trying doesn't affect them at all. If they are trying and they do not succeed, their failure doesn't mean they are not able or that they will never learn that particular ability.

EIGHTH SESSION

Objective: To understand that perfection is impossible to reach and being imperfect doesn't mean you are incapable.

Activities: Children are asked if there is someone who has done something perfect. There are selected three volunteers from the group, being asked to perfectly juggle with three tennis balls. Another three pupils are asked to oberve, to determine if the assignment was perfectly accomplished. The activity is stopped after several minutes.

The discussions regarding the content of the activity had the following problems:

- If there was one volunteer capable to perfectly accomplished what he was asked;

-The feelings developed because of the fact that the activity hasn't been made perfect;

-how many of the volunteers felt they were incapable or felt stupid because of not managing to perfectly juggle with the balls;

It is important for pupils to recognnize the impossibility to reach perfection and avoid equivalating their personal value with the performance in different assignments.

5. *Presenting the results*

For hypothesis HS1- the level of anxiety changes (decreases) as a result of the participation in the psycho-inteffernnce program.

The obtained results are the following:

Descriptive results for HS1:

From a total of 10 pupils with a high level of anxiety, who participated in the training program 60% changed their level of anxiety from a higher one to a medium one, 20% changed their level of anxiety from a higher one to a lower one. Only 20 % have mantained their high level. (table no.1)

Table no. 1

The level of anxiety for pretes and postest

Pupils	Pretest		Posttest		Anxiety
	No.	%	No.	%	
	10	100	2	20	High
			6	60	Medium
	-	-	2	20	Low
Total	10	100	10	100	

Table no. 2

Satistic values of anxiety's variable pretest and postest

Anxiety	N	Minim	Maxim	Average	Standard Deviation
Pretest	10	30	41	37,6000	3,3066
Posttest	10	14	27	22,7000	4,6200

Interferential results for hypothesis HS1:

As a method of elaboration of information it has been chosen the Paired Samples T Test, because we have been working with two sample tests (pretest, posttest). Thus, the value of t is 8,316 just as 0,001. It has been stated the fact that there is a decrease in the level of anxiety because of the participation in the psycho-interfference program.

Table no. 3
The ''t'' Test for the average equality

ANXIETy	Coefficient t	Grades od liberty df	Account barrier
Anxiety	8,316	9	.001

The universe of children is magic but also threatening, full of mysteries and real or imagined dangers, which are forgotten by most of us especially to maturity.

Studies show that 90% of the children aged between 6 and 14 have specific phobia, while those aged between 6 and 12, 43% suffer already from a phobia. Most of the childhood's anxieties are not associated with psychological disturbances. The fear from the first years of the child becomes disorganised in the following years and at the age of 7-8, develops the anxiety of separation from parents. At the age of 10 the social and sexual anxiety appears. (Marian, 2004, p.92).

The anxiety of detachment becomes a very serious subject. The fear of being apart from parents or from home can develop a spontaneous stress and anxiety.

Children suffering from detachment anxiety have the symptoms of fear even when they go to go to school, excursions etc. They need a special attention from parents, they follow them everywhere, even during night they slip into their bed. When the separation is imminent they can develop somatic symptoms. Fear can take the form of several specific fantacies regarding accidents, sickness, death. Also, these children will develop conditions of desolation and aggression.

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DIFFICULTIES OF EXERCISING EDUCATIVE ROLES IN SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES

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Abstract: *The number of single-parent families has significantly increased in the recent years. The difficulties they are confronted with are an alarm for pedagogues, sociologists and psychologists. The article analyses the difficulties of exercising educative roles in single-parent families. A focus made among single parents highlights a series of aspects that require a solution, considering the consequences a divorce can have on the child`s evolution.*

Keywords: *single-parent family, the family`s educational function, difficulties of parenting*

Introduction

Family is the fundamental unit of a society and its problems were a central objective of reflection and analysis of human spirituality from times immemorial. Various sciences focus their attention on it for over a century: legal sciences (family law), economy (family budgets), demography (marital status, fertility), and psychiatry (with emphasis on family as therapeutic enhancer of mental diseases).

Today, the term "family" is used with various meanings, according to the context and it is almost impossible to find a universally accepted definition of the notion that would clear out all questions related to this topic. A widely accepted definition is the one given by Ernest W. Burgess and Harvey J. Locke (1971): „family is a group of people connected by marriage or blood ties, by adoption documents that build a home; they interact and communicate with each other in their various social roles: of husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother or sister who create and maintain a common culture." Another definition was formulated by Ann Hartman and Joan Laird in 1983. It says that family is: „a group of people united by marriage, filiation or kindred that are characterized by the same interests and mutual help."

A complex definition is given also by Murdock (1949): family is a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, of which at least two have socially acknowledged (approved) sexual relations and one or more children of their own or adopted whom they raise and care for.

It may be observed that the changes that occur in the family structure at present are in full resonance with the socio-economic, technical and cultural process and under these circumstances the family is subjected to further restructures.

In recent years, more and more families are made of one parent and a child or children. They are called single-parent families and because of their social vulnerability they benefit from a monthly allowance of support provided by the Emergency Ordinance on complementary family allowance and support allowance for single-parent families, art. 5-6. According to this ordinance, single-parent family consists of a single parent and the children placed in his/her care. "*By single person should be understood the person placed in one of the following situations: single (not married), widow, divorced, whose wife or husband is declared missing by a court order, whose wife or husband is arrested for a period of over 30 days or is doing time and therefore cannot support the children, is underage and in one of the above mentioned situations; was named legal guardian or was entrusted to foster one or more children, except professional foster parents*".

If we refer to real single-parent families we consider the particular situation of parental families where the child lives with one parent but away from the other.

The educational function of a family

The universal significance of family, as the core of each social system, is supported by its specific functions „which cannot be transferred to any other social unit": reproductive, educationally-socializing, economic, emotionally-therapeutic and supportive (Stănoiu 1983).

Discussing issues related to couple, Iolanda Mitrofan (1989) states the living history of humanity under all its aspects – biological, psychological, socio-cultural, economic and political are closely linked to the coexistence of man and woman one by, with and for each other as well as of their descendants. Family is a fundamental microsystem within the social microsystem. Family provides its members their basic needs (food, clothing), wielding its survival and security function; it provides social and emotional development for its members, teaches them socially accepted rules of behaviour, support in stressful times, the development of personality, education, social connections, independence etc.

The family environment facilitates communication among its members because it is a matrix for parents and children. It also should be capable of providing them emotional and financial support; social relations outside family, responsible relations with the community, the ability to support themselves but also accept the help of the others, flexibility in assigning roles and functions and mutual respect.

Sociologists share different views on the role of family, though few of these are generally accepted.

According to Filipescu I. the "basic" functions of family are: the reproductive, economic and educational function.

Family is the most important "transmission belt" of all cultural norms from one generation to the other (R. K. Merton, 1949). Most studies include the assumption that parents have an important educational role. It is also proven by the universal and invariable definition of a parent and a child: being a parent means transmitting, acting

as a go-between them and the society; parents have the power to transmit information and being a child means receiving the message conveyed by the parents (Stănciulescu, E., 2002).

In other words, the educational function of a family consist of all pieces of information, skills, values, traditions, norms and responsibilities that parents have to convey to their children. This function that refers to the parents` responsibility towards their children is regulated by the Family Code, art. 101. Thus, parents „have to raise the child, caring for its health and physical development, its education, learning and professional training according to its personality and according to the goals of the state so as to make it useful for the community. The Constitution of Romania, art 29, paragraph 6 states that „parents or tutors have the right to provide according to their own beliefs, the education of children under their guidance". We can certainly say that family is a system of personalities placed in mutual interdependence. Intense communicational and emotional exchanges take place inside the system. It is also a process that unfolds perceptions, assessments, interpersonal valuing, and marital, parental and filial processes.

Sharing responsibilities inside the family – a cause of problems

It is not easy to play a proper marital role. Problems occur even in couples whose personalities are compatible. Sometimes they don`t share the same concepts, aspirations, needs and urges.

Responsibilities are characterized by contents and how vague or clearly they are defined in different couples and in different historical periods. For example, the notion of good mother and wife in exotic cultures of Africa is slightly different from the peasant culture form Eastern Europe (Iluţ, 2005). In recent years, these roles have suffered major changes. The mother played the leading part in a child`s education in the past and the father cared for money (the picture of a traditional family). In modern society, partners pretend to share these roles, according to the circumstances. The marital couple is not a mere association of two people of opposing gender but a manner of synchronizing, compatibility and interchange.

The difficulties of exercising educative roles in single parent families

The Anglo-Saxon literature uses the term single parent family from the mid-1960s, and after 10 years this term received a French correspondent: monoparental families. The ways of becoming a monoparental family, which is generally centred around the mother, are: divorce or separation, death of a spouse, unplanned births outside marriage, the decision to have children without getting married.

According to a summary made by B. Bawin-Legros (1988), studies on single parent families conclude that the probability of identifying illegitimate births, abandonment of children, retarded psycho-emotional development of children, behaviour disorders, abandonment or school failure and even crime is higher in this category of population; the causes would be that single parent families adapt with difficulty to the current consumerist cultural model, being the new victims of poverty; they tend to self-replicate (children from such families were "likely" to repeat the great experience as adults), reproducing and expanding a whole chain of social problems.

Single parenthood, especially that resulting from divorce, is correlated with a decrease in the educational activities and especially with lower adequacy and

effectiveness of educational efforts; the maternal role is characterized in terms of overload (material, emotional, relational) of a relative lack of interest or a conflict of role (dominated by the problems created by the separation and their own emotional states, mothers are less available to the child exactly at times when s/he would require greater attention and effort), while the paternal role is analysed in terms of "paternal absence," "paternal deprivation", "paternal irresponsibility" (Stănciulescu, 2002, p 141).

Louise Miron presented a clear summary of the difficulties that the parents who find themselves left on their own, the mother in most cases, encounter in raising and educating children: ".... the ability to exercise properly the task of parenting is strongly diminished in the years following the separation. Grasping her own suffering, anxious, depressed, angry, marked by feelings against her former husband in terms of separation or the previous experiences, the mother (or father entrusted with the child) finds it difficult to stay focused on the child's needs, attentive to his/her manifestations. This is especially true when children are small and overwhelmed by anxiety or despair, eager to restore the family unit, sometimes in a state of shock. Fathers experience, just like their former spouses, extra anxiety, anger, depression, feelings of rejection and incompetence, compared to the un-separated parents with small children of the same age. They are afraid to take their children with them, they feel uprooted, without direction, without a home, while mothers who have children can live an extra sense of continuity, but they also experience the loss of identity, status, and a general feeling of helplessness. We therefore have parents in great suffering who must "adapt" to identity change as well as to their emotional capacity to adapt. It results that they communicate less well with children, treating them below their true age, showing often less consistent in what they require, less caring and controlling their good behaviour in a more shallow way (1987).

The thesis of educational deficiencies is supported with arguments regarding the psycho -emotional development of children and their social integration. Children under divorce are marked by numerous psychological and relational problems. Their reaction is different depending on age, gender, the time elapsed since the rupture occurred between the parents, the quality of past and present relationship with each of them, the climate of relationships between them during the divorce and after the separation, relationships with siblings, support provided by social networks, etc.

Other problems of single parent families are linked to their financial difficulties, often considered to be the victims of the "new impoverishment", overload and the role conflict experienced by women forced to add to their daily duties of care and education those of being the main provider of income and exercise of authority. Consequently, children who live in families like these are considered "risk population", sentenced to thicken the ranks of those living in poverty, of those failing school, or of deviants and offenders (cited 2005).

The single parent family nowadays

At present, the perception of single parent families is quite different than it was in the past. It happens more often to see a mother with a child or a father who supervises children. Modern principles of conjugal life rather highlight the benefit of

separation than the child's exposure to a tense climate and conflict between two parents who have nothing in common but remain together for the sake of the child.

To what extent does a parent succeed in assuming parental responsibilities so that the child wouldn`t to feel permanently the absence of the parent who left?

Objectives

This study aims to identify the difficulties encountered by a single parent in the process of raising the child.

Methodology

To capture these difficulties we conducted a focus group attended by five mothers and two fathers with children of school age. In all cases the single parent family was the result of a separation, in no case the result of a death. The cases are somewhat similar in the fact that each of the families has an experience of 2-4 years as a single parent.

Given the method of data collection, the study is a qualitative one, so we cannot extrapolate the results on the whole population of single- parent families. However, most of the problems faced by these families are common, being differentiated only by features related to their own situation, their personality type and the conditions they live in. Sample families have been identified through personal network.

Results

The discussions led in the focus group revealed a number of difficulties of economic, social and educational nature. In my presentation I will refer to this last category of problems.

Parents reported the following major problems:
- Very little time spent with the child due to busy work schedules;
- The blame that the child puts on the remaining parent;
- The inability to be with the child at certain times;
- The fatigue and stress that lead to downtime and irritability;
- The obsessive fear of not being able to raise the child well;
- Lack of financial and material support;
- Tensions and conflicts due to misunderstanding manifestations of the child;
- Frustration caused by the many duties that overwhelm them;
- The tendency to protect and compensate for the absent parent with gifts;
- Exaggerated concern for the emotional and financial welfare of the child;
- The need for relaxation/leisure for oneself;
- Difficulty in being consequent regarding constraints or punishment;
- Difficulty in being consistent so as to create a proper attitude or the development of a desirable social behaviour;
- Insufficient time to assist with homework, to discuss and communicate on various topics of interest to the child.

Parents have reported almost the same problems. According to everyone's situation some problems distinguished themselves. What particularly emerged was the importance of the support provided by grandparents or close relatives and the difficulty of educating the child who has suffered the loss of his father:

"It is very difficult especially in the first months to tell the child not to do certain things because that is the right way. In front of you there is not a student... it is your

own child who suffers enormously and you have to find the middle way, not too hard ...but not too protective either Very difficult." (-DD – teacher, divorced for 3 years, child aged 7)

"A big problem for me was to abstain myself from giving him expensive things (phone, tablet) on which I wanted to compensate for the pain caused by his mother's departure. After 10 hours of labour, dishevelled and exhausted, I had to give explanations to a child who expected a lot of answers that I....did not have." (DC- firm manager - child aged 9).

Of course, there have been signalled different patterns regarding the life of single-parent families, based on the remaining parent`s life style. Thus, due to differences in exercising the parental role between mothers and fathers, the biggest difficulty is filling the role of the parent who has left/doesn`t live with the child. The following table contains the weaknesses that exist in child raising according to the parent who the child remained with.

Table 1. Difficulties signalled by the single parent

Difficulties signalled by the single parent	
Single father	**Single mother**
Impossibility to spend more time with the child (to prepare meals for the child, help with homework, give advice in minor situation, caring for him)	Major difficulties in covering expenses
Communication difficulties (more frequent if the child is a boy) involving difficulties in playing the role of the child`s confident	Exhaustion, chronic tiredness
Impossibility to give him maternal affection, to be patient or available to understand certain things (These aspects have been mentioned by children who signal the father`s minuses)	Difficult to provide independent child (rather it is smothered affection and spoiled)
Poor responsibility taking abilities in household, housekeeping in general.	Oscillating behaviour between being authoritarian (to supply the father`s role) and overprotective

Irrespective of the remaining parent, both mention a high level of anxiety sprung from fear of not raising up the child properly. Still, this feeling is more pronounced in women. Discussions in the focus-group described a more relaxed behaviour at single fathers who are helped by a woman (grandma). They consider that a woman`s presence around a child is absolutely necessary, especially if the child is little. Single mothers are more careful with the events in a child life, with the education and therefore are overloaded with tasks which lead to emotional and physical exhaustion.

Under these circumstances, the need for single-parent family support is necessary. Currently, there is an insignificant allowance, but emotional and educational needs are not covered.

The table below gives us suggestions on support manners for single parents raising up their children.

Table 2. Support forms for single-parent families

Nr. Crt.	Support forms mentioned by single parents
1	Increasing the allowance for single-family support
2	Free access to certain services (playground, cinemas, museums)
3	Day care centres which provide educational services, leisure activities, foreign language classes.
4	Foundation of break type centres for parents
5	Counselling services for parents and

Recommendations

Considering the fact that the number of single-parent families is continuously increasing and that its effects on children are significant (deviating behaviour, depression), we consider that sustainable measures should be taken to prevent their marginalization. The complexity of the situation in which a parent and his child find themselves after a separation is acknowledged by everyone. Support centres for single-parent families should be opened. These centres should provide counselling services, mediation but also real solutions for who don`t have support from their extended family. More families facing divorce could have been saved if we had had free counselling services or they had appealed to mediation. More couples could have saved their relationship.

Social services should increase the allowance; single-parent families are the mostly at the risk of poverty.

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EDUCATION POLICIES UNDERLYING SOUTH KOREA'S ECONOMIC SUCCESS

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Abstract: *Countries' education level is the most important driving force for economic development. Scientific researchs demonstrate that there is significant relationship between education level and development elements which are economic growth, political and social developments. South Korea was on the border of starvation after the second world war although today it is among the world's most advanced economies. It is known that education policy and stable policies in this field have important role South Korea's phenomenal success in area of development. The purpose of this study, is to examine South Korea's educational policies underlying economic success. In this respect, the findings obtained from the literature are evaluated and fundamental constituents of education in South Korea are described in eight different titles. The eight fundamental constituents are as follows: (1) higher allocation of general budget for education, (2) importance of teacher training, (3) quality approach in higher education, (4) large targets in field of science and technology, (5) importance of English training, (6) using effectine information technologies in education, (7) gifted education, (8) high teacher salaries.*

Keywords: *South Korea, education system, educational policy, educational planning.*

1. Introduction

It is a well-known fact that education serves as an engine by means of labor, research and innovation (Green & Ferguson, 2011). Successful countries in education has developed economies due to their capacity to adapt according to the needs of the age. Researches show that there is a significant relationship between economic indicators and PISA exam results. This view supported with the data elicited from the most successful five countries in PISA (Finland, Korea, the Netherlands, Japan and Canada) which have higher national income of per capita (Aydın, Sarıer & Uysal, 2012).

South Korea which attracts attention with its outstanding performance in the PISA exam has transformed from a country that relies on agricultural production to one of the largest 15 economies of the world in short time which doesn't exceed a human

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lifespan. On the other hand, South Korea had a major bottleneck in economic terms and asked for external food aid after Civil War II. According to The International Monetary Fund's findings, it increased national income of per capital $88 to $31.949 from 1965 to 2012 (IMF, 2013).

South Korea has managed to capture 10% growth rate in 1999 despite having experienced the Great Asian crisis in 1997. In 1970's South Korean companies began to export ships, steel, electronic home appliances and entering tender of international grand projects but in the middle of 1960s their products merely met minimal workforce based simple manufacturing standards such us textiles, garments and toys. For the period starting from 1980s to 1990s semi-conductor memory cards, computers, automobiles, mobile phones, LCD and plasma televisions as well as products that require advanced technology has become the major export products (Yoo & Winsor, 2009).

South Korea is one of the leading countries in the world about Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that has managed to adapt in education. With the advances achieved in distance education offers consulting services to other countries. About fifty years ago, only 5% of high school graduates can take higher education in South Korea but this rate is increased over 90% today. To provide rapid development, there are important support of private sector beside government in the area of education (Kutanis & Tunç, 2010). Especially R&D activities are supported and this has contributed development of country's technological infrastructure thanks to integrated private sector to education.

When Korea's economic success is evaluated, its developed economy has evolved in parallel with its improments in education. In this country, the educational system is shaped according to the needs of the market. In other words, South Korea has shown a rapid development in line with its educational plan which is created based on industry's needs and expectations while maintaining a supply-demand balance (Peuch, 2011). The main factors underlying all this progress involve fitting education policies and strategies, appropriate planning, implementation and evaluations.

The purpose of this study is examine educational policies underlying South Korea's success which belonged to the category of developing countries almost 30 years ago. Nowadays, though, it finds a place amongst the economically developed countries.

2. Education system from past to present in South Korea

South Korea's Ministry of Education is responsible for all kinds of education since 1948. It is seems that the name of Ministry is changed many times when considering the historical background. In 2001, its name has turned into "Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MOEHRD)". It is called "Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST)" after through merger "Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development" and "Ministry of Science and Technology" on 29 February 2008 (NUFFIC, 2013). It is separated from "Ministry of Science and Technology" and operates under the name "Ministry of Education"(MOE) until 23 March 2013.

Ministry of Education represents a faction of the government that is responsible for the creation and application of the policies regarding science and education. The new ministry aims to train self-confident Korean citizens who contribute to the welfare of the society while promoting democratic developments for the country and the human race in line with the "Hognik Ingan" ideology. the Ministry plans and coordinates educational policies, formulates policies that govern the primary, secondary and higher educational institutes, publishes and approves text-books, provides administrative and financial support for all levels of the school system, supports local education offices and national universities, operates the teacher training system and is responsible for overseeing lifelong education and developing human resource policies (MOE, 2014a).

The school system in South Korea consists of six years of primary or elementary school, three years of middle school, three years of high school, and two years of junior college or four years of college or university. In Korea, children must attend classes from primary school to middle school (Kim, 2005). Primary school starting age is seven and all primary schools are free except of some private schools. Three type education are given by high schools such as general, vocational and other (foreign language, fine arts etc.). Higher education institutions provides seven different types service which are chosen by students (Bakioğlu & Baltacı, 2013).

According to UNESCO, Korea's education system can be explained with four words: Democratization, autonomy, localization and globalization (Peuch, 2011). Other prominent features of South Korean education system are listed in the below (Lee, 2008):
- Education rapid expansion in all levels of schooling
- Efficiency in policy implementation
- High equity in education
- Zeal for education
- Education extreme competition for college entrance
- Over-centralized educational administration
- Lack of diversity
- Debate between excellence and equity
- Low confidence in school education
- High private expenditure for tutoring

Korean education system is renewed constantly in accordance with the terms of era. In this respect, updates are dynamic with obtain of targeted acquisitions besides training models and standards.
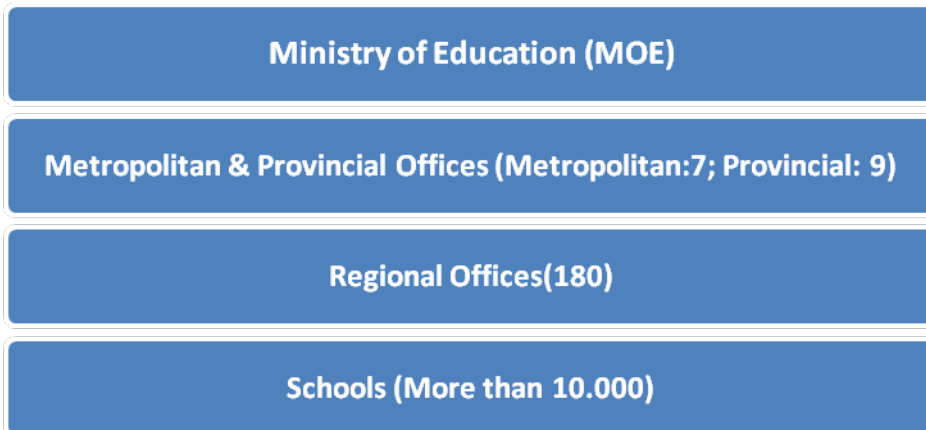
Figure 1. Structure of Education Management System, developed by Lee (2008)

South Korea's structure of education management system is shown at Shape 1. Although it may seems like there is a horizontal hierarchy structure with a South Korean education system has an important role in the local governments.

In 1980s, informal education began to take shape with qualitative changes such as adoption of lifelong learning concept and restructuring education system according to these changes. In the 1990s, local autonomy has become an important ingredient in education policy agenda. The main objective is to support vocational training within the scope of lifelong learning. Thus, the number of qualified people and trained new generation would be increased across the country (NUFFIC, 2011).

The national curriculum sets strict regulations for the number of school days, the subjects to be taught for each school year, and the time allocation for each subject in each school year in South Korea.

The national curriculum provides criteria for the development of textbooks and general guidelines for teaching-learning activities and methods of assessment. However, some changes are made by local education authorities and some school units (Lee, 2008).

The national curriculum is updated periodically to meet emerging needs of new educational demands and to include new academic disciplines to the program (MOE, 2014b). In this context, it has been changed seven times 1954 until today. The most recent curriculum change is started to apply at primary education in 2000 and has spread to all school systems until 2004. New curricula gives the opportunity to move away from traditional rote learning, thanks to provide more flexibility to meet student's individual needs and to increase independent learning activities (Bakioğlu & Baltacı, 2013).

Before appling the new national curriculum, referred to as the 7th national curriculum, the goverment pushed public schools to change curriculum and teaching methods, which was referred to as "open education", especially for elementary schools. One of key features 7th curriculum is that having selectable program of curricula. Additionally one of the major aim of the 7th curriculum was to reduce the size of existing bational curriculum bu 30% and to give autonomy to school of teacher based curricula (Kim, 2004).

Unlike in the past, Seventh Curriculum is student-centered curriculum which emphasized student-focused, individual abilities, aptitudes and creativity. This curriculum should have a trained person's characteristics are defined as follows (MOE, 2014b):

▪ A person seeking individuality on the basis of development of the whole personality

▪ A person who shows a certain capacity for basic creativity skills

▪ A person who led a career pioneer in wide range of cultures

▪ A person that add new value as well as understanding national culture

▪ A person who contributed to the development of society based on democratic civil consciousness

While "open education" and "performance assessment" focused on the "learning process", the 7th curriculum, which began to be applied to schools in 200, centered "achievement level". "Open education" policy begins with performance evoluation at the office of local education assessment, in 1996 and its place of learning process is emphasized for implementation all schools. The fundemental idea in the implementation of this policy aims to continued establishment of the school community, student-centered curriculum and evaluation procedures of a variety of student at school and outside of school. Also open education intended to reach the maximum number of students. University entrance examination has to be improved for performance evaluation and it is hightlighted that the comparatively system would be better instead of note. These improvements followed policy plans such as evaluation student success at elementary and secondary education and improvement school control systems (Kim, 2004).

3. The State of South Korea in International Student Assessment Exam

Success of countries and education adequecy are evoluted with different exams all over the world. PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) is one of the efficient and comprehensive exam, which is prepared to determine student's situation, who complated compulsary education students, 15 years old in OECD. PISA compares efficiency student's knowledge in view of today's information society. Structure of PISA determines student success multi dimensionally about mathematics, science and reading. The evaluation was made about problem solving at 2003 but this is not continued.

PISA is managed by cooperation Education Department of OECD and countries' ministry of education. Each country has its own exam committee. Students attending exam are selected randomly using a software named Keyquest. In 2012, totally 65 countries - 34 member and 31 non-member countries of OECD- participated the exam. 28 million students were represented by 510 thousand students. Countries made education planning and identified new policy and strategy with using success of PISA which is made period of three years.

Table 1

South Korea's Success of PISA

	2000		2003		2006		2009		2012	
	Score	**Rank**	**Score**	**Rank**	**Score**	**Rank**	**Score**	**Rank**	**Score**	**Rank**
Reading	525	7	534	4	556	1	539	2	536	5
Mathematic	547	3	542	3	547	3	546	4	554	5

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Science	552	1	538	2	522	11	538	6	538	7
Problem solving	-	-	550	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: "PISA 2012 Results in Focus", adapted from OECD (2014)

South Korea's annual PISA results are given at Table 1. According to the table, It is possible to see South Korea has first place about science in 2000, problem solving in 2003, reading in 2006. Besides, South Korea has left behind lots of developed countries with taking higher points in four different areas of OECD average between 2000 and 2012. When South Korea's PISA results is evaluated, it is possible to say that South Korea has a prosperous graph.

There is a strong relationship between South Korea's PISA results, education policy and examination system. For example, South Korea's examination system gives more importance to reading rather than science which leads to a progress in students' reading acquisition. In addition, according to Lee (2008) South Korea's area of reading success is depend on factor listed below:

▪The new national curriculum put more emphasis on critical and creative thinking skills through reading and writing.

▪Reading assessment more focused on thinking ability.

▪The university entrance system changed. Essay test that assesses both writing skills and logical thinking abilities introduced.

Educating children from elite universities in Seoul is a family prestige at South Korea. The old entrance examination system that relied entirely upon a highly objective evaluation greatly emphasizing memorization and rote learning brought students "examination hell" and imposed heavy burdens on parents who lavished their money on private educational expenditures for their children. This old system has amended several times cause of hightlighting rote learning and mechanic test solving skills. It has fundementally changed with part of education reform which began in 1995. The new system brings out student's personal school file records, article writing and interview skills with general knowledge and aptitude test. It aims to make meaningful contribution for high school students development of a versatile which means return to the main task (Lee, 2000).

TIMMS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) is a mathematic and science tendency screening research which is prepared by IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) in Netherland. Aim of TIMSS' preparation is making more understandable function of education system for curriculum specialists, researchers and managers who can effect education policy. It determines students knowledge and skills multi-dimentionally. TIMSS, which is made per four annual period, is prepared to evaluate student's mathematics and science success with using a standard scope. Besides, it is designed to determine how realized mathematics and science learning and teaching in school and to measure and evaluate differences between national education systems all around the world (Yücel, Karadağ & Turan, 2013).

Table 2
South Korea's Success of TIMMS at 8th Grade

	1995		1999		2003		2007		2011	
	Score	**Rank**	**Score**	**Rank**	**Score**	**Rank**	**Score**	**Rank**	**Score**	**Rank**
Mathematic	607	2	587	2	589	2	597	2	613	1
Science	565	4	549	5	558	3	553	4	560	3

Source: "International Database", adapted from TIMMS (2013)

South Korea's annual TIMMS results are given at Table 2. According to the table, South Korea took place in first five and left behind many OECD countries between 1995 and 2011. Intercalarily, 42 countries participated TIMMS exam in 2011. 8. grade students of South Korea has settled first position field of mathematic and third position field of science.

There is significant impact of the reform movement in the field of education under South Korea's achievements at TIMSS. For instance, in the context of the curriculum, the number of required courses have been reduced, elective courses have been increased. In addition, it provides tend to be composed of creative education, which became experimental activities such as presentation, discussion and experiments instead of exam-oriented rote learning. In other words, the new curriculum, which encourages for problem solving and creativity, gives the possibility to use more power and initiative to local authorities and schools (Bakioğlu & Baltacı, 2013).

4. Success Factors of South Korea in Education
a) Higher allocation of general budget for education

The South Korean government invests heavily in education. Education expenditure was 2,5% of total budget in 1951 but it is raised to 17% in 1966 (Porter, 1998). This constant increase has continued since the mid-1980s between 2000-2008 and approximately 15% of total public expenditure is shared.

Table 3
Education spending ratio of total public expenditure in some countries

Country	**2000**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**
Norway	14	16,7	16,2	16,5	16,1
Swiss	15,6	16,2	16,3	16,1	16,7
South Korea	**-**	**15,3**	**15,2**	**14,8**	**15,8**
Denmark	15,4	15,7	15,4	15,4	15
U.S.	14.4	13,7	14,7	14,1	13,8
Israel	13,8	-	13,3	13	13,7
Australia	13,8	14,1	13,8	13,7	12,9
Belgium	12	11,4	12,3	12,4	12,9
Finland	12,2	12,6	12,6	12,5	12,4
Russia	-	-	-	-	11,9
Netherlands	11,2	12,2	12	11,7	11,9
Spain	10,9	11	11,1	11,1	11,2
Austria	11	10,9	11	11,1	11,2
England	11	11,8	11,9	11,7	11,1

France	11	10,6	10,6	10,7	10,6
Germany	10,1	-	9,7	10,3	10,4
Turkey	10,4	9,5	9,4	10,4	10,3

Source: "Public Spending on Education", adapted from Worldbank (2012)

The proportion of total public expenditure on education budget is given at Table 2 for between 2000-2008. As seen in this table, according to 2008 data South Korea is the third country which has the largest share of education in the public budget after Norway and Switzerland. Additionally, it is said to possible that South Korea's rate of shared budget on education is bigger than most of OECD countries.

In parallel with the investment in education, South Korea located the highest literacy rates in the world among countries. Besides, it seems that high school and college graduates has majority. According to official data of South Korean Statistical Institute (KOSIS), employment-labor ratio is given at Table 4. Table shows that economically active population number is 25.873 million until 2013.

Table 4

Employment-Labor Ratio (2013)

By Education Level	Pop. 15 years old and over Thousand person	Economically active pop. Thousand person	Not economically active pop. Thousand person	Participation rate Percent
Primary school graducates & under	6.227	2.444	3.783	39,2
Middle school graducates	5.790	2.333	3.457	40,3
High school graducates	16.087	10.183	5.904	63,3
University graducates & over	13.992	10.914	3.078	78
Total	42.096	25.873	16.223	61,5

Source: "Economically Active Population Survey", adapted from KOSIS (2014)

b) Importance of teacher training

The idea of education quality can not exceed the quality teachers' is adopted by Ministry of Education. Therefore, contribution to the professional development of teachers was placed great importance in South Korea (Kim, 2005). This qualitative rise is linked with research which are made to ensure that teachers used technology effectively in education. In parallel, "flipped classroom" is adopted by a large portion of teachers in South Korea.

Reforms of teacher training were initiated in South Korea. Graduated from standard schools was enough for being teacher between 1945 to 1961. In that period, a demand of more teachers was expected with increased students. This lack was

remedied by hiring graduates of standard and high schools, who completed 18 weeks education period at education centers. All the regular schools were converted to two-year vocational college of teachers in 1961 (Bakioğlu ve Baltacı, 2013). After 1984, it was stipulated that completing a four-year undergraduate education was required for being teacher. Today, most of teachers are trained by 11 universities, which are affliated with the Korean National University, such as Department of Primary Education at the Korea National University of Education and Ewha Womans University *(MOE, 2014b).*

Teachers are under no obligation after graduating to finish their master's or doctoral programs. Teaching certificate exam is not required to be teacher. However, it is necessary to take teacher placement test to be able to teach in state institutions. The first phase which covered %30 of the exam, is designed to measure general education courses. The second phase includes open-ended questions and interviews about field and professional knowledge. The teaching profession is preferred by students in South Korea, cause of respected by family, having lifelong validity of teaching certificate after received, exemption from compulsory military service *and* a guaranteed retirement age of 65 *(Kwon, 2004; Kim, 2005; Kim, 2007).*

c)   Quality approach in higher education

Korean Ministry of Education has launched a program called "Brain Korea 21" which successfully trains scientist in higher education in 1999. The main purpose of this program is to create world-class research universities which supports a platform for the production of original ideas and creative technologies to fulfill its mission. A large increase in the number of international publications of universities and faculty exchange mobility is provided thanks to this program. In continuation of the same program, a decision was taken in 2005, within two years the number of national universities to be reduced from 50 to 35 and is intended to reduce the quota of students of these universities. In this context, it is decided that the number of private universities is reduced %25 and its number decreased to 271 from 358. Universities participate in the program is planned restructuring or merging with this method (International Qualifications Assessment Service, 2009, as cited in Bakioğlu & Baltacı, 2013). Drastic changes gives positive results in a short time which is made regarding the provision of qualitative development in higher education, have increased the international competitiveness of universities in Korea. According to this report, South Korea's three universities are in the top 100.

QS World University Rankings in the United Kingdom which ranks 29 different field of science reflects the results of an extensive research. This study took place as a result of the meetings with 46,000 academics and 25,000 graduate and it has provided important information for the comparison of the performance of universities. Besides, the fact that Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology is recognized as the institution with the highest progress amongst the top 100 universities is a prominent development (QS, 2013).

d)   Large targets in field of science and technology

South Korea has managed to become a country of interest with stunning development thanks to the success of economic development, innovation and R & D activities in the world. South Korea took place under the OECD avarage with GDP per

capita and expenditure on R & D activities untill 1980s. South Korea reversed this trend completely thanks to a remarkable growth has made a major breakthrough in technological terms (Arslanhan & Kurtsal, 2010).

After 1985, South Korea has accomodated selective international brands from all over the world in field of automotive, electronic and telecommunication. In particular, the brands in the electronics industry has become a competitor to large companies all over the world with their innovation efforts and amount of exports. South Korea make an investment in area of science and technology to produce this increasing. For instance, South Korea has reserved the share of budget which is $50 billion between 1994 to 2015 because it aims to become in top five about telecommunication network (Selwyn ve Brown, 2000).

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) published a list which includes top ten countries in patent application in 2012. Table 5 shows that South Korea is ranked fourth in the world with its high number of patent applications in 2010 (WIPO, 2012). When the patent number per million capita is considered, it is possible to say that, South Korea has better position than USA, China and Japan.

Table 5

Top 10 Countries in Patent Application Number (2010)

Id	Country	Patent Application Number
1	U.S.	490,226
2	China	391,177
3	Japan	344,598
4	**South Korea**	**170,101**
5	Germany	592,45
6	Russia	42,500
7	Canada	35,449
8	India	34,287
9	Australia	24,887
10	Brazil	22,686

Source: "IP Facts and Figures", adapted from WIPO (2012)

There are two significant role which is provided high patent application number in South Korea. One of these is a developing R&G system and the another one is an education investment (Arslanhan & Kurtsal, 2010).

e)   *Importance of English Training*

South Korea places great emphasis on English education. Studies that involve English curriculum and practice have started in this field in order to aid pilot implementations which have began from early-mid-high schools in 2008 (Selwyn ve Brown, 2000). Importing teachers whose main language is English, is one of the effective method in English training. South Korea has employed assistant to come their country in secondary schools thanks to providing coordination with American universities. For example, Wisconsin University in the United States is in communication with the education directorate of the most populous Korea's province

which is called Gyeonggi. Highly qualified students at the Wisconsin University can request to become teacher with this in Gyeonggi (Koru & Åkesson, 2011).

Korean President recognizes the value of training in English for economic development in 2008. Then, a radical plan which envisages all courses taught in English in schools until 2010, was announced. However, the suggestion could not be applied cause of intense reaction of educators' and parents'. Instead, the Ministry of Education has decided to be cultivated and certified English teachers via new English Education Program (TEE). In this context, thousands of teachers have been subjected an intensive program of six months. TEE has created a stimulating effect for participant teachers to use English in the classroom and to plan more student-centered activities (EF, 2013). Especially concurrently with the importance given to learning English, reading development planned and this situation has a positive impact on PISA results.

Korean students begin to learn English language from grade 3 in primary schools (Kim, 2005). Starting from importance of English education should be given at an early age, English training is planned to start of primary schools's first grade instead of the third grade. Besides, it is aimed to give "native speaker (the language spoken as mother tongues-speaking)" to each secondary school. In this context, teachers who has knowledge of English, has priority when they are selected (Choi, 2006).

f) *Using effective information technologies in education*

27.5 students are present in each primary level classroom in South Korea. The average class size is 21,2 at the primary level in OECD countries. The avarege of lower secondary education level class size is 23,4 in OECD countries though this ratio is 34,7 in South Korea (OECD, 2010). Using technology effectively in education explains success of international exam despite of crowd classes.

The information technology background and web opportunities of South Korea is designed globally. For instance, the average computer number for each student is 5,8 and %70,7 of schools have internet 2Mbps internet connection. Majority of Korea public can access internet anytime and anywhere (UNESCO, 2010). Negative effects of crowded classrooms decreases thanks to this method.

There is an autonomous examination system in Korea to evaluate the education system. This exam is known CBAS and unlike PISA it uses videos consistent with simulation and conceptual frame in real life. Students' information and communication technology ability is measured using this method (Lee, 2008).

South Korea provides consulting services to developing countries about using information and communication technologies in education, planning and related to the execution of various projects. In this context, totally 11 countries are provided consultancy services between 2006-2009 (UNESCO, 2010). All these findings shows that there is an important role of information and communication technologies on South Korea's education system. This integrated relationship provide positive effect on development of South Korea. There is a parallel relationship between slope of Korea's PISA scores and spreading of distance education in years.

Korean Ministry of Education has introduced legislation in the field of Science and Technology (MEST) to established cyber universities in 2001. All cyber universities are establised to support KNOU (Korea National Open University) which

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founded 1972. 18 cyber colleges and universities has been provide undergraduate and graduate education in various science fields since 2010. Besides, KNOU educate totally 30.000 of 170.000 students in cyber universities (Jung ve diğerleri, 2011). The demand of distance education has been increased at higher education with developing cyber universities concept.

The success of South Korea's policy on e-learning and information and communication technologies is provided thanks to mechanism of covered system, secured support and budget, successfull partnerships between public and private sector, appropriate skill development, effective monitoring, evaluating system and rules that are defined in legal framework. The effective instrumental in the success can be summarized as below (UNESCO, 2010):

- Systematic policy implementation;
- Capacity of implementing organizations;
- Implementing policy through liaison and cooperation between organizations;
- Sustainable financing of ICT in education;
- Well-established policy monitoring and evaluation systems;
- Consumer-centred policy implementation;
- Shift in policy to respond to technological and societal change.

g) *Gifted education*

Having qualified manpower is the most important factor for the development of the country. Qualified manpower is closely associated with number of outstanding talents. In other words, country's development is not possible in the real sense without giving importance to the education of gifted. Besides, superior brain power is revealed through education in all areas. Therefore, this restricted human resource is an extremely important economic factor (Erkal, 1992, as cited in Levent, 2011). South Korea has been remarkable with significant strides in the field of gifted education. South Korea which is leading revision on gifted education, has made the largest investment in the training of teachers. In this context, teachers who are involved in gifted education, has been trained with in-service training between 1990 and 1994 thanks to collaboration of Korean Educational Development Institude (KEDI) and United Nations Development Program (UNAP).

In 1995, the goverment has given permission to students for skipping a grade with a new education law. This policy has been implemented since 1996 and gifted students can begin elementary schools at an early age with outstanding academic achievement. All of the schools have authority to decide to step up with a careful evaluation by reaching an agreement with parents (Lee, Cho & Lee, 2006). Additionally, regular schools provide gifted students with enrichment programs. After schools, enrichment programs are offered in various fields such as science, mathematics, music, dance, foreign languages and arts (Cho & Kim, 2003).

The Gifted Students Education Promotion Act was established in 2000. The Revision of the Gifted and Promotion Act has been issued in the same year. It supports economically disadvantaged gifted student programs to meet special educational needs (Jeong, Seo, Kim & Kang, 2006). Thus, more than 1800 students participated the program which has been initiated to identify and educate gifted students lack socio

economic rights. These students are selected for the program on the basis of critical thinking tests instead of standardized tests.

Table 6

Quantitative Data of Gifted Education in South Korea

Institution Type	Quantitiy	Total Student Number
Gifted School	4	1147
Science High School	17	4320
Gifted Towards Custom Classes	3521	64.283
Towards Gifted Centers (Provincial Education Office Optional)	357	34.447
Towards Gifted Centers (at the university)	61	8644
Total	3960	112.865

Source: "Suggestions for Gifted Educaiton in Turkey", Bakioğlu & Levent, 2013, *Journal of Gifted Education Research, 1*(1).

A multi-model which includes four different type, is implemented for gifted education in South Korea. Population of this country had been 50.062.000 since 2009 and The special education had been provided to 112.865 gifted students since 2012 by goverment. In addition, Table 6 shows that there are four formal school for gifted students (Bakioğlu & Levent, 2013).

h)   High teacher salaries

One of the most important factor which effects employees' productivity and job satisfaction, is salary received in return. Teachers' salaries are upper than many countries and it increases according to the degree in South Korea. In addition, teachers' salaries are higher than other university graduates only three countries which are Spain, Portugal and South Korea. According to the PISA data if the countries are compared, there is a relationship between students' performance and teachers salaries (Süngü, 2012). Thereto, the continuous development of teachers is forced paralelly with elevation of teachers's salaries. In other words, high salary brings extra obligation.

Tablo 7

Teacher Salaries in some OECD Countries

Country	The institution of teacher work							
	Primary				Secondary			
	Starting salary	Salaries in next 10 years	Salaries in next 15 years	Most of Senior Teacher Salaries	Starting salary	Salaries in next 10 years	Salaries in next 15 years	Most of Senior Teacher Salaries
Swiss	53.599	67.942	-	83.105	61.437	79.032	-	94.038
Germany	53.026	-	64.491	70.332	57.357	-	69.715	79.088
S.Korea	**27.476**	**41.268**	**48.146**	**76.423**	**27.476**	**41.268**	**48.146**	**76.423**
Austria	32.973	40.124	45.105	64.510	33.398	35.975	46.317	67.444
Netherlands	38.941	53.256	63.695	66.117	38.941	53.256	63.695	66.117
Ireland	34.604	49.060	54.954	62.166	34.604	49.060	54.954	62.166
Japan	26.031	38.665	45.741	57.621	26.031	38.665	45.741	59.197
Denmark	43.461	48.616	50.332	50.332	44.710	58.347	58.347	58.347
Canada	35.534	53.631	56.349	56.349	35.534	53.869	56.569	56.569
Spain	39.693	43.222	45.689	55.603	40.308	43.945	46.479	56.536
U.S.	37.507	43.841	45.950	56 364	38.012	44.891	49.414	56.303

Portugal	30.946	37.152	39.424	52.447	30.946	37.152	39.424	52.447
France	28.653	33.970	36.159	52.090	28.892	34.209	36.398	52.352
Australia	34.746	49.144	49.144	49.144	34.746	49.144	49.144	49.144
Finland	33.034	38.601	40.917	43.372	34.008	41.636	43.302	45.900
England	30.289	44.269	44.269	44.269	30.289	44.269	44.269	44.269
Italy	29.418	32.588	35.922	44.059	29.418	33.380	36.928	46.060
OECD Avg.	**30.216**	**37.213**	**39.934**	**48.177**	**31.348**	**38.899**	**41.665**	**50.119**

Source: "Education at a Glance 2013", adapted from OECD (2013)

The salaries of teachers are examined according to institution of teacher work (primary-secondary schools) and teachers seniority (started, 10 years seniority, 15 years seniority and most senior teachers). According to the table, teachers' gross salaries are changed between $27.476 and $76.423 in South Korea. Teacher salaries rises depending on professional experiance and the wage is much more than many OECD countries. If look at the senior primary and secondary teachers' salaries ($76.423), it indicates that highly more than OECD average ($50.119).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

When developed countries are examined it shows human resources is the greatest treasure instead of the wealth of underground resources. These countries educate required number and characteristic of manpower thanks to well functioning education system. Economic development is possible with develop technology to increase production, use effective all natural resources and capital. In other words, most important factor of economic development comes trained manpower.

South Korea has become an economically developed country which was dependent on external aid case in the 1960s, since 2005 engaged in technology transfer to the outside world. Five Year Economic Development Plans has a major role in the development of South Korean which is prepared by "Economic Planning Board" between 1962 to 1997. Analyzing the factors underlying this progress, producing skilled manpower seems to be a very important place in education. In particular, the education reform movement began in the 1980s reflections has been the driving force of the economy by meeting the needs and expectations of the business world.

Scientific researches shows that there is a significant relationship between economic indicators and the international student assessment exam results. South Korea is attracted attention with the success in PISA and TIMMS which are the international student assessment exams. In this country, students can learn a time of need thanks to adopt the concept of lifelong learning, aiming at learning at work and prefer technological possibilities instead of classroom. Besides, South Korea's national assessment exam CBAS gives priority to the technological competence because of this approach.

The national curriculum appication based on equality of opportunity in education is an important factor of South Korea's success in education. The student centered approach is adopted in the national curriculum after 1987. The timing of this practice occurs in line with the economic development of South Korea. In addition, it wouldn't be misleading to state that innovation and technology play critical roles in Korea's education success within the last 30 years.

In addition to South Korean being a World-renowed tech giant and the prevalence of the use of information technology in education, the education system drifts away from standard education understanding and shifts towards the online environment day by day. Distance education has been adopted by the community and has brought a solution to many problems despite of negative opinion defenders of traditional education. The major of the problems is inequality of opportunity in education and crowded classrooms. In particular, South Korea gives significant support to lifelong learning due to the adopted adult education policies. Therefore, both the education level of society and achievements in field of business are increased.

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DEVELOP THE ABILITY TO READ IN SMALL CLASSES

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Abstract: *It is often believed that students' reading is limited to belletristic. Due to this reason the other teachers are less interested in students' reading, except the school textbooks. Students' lectures should be more varied and embrace all fields: mathematics, physics, chemistry, computer science, geography, history, modern and classical languages. The teacher must be to date with everything that is in his area and inform the students on these things to prevent the situation in which the student does not know what to buy at the library. Certainly, to recommend some books should not lead to an ordered purchasing and reading of them. This will leads to an overuse of students' interest in reading and turning a certain chore that students pay without much pleasure. Even reading an interesting book loses its charm when it is imposed.*

Keywords: *students' reading, facilitate reading, methods.*

Introduction: Unfortunately, some schools are poorly equipped with books. Whether the essential books are missing, their number is too small, or their condition is lacking. Another school libraries' minus is the lack of the reading rooms. Unfortunately some librarians prefer just to borrow books and not to encourage the study in their reading rooms. Also, even good libraries lack in technical facilities and very few are those whose base is fully computerized.

To facilitate reading, it is necessary for the room to be bright, spacious, with comfortable desks and books arranged by accessibility issues. Students should have access to books and the climate to be one of peace. The librarian has a significant role in all this. He must know his entire specialty works, to read a lot to be able to recommend the most accessible books or the most appropriate in the field of which they are interested in. Knowing better children's soul, approaching them with love, recommending them instructional and educational books, advising them how to read and preserve the books, the librarian becomes a friend of the student, a trainer of taste for reading.

A very good way of reading guidance is the systematic preparation of the recommended bibliography lists based on criteria that reading books chosen badly is worse than not reading at all. The lists are meant to keep children informed with the news from children's literature. These lists of recommendations can be drawn by local libraries according to the demands of school textbooks and programs. Often some children go to the library to borrow books for their pleasure. It is essential for the librarian to offer him valuable and age-appropriate books. Some children who attend the library don't have age-appropriate literature at home. Generally, it is believed that the guidance and control of reading belongs exclusively to the Serbian teacher.

Nothing is less true and more wrong than this way of looking at things. Reading guidance and control are very difficult actions with many consequences on education. The whole school community from the manager to the librarian has the duty to deal with students' reading.

Theoretical significance and applied value of work

The school principal, responsible with the guidance of the educational process as a whole can not remain passive towards the volume and quality of student reading. He has the obligation to introduce into the school's general plan the concrete measures of guidance and control of reading, carefully to check the scheduled planning and to give precise details about them. When assisting the classes or when there are surveys or students' notebooks are controlled, it is necessary to take into the account the readings' problems, a worthy objective to watch at any occasion. At various research misconducts, when considering low frequency of some students, neglect or indifference to the study, do not neglect to inquire about the books they are reading. The school manager can occasionally organize debates in the teaching council on this topic. Such discussions give thought to teaching staff and mobilize them more for work.

The head teacher has the same obligations as the director of organization. He is responsible for the training and education of all students in the class he leads. Within the tutorial hours or even in small parts of these classes, through individual discussions with students, the class master must follow carefully extracurricular students' reading. Approaching them, he manages without too much effort to document himself about their readings. Using sometime in his master classes some literary readings, presenting volumes of books, organizing together with the librarians class stands with books to facilitate direct contact of the student with the book, the class master manages to arouse students' interest in good books. The methodical commissions, serving to coordinate the various specialties and to exchange useful teaching and professional experience should have in their spotlight students reading guidance. Methodical commissions rests important duty to prepare bibliographic lists by the included items, first optional and then the extracurricular in order of their accessibility and usability.

The family has a great responsibility in the education of children. Time the student spends in the family is much larger than spent in school. Family members become a model than they imitate in language, attitude, tastes and behavior. So, it's desirable that parents become an integral part of the educational process. As in any school there are pupils from very diverse families, class managers have the duty to know their environment, to help parents to be their own child partner in assuming a culture. To transform a parent, so pretty busy is not easy at all. It required a strategy composition, finding methods and activities that actively involve the parent in the process. Problems occur when parents need to form the taste for reading.

As an activity practice, I'd recommend a good communication with parents at the meetings and beyond. Once they became aware that what the teacher demand from their children is an essential in their becoming, they will help him, even if the books are not the way they fill their time. There are publishers who have developed a working strategy focused mainly on schools, producing books required by school bibliography

and responding to the desire manifested by some parents to buy the books that should be read by their children.

With the information leaflets, discount offers for orders over a certain amount or free for members, they registers a sales success and children buy books that will facilitate reading. The reading can not be broken in the cultural context of our times. Certainly it is necessary to know the classic works of literature as well as the contemporary. There are prolific writers who publish, launches maintaining themselves active on the contemporary literary scene.

We can arouse interest in classical works by watching theater plays. It shall be made on stage numerous masterpieces. Regular students should attend theater and watch parts that will excite interest. By going home, he is likely to take the book in hand and go through the viewed play again. A good teacher will never ignore book releases. Knowing the students' desire of meeting personalities, he will present their literary life making them become curious to read the book from which he has got an autograph or dedication or which whom he has made a photo.

Reading is known as an event of knowledge. It orients students thinking and sensitivity to the literary work, reveals a certain way of understanding the world. Employing students in knowing the work the teacher is gong through it with them with questions and answers, captures the novelty, originality of vision. In school, the emotion of reading involves valorization of the work; it's logical and rational explanation. Talking about stimulating the taste for reading, we can not ignore the student's guidance for reading. Once the students were motivated to read, it's extremely important reading to be guided to students. Thus we talk about a job of training and education.

To a certain extent, reading guidance work is confused with the teaching of Serbian literature, history of Serbian literature and literary theory notions in classes. Literary analysis or general characterization of a work, the bibliography included in textbooks and taught in class offers many possibilities to initiate students in the various sectors (genres

It is recommended especially in lower grades where students are unable to distinguish between important and less important, between primary and secondary. At higher grades, exposure achieves its purpose unless it acquires the character of a period, otherwise boring and not convincing. This can be achieved, for example by exposing the beautiful subject of a book, especially in small classes by analyzing the moods of a character by describing an emotional scene, the appearance of a dramatic moment in the book. The student who aims such exposure will become interested in reading the book as soon as you will watch over its scenes being presented by the teacher and so much easier to distinguish what is important from what is secondary.

It is the most effective of all methods. This gives the opportunity to know turmoil, opinions and preferences of the students. In addition to the organized nature of the classes, conversation can dress a more unorganized form, occasioned by a confusion of a student or group of students, the student inclination towards a certain type of book, the presence of the teacher in the library when students come to borrow books. Through conversation it gets easier at target, the teacher being easier to gain the attention of students to reach their soul and may direct them.

Good results are obtained with the help of conversation when using examples from the studied works or when the conversation alternates with some reading of excerpts from the studied works. At the end the conversation it's good to come to a simple conclusion formulated by students. Long conclusions stated by the teacher are tired and not interested, often negating the effect of conversation. The conversation method should lead to the formation of student's independent thinking , to shape clear personal opinions and clarifying students' confusion (Kelemen, G., 2014). It is desirable that during the conversation the teacher should not impose really didactic character.

It is recommended especially in lower grades. Certainly you can not read the whole book during learning hours but it is formed student's habit to work independently with the book, and the habit acquired earlier is invaluable in further work of the students. The emphasis should be put on increasing interest to thoroughly read a book and not the reproduction of ideas. It is only after he develops an interest and taste for reading when he can proceed to develop the habit of extracting ideas from a text.

At higher grades this method is used for making the plan of ideas. A special attention should be given the use of workbooks. During the period of transition from the notebook to the workbook it is advisable to use removable sheets about books read which should contain the author, the title of the work, brief summary and some impressions on that work. Students will be guided to group records on issues and specific topics to extract

It can be used in guiding higher reading classes where students need more arguments. The successful practice if there besides the arguments of a rational or aesthetic and able to demonstrate a theme based on intuitive material. This method can be used and combined with the exposure method or conversation. It all depends on the intended purpose and usefulness of a stronger argumentation to convince the students. Excursions can be specially organized for surrender of a chapter in the history of Serbian literature. Museum of history of literature in the town where an author was born and grew also contain some of his representative books, first editions. For excursions and visits to the various memorial houses to achieve their goal a proper preparation and good organization is required. Students must previously have a minimum of knowledge about the character in question and onsite is desirable a guide reading biography and important pieces of work.

It is used widely in the literature. School programs provide various hours of composition which contribute to improving the knowledge acquired and at work skills training. Summaries, literary analysis, reviews, characterizations of characters are all the beginning of a creative independent work. Offering to carry at home of various topics, these can stimulate interest in reading when the paper refers to certain literary works or when for its motivation the teacher mentioned certain bibliographic.

Another way to guide and control the children reading are literary games. It is well known the attraction that children feel for games in general. Playing, children have fun, and develop many skills. This dual role, to amuse and instruct the children belongs to literary games. For teachers, they are a good opportunity to observe and

evaluate the students' reading. To illustrate this method less conventional, I'll try to present a few games that can be played in schools or extracurricular.

This game is not just a great opportunity to renew children's knowledge of the geography but also to track the conscientiousness that was done by the reading. The game leader can intervene creating funny moments, announcing the coming of the pirates, so the child having to identify the island or the coast from which it comes and says what the crew did. The leader of the game can use his ingenuity to make participation more enjoyable. If children are informed in advance, they will prepare thoroughly and the game will be a success.

The game can be organized by at least five participants. The game leader gathers others around him and explains them the rules. A book is chosen, *Plavi čuperak* by Miroslav Antić for example. The first player begins the story. At one point, the leader of the game interrupts and put on the next student to continue exactly from where the first remained. Then, the second is interrupted and a third is required to continue the story. Those who can not continue from where the story was stopped, get a pledge, those who are confused, get it too. Repeating the game and changing frequently the story caught in the chain, children will acquire the skill to read carefully even only for the sake of competition.

Concluzion: Using this appealing way of the game we can track various interested issues about the way they read the books. The coordinator of the game may tangle situations, actions, episodes, conflicts, locations, descriptions of nature, psychological analysis, etc... Helping him handle messy situations children attend a fruitful activity terribly funny at the same time. Besides the methods mentioned above, certain activities may also be used to stimulate interest in reading: work in specialty circles, circles of literary creation, symposia, papers, literary medallions, evening fairytales or literary evenings, literary competitions, meetings with writers, attending various releases.

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PERSONAL REFLECTION AND LEARNING EFFICIENTIZATION

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Abstract: *The study analyses the efficiency of the constructivist teaching models in forming the reflexive capacity of the students – the future teachers. The goals of the research aimed at establishing connections, correlations between the use of some constructivist teaching models (the ERR model; the 5E's model; the ETER model; the CETP/SIS model; the OSIOS model; the ABERA model) and the development of the reflexive competence of students as well as the improvement of their academic results. To establish the statistical relevance of both the correlations and the difference between the averages of grades obtained at the end of the research, compared to the initial period, we used the Pearson correlation index and the Z test. Some of these models proved their efficiency in forming the reflexive competence of students. The results obtained following the Z test, pointed out the efficiency of using the constructivist teaching in improving the academic performances of students.*

Keywords: *personal reflection, constructivism, metacognition, metacognitive strategies, reflexive competence*

1. Introduction

The educational theory and practice have imposed lately, as a condition for the efficientization of the educational-teaching activity, the promotion of the reflexive thinking as an essential component of the teacher's competence profile. The principles and ideas that the constructivist paradigm is based on, are not all new, some of them being related to the thinking of some philosophers in the period of Antiquity, such as the Socratic learning method, which can be considered as a precursor of the cooperative learning (Lam, 2011). But, although the constructivist theory in its essence is not new, nevertheless, the necessity of its affirmation is even more real in a postmodern society (Cook-Sather, 2008).

In essence, the constructivism is based on the idea of building own knowledge, by those learning, analyzing, commenting and interpreting individually the objective, external reality (Iran-Nejad, 2001; DeVries, 2003; Danforth, Smith, 2005; DeVries, Zan, 2005; Diallo, 2005; Loyens, Gijbels, 2008; Gordon, 2009). Depending on the types of constructivism (Doolitle, Hicks, 2003), in the act of knowledge, the individual or the social activity can be dominant, given that the subjectivism of one's own knowledge needs an external referential for objectivization. Thus, it is underlined the role of the social environment in the process of learning as well as the importance of

the collaborative learning (Jager, Janse, Reezigt, 2005; Schraw, Crippen, Hartley, 2006; Maxim, 2009).

We present a few characteristics of the constructivist learning (Cooperstein, Kocevar-Weidinger, 2004; Joiţa, 2006): building own understanding by those learning; acquiring new knowledge based on the previous knowledge; learning is improved thanks to the social environment and therefore is socially mediated; learning is based on an authentic, real task or situation. Although the majority of opinions accept the idea of the efficiency of the constructivist strategies in teaching, there are also points of view that question this efficiency (Vogel-Walcutt, Gebrim, Bowers, Carper, Nicholson, 2011).

In general, the constructivist teaching and the constructivist learning promote both metacognition and reflection, as a way of learning but also of evaluation.

The metacognitive strategies refer to the awareness of a cognitive approach and the possibility to identify steps or phases, difficulties, obstacles, weaknesses and strengths. The metacognitive capacities are in many cases decisive when it comes to pupils' success or failure. There is a multitude of metacognitive strategies. Of these strategies, we review the following (Du Toit, Kotze, 2009; Cubukcu, 2009; Jian, Yujun, 2012):

• Planning the learning strategy (awareness and internalization of rules, learning stages, time horizon, etc.

• Posing questions – must be done both at the beginning of the teaching situation as well as throughout the process, to eliminate misunderstandings and clarify concepts.

• Awareness of the decisions made – implies, on behalf of the pupils, to understand the connection between their decisions, actions and the results, consequences of these decisions.

• Setting and pursuing the goals of the teaching situation or the long-term goals.

• Self-management of both time and teaching space.

• Assessment of the way of thinking and action – implies awareness on behalf of the pupils/students, regarding the assessment criteria.

• Identifying difficulties – pupils must be encouraged to identify the resources, competences and information they need, to have results regarding their learning, make a distinction between the knowledge and competences they need and what they need, recognize the difficulties they have in acquiring/building this knowledge.

• Paraphrasing, elaborating ideas, theories, opinions of others, reflecting on them – pupils must be taught to comment, interpret the ideas of others, but also express their own point of view.

• Terminological clarification, delimitation, for a better understanding of the basic concepts.

• Problem solving - represents a good way to practice the metacognitive strategies, due to the capitalization on the knowledge and competences existent in new situations, finalized with new psycho-cognitive, psycho-behavioral and psycho-attitudinal enrichment.

• Using diaries, as they are instruments which allow the practice of metacognition, because they offer the possibility to become aware of own thoughts, feelings and actions.

•Promoting both cooperative learning and learning based on the capitalization of the social environment in learning, which allows the correction, adjustment and improvement of personal thinking, by relating it to the others' thinking.

Many models of constructivist teaching integrate reflection as an important stage, whose aim is to ensure an efficient and thorough learning. We present several of these models (in Joiţa, 2006):

•**E-R-R model** (Evocation-Realization of meaning-Reflection);

•**5 E's model - E**ngage, **E**xplorer, **E**xplain, **E**laborate, **E**valuate;

•**ETER model** (Experience, Theory, Experimentation, Reflection)

•**CETP/SIS model –** achievement of a constructivist learning in 6 distinct stages: updating the knowledge regarding the specific topic or issue; identifying and analyzing the necessary information; identifying errors, confusions, preconceptions regarding the topic at stake; making associations, correlations for a better embedment of the new knowledge; making personal reflections with regard to the researched topic and the achieved, finalized actions; creating openings towards situations that can ensure a continuation of what has been achieved.

Apart of these models acknowledged by the literature, we want to signal also own teaching models based on reflection (Junor Clarke, 2007) as well as instruments of self-reflection achievement, elaborated and implemented in the educational practice (Kitsantas, Baylor, Hu, 2001; Joiţa, 2008).

There are presented a couple of the models conceived by us within a Grant Research Project, which was developed between 2005-2007, on the theme of cognitivism and constructivism, seen as new educational paradigms. The project was coordinated by university professor Ph.D Elena Joiţa. These models focused on the constructivist knowledge/learning (Ştefan, 2007, pp. 131-137) have been taken up and exploited in the present study (table 1).

Table 1. Facilitating the constructivist learning – personal/own models

Constructivist models (elaborated personally)	**Constructivist knowledge/learning**
OSIOS Model	- **Orientation in the new theme** – supplying the resources, the necessary conditions to facilitate the approach of the new theme; - **Scanning the support material offered** – orienting, observing, direct investigation of the offered material; holding the signifying information; recording the observation; - **(Own/Personal) Interpretations** – asking questions to facilitate the understanding, identifying the key words; critical analyses; shaping a personal opinion. - **Organizing the new knowledge** – group debate; making classifications, comparisons; drawing conclusions. - **Schematization** – structuring the acknowledgement; representing graphically the new knowledge.

ABERA Model	- **Analysing the task** – at this stage students are presented the tasks, materials and necessary actions are organized; students are oriented/guided in the text; each of them has to reflect over the context, the situation in a subjective way, personalized, by means of previous experience;
	- **Building the understanding** – the student is trained to intuit an own/self model of building the understanding and solving the task, in organizing the search and analyse actions, in comprehending the text; there is a reference at the self way of understanding.
	- **Expanding the field** – being integrated in a group, the student learns the knowledge under the shape of a discussion; by enlarging the field of comparison they get to acknowledge the degree of efficiency of the strategies used and, if necessary, to correct it, to replace the inefficient strategies; the group collaboration allows confrontation, comparison, reciprocal evaluation and in this way stimulating the metacognition; at this stage, students manage to expand the field of understanding, elaborating the cognitive map, as a result of the way in which they solve the task and optimize the process; the cognitive maps highlight the students' progress in learning, the evolution of the degree of complexity of the corresponding cognitive structures.
	- **Reflections** – students have to verbalise their own reflections on their way of understanding, knowledge, decision and solving.
	- **Appreciation** – it is the stage of a post-processing, an overview of that certain theme, on the way in which the tasks have been accomplished and on the cognitive and action progress.

The constructivist education models, elaborated by us, have proven their efficiency in shaping the reflexive ability of the students – future teachers.

Some authors (Zeichner &Liston, Van Manen, Handal&Lauvas apud Le Cornu, Peters, 2005; Taggard, Wilson, 2005; York-Barr, 2006) distinguish between different levels of reflection and in accordance with these levels, different types of reflection: *technical* reflection (regarding actions); *practical/theoretical* reflection (regarding the reasons behind the taken actions); *critical* reflection (regarding the values and compatibility of actions with the social notions of honesty and justice); *deliberative* reflection (regarding the intentions and perspectives affirmed); *contextual* reflection (refers to the analysis of the context and the concatenation of all elements and variables of a teaching situation); *personalized* reflection (implies the affirmation of the own way of interpreting an idea or situation in relation to the reflections of the others); *dialectical* reflection (refers to different moral and social manifestations) .

The role and implications of reflection can be analyzed on two levels: outside the classroom and within the classroom (Le Cornu, Peters, 2005). Thus, outside the classroom, the mentioned authors recommend meetings and discussions between the teaching staff, on issues regarding teaching and education and the subsequent

reflections Within the classroom, there are recommended a few ways of stimulating the reflection capacity of pupils: development of a reflexive attitude; explicit mentioning of the metacognitive skills and processes; creation of opportunities for reflection within the classroom; use and encouragement of an interactive and receptive style.

Moreover, we mention a few methods and ways of realizing personal reflections (Joiţa, 2008, pp. 259-267): posing of questions, elaboration of hypotheses and personal assessments; elaboration of own interpretations and critical analyses; elaboration of reflections in solving real situations, but also techniques and instruments of work such as: observation and self-observation; reflexive journal; expressing of own opinions at the end of the action; post-action own analyses; registering of activity; filling of rubrics for criterial assessments; elaboration of special letters; initiation of a reflexive dialogue; description of own way of interpretation and argumentation; comparison of several points of view; correction of other people's arguments; identifying and respecting the ideas of other people; elaboration of portfolios with comments and different analyses; commentated accounts; personal metaphors; spontaneous personal notes etc.

Other techniques for training and stimulating the reflexive capacity have been capitalized on, by some authors, (Joiţa, 2005, p. 119) in the initial training of the future teachers, starting from the premise of the importance of the reflexive competence within the structure of the future teacher's competence profile: elaboration of essays; reflexive exercises on certain topics; elaboration of hypotheses and their argumentation; identification of keywords and their commenting; elaboration of possible ideas on a certain topic and their subsequent sorting out; use of ideas in the form of metaphors or versifications; elaboration of counterarguments or involvement in a controversy; commenting or capitalizing on different elements or ideas; drawing up various cognitive maps; elaboration of critical assessments regarding construction actions; elaboration of own works based on own interpretations; establishing various correlations and commenting them; elaboration and commenting of projects; elaboration of journals with opinions on different issues of teaching; developing suggestions for own interpretations (quotes, maxims, proverbs, hypotheses, etc.).

We specify a few rules for easing the formulation of personal reflections (Joiţa, 2008, p. 257): it must be personal and simple; it must contain own comments and express personal ideas; arguments should be formulated to support ideas; it must be related to the pedagogical or situational context; the opinions of the other members of the group must be respected.

From the point of view of its moment, the reflection can be (Mogonea, 2007, pp. 131-132; 2008, pp. 224-225):

- A pre-action analysis, for instance: assessing both the level and quality of the previous knowledge as well as the capacities and competences necessary for solving the task; assessing difficulties, obstacles during similar learning activities as well as the ways of overcoming them; anticipating the difficulty level of the task; establishing strategies for solving the task; assessment of the theoretical/praxeological contribution of the task to be solved etc.

- Analysis conducted at the same time with the action – examples: putting in practice the plan previously established and monitoring the action; identifying the

obstacles and mistakes made and becoming aware of the ways of overcoming them; elaborating throughout the activity some schemes whose goal is to describe synthetically the stages reached; becoming aware and registering the progress realized throughout the activity, in relation to the criteria imposed, the colleagues' achievements and one's own activity, analyzed from different temporal perspectives; assessing if time has been correctly managed etc.;

- A post-action analysis – examples: assessing the level of difficulty of the solved task and identifying both the difficult moments and those easily overcome during the process of solving the task; assessing the level of gained knowledge following the finalized learning experience and establishing ambiguities emerged throughout the process of learning; identifying the aspects that should be repeated in future learning activities; identifying the use of the gained knowledge and of the skills and capacities formed; assessing the efficiency of the ways and strategies used in solving tasks; identifying the possibilities of integrating the new acquisitions into the already existent notional systems; drawing conclusions regarding the efficiency of the learning style.

Reflection is a process carried out individually for most of the times, but also collectively (Frederiksen, White, 1997).

2. Research methodology

This experimental approach is a part of our latest interests regarding the promotion of the constructivist teaching, as an alternative within the academic teaching, and more exactly within the didactical professionalization. Also, the metacognition topic, analyzed for the category of children with SEN (Mogonea, 2013) is discussed in this study, but from a different perspective. Hence, we enlarge upon the sphere of issues regarding the efficiency and efficacy of some theories, models, instruments of work, capitalized on within a research project, carried out between 2005 and 2007 (project manager: Professor PhD Elena Joiţa). The necessity to train the future teachers through the Program regarding the certification of the competences for the didactical profession in accordance with quality criteria, has determined the thoroughness of some aspects on the efficientization of work strategies, together with the development and pursuit of the new outlined research hypotheses.

Within this general framework, we mention the **hypotheses** that the current experimental approach was based on. Hence, the **general hypothesis** was the following one: ***The use of reflection, as a constructivist learning technique within the teaching activities, carried out with the Future Teachers students, will lead to the efficientization of this activity.***

Starting from the general hypothesis, we pursued two **particular hypotheses:**

a) The models, methods, techniques and instruments based on the use of personal reflection, employed frequently, can stimulate the formation of the reflexive capacity of the Future Teachers students; b) There is a connection between the personal reflection and the improvement of the students' learning style, i.e. their school results.

The independent variables implemented within this experimental approach consisted of models, methods, techniques and instruments of promotion of personal

reflection, capable of determining the formation of the future teachers' reflexive capacity and implicitly their school results (dependent variables).

The purpose of our research was the development of the reflexive competence of students through some constructivist teaching models.

In close connection with this purpose, we pursued the following **objectives:**

• To know students' opinion regarding the efficiency of the constructivist teaching within the academic learning in general, and the didactical professionalization in particular;

• To know students' capacities to achieve personal reflections;

• To implement some models, methods, techniques and instruments for stimulating personal reflection within the activities carried out with students.

Within the research, we aimed at pointing out the following correlations between: the use of both constructivist models and instruments and constructivist models based on the stimulation of personal reflection and the formation of the reflexive competence; the formation of the reflexive competence and the improvement of their learning style, i.e. their school results.

The group of subjects was composed of Future Teachers students, from representative faculties for the fields and specializations existent within the University of Craiova. We selected 208 subjects – students in their first year of the psycho-pedagogical teaching Program. Of the 207 subjects, 80 formed the experimental group while 127 formed the control group. With respect to the content group, it was established in accordance with the Curriculum for the certification of competences regarding the didactical profession. We made a selection of some topics included in the syllabus of Pedagogy (structured into two semesters), given the importance of this discipline in forming future teachers.

Hence, the research was carried out throughout two academic semesters (2nd semester of the 1st Year and 1st semester of the 2nd year of psycho-pedagogical studies).

The research methods and instruments that were used are the following : the questionnaire enquiry (we applied an opinion questionnaire to students to find out their opinion on the specific of the constructivist teaching and its role in the didactical professionalization); the pedagogical test of knowledge (in the observation phase we applied the pre-test while at the end of the research we applied the post-test to signal the progress realized by the subjects of the experimental group); the systematic observation through observation grids, whose indicators aimed at identifying both the ways regarding the training of the personal reflection and their frequency within the activities carried out with students.

The conducted psycho-pedagogical experiment consisted of using models, methods and instruments of work, based on the training, promotion andstimulation of the reflexive competence of the Future Teachers students. Hence, we used the following models of constructivist teaching: *the ERR model*; *the 5 E's model* (Bybee, 2001); *the ETER model* (Beliveau, Peter, 2002); *the CETP/SIS model* (Summer Institute, in Joiţa, 2006); *the OSIOS model; the ABERA model* (Ştefan, 2007, 133-137).

Of the methods and instruments for stimulating personal reflection, we used the following ones: question posing, hypotheses, personal assessments; own interpretations

and critical analyses; elaboration of various cognitive maps; expression of own opinions at the end of the action; formulation of reflections in solving real situations; formulation in a personal way of metaphors; spontaneous personal notes; elaboration of essays; reflexive exercises on certain topics; elaboration of counterarguments or involvement in a controversy; elaboration of journals with opinions on different issues of teaching; journals to identify the stages in solving a task within an activity; grids, questionnaires to identify the mistakes made in solving a task or to identify the positive aspects of an activity as well as to point out the theoretical and praxeological contribution of the solved task.

3. Findings and interpretations

Starting from the premise that the promotion of models, methods and instruments of constructivist teaching determines the formation of the reflexive competence of students, we used two instruments: on one hand, a survey applied to students, in order to find out their opinion on the efficiency/inefficiency of the constructivist teaching models (used in the experimental phase) in forming the reflexive competence, and on the other hand, a grid, in order to establish the level of development of the reflexive competence, practiced and stimulated throughout the experiment.

In order to point out the correlations between the constructivist teaching models and their role in forming the reflexive competence, we used the Pearson Correlation index. The findings are presented in table no. 2.

### Table 2. The findings of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient

Constructivist models		Development level of the reflexive competence	
		High	Low
ABERA	Pearson Correlation	**,227**[**]	
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,000	,000
ETER	Pearson Correlation	**,152**[*]	
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,014	,014
the_5_E's	Pearson Correlation	**,245**[**]	
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,000	,000
ERR	Pearson Correlation	**,121**[*]	
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,041	,041
OSIOS	Pearson Correlation	**,781**[**]	
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,000	,000
CETP/SIS	Pearson Correlation		**,239**[**]

	Sig. (1-tailed)	,000	,000

As it can be noticed, the findings presented in table no. 2, point out the efficiency of some of the constructivist models in forming the reflexive competence, that is, the efficiency of the ABERA model (,227, significant at a significance threshold of 0.01); The 5 E's (,245) and the OSIOS models (,781) –are significant also at a significance threshold of 0.01. For the ETER and EAR models, the values (,152, and ,121, respectively) are significant at a 0.05 threshold. On the other hand, for the CETP/SIS model, the significances are negative, which in students' opinion demonstrates their inefficiency in forming the reflexive competence.

In order to point out the effects that the development of the reflexive competence has on the improvement of students' school results, we registered and quantified the results obtained by students in the pretest and posttest, to be able to highlight the progress made by the subjects of the experimental group. The evaluation items for the two tests applied, requested students' competence to formulate personal reflections regarding the carried out activity as well as their utility and efficiency in formulating hypotheses and ameliorative proposals.

The averages obtained by the two groups in the pretest and posttest are presented in the following graphics (1 and 2):
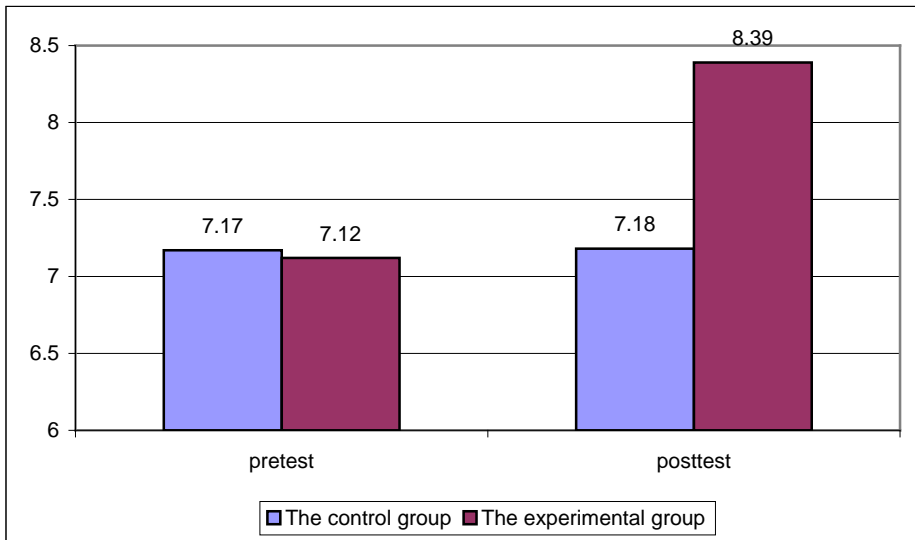
Graphic 1. Comparative results of the two groups of subjects, in pretest and posttest

The comparison of results can be done not only between samples, but also at the level of the experimental group, in relation to the two different temporal moments, that is, the pretest and the posttest.
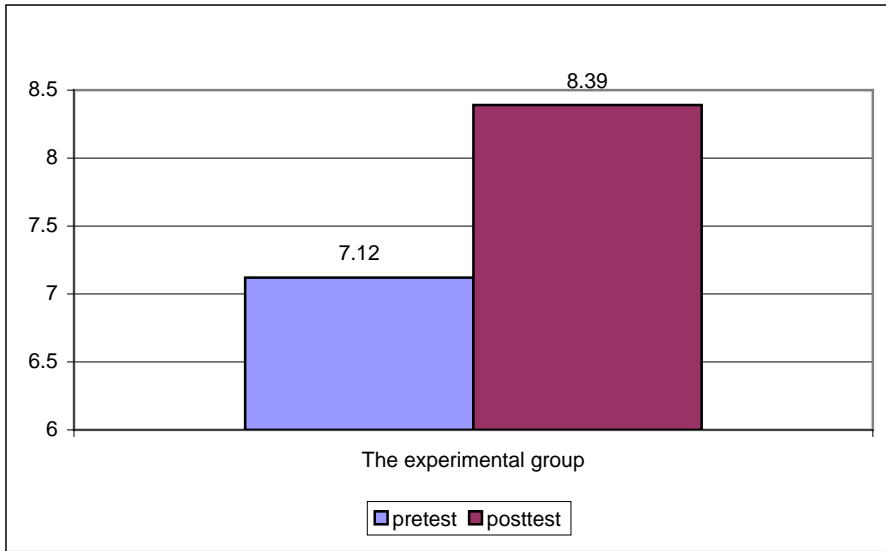
Graphic 2. The comparison of the results obtained by the experimental group

The results obtained were then interpreted statistically, to establish the statistical significance of the difference between the averages registered during the two moments of the research (pretest and posttest), by the two groups of subjects (control group and experimental group).

For interpretation, we used the Z test for independent samples, its calculation formula being the following one (see formula 1):

$$Z = \frac{|m_1 - m_2|}{\sqrt{\dfrac{\sigma_1^2}{N_1}} + \sqrt{\dfrac{\sigma_1^2}{N_2}}} \qquad (1)$$

The comparison of results registered by the subjects of the experimental group in the posttest with those registered by the subjects of the control group, allowed us to establish the statistical relevance of the difference, as it can be noticed in table 3.

Table 3. The statistical relevance of the difference between the average of the experimental group and the average of the control group, in the posttest

Group	Average (m)	Deviation (σ^2)	N	Z value
Control	7.18	2.11	127	
Experimental	8.39	2.52	80	5.52

In order to enhance the statistical relevance of the difference between averages, we also compared the results for the same group, by relating them to the two different temporal moments (pretest and posttest). The results are presented in table 4:

Table 4. The statistical relevance of the difference between the average of the experimental group in the posttest and that of the experimental group in the pretest

Phase	Average (m)	Deviation (σ^2)	N	Z value
Pretest	7.12	2.11	80	
Posttest	8.39	2.52	80	5.26

In both situations, the value of Z is higher than 2.58, which allows us to state that the difference is significant at a significance threshold of 0.01.

4. Conclusions

The results obtained confirm the efficiency of some of the constructivist models based on the stimulation of reflection, used in the formative activities carried out with the Future Teachers students. The educational practice and the instruments used in determining the subjects' opinion pointed out students' preference for some of these models (for instance: the OSIOS model, the 5 E's model, the ABERA model), which turned out to be also efficient in stimulating the reflexive competence of the future teachers.

Given the importance of this competence in the general profile of a successful teacher, we insist on using these constructivist teaching models that can also assure academic success.

At the same time, the carried out research has opened up new perspectives on approaching some of the researched topics or subtopics, such as, for instance, the outline of a general competence profile of the teacher, from the perspective of the constructivist paradigm.

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THE ICT COORDINATOR IN SCHOOL A XXI CENTURY EDUCATION

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Abstract: *In order to meet the needs of a developing society, the educational systems need to rethink both their content (What we learn?) and their methods (How we learn?). They are called upon to introduce ICT in school, an extremely difficult process because of the need to transform the view of most of the teachers on their traditional role (transmitter of knowledge) for which they were trained and became accustomed with.*

Keywords: *ICT, computer skills, education, online resources*

Introduction

This change of vision implies not only the initial training in computer skills and in the use of ICT, but also an understanding of the new way of perceiving the student interaction with the knowledge in the learning process. The informational and communication technologies allow access to more resources than the traditional manual, but what is more important, they enable new types of student activities, more stimulating and productive. The increasing use of ICT in education and the study on how to achieve more efficient educational strategies and also individualized approaches, the attention shifted from teaching (with the focus on teacher) to learning (with focus on the student).

The impact of ICT in education

An analysis of the educational approach (teaching / learning) focusing on the four main components of "educational situation" - teacher, content, student, context - could give us a breakthrough in understanding the role and impact of ICT in this approach:

a. *The teacher*: a binder from transmission to facilitation. At one extreme are the teachers who send, "deliver" information, and on the other, those who design and facilitate students' activities that generate learning.

b. *The content*: a binder from pre-organized/pre-structured to "developed". What you have to learn can be at one extreme, a knowledge package developed for acquisition, and at the other extreme - a draft statement for the realization of which students must gather information, analyze, draw conclusions, and elaborate.

c. *The student*: a binder starting from limited access to online resources and ending with unlimited access to these resources.

d. *The context*: a binder from a low external support source to an extensive external support for the use of these resources.

The real situation in most schools shows that the teacher is a transmitter of information rather than a facilitator of learning; in most cases the content is pre-organized by the teacher rather than the built by the student. Of course there are situations in which all four components are at the other extreme. Therefore it is important for each institution to assess the situation of each component and to take all steps to ensure a continuous balance between these components.

The personal computer is very useful for both students and teachers but its use must be such as to improve the quality of the educational process, not hinder it. The computer should be used with the goal of acquiring knowledge and developing skills to enable students to adapt to a society in constant evolution. They must be trained, oriented with confidence to the changes, and they will feel the need to be better trained to deal with new types of professions. Failure to develop the capacity to respond to change can entail passivity and alienation. The teacher himself lives in a changing society, and luckily in the forefront of change, so he will have to adapt, to adjust, to continuously improve.

The introduction of internet and modern technologies in school results in significant changes in the education process. Thus the act of learning is no longer considered to be the effect of teacher's work, but the result of student interaction with the computer and collaboration with the teacher.

This changing in the educational system has the following objectives:

1. Increasing the efficiency of learning
2. Developing communication skills and individual study

Achieving these objectives depends on the teacher skill in computer use, the teacher's style, the number of students, their interest, knowledge and skills, the atmosphere in the class and type of software used, on the amount of software integration within the lesson, the synchronization of explanations with the sequences used, the assessment methods, the developed worksheets.

The random use of the computer, without a specific purpose, at the wrong time during the lesson leads to boredom, monotony, learning inefficiency, failure in achieving the lesson objectives and can even generate a repulsion sentiment over this modern teaching-learning-evaluation tool. Excessive use of the computer may result in loss of practical skills, computing skills and abilities in investigating the reality and can damage human relation. Also the excessive use of self-learning denies the student-teacher dialogue and leads to the isolation of the learning process in the psychosocial context. The teaching content is segmented and atomizes too much, and the mental activity of students is diminished, being guided step by step.

Using the personal computer has numerous advantages:

- Stimulates innovative learning ability, adapted to the rapid social change;
- Strengthens the scientific investigation skills;
- Increases awareness that the concepts learned will be useful later;
- Increases the learning efficiency by immediate assessing of student responses;

- Strengthens students' learning motivation;
- Stimulates imagination and logical thinking;
- Introduces a cognitive style, an effective independent work style;
- Installs a climate of self-improvement, of competitiveness;
- Mobilization of psychomotor skills in computer use;
- Development of visual culture;
- Trains useful practical skills;
- Provides a permanent feedback, the teacher being able to redesign the lesson based on the previous sequence;
- Faster data processing facilities, to perform calculations, display the results, outputs, graphs, tables;
- Provides choices for using the appropriate strategies for solving various applications;
- Develops thinking so from a general way of solving a problem the student finds himself the answer to a specific problem;
- Prepares students for a society based on the concept of lifelong learning (education throughout the life);
- Determines a positive attitude toward the discipline and toward the moral values, the cultural and spiritual needs of society;
- Helps students with disabilities to integrate into society and in the educational process.

The computer is extremely useful because it stimulates complex processes and phenomena that no other teacher can make out so well. Thus, through it the students are getting models, justifications and illustrations of abstract concepts, illustrations of unobservable or difficult to observe processes and phenomena. It allows experiments practically impossible to conduct otherwise due to lack of teaching materials, inadequate endowment of the school laboratories or the danger to which students and teachers would be exposed. The students can easily modify the conditions in which the virtual experiment takes place, it can be repeated a sufficient number of times so that they can follow the way in which the phenomena performs, and they can extract their own conclusions and can enunciate laws.

Also, the computer is used for developing communication skills, for collecting, selecting, synthesizing and presenting information, for typing essays. Thus, students develop the ability to critically assess the accuracy and correctness of the information obtained from various sources.

Strategies used to increase the effectiveness of online resources:

1. *Ensuring students with a greater control over resources*. This makes students more involved in the content construction. Students who have not only realized the possibilities of the new technologies, but have also gained control over them, develop their capacities to plan, select, explore, solve problems, monitor and evaluate their own progress. In many school subjects - science, mathematics, languages - ICT allows to overcome the limited framework of the manual by appealing to recent data, information on a wide area, by meeting the knowledge interests of the students.

2. *The learning situations are more realistic and authentic*. The access to information resources and enhanced involvement of students in the content

construction lead to more authentic learning situations. For example, students can study at the environment class, by using information from data banks of different countries, images, descriptions and statistics relevant to the issues investigated. Furthermore, Internet communication ensures direct data collection or enables a form of collaboration on the respective project.

3. *Combining or integrating ICT within a suitable pedagogical strategy.* Building content requires different types of learning situations; studies show a decrease in the activities led by a teacher, a decrease in frontal training front and a shift towards project-centred activities and independent learning. Effective use of ICT must be accompanied, sustained, supported by a pedagogical strategy based on the knowledge of how learning occurs.

4. *Training is extended to online learning communities with the potential to support the school curriculum.* Networked schools provide new interaction models, extending learning beyond teacher and manual. The possibilities for presentation and manipulation of the learning outcomes, facilitates collaboration with other users - students or local community members. It also raises the possibility of collaborative projects with other schools or local community experts.

5. *Teacher training is extended by including learning problems in terms of using ICT.* Teachers, like other professionals, need the new technologies but also the knowledge to use these technologies in order to solve tasks of increasing complexity. Teachers need to be better informed about the potential that these technologies pose to the teaching/learning process. Like in any other countries, the computer initiation remains the main problem in training future teachers or improving existing ones. The large differences that exist in this part of the "educational situation" create many difficulties for developing a unitary approach to the use of ICT in schools. The introduction of computers and ICT in educational practice has occurred in parallel with three decades of cognitive sciences research, during which our understanding of how learning occurs was widened: the investigations in this field, revealed that knowledge is not passively received, but actively constructed by the learner based on previous knowledge, attitudes and moral values. The dependence on a single source of information, for example, the manual limits the construction of knowledge.

6. *The teachers perceive the online technologies as the driving force for the educational reform.* The use of ICT leads to a rethinking of education, starting with questioning the way in which its goals are determined, the way the curriculum is designed, the manner in which the interaction between student and curriculum takes place, as well as how the educational process is assessed. This impact on educational systems can only occur under conditions in which ICT is used in an educational approach focused on the fundamental thesis "the learner actively constructs knowledge"; when ICT is used in a traditional manner, based on the "transmission of knowledge" principle, the impact on the education system will be insignificant.

Show me, I will remember 20%

Show me and tell me, I will remember 40%

Show me, tell me and let me do it myself, I will remember 70%

Changing is difficult. Effort and time will be needed to facilitate changes in people. The fears of teachers should be recognized and solutions to the impasse should

be provided. They need to be reminded that there are benefits with these changes, and the most powerful tools to decrease resistance to change are the teachers themselves: teachers that see other teachers effectively using the technology tend to embrace that technology. Indeed, for over a century, children went to school, sat in class and worked under the supervision of adults more or less trained for that job. Although the specific contents have somewhat changed, reading, writing and mathematics are still central areas of learning, as they were 200 years ago. The interaction of these apparently opposite forces - one based on continuous change and the other based on tradition and continuity - is the main challenge of the future and today's society.

It can be said that the integration of ICT resources in education is beneficial and leads to an increase in school performance, provided that students have the basic knowledge of computer use. This requires the introduction of classes on computer and ICT in all profiles and all levels of education. Also the teacher should work with small groups of students and the classes are to be equipped with modern computers connected to the internet. Teachers should possess in addition to theoretical knowledge and practical skills related to the studied discipline, also the ability to use the ICT resources.

ICT should not only be a tool to present the existing content in another manner, but instead should lead to changes in thinking and working style of classroom teachers, crystallized in centuries of traditional education, and with too little concerned over the personality and the potential of the student.

The use of ICT should not become an obsession, because every student has the right to academic success and to achieve the highest curricular standards possible, that's why appropriate teaching methods have to be found for each case. Therefore we must not discard the chalk, the blackboard and the sponge, the work with the manual, problem solving and real experiments, because by creating a direct link between practical experience and theoretical ideas, physics study contributes to the development of student skills required both for his and for the development of the society in which he lives.

In conclusion we can say that in order to achieve quality in education and to achieve the best results we must use both the traditional and modern methods of teaching, learning and assessment!

The ICT coordinator in school

Integrating ICT as a didactical tool in the teaching-learning process aims to improve the educational standards for the students, to facilitate the development of opportunities related to the cognitive performance of students, school-community relation, school development and not least the management of the educational system.

What is and what does the ICT Coordinator in school (ICT = Information and Communications Technology)

- the ICT coordinator is not a new teaching position, but it is a task that every teacher interested in ITC integration, can master, after following some training courses;
- the ICT coordinator helps choosing the right application for a particular teaching activity;

- advises teachers in choosing training courses, provides a schedule of activities and ICT experiences for different classes of students;
- the ICT coordinator role in school, exercised by a teacher, will facilitate tracking

the progress and continuity in the development of digital skills of students through the use of new informational technologies in addressing all school subjects.

Applications that could help the ICT coordinator:
- World Wide Telescope - attractive study on the solar system and the universe;
- Microsoft Auto Collage - provides the opportunity to achieve photo collages on a particular topic
- Math Worksheet Generator - math tests generator for I to VIII grades;
- Songsmith - creates songs with own lyrics on pre-determined musical backgrounds;
- Kodu Game Lab - creation of interactive games on given topics;
- Storyjumper - permite realizarea unor carti digitale cu povesti proprii ale elevilor la care se pot adauga personaje si fundaluri proprii sau prestabilite allows the creation of digital books with students own stories on which they may add characters and backgrounds;
- Storybird- creating stories with colorful and cheerful images attractive to students;
- Photostory 3 for Windows- allows the creation of short films with own photos and you can add text and your own voice
- Photopeach - creating an animated spiral based on own photos
- Goanimate - creation of cartoons in which the characters talks about a certain topic given by the teacher
- Padlet - online wall on witch students can post comments about specific topics, especially in used in critical thinking
- Voki – an avatar with different speaking characters announcing the solving of the task requested by the teacher
- Audacity- enables MP3 voice recording of students.

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COMPARATIVE STUDY REGARDING THE METHODS USED IN PRIMARY SCHOOL (TRADITIONAL AND STEP BY STEP)

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Abstract: *The paper tries to underline the positive and constructive aspects of the use of specific methodologies based on the interactive and cooperation learning in primary school. The comparative research shows the changes resulted from the use of the interactive methods. It underlines the cognitive, attitudinal-behavioural and the inter-relational progresses of pupils from primary school integrated in the Romanian traditional educational and in the Step by Step systems.*

Keywords: *interactive methods, traditional methods, interactive pedagogy*

1. Introduction

Organisation is indispensable for the realization of the educational process – conscious, deliberate activity in order to obtain finalities. The most prevailing method of organization for the educational process, that has proven to be efficient in order to realize the instructive-educational objectives of the school, is represented by an organization into **classes and lessons**. During the 17th century, Copernicus set a basis for the instruction organizational system into *classes and lessons*, the system rapidly spread across Europe and later in the entire world, continuing to be the dominant modality of organizing the educational process.

The pupils' class represents the organizational frame represented by constant groups of pupils, relatively homogenous from the age point of view, from the school progress and the level of intellectual development points of view. *The class* represents a form of organization of the education process through which the common activity of teaching the pupils collective is realized under the teacher's guidance. Affirming the supremacy of the class as the main form of organization of the educational process, V. Anghelache offers a definition to the term "lesson": "a form of organization for the education process", "basic form", "main form", "dominant form", "fundamental form", "central form" (2011, p. 20, *online*).

Nowadays, in our country, an option for an alternative educational system, *Step by step*, has intensely manifested, the characteristics of which will be presented in the following rows.

The educational system Step by Step, represents the most prevailing system of alternative education in our country, being based on: *the importance of early education; the sustaining of underprivileged groups inclusion; education centred on children; learning organized in centres of activities; the family and the community implication in the children's education and the respect and appreciation of human*

diversity. The specific of the system highlights the following characteristics: education practices that take into consideration the child as a whole; the education process is centred on the child, the education is more individualized; parents participation in the child's education and teaching is centred on the child's needs.

The need to complete and to extend the educational process outside the classroom, associated with the need to conceive education in complex and attractive manners lead to the functioning of more exiting and flexible forms of organization (Cojocaru, 2008, pp. 93-94) as for example : *education outside the classroom* – practical-applicative workshops, didactic trips and visits and *education outside the school* – pupils roundtables, consulting, meditation, educational, artistic and sports competitions, trips and visits outside the school.

2.   Methodological particularities of the *Step by Step educational system*

The Step by Step educational alternative offers to the pupil an educational environment that promotes the wellbeing of every child. A hospitable, safe, stimulating and inclusive educational environment is insured, which promotes children's exploring, education and independence. The teacher manifests respect towards the child, showing interest for his feelings, ideas and experiences. Children are asked to express themselves; each child is encouraged to develop attachment and inter-individual relations. The teacher incorporates different materials that are sufficient, accessible and adequate from the development point of view, that stimulate children to explore, to play and learn. Children participate in the planning, the organizing and the maintaining of the educational environment.

The teacher organizes the space at his hand into interest areas, defined by logics, with the purpose to sustain education and development. Thus:

o   Learning is produced through individual discovery, accepting and encouraging personal manners of developing skills and knowledge;

o   Learning is organized into activity Centres. A classroom must have a reading Centre, a writing Centre, a science Centre, a mathematics Centre, and arts centre and a constructions Centre; and other facultative Centres imagined by the teacher.

This organization modifies the teacher's place in the classroom, he no longer sits in face to face to children – a position considered to be unequal and of confrontation, but shoulder to shoulder – an equal, collaboration position.

The strategies used allow an active training for children in the development of knowledge and aptitudes, through (Tankersley, Brajkovic, Handzar, 2013):

✓   The use of strategies that address all development domains;
✓   The offering of activities that encourage experiment and creativity;
✓   The stimulating of thinking and solving problems;
✓   The facilitating of informal learning;
✓   The use of technologies adequate to the children's development level;
✓   The construction of positive, cooperation and reciprocal support relations;

✓   The valuing in teaching of children's anterior knowledge and experiences;

✓   The integration through learning experiences that allow a connection between educational concepts and day to day experiences.

The main methods used are the ones that encourage the development of an active and critical spirit. The activating of teaching-learning supposes the use of methods, techniques and procedures that implicate the individual in the learning process, following the development of thinking, the stimulating of creativity, the development of an interest for learning, in order to build him as an active participant to the education process. From this perspective, the methods for an active learning may be classified in:

a. *Methods that favour the understanding of concepts and ideas,* the value the pupils' experiences develop communication and relation skills, of deliberation on a mental plan and aim at the formation of an active attitude: discussion, debate, role play, brainstorming and Phillips 6-6;

b. *Methods that stimulate thinking and creativity,* determine pupils to seek and to develop solutions for different problems, to build critical reflections *and* valuable judgements, to compare and to analyse the situations given: heuristic conversation, case study, problem solving, didactic games, exercise and brainstorming;

c. *Methods through which pupils are learns to work productively* with others and to develop collaboration and reciprocal help abilities: mosaic, coffee shop, small groups' projects and the cube.

The active participative methods may be classified according to the **historical criterion** (that of reporting methods to the exigencies of periods during which the didactic process takes place), in:

a.   *Traditional methods*: Algorithmic methods, Conversation, Demonstration, Exercise, Role play, Questioning and the Study of the handbook;

b.   *Modern methods*: Brainstorming, Learning assisted by computers, Framing method, Bunch method, Cube method, Focus group method, I know-I want to know-I have learnt method etc.

3.   The research design

As the paper title suggested, the research has started from the idea that the instructive process must be organized from the perspective and from the position of the most recent achievements of the interactive learning theories. This implies the application of some interactive didactic methodologies, of modern conception and of increase efficiency.

3.1. The general hypothesis *that is to be verified is: The frequent use of interactive methods in the didactic activity will lead to the optimization of the teaching-learning activity with pupils from primary school.*

The analysis regards the methodological aspects of traditional and SBS educational systems (involving the use of the some methods as: heuristic conversation, case study, problem solving, ideas assault, project, the cube etc.).

The sample consisted of 120 subjects – 100 pupils from primary level (preparatory school, first, second, third and fourth grades) and 20 teachers (teachers

from primary and preschool levels), from the traditional system build on classes and lessons, and from the Step by Step educational alternative.

3.2. The research methodology. The research realized has an ascertaining character that proposes the obtaining of information "regarding pedagogical phenomena investigated and the verifying of relations and correlations between the aspects analysed. The research methods used on most occasions are the questionnaire and the interview and other methods like observation, focus-group etc." (Antonesei, Labăr, 2009, p. 21).

The research objective has required the use of a set of methods of data collection, process and presentation (Table 1). From the field of the psycho pedagogical research methods, there has been chosen two methods that fulfil the requirements of an ascertaining or observation research: *the method of investigation based on the written questionnaire* and *the pedagogical test.* The statistical-mathematical data process required the next: *tables of synthetically results, the determination of the central tendency and correlation determination.*

The method of investigation based on the written questionnaire. Didactic staff, teachers from primary and preschool levels are competent and experienced persons, capable to appreciate not only their pupils changings and progresses (cognitive, attitudinal-behavioural) as individuals, but also as groups, gained after the participation to didactic activities (organized in the traditional and SBS class). The questionnaire items identified the cognitive progress and the attitudinal-behavioural progress obtain by pupils.

Methods of data collection	Methods of statistical-mathematical data process	
The investigation based on questionnaire	The determination of the central tendency	
	The correlation	Bravais-Pearson correlation
	Tables of synthetic results	Frequency
The pedagogical test		Media
The observation		

Table 1. The research methodology

The pedagogical test. In order to identify the level of knowledge obtained by pupils during the educational process, a pedagogical test was applied. The pedagogical test used is a non-standard test, elaborated in order to appreciate the level of the cognitive achievements obtained. The items investigated the next indicators: the achievement of new information, creative-reflexive thinking, the ability of interpretation, the deepened understanding, the selective analyse of ideas, the systematization of knowledge.

The observation. In the present research, the use of the systematic (structured) observation was used. It was realized by an observation guide, which offered a pattern of systematization and hierachization of the primary data. As a way of creating the observation guide, an observation technique without a measurement scale was used (because the observation data will be analysed from a qualitative point of view). In

order for all aspects of the research to be recorded and gathered, analyses units were formulated in antithetical terms.

3.3. The interpretation of the analysis, the processing and the results interpretation consists in the comparison of results between the traditional and SBS classes.

From the level of **the cognitive development,** it was observed that the results of the pedagogical test are better in SBS classes than in traditional classes, tests showed significant differences for all the aspects evaluated.

Regarding **the attitudinal-behavioural changes**, it was observed that significant differences were registered for all the investigated attitudinal- behavioural indicators in the SBS class. The values presented above lead to the conclusion of a successful use of interactive methods, confirmed by the correlation existence, a connection of the post-test between the variables of the present research.

The analysis **of inter-relational progresses** revealed that the differences are significant between traditional and SBS classes.

Medium values for the progresses due to the interactive methods			
	Cognitive achievements	Attitudinal – behavioural changes	Inter-relational progresses
TRADITIONAL	3,47	3,55	4,20
STEP BY STEP	3,8	4,23	4,55
The results of the inferential processing for the STEP BY STEP CLASS			
	Cognitive achievements	Attitudinal – behavioural changes	Inter-relational progresses
R	0, 892 strong connection	0, 957 determinist connection	0, 996 determinist connection

Table 2. Changes resulted due to the use of the interactive methods

The values presented above conclude towards a successful didactic methodology in SBS class, fact confirmed by the value of the correlation index, between the frequency of the interactive methods and the progresses observed.

Table 3 shows the differences between the pre-test step and the post-test one, from the point of view of the behavioural manifestation registered by the method of observation in the experimental group:

TRADITIONAL CLASS	SBS CLASS
passive behaviour, lack of involvement in the activity	active and interactive involvement in the task
formal atmosphere, closed	informal and relaxed atmosphere

unsupportive environment, neutral	supportive environment
little discussions	many discussions focused on the task
communication and superficial relations between partners	communication and profound relations with partners
unconstructive criticism	predominant constructive criticism
inflexible and misfit opinion	flexible and adapted opinions
individual problems' approach	group solving problems
affirming individual experience in the same time with learning form the others experience	learning from the others experience
negative attitudes and behaviours	positive attitudes and behaviours

Table 3. The observation results

The accent is put on the development of some social skills by exerting special didactic activities in order to help in building these skills. The objective is to create a climate based on collaboration and equilibrium at the entire group level.

4. Conclusions

From the comparative analysis of the results obtained from traditional and SBS classes, it can be observed that the level of the cognitive achievements in the interactive mode is definitely superior. The attitudinal-behavioural changes are significantly positive for the participants that have taken part to the activities that involved interactive methods. The level of interrelations is highly maintained in the SBS class, the activities realized have become an opportunity to solve the group problem (the perspective of the interactive pedagogy).

In conclusion, the frequent use in the didactic activity of interactive methods will lead to the optimization of the teaching-learning activity with pupils from primary school. The general hypothesis of the paper has been verified and validated.

Thus, we militate for an interactive pedagogy, which "promotes a model of reflexive-interactive training that encourages an interior reflection – individual and collective – and the debating of different problems, the direct experimenting of objectives, phenomena and reality processes, as pertinent preparation for a social integration. Moreover, democratic school is a school of diversity is a school of diversity, of confrontations and of agreeing to the offer and demand from the educational system, a school that builds curriculum (constructivist), pedagogical devices, pupils' educational evolution, through interactions with other persons (parents, colleagues etc.) and other institutions (schools, local administration, economic agents, local and areal community etc.) - (Bocoş, 2013, p. 51-52).

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THE SPECIAL PROTECTION OF THE JUVENILE DELINQUENT. CASE PRESENTATION

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Abstract: *Informed by the specific characteristics of the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency, this paper aims to determine the social factors and mechanisms that lead to the development of antisocial behaviors among minors. It also aims to identify and present the protective measures for this category of minors, with an emphasis on the measures designed to protect youth who have committed criminal offences and are not held liable for such acts, and how these measures are applied in practice, in working directly with such cases. By presenting an example of youth offender casework, we aim to highlight the issues specialists in the General Directorate for Social Work and Child Protection, encounter in providing specialized services to young offenders and their family members.*

Key words: *juvenile delinquency, minors, criminal offence, specialized supervision*

Introduction

In order to define the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency, it is important to start by analyzing the general concepts of deviance and delinquency. In the scientific literature, deviance is defined as "nonconformity to a given set of norms, accepted by a significant number of people, within a community or a society". The notion of deviance applies both to individual behaviors, and at a group level, being more comprehensive than the notion of delinquency, which is practically included in this definition (Giddens, 2010, p. 748). Delinquency represents a complex social problem engendered by the interaction between the individual and their environment. When addressing the issue of delinquency, it is essential to consider social maturity, which is actually the defining element in regard to the individual's ability to maintain a balance between one's personal interests and those promoted by the society in which they live. Thus, the offender is perceived as an individual with insufficient social maturity, who has difficulties in social integration and in adjusting to existent norms (Pașca, 2005). In regard to offending minors, the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency implies a series of complex issues, such as: social inadaptation, behavior and personality disorders, which determines its positioning as an study interest at the intersection of various disciplines: psychology, psychiatry, sociology, pedagogy, criminology etc. The

theoretical objectives of studying the phenomenon concern the causes and the individual and social significances of the offending behavior, while the objectives of practical research focus on identifying the means of preventing and controlling the phenomenon of violating legal norms, with an emphasis on the involvement of educational stakeholders, social structures, the cultural environment, the rule of the law (Rădulescu şi Banciu, 1990).

The research indicates that the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency does not reach alarming rates in our country, in comparison to other countries – the statistical data show that juvenile delinquency corresponds to "a percentage of about 8-10% on average, in aggregated delinquency rates in Romania" (Banciu, 2011, p. 19), but it represents nevertheless a problem that warrants attention. This issue is at the center of sociological, psychological, criminological etc. research, which calls for the need to identify coherent solutions in improving protective measures, with the aim of reducing antisocial behaviors among youth, with an emphasis on the adoption of educational solutions and effective specialized interventions, as well as on the involvement of all responsible stakeholders, especially local communities and institutions with responsibilities in child welfare: county school boards, the police, city halls, General Directorates for Social Work and Child Protection etc.

Drawing on the specific characteristics of the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency, this paper aims to determine the social factors and mechanisms that lead to the development of antisocial behaviors among minors, both as a group phenomenon, and as an individual phenomenon. It also aims to identify and present the protective measures for this category of minors, with an emphasis on the measures designed to protect youth who have committed a criminal offence and cannot be held liable for such acts, and how these measures are applied in practice, in working directly with cases.

Juvenile delinquency. Theoretical framework and protective measures for the minor who commits a criminal offence and is not held liable

Theoretical framework

For a better understanding of this phenomenon, as well as its implications for both the offending individual and their community, we begin by defining the phenomenon and by placing it in the scientific discourse, in order to determine the individual's conduct characteristics in regard to the offending behaviors they might engage in at a given moment.

Research in this field underlines the fact that judicial and psychosocial perspectives in addressing deviance and implicitly delinquency do not overlap (Preda, 1998; Paşca, 2005).

From the judicial standpoint, juvenile delinquency is labeled as a distinctive form of deviance, that is of a criminal nature, and is defined as "a set of conducts in conflict with the values protected by the legal norm" (Rădulescu și Banciu, 1990, p. 42), or "that sequence of delinquency found that is prosecuted and sanctioned by specialized courts of law…" (Paşca, 2005, p. 6).

The concept of deviant behavior in social psychology has a wider range of inclusion, compared to its conceptualization within the judicial field. Thus, from a

socio-psychological point of view, the common factor underlying delinquency is that "the subjects from this category give evidence of nonconformity to the social model, and display deviant behavior from social and moral norms, in the sense that they pursue some of their goals and aspirations through social unacceptable means" (Preda, 1998, p. 2).

Furthermore, the sources of offending behavior are represented by different categories of minors: abused minors, youth abandoned by their parents and living in the streets and forced to engage in such acts in order to survive, minors who have been institutionalized, deprived of an adequate social environment, youth with poor academic performance or dropout (Banciu, 2011).

Thus, it follows that juvenile delinquency should be conceived as "the consequence of the absence of moral support provided by the adult, the lack of protection and care in the family, the failure of the educational activity in school etc" (Chipea, 1996). Children, who for various reason, such as: parental alcohol abuse, poverty, troubled family history, children subjected to different forms of violence in the family etc, are not provided with the minimal conditions for their development, might be at risk of becoming offenders (World Youth Report, 2004). Moreover, the research shows that most of the juvenile offenders prosecuted by courts of law display "deficiencies in family, social and school socialization, as evidenced by running away from home, truancy, alcohol and drug abuse, theft and physical violence…" (Banciu, 2011, p. 19).

The family is extremely important in this context because it exercises a considerable influence on the child's personality development and professional achievement. The research points to a direct relation between the educational environment in the family and social integration (Sandu, 2008). Thus, one can assume that offending youth might be simply victims – not to be found guilty, as they lack the criminal responsibility imputed on them.

In this regard, the judicial perspective needs to be harmonized with the socio-psychological standpoint toward a multifaceted understanding of delinquency, allowing for adequate interventions conducive to the social reintegration of this category, to the prevention of recidivism and the prophylaxis of social deviance through multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary actions. An approach which takes into account the psychological, sociological, pedagogical, judicial, medical perspectives in researching juvenile delinquency aims to study this phenomenon in all its complexity.

In the Bihor county, we encounter the issue of juvenile delinquency. Although the number of juvenile offenders is not very large, it still exists. According to data provided by DGASPC Bihor (2012, 2013), between January – September 2013, there were four cases registered and managed of minors who committed a criminal offence but were not held liable (compared to the 88 cases managed between January – December 2012), and 12 cases of minors aged 14 to 18, who committed criminal offences and were held criminally liable. Hence, there are minors who are engaged in criminal activity, and the General Directorate for Social Work and Child Protection is required to take measures of "a more thorough supervision" in relation to them.

Other countries are dealing with this issue. The research indicates that significant functional inefficiency in the home, at school and in the community often

determines that these children, young people and their families request support from different public and private agencies (MacKinnon-Lewis et al., 2002).

Protective measures for the minor who committed a criminal offence but is not held liable

Current legislative regulations concerning child protection address the issue of the offending juvenile, who cannot be held criminally liable, and ensure at the same time the alignment of internal norms to international standards regarding the protection of the child's rights (UNICEF, 2005). The judicial system is however not mandated to fulfill this role, and we identify the need for the social sector to collaborate with the juvenile justice system, otherwise the latter cannot realize sustainable changes in regard to children's behavior, their specific circumstances and environment (UNICEF, 2013).

Using as criteria for establishing criminal liability the child's age and mental capacity, art. 113 of the Criminal Code establishes three categories of minors: minors under the age of 14 who cannot be held liable based on the presumption of a lack of mental capacity; minors aged 14 to 16 who can be held liable if it is proven that they committed the act in discernment; and minors aged 16 who are held criminally liable.

Law no. 272/2004 concerning the protection and promotion of the child's rights, on chapter V, regulates the protection of the child who committed a criminal offence and is not held liable. Thus, according to art. 80, paragraph 1, at the proposal of the General Directorate for Social Work and Child Protection within the administrative-territorial unit where the child resides, either one of the following special protective measures will be taken in relation to the offending child who cannot be held criminally liable:

- specialized supervision
- placement

Art. 67, paragraph 1, stipulates that specialized supervision be enforced in relation to the offending minor who is not held criminally liable, while paragraph 2 of the same article requires that the competent agencies to enforce such a measure are the Child Protection Commission, if there is a parental agreement, or the court of law in the absence of such an agreement.

The measure of specialized supervision (art. 81, paragraph 1) consists in ensuring the child stays in the family home, provided they fulfill certain obligations, such as:

1. the requirement of attending school
2. the use of day care services
3. participation in medical treatment, counseling or psychotherapy
4. the prohibition to visit certain places or to maintain contact with certain individuals

These restrictive measures are established by representatives from the General Directorate for Social Work and Child Protection when the specialized supervision measure is decided upon by the Child Protection Commission.

According to art. 81 (2), "provided that maintaining the child in the family home is not possible or when the child does not fulfill the obligations set up through the specialized supervision measure, the Child Protection Commission or, as applicable,

the court of law, can order their placement in the extended or a substitutive family, as well as the fulfillment of the child's obligations stipulated in paragraph 1".

Art. 82 of the law no. 272/2004 stipulates that "if a legally-sanctioned offence, committed by the child who is not held liable, presents a high degree of social danger, as well as in the case of the child for whom protective measures were set out according to art. 81, presents re-offending behavior, the Child Protection Commission or, as applicable, the court of law, orders for a determined period, the child's placement in a specialized residential service".

For the duration corresponding to the measures applied to the young offender, specialized services are provided in order to assist the child in the process of social reintegration (art. 84, paragraph 1).

Government Resolution no. 1439/2004 regarding specialized services for the offending minor who is not held liable, requires in art. 5 that "specialized residential services for the offending minor who is not held criminally liable, are organized as centers providing direction, supervision and support for the child's social reintegration".

Intervention methods in working directly with cases

Drawing on the theoretical aspects previously mentioned, we shall present an example of intervention applied by professionals in specialized services, in their direct work with juvenile offenders and their family members.

In approaching such cases, specialists analyze the overall issues, using specific intervention methods and techniques adapted to each client system, working in multidisciplinary and inter-agency teams. Thus, the service user is perceived through their relationships with the other systems they relate to (Figure no. 1): the family, the peer group, the community they belong to, the organizational system they come into contact with, obviously considering their personality and other factors that might contribute to solving the issues they deal with.
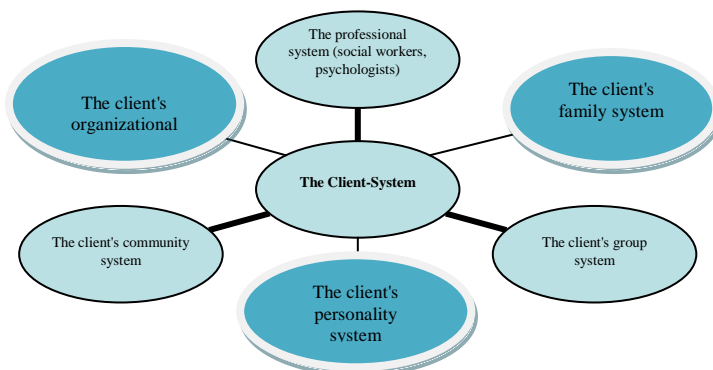

Figure no. 1 The helping relationship (adaptation from Poulin et. al., 2000 apud Roth şi Rebeleanu, 2007)

Case presentation (*we specify that one of the authors of this paper was the case manager in the following example)

The court in one of the towns in Bihor county issued a communication addressed to the General Directorate for Social Work and Child Protection, requesting that the Child Protection Commission establish a special measure for minor M.D., aged 16, with the domicile in a commune in Bihor county, who was spotted by police officers shoplifting from one of the stores in the village, after breaking in. Arrived at the scene, the local police found only minor M.D., the other participants having managed to escape.

The communication was analyzed and a case manager was assigned to investigate the case and present it before the Child Protection Commission.

During their investigation, the case manager (a social worker) worked in partnership with colleagues across different services: services specialized in child protection for offending minors, but also with colleagues in a specific counseling service for parents and children, all of these services being provided under the authority of the General Directorate for Social Work and Child Protection. The case manager also worked together with the person with social service responsibilities in the local council and with staff from the school attended by the child.

Thus, the case manager began by assessing the case and discussing all of the aspects with: the minor, his family members, local council and school staff etc. Taking into account the complexity of the case, an intervention was considered necessary in this case, as a result of the assessment. In this regard, the intervention took place at the individual and family level.

Following the assessment, the team's proposal submitted to the Child Protection Commission established the need for specialized supervision (art. 81, Law no. 272/2004), which consisted of the child remaining in the family home under the condition that he fulfill certain requirement such as:

1. attending school
2. using day care services
3. submitting to medical treatment
4. psychological counseling
5. the prohibition to visit certain places or to maintain contact with certain individuals

However in practice, these requirements were difficult to fulfill. The child's family explained that they could not assume personal responsibility for their child's school attendance, on the basis of his frequent truancy. In their area of residence, there aren't any special educational establishments for children with disabilities, thus such a possibility had to be ruled out. Furthermore, the parents explained that they could not supervise the child on an ongoing basis in order to prevent him from going to certain places and connect to the persons who caused him to engage in offending behavior. The child was registered with a psychiatrist, but he did not take his prescription medications regularly; the parents stated they could not monitor the child during school hours, and could not take responsibility for that.

For a better understanding of the case, we selected certain relevant aspects for further analysis.

A. Description of the client system

The minor M.D. attended at that time one of the Arts and Crafts Schools in Oradea, living in the boarding school during the semester. The child was known as one of the students who often played truant (in spite of the gatekeeper in the institution), and he was repeatedly found at the train station by the police, planning on going home (he often did arrive home).

He was a child who had been institutionalized in a residential center in the county, a center for children with disabilities between the ages 3 to 14, where he also received his education. The child had been institutionalized due to family issues. He was reintegrated in his biological family after the intra-family problems were resolved.

The child was registered with the General Directorate for Social Work and Child Protection, having been certified with a marked disability – mental, psychiatric characteristics – a diagnosis of medium intellectual disability and behavioral problems.

B. Family assessment

The minor's family lives in a commune in the county, at 50 km from Oradea. In the past, there were problems within the family, such as alcohol abuse and domestic violence; hence the child was placed in a residential institution under the authority of the General Directorate for Social Work and Child Protection. The child has three elder siblings (a sister and two brothers), who were raised by their grandparents when their parents were going through difficult times. The child's siblings live in another county, with their own families. The parents managed to overcome their issues, after converting to a neo-protestant religion. They stopped consuming alcohol and accepted M.D. to be reintegrated in the family. In addition to the support provided by the church, before and after the child's reintegration, the family received material and moral support from a non-governmental organization in Oradea (with building materials, food etc).

The child's reintegration in the family raised serious concerns. The parents lacked the parenting knowledge and skills necessary in raising a child with disabilities, hence the relationship conflict between the parents and the child.

The child repeatedly ran away from home, the family after being notified looked for him every time. Also, when he was at home, he was easily influenced by anyone and in exchange for small amounts of money and other promises, he would obey their requests (e.g. breaking the neighbors' windows). He was not at his first misdemeanor. After the incident that lead to the investigation by the court, the child's mother, since her first meetings with the case manager, stated: *"I can't handle it anymore... do whatever you want with him... I don't know how to deal with it any longer... he's all yours, I'm sick of having to pay fines or the neighbors' broken windows, I'm ashamed, we've lived there for a long time... I have other children, but I didn't have any of the problems that I have with him".*

C. Problems identified following the complex evaluation
- the child's behavioral problems;
- a strain on the relationship between the child and his parents;
- conflicts between family members, actually a major conflict;

- poor parenting skills (the parents cannot control their son's behavior).

D. General objectives established through consensus with all the parties involved:
- changing the child's undesirable behaviors into desirable behaviors;
- improving intra-family relationships;
- developing parental skills.

E. The intervention

The intervention at the individual level focused on changing the child's undesirable behaviors. Because it was possible, at the parents' request and with the child's agreement, he was placed for a month at an emergency care center in Oradea. The child attended school, without living on campus. During that time, he was provided with support from the professionals of the center (psychologist and social worker). The counseling sessions aimed to change his undesirable behaviors and improve his relationship with his parents. During this period, there were no problems in terms of the child's behavior in the center, at school, or in meetings with his parents.

The intervention at the family level focused on developing parental skills. A series of issues were identified. Given the considerable distance between the parental home and the service where the meetings with the professionals took place, and the family's financial difficulties, the mother was the only one who could participate in two sessions with the psychologist. In only two sessions, such objectives cannot possibly be achieved; consequently the intervention was limited to providing specific information that might help in solving these issues. It was practically impossible to engage the whole family in the intervention.

F. Discussions:

The intervention plan focused on the whole family, did not reach its objectives because for each type of intervention, a compromise solution had to be identified, due to the general lack of social services in rural communities. Generally, such problems are highly complex and require a long term specialized intervention. Issues at the psycho-individual level, where we identify an insufficient development of moral judgment, of attitudes and values, affective and personality disorders, low frustration tolerance etc, are difficult to address in short periods of time. Moreover, the intervention at the individual level is not enough. It is important in this regard that the intervention at the individual level be completed by an intervention at the family level, since many of the problems are caused and/or maintained by problems within the family.

Conclusions

According to the data presented in this paper, the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency does not reach alarming rates in our country; however this issue does exist and should be the center of attention for all stakeholders. It is a known fact that adolescence is considered a troublesome time. Given the age-specific biological changes and teenagers' wish for autonomy, independence from parental control, "it isn't

surprising that the teenage years are a time of rebelliousness and conflict with authority at home, at school, and in the community" (Siegel and Welsh, 2009, p. 4). This period of one's life may be associated with a certain vulnerability to the action of negative factors of socialization. Running away from home and truancy, misbehavior, nonconformity, are only some of the characteristics of teenagers. These characteristics can be corrected or eliminated through positive education and socialization of at-risk youth (Banciu, 2011).

According to Law no. 272/2004 concerning the protection and promotion of child's rights, the General Directorates for Social Work and Child Protection fulfill an extremely important role in assigning and establishing the special protective measures for the offending minor who is not held criminally liable. Given the complexity of the issue, the case selected for this paper illustrates a possible intervention method, with an emphasis on the problems encountered in case management, determined mainly by difficulties in accessing specialized services, rather insufficient in regard to the needs of rural communities, or specific educational programs for inadequate parental skills, by intra-family conflicts, a lack of parental responsibility etc.

In practice, the system does not have the specialized services required to fulfill all of these needs, and the measures that can be taken – such as specialized supervision, for which the responsibility falls back on the parents, who ought to be supported by their local community – are rather unhelpful, since the parents are often out of their depth or completely uninterested. If one does not intervene through specialized integrated services of psychosocial, educational and socialization assistance, there is a risk of enforcing the antisocial behavior, a risk of recidivism through committing more serious offences. Furthermore, as social marginalization and non-acceptance increase, the minors' rehabilitation becomes more difficult as they age. Another essential aspect in this regard is the risk of re-offending. Professionals specialized in working with such cases estimate that, in 30-40% of these cases, there is a high risk of re-offending, which declines if the intervention is sustained (Văduva et al, 2009). All parties involved carry the responsibly for the case.

Further discussions are necessary in order to determine viable solutions for these problems, such as developing new specialized services, developing preventative programs in regard to this issue etc.

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APPROACHING THE EDUCATIONAL VALUES OF THE STUDENTS' AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL

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Abstract: *The general issue highlighted in this article is the importance of some educational values (respect, responsibility, cooperation) in assuring the efficiency of the educational process at university level and preparing these students for their future role of employees. Using a 23 items inventory, on a sample of 158 students, our research goal was to establish the most important educational values on which the students' activity in the educational process at university level is settled up and to identify the differences between the first and third year students regarding these values. The results obtained sustain our hypothesis, supposing that students at university level have developed a high level of different types of educational values promoted in the educational process in which they are involved. But, these educational values were not represented at a highest level growth for the third year of study students opposite to the first year of study students. The conclusion of the study emphasizes the fact that that students have engaged in the educational process some educational values such as: respect for teachers or colleagues' opinion and for differences between individuals, and it is very important for students to have more sustainment in their personal development based on: cooperation, responsibility and assuming the results of group work.*

Keywords: *axiology, values education, educational values.*

INTRODUCTION

According to the researchers, the approach of education from the axiological perspective supposes the distinction between the two plans of reporting to the area of values: the theoretical plan, which is assured by the release of a horizon in the educational sciences' field, that can be defined by the concept of axiology of the education, or the axiology of pedagogy, and the practical plan, which will be circumscribed through the concept of values (axiology) education, proposing a valuable orientation of the educational praxis (Cucoș, C., 2006, p.116). Any educational process implemented at university level must guide all the interventions toward the development of the two approaches previously mentioned. It is known that not every field of study treats the theoretical approach of the axiology in education. But each professor can provide an educational process which has as a goal a positive attitude and the implementation of the educational values in different educational

contexts. These values have specific characteristics related to the career development process, but are also general values which will contribute to the personal development of students as individuals. This individual developmental route of the student must be supported by the professors that offer a genuine values education. This way education, from an axiological point of view, should settle up on the orientation of the educational process to the best trajectories, identification and exploitation of the privileged educational moments, finalization of all the searches through the best choices, in order to establish a hierarchy towards the available goals, to operate according to a relevant order of priorities (Bunescu, Gh., 1998, p.5). This educational process involves a high level of participation from the professor and the students in a manner that supposes the following: the educational act priorities are established by both educational actors and students' active participation is obligatory for attending their maximum efficiency. An important characteristic of the educational process with an axiological orientation is the long duration and the fact that this process doesn't valorise immediately the potential of the individual. In this respect, teachers at university level must assure an educational climate which sustains the natural evolution of the three levels of the values internalization, mentioned also by A. Chircev (apud. Iosifescu, V., 2004, p. 52):

− The value acceptance level – supposes emotional acceptance, but the belief of the individual is not present. This emotionally accepted value should be internalised or not, depending on the future educational influences.

− The personal preference level for a distinct value – is the level of the expression of the individual' preference on a certain value. In this moment, the person selects a value from a plurality of values and manifests his desire for its acceptance and internalisation. Each individual selects for himself a set of values which are defined as personal values.

− The participation/ engagement level – involves a high degree of certainty, which encourages the internalisation of this value. This process continues with the emergency of the value among other persons.

In order to attend all the mentioned levels and the implied steps to be completed by the students, the professors at university level must offer a good practice model for internalising educational values. Also, his/her personal model related to the promoted values in the educational process is very important and is assumed by students as a landmark for personal development and promotion of the values. This axiology based approach must assure the balance between students' total engagement in the educational process and a dozen of detachments from supreme values, if the specificity of the educational contexts determines that situation. R. Vigaro affirms that it is a great difficulty to combine on the one hand the engagement of such persons that are deeply attached to the realising values for the individual, and on the other hand a sufficient detachment from these values for avoiding the situations in which such values became oppressive (apud. Iosifescu, V., 2004, p. 77).

A wide number of studies in the specific literature approached the discussion of the topic and researched values education and its possible implications in the educational process. Related to our study issues, we select and shortly describe a few in what follows:

-C. A. Van Kan, P. Ponte, N. Verloop (2013) explore the substance of teachers' educational values and beliefs that underlie their daily classroom interactions. The study develops a typology of six legitimization types that teachers used when interpreting their classroom interactions in terms of their pupils' best interest: a caring legitimization type, a personal legitimization type, a contextual legitimization type, a critical legitimization type, a functional legitimization type, and a psychological legitimization type, entailing a systematic description of what teachers consider to be educationally worthwhile and contributing to the development of an educational vocabulary that enables teachers to inquire, articulate and discuss the educational values and ideals in a deliberate manner.

-S. Kalafatis and L. Ledden (2013) examine the impact of students' perceptions of educational value at a specific point in time which have subsequent evaluations of value during a one-year programme of study. The results of the study confirm the presence of carry-over effects in perceptions of value and indicate that, during the consumption experience, there are re-formulations, modifications and adjustments of students' perceptions of value, demonstrating the temporal nature of perceptions of educational value.

-I. Golyshev (2011) offers an interpretation of the existing approaches regarding consumption values classification, identifying the components of educational services that are important in the context of consumption values and outlining the prospects of applying value approaches to developing educational services at university level.

-D. Kirk (2013) offers two examples to support a case for educational value, built on the examination of one established pedagogical model - Sport Education, which develops a new perspective on ethics and supports the reconstruction of the concept of the educational value and may offer a possible future for physical education development.

- T. Lovat, N. Clement, K. Dally and R. Toomey (2010) argue that values education has moved from being associated mostly with the religious agenda of faith schools to being central in the process of updating research insights into effective pedagogy. The authors consider that it is a vital approach to education in any school setting.

-L. Bills and C. Husbands (2005) analyse the specifically mathematical values which characterize the practice of mathematics teachers and draw on one teacher's articulation of his practice to explore values issues in the teaching of mathematics. The article compares also both the mathematics education literature and the general values education literature.

These studies are oriented to educational values in the teaching process in generally at pre-university or university level, pointing at the importance of teaching values as support for a specific domain development or for the teaching process. The authors highlight the importance of an effective pedagogy adopted in the educational process, in both teaching and learning activities.

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS OF THE RESEARCH
As we observed in the previously mentioned studies, the issues related to values in the educational process are complex. In our study, we consider that the centre of

each educational process based on educational values is represented by the students' values manifested in this process. In this respect, we want to analyse the assumed educational values of the students in the educational process.

The hypothesis of our study was: the students at university level have developed a high level of different types of educational values promoted in the educational process in which they are involved, more increased for the third year students then the first year students.

Settled up on a 23 items inventory, our research goal was to establish the list of the most important educational values which are settled up during the students' activity in the educational process. We didn't use a validated inventory, but we proposed some items which are related to group cooperation, respect, equal chances, right and responsibilities in the educational process, considered important for us in order to assure the efficiency of values education. This inventory can be developed and extended in the future on a larger number of students at university level. The sample on which we applied this inventory consists in a number of 158 students from The West University of Timişoara (year 1 and 3 of study). The inventory was applied in the second semester of the year 2012-2013.

The objectives of the research were:

O1. To identify the hierarchy of first year of study students 'educational values at university level.

O2. To specify the hierarchy of third year of study students' educational values at university level.

O3. To establish the significant differences between the educational values of first and third year of study students, at university level.

The discussions about the results are based on the analysis of the following dimensions:

1. The score averages for each educational value at first and third year students.

The analysis of data on the highest and lowest average scores of each mentioned educational value for first year of study students reveals the following data:

Table 1 First year students' highest average on educational values

Educational values	First year students' highest average
1. I treat my teachers with consideration and respect.	4.77
2. I ask from my colleagues to manifest respect and honesty in the educational process.	4.63
3. I take responsibility for my own actions in the educational process.	4.44
4. I respect my colleagues' activity.	4.36
5. I respect my colleagues' rights in group activities.	4.36

Table 2 First year students' lowest average on educational values

Educational values	First year students' lowest average

1. I help my colleagues in their learning activity.	3.38
2. I cooperate in a constructive way in the conflict solving process.	3.57
3. I take action against the disrespect of my colleagues' rights in the educational process.	3.68
4. I constantly contribute to the assurance of an educational climate adequate for mutual trust.	3.71
5. I perform at the highest level during each educational activity.	3.73

As we noticed (Table 1 and Table 2), the first year students give more importance to the educational values related to the respect for or from other participants in the educational process (teachers and their colleagues) and their involvement in this educational act. Students affirm that they take responsibility for their own actions in the educational process.

The educational values related to cooperation with others or contribution to an adequate educational climate, also obtained the lowest average. This educational value, constantly applied, should determine a well formed competence for relationships in every context. The high level personal performance of students can also be improved and this can be related to the level of personal motivation for the educational process.

Analysing the highest averages for the educational values of the third year of study students (Table 3 and Table 4), we observe that the first place is taken also by respect for their teachers and has a very close score relating to first year of study students (4.74). The respect for their colleagues' activity is also very important for these students. For this sample of students other educational values, such as: honesty and equality of chances are also very important. These are requested from colleagues and from himself/herself in the educational process. Although respecting the freedom and rights of my colleagues is an important educational value (4.29), taking action against disrespecting my colleagues' rights in the educational process is an action which obtained a lowest average (3.84). This is possible because students in the third yea had obtained the lowest average of educational values on the cooperation dimension: helping their colleagues, taking a common responsibility for the team tasks or cooperating in solving conflicts.

Table 3 Third year students' highest average on educational values

Educational values	Third year students' highest average
1. I treat my teachers with consideration and respect.	4.74
2. I take responsibility for my own actions in the educational process.	4.43
3. I ask from my colleagues to manifest respect and honesty in the educational process.	4.40
4. I am honest and correct in my relationships by the educational process.	4.38

5. I respect the freedom and rights of my colleagues, not constrained by an authority. 6. I respect my colleagues' activity.	4.29

Table 4 Third year students' lowest average on educational values

Educational values	Third year students' lowest average
1. I help my colleagues in their learning activity.	3.65
2. I think that I am responsible for my colleagues' activity, if we have team tasks.	3.74
3. I accept the differences between me and my colleagues.	3.78
4. I cooperate in a constructively way in conflict solving process.	3.79
5. I take action against breaking my colleagues' rights in the educational process.	3.84

2. Analysing the highest and the lowest averages for the first and third year students we observe that, regarding the highest averages obtained by them, (Table 1 and Table 3) where almost identical educational values regarding the respect for their teachers or their colleagues' activity or rights and asking from their colleagues respect were mentioned. The differences consist in the answer regarding the honesty and the correctitude in their relationships which was mentioned by third year of study students.

Regarding the lowest obtained averages, there are three educational values promoted by the two samples of students (Table 2 and Table 4) and two different educational values mentioned by the first year of study students (the constant contribution to the assurance of an educational climate adequate for mutual trust and performing at the high level in each educational activity) and also two different educational values mentioned by the third year of study students (I think that I am responsible for my colleagues' activity, if we have team tasks and I accept the differences between me and my colleagues). So, taking responsibility for the own or other activity or for the educational climate can be difficult for students. Although students respect their colleagues, the students in the third year of study obtained a lowest average on accepting the differences between their colleagues.

The t test on independent samples (first and third year of study students) does not establish significant differences between the averages of the scores obtained by the first year students and third year students regarding their educational values. The average obtained by the first year students regarding their educational values was 4.08 and for the third year of study students was 4.10 representing a high level of educational values' manifestation. Thus the determined $p > 0.05$ demonstrating the inexistence of the significant differences between the educational values of the two mentioned samples.

So, the initial hypothesis is partially validated by the results of the research. Although the high level of educational values is reflected by the obtained averages, yet the expected increase of the score for the third year students is not relevant.

CONCLUSIONS:

The analysis of the averages obtained by the two samples of the research points to the fact that in the educational process students apply some important values such as: respect for other people's activities, honesty and equality of chances, personal involvement and responsibility. But there is a lower average regarding cooperation and help offered to others in the process of conflict solving or assuming responsibility for each colleague's participation in the educational process. We consider that these concepts are important educational values for the future citizens and employees. In this respect, the educational process must develop some efficient strategy in order to develop these dimensions of values education. We are in accordance with The Delors' Rapport which proposes a few support points for education (Delors, J., 2000): "Learning to know", "Learning to do", "Learning to be", "Learning to leave with others", according a high level of importance to the pylon "Learning to live together" which embraces a common analysis of the future" risks and challenges for attending and implement common projects.

It is important for us that our research results demonstrate that students participate in the educational process with a high level of some valuable referentially as a "totality of the individual mobiles and supra individual normative, which are interiorised by the subject and are manifested in each valuable act (Cucoş, C., 1996, p.186). These results demonstrate that our hypothesis was correctly formulated. But, it is important for students to improve or develop permanently this valuable referential from the first to the third year of study and the T test on independent samples used in our research does not sustain this request. In this respect and because each valuable referential simultaneously involves stable elements (personality, culture) and variable elements (socio-cultural climate, ideology), we consider that teachers at university level must assure more support for personal development of values manifested in the educational process and determine students to be much involved in group activities or supportive activities. Also, they must sustain students as future employees to promote the importance of the educational values for the group activities, a base for cooperation in their future workplace. Only believing in cooperation, support and responsibility students' educational values will be improved and their personal development in the valuing process will be a support for other individuals in different social contexts.

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