CUPRINS

THE CURRICULUM – EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

Anton ILICA
Faculty of Educational Science, Psychology and Social Sciences
"Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad, Romania
anton.ilica@yahoo.com

Abstract: *Each individual experiences or not the change of a lifetime. In both situations, the individual`s personality turns into a developing project which is constructed and deconstructed as human due to its ability to adjust to constant changes and social situations. The man`s paideic evolution is marked by other peers intervention and their attempt to make him desirable for a society which continuously expresses its mentality and behaviours. Man experiences education through specialized institutions developed by the society. Man in thus constantly subjected to influences thanks to various models. In this article we try to prove than any individual evolves based on a personality development programme but also influenced by the social-cultural context and his ability to adjust.*

Keywords: *curriculum, paideia, educational ideal*

1. A Curriculum. The term „curriculum" has one of the most dramatic pedagogic destinies. The term curriculum has been adopted by pedagogical vocabulary after pedagogy became known as "education sciences". ***Pedagogy*** – as education science– ***methodology and didactics*** are developed and evolve around the concept of *curriculum*. The semantics of this term – too easily accepted by the basic pedagogic vocabulary – still gives headaches to theoreticians and by derivation to educators. An honest answer to the question „***what is a curriculum***" would start with "in my opinion". The *Curriculum* has become an operational concept of European pedagogy since 1950s and Romanian pedagogy started using it after 1990; pedagogues have not managed to overcome the difficulties of using the word in educational purposes not even after two decades. „Abusive use and misuse" of the term „curriculum" has not allowed it to gain sufficient scientific legitimacy so as to be included in the basic linguistic corpus of "education sciences".

The word has been borrowed from the American pedagogy with a certain pedagogic significance. Europeans have rediscovered its Latin origins as a neutral noun with the letter *u* stressed (the one in the middle of the word) and with the plural form *curricula*. The first observation refers to the Romanian language`s inability to adapt it to its language system (Romanian

is a phonetic language, we read words the way we write them. Keeping the word with double consonants and the Latin plural in (*curricula*) allows speakers to use it in strange combinations such as: curriculum, curriculei, curriculumului etc. The plural form *curricula* produces strange linguistic combinations which contain grammar errors: curricula academic (academic curricula), curricula educaţionale (educational curricula), curricula profesorilor (teachers` curricula) etc.

Secondly, the word has lost its whole and main semantic Latin flavour. Originally, it meant "*running in circle"* as a race between horse-drawn chariots in Roman circuses. Then the adjective *vitae* was added to *curriculum* (curriculum vitae), which means „the path of life", namely the man`s becoming from birth to death including his education. With this meaning, *curriculum vitae* identifies „lifelong learning", with *paideia* from the Greek thinking. *Curriculum vitae* (CV) would means man`s life from birth to a certain point and in pedagogical terms, the CV would refer to an individual`s overall learning experiences. Thus, *curriculum* would be almost synonym to *paideia*, as educational becoming of a harmoniously developed man; the curriculum comprises all learning and educational experiences (institutionalized or non-institutionalized) irrespective of age. The concept is regarded quite reluctantly by the Romanian epistemic and practical area of education and the author of this study shares the same opinion. However "*although there are many who consider the term curriculum to elaborate, forced, redundant and useless in the Romanian pedagogic vocabulary, it is recommendable it use it both from epistemological reasons, linked to the evolution of contemporary pedagogy, and from pragmatic reasons (the curricular development in the Euro-Atlantic area involves unity and coherence, including in conceptual terms). The effort of understanding this term along with the accompanying pedagogic ideology is rewarded by granting access to the approach, planning and application of instructive-educational models adapted to the modern world*"[1]. One cannot find reasons to exclude the word from the basic pedagogic vocabulary due to its international coverage. Thus, through curriculum we shall understand two realities: **process** of training/ developing the personality (1) and **programme** of training / developing personality.

2. The Curriculum and the educational ideal. From a curricular point of view, the main question stated by pedagogues and didacticians is: how can a person be educated so as to be useful to the society, without diminishing too much the personal satisfactions of his / her existence? Each society has "ennobled" its requests towards child / teenager education by identifying a

---

[1] D. Potolea, N. Manolescu, (2006), *Teoria curriculum-ului*, Curs pentru învăţământul rural, Ministerul Educaţiei şi Cercetării, Bucureşti.

curricular perspective synthesized in the educational ideal. *The educational ideal* is the reflection of a personality project (ideal, so virtual) that society (by its social interests) desires for the individuals, so as to serve its concerns for identity protection and existential security. An *educational ideal* – as a fulfilled abstraction for a personality – becomes a fundamental prerogative of the educational institutions. In schools and universities the type of personality – aimed by ideal – is configured by means of two "curricular" documents: basic and normative.

First of all, *The Curriculum* contains affective, rational, behavioural, physical, aesthetical, moral components capable of being amplified in a harmonious personality. Thus taking into consideration the fact that mathematical abilities are compulsory for fulfilling cognitive intelligence, this subject is represented from kindergarten till high school graduation, in a certain percentage. If we aim at the formation and the development of patriotic feelings, the subject *history* is contained in the *Curriculum* for so many years and hours as to configure their quality (and quantity). The diminution in the number of hours for a certain subject / its absence from the *Curriculum* is the consequence of an educational policy. For example, the lack of art education in high school education derives from the perspective of the educational policy due to which teenagers can reach the ideal aimed by the society without art education. The diminution in the number of hours of physical education expresses the perception of social and political decision-makers regarding the configuration of youth personality. This situation is represented in the number of hours assigned for psycho-motrical and physical development.

This is a comparative view on an average Romanian and European *School Curriculum* design, for a 10 year old pupil:

Disciplines	European Union	Romania	+/- for our country
Mother tongue	183	204	+ 19
Modern languages	99	85	- 14
Mathematics	142	119	- 23
Nature sciences and humanities	127	93	- 34
Artistic activities	115	85	- 30
Religion and ethics	57	34	- 23
Sport	78	85	+ 7
No. of hours per study year	826, 7 hours	652 hours	- 174 hours
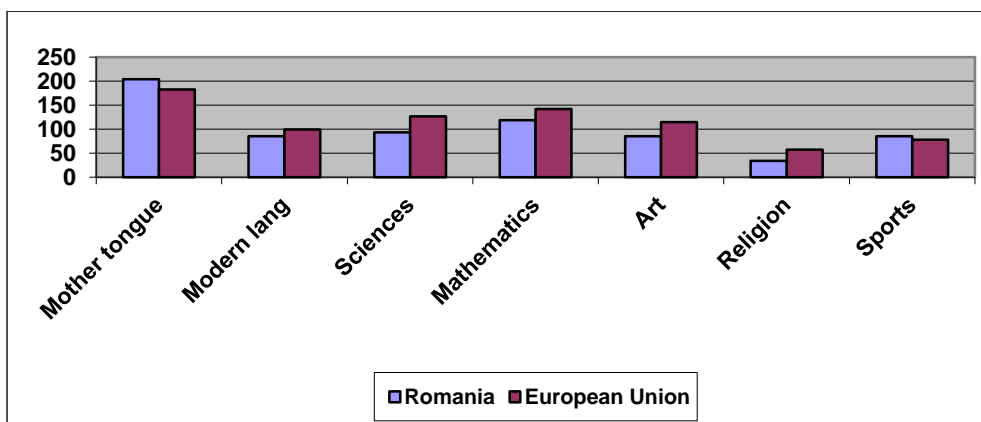
The comparative relation between the average number of hours per study year from our country and the European Union countries is represented in the following chart:
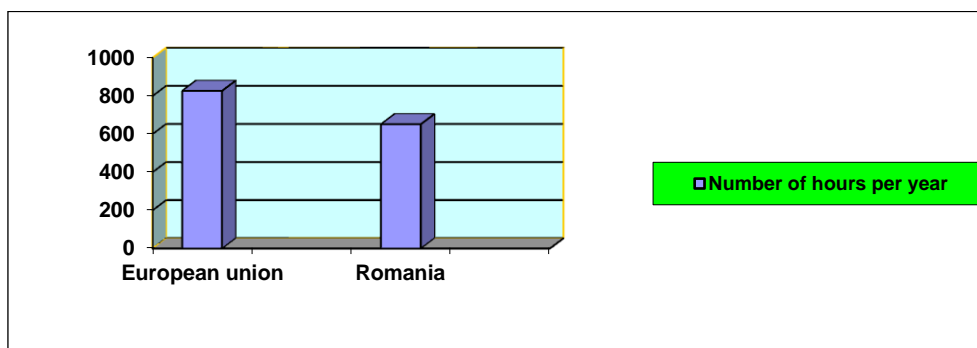
Second of all, *School Curricula* or *The Syllabus* detail the part of the pupil or student personality formation – development project that ensures competences suitable for the targeted domain as well as some transversal competences (computer usage, acquisition of mother tongue and modern languages, acquisition of a learning style, and if such the case of a research style). The sum of all didactic operating effects in the *School Curriculum* represents the acquisition that fulfils the aimed personality profile. Unfortunately, knowledge distilled in the subjects of school curricula has representation in prefabricated products (through the so-called alternative textbooks) with a strong hue and cognitive expressivity. Simultaneously the designers of *Curricular Programmes* do not take into account the correlation of the fields of knowledge for an integrated learning. Knowledge and abilities are autonomous, as identified by the famous "streets metaphor" (each field of knowledge walks on its own street and when it comes to a crossroad no one knows anyone) used by the pedagogue, Emil Păun.

The other curricular designs derive from the authority of the *Curriculum and Syllabus* considered absolutely compulsory. Together, they develop a **Paideic Programme of Human Development**. They all are carried out under the auspices of an educational ideal that is the effluence of educational policies and of the configuration of social mentalities.

Historically speaking, the ideal of Greek fortresses was represented by *Kalokagathia*, meaning that a young man was educated in the spirit of *truth, goodness* and *beauty*, namely education aims at developing o tender heart, a mind oriented toward discovering the truth and a beautiful body capable of admiring the aesthetics of reality. This harmony was named *paideia*. In ancient republican Rome, the educational ideal was represented by the apophthegm „Mens sana in corpore sano", linking the mind and the body through health. In other words, only in a healthy body can exist a healthy thinking. "Health" for the body and thought contains the Greek *Kalokagathia*, namely, the adjective "*healthy*" refers to the health of the relation between truth and mind, moral behaviour and respect for the body, environmental and natural beauty. The educational ideal of the Middle Ages involved formation of young virtuous people with knight dignity and respect for faith. The educational ideal of the Renaissance is represented by the universal man, by developing absolute personalities all these by rethinking the educational ideals of Latin and Greek Antiquity. Modernity motivates its educational ideal by encouraging the assimilation of eternal values (goodness, truth, beauty), of specific values (freedom, equality, legality), of personal values (courage, dignity, fraternity) as well as of certain collective views (faith and nation).

In conclusion, *the educational ideal represents the most abstract form of curriculum that aims at developing a profile of wishful personality with a community's aspirations.*

The curriculum agglutinates systematically the values a society believes in. A civilised society and especially a responsible one does not afford to ignore setting an *educational ideal* – that indicates its orientations toward a set of values that represent it. This society aims at bringing up the youth in the spirit of certain values capable of defining his/her personality and cultural identity. Action virtues acquire an epistemic representation within the *curriculum*. They aim at developing "ideal" personalities, desired by the *society*, passing on its cultural "genes" (traditions, values, rituals and symbolic representations) as well as forms of civilization capable of ensuring a certain standard of civilization and existential comfort. Consequently, such a *curricular project* is *point zero from where each child's education within a certain society starts*.

National societies assume the determination of a curricular ideal. But each family cares for their child's education, thinking about his/her future.

The statement "I want my son to be a doctor" is a projective identification of a curricular ideal. So, educational ideal can be regarded as a projected curriculum, aiming at coagulating a personality according to adults' wishes, they being responsible for a child's growth and education. After all, educational ideal identified in the curriculum contains supreme values that guide a community or a social organization. For the time being, the concept of curriculum, as used by educational sciences has various meanings, which derives into a certain notional ambiguity. As programme for school activities, curriculum refers to all components of educational process: plan, programmes, textbooks, strategies, evaluation, etc. Now, we use the meaning of content selection for didactic disciplines, namely syllabi and didactic programmes, actually the only normative documents. A curriculum should respond to an educational ideal, particularized to prospective configuration of social – economic reality. Educational ideal as a generation's option remains a Sissif –like aspiration. Its determination – consequence of an educational policy – relates to the prospective requirements of a society w hose configuration and dynamism are anticipated. Frequently, we deal with an education for adaptation than with an education for change.

By particularization of the desired type of personality, we mean a derivation process and paradigmatic connections:
- Paradigm of a future society;
- Paradigm of an educational ideal;
- Curricular paradigm.

In a world of constant changes, *the curriculum* ends quite quickly in conflict with the demands of the society. If in previous societies the progress was too slow and culture seemed stuck in eternal values (apparently), today, the future is approximated by the very configuration of the present. Therefore, curriculum involves not only anticipating a future it prepares the children for, but also a projection of the future.

3. Pansophia. The word "pansophia" can be translated as "universal wisdom", being used by the philosophers of brotherhoods as one of its objectives. From a pedagogic perspective, *pansophia* is a concept that aims at a standardized and global curriculum, valid worldwide. A *pansophic curriculum* would be a projection of personality valid for any community, irrespective of its civilization, culture, geographic spreading. "Pansophic curriculum" means what the pedagogue J. A. Comenius stated almost four centuries ago, regarding the "construction" of an educational system valid in all times and applicable to "all". („*Didactica Magna"*, 1652)

The idea of creating a European environment of superior education, by the regulation of Bologna, would be the first step in promoting *pansophia* for the time being, only on a formal, organizational level. Harmonizing education stages, as well as promoting unitary requirements for a set of

curricular programmes confirm the option for a *pansophic curriculum.* Its consequence upon national societies (for now) will lead to the development of a unitary contemporary society with loose identity borders. Border cultures − so strongly encouraged to develop under the protection of intercultural manifestations − will lead to premises for their dilution into a single, multicultural civilization (as a stage), that builds a world without national, cultural, religious differences, to a world independent of race, history, geographic area or cultural authority.

Such a pansophic "curricular project" (encouraged by the UNO, UNESCO, Amnesty International, Universal Masonic Organization) would benefit of a worldwide, unitary educational curricula standardized at global level (the idea of "globalization" and "universal village" are part of those conceptual tools that maintain such a project). It is difficult to predict communities' reactions - even from a demi-millennial perspective − just as unpredictable as the development of a Babylonia that would divide again "languages" and nations. As a remarkable Romanian pedagogue used to say "*ideas never die forever*"[2] (Ion Negreţ), humanity is too agitated for one to anticipate a long term evolution. *Human condition* evolves as "*a interconnection between the psychological structure and the biological structure in the social over-structure*"[3], as a close relationship between all three variables (psychological, biological and social).

The new challenge regarding a humanistic and global pedagogy refers to a hypothesis: how can a man be educated so as to reach his goal in the world? But the world how is it so as to be able to prepare the individual to enjoy the satisfactions and what can it pretend from an individual?! But maybe *the world* is too loaded with uncertainties, potential threats, and an overwhelming source of unpredictable problems?! Human perfection is a Sissif − like activity because the world expresses itself in its own monotonous existential dramas (though configured by people) follows its predetermined destiny.

A global curriculum that would eliminate educational differences between people remains an aspiration of humanity itself. The metaphor of Christian sacrifice is allegorical. In those times when in the Terrestrial garden - so carefully taken care of by God − wickedness appeared, god sent His Son to give people a model of educational sacrifice. The supreme sacrifice, the

---

[2] In the volume „***Teoria generală a curriculumului educaţional***" (2008), I. Negreţ-Dobridor develops in comments and updates the opinions of several specialits, especially Americans, regarding the promotin of a *„global curriculum that would guide and assure a global education".* He brings arguments for the (ideal) opportunity of global education *„to change the individual into kosmopolites and papaideumenos, namely into a citizen that possesses the huge world culture and warmlynd respectfully embraces all national cultures of this world"* (p. 350).

[3] N. Mărgineanu, (1973), *Condiţia umană*, Editura Ştiinţifică, Bucureşti, p. 34.

homicide and then the Ascension created the premises for a change. Christianity would spread, would become *global paideia,* promoting love instead of vendetta, love instead of hatred and fraternity instead of selfishness. When human condition is threatened, a global, pansophic curriculum would resettle human dignity, totally or like E. Fauré says, „*tout homme et tout l̓ homme*" („whole humanity and whole man).

The path between *paideia* and *pansophia* metamorphosis the human being's humanity and gives him the chance to fulfil his goals, to pass on to future generations the hope that makes man's garden look pleasant to God.

References

Ciolan, L. (2008), *Învăţarea integrată. Fundamente curriculare pentru un curriculum transdisciplinar*, Editura Polirom, Iaşi.

Cristea, S. (2008), *Curriculum pedagogic*, Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, Bucureşti.

Ionescu, M., Bocoş, M. (2009), *Tratat de didactică modernă*, Editura paralela 45, Piteşti.

Ilica, A. (2013), *Discurs pedagogic contemporan*, Editura Învăţătorul modern, Chişinău.

Kelemen, G. (2013), *Pedagogie şcolară şi preşcolară*, Editura Universităţii Aurel Vlaicu, Arad.

Mărgineanu, N. (1973), *Condiţia umană*, Editura Ştiinţifică, Bucureşti.

Negreţ-Dobridor, I. (2008), *Teoria generală a curriculumului educaţional,* Editura Polirom, Iaşi.

Niculescu, R. M. (2010), *Curriculum între continuitate şi provocare*, Editura Psihomedia, Sibiu.

Potolea, D., Manolescu, M. (2006), *Teoria curriculum-ului*, Ministerul Educaţiei şi Cercetării, Bucureşti.

MODEL OF SUPERVISED TEACHING PRACTICE FOR THE TRAINING OF REFLEXIVES PRESCHOOL TEACHERS AND PRIMARY TEACHERS

Estrela PAULO, M.B.,
University of Fafe
epaulo77@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper presents the new model of supervised teaching practice planned for students attending the Master in Pre-School and Primary School Education, at a time when we are witnessing a new reorganization of Study Plans as regards professional Master's degrees, compliant with Decree-Law N.º 79/2014 of 14 May.

The new model is the result of constant research justified by numerous studies in teacher education ensuring the importance of supervised curricular traineeship and highlighting it as an extremely important stage in the training of students, prospective educators/teachers, still more by the weight assigned to this training component concerning ECTS credits. There is further emphasis on the importance of the supervision and guidance actions, that have a key role in the Practicum, as moment of teaching-learning, research and orientation, and which simultaneously constitute essential moments of reflection, the currently most widely used concept when addressing new trends in teacher training.

The purposes, objectives and principles underlying the methodological options are properly presented, as well as the organization and management of the entire process of Supervised Teaching Practice, including the importance of choosing Education Centres with best practices and the specification of functions of the different educational actors involved in the process.

Keywords: *Supervised Teaching Practice, Practicum, Teacher Training, Theory-Practice, Reflection.*

Introduction

> *No one is so old that cannot learn,*
> *Nor so young that cannot teach."*
>
> Unknown Author

Research on teacher training, as mentioned by Grossman & McDonald (2008), is still a relatively new field, although its fundamentals largely coincide with the research on teaching itself.

The conclusions of the Council of the European Union of 15 November 2007 pointed out that teacher education shall be considered as a "transversal objective" and that every EU country must put it into practice, but taking into account its specificities.

In Portugal, a first implementation of the European Agreements was performed, mainly regarding the curriculum, teaching and student work. However, compliant with Decree-Law No. 79/2014 of 14 May, we are witnessing a new reorganisation of Study Plans as regards professional Master's degrees, designed to endow students pedagogically and didactically, and which led to the need of creating a new Model of Educational Practices.

The Educational Practices, immersed in a Supervised Teaching Practice, are thus presented as one of the most important training components of the educators and teachers' training process. In this sense, we present a curriculum design of the *Practicum*, accomplished in the Supervised Teaching Practice of the Master in Pre-School and Primary School Education of the Teacher Training Model of the Higher School of Education of Fafe, based on the study plan and the guidelines emanating from the current legislation.

Thus, we present in a first analysis, the Practicum in the curriculum structure, followed by the aims and objectives that guide the methodological options, as well as the framework in terms of organisation and management of the Supervised Teaching Practice process, which ensures coordination and execution and, to conclude, the training content to develop during the *Practicum*.

The *practicum* in the curriculum structure

Following the opening remarks, the importance of the process of Supervised Teaching Practice is understood, as it is a means through which students, prospective educators/teachers, act as agents of change, recognise themselves, renew themselves and extend (individually or collectively) their commitment to teaching, acquire and develop critically the skills/professional practices which are essential for an effective reflection in each stage of their professional life. In terms of curriculum structure, the *Practicum* is part of the 2nd year of the course since in the 1st year occur all other training components perceived as important in the basic sustaining of the construction of

professionalism, through which it is intended that the graduate acquires the basic knowledge to be able to teach properly, relying on principles such as reflectivity, theorising analysis of practices, collaborative work and action research.

Thus, the *Practicum*, accomplished in the Supervised Teaching Practice, presents itself in the new Curriculum of the Master in Pre-School and Primary School Education, in the 2nd year of the course – in the 1st semester as *Practicum* in Early Childhood Education, subdivided in moments of childcare practice and practice in Pre-School Education; in the 2nd semester as *Practicum* in Primary School Education. We understand that it is ensured thereby that the student acquires a sequenced specialisation of academic nature resorting to research and innovation, as well as the further enhancement of professional skills.

Aims and objectives

The aim of the Masters in Initial Training of Educators and Primary School Teachers is to train educators/teachers professionally qualified to respond to different demands and requirements with which today's and tomorrow's school is confronted, in its idea of School-Community, considering the school as an open system, which results from dissolution of boundaries between school and the surrounding community (Branco, 2007).

The diversified role of School demands to the educator/teacher the capacity to promote developmentally appropriate educational practices, considering cognitive, social and cultural diversity of children.

The condition of the school as an educational community also requires that the educator/teacher develops research and reflection skills, on teaching, learning and child development, mobilising that scientific knowledge for the conceptualisation of projects of action, research and scientific and pedagogical innovation in their teaching area.

In summary, the profile of the educator/teacher of basic education has to meet the competencies foreseen in Decree-Law No. 240/2001 of 30 August – general competency profiles for teaching – and Decree-Law No. 241/2001 of 30 August – specific professional performance profile of the Primary School teacher and specific professional performance profile of the early childhood educator.

With this conception of school and educator/teacher in mind, the training during the *Practicum* considers as priority objectives:

- To acquire a comprehensive and critical understanding of the educational School-Community, seeking to create alternatives for change.

- To acquire concepts, techniques and processes appropriate to the demands of teaching in the curriculum areas of Pre-School and Primary School Education.

- To develop the skills foreseen in the curriculum of primary school education, in the context of an inclusive school, mobilising and integrating scientific knowledge of the areas that underlie it and the skills required to promote students' learning.

- To improve attitudes and skills of interpersonal relationship with the children/students and the different educational actors, based on the principles of professional ethics.

- To assume a pedagogical relationship of quality, expressed in criteria of scientific and methodological accuracy in the different areas.

- To progressively acquire the security and domain in performing the different tasks which the educator/teacher faces as a professional.

These objectives are operationalised through experiments and significant activities, which allow the students of the *Practicum* to:

- Develop joint projects between Pre-School and Primary School, as well as continuity projects with the succeeding levels of education.

- Promote learning of curricular nature, integrating the areas of Pre-school and Primary School Education through inter- and transdisciplinary practices, leading to the development of socially relevant skills.

- Develop skills foreseen in the curriculum guidelines for Pre-School, through planning, organisation and evaluation of the educational environment.

- Develop skills foreseen in the Primary School curriculum, through planning, organisation and evaluation of the educational environment.

- Reflect on their practices in order to assess their own professional performance.

- Investigate and reflect with the aim of building interdisciplinary projects of pedagogical intervention, mobilising the relevant knowledge for an informed, competent and innovative action.

- Use research strategies which allow preparing intervention projects to solve problems and change the practices and contexts.

- Critically evaluate the different educational contexts in which they play their professional roles.

Organisation and management of the supervised teaching practice process

The **structure** of organisation and management of the Supervised Teaching Practice process comprises: i) an education centre, which is the cooperating school where students perform the *Practicum*; ii) a training pair, who are students under the guidance of the same cooperating teacher. Where applicable: and iii) a training group, which is the group of students accompanied by the same supervisor.

The **participants** in the Supervised Teaching Practice process are: i) the Coordinator of Supervised Teaching Practice, which inherently is the

Course Coordinator; ii) the Supervisor, who is the professor of the higher education institution responsible for monitoring the *Practicum*; iii) the Cooperating Teacher, who is the educator or Primary school teacher of the education centre who guides the training of students in the *Practicum*; iv) the Student, future educator/teacher, who is doing *Practicum*; v) the Commission of Supervised Teaching Practice, which is the group formed by the Coordinator and Supervisors, that define and coordinate the training project of the students in Supervised Teaching Practice. Whenever required, the Cooperating Teachers and/or students may participate.

Once defined the participants, it is worth highlighting their **roles**:

The Coordinator has the following functions: i) to chair the Commission of Supervised Teaching Practice; ii) to coordinate the design, development and evaluation of Supervised Teaching Practice in its administrative, pedagogical and scientific aspects; iii) to implement the training program for Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers; and iv) to select juries for public defence of the Final Reports of Supervised Teaching Practice.

The Internship Commission has the following functions: i) to design the curricular project for the training; ii) to monitor and evaluate the development of the project; iii) to formulate the modalities and criteria for assessment of students; and iv) to approve the assessment of students.

The Supervisor has the following functions: i) to participate in the design of the curricular project for the training; ii) to be responsible for the implementation of the curricular project in his/her training group; iii) to monitor the *Practicum* process in his/her training group (needs assessment, guidance of the Final Report of Supervised Teaching Practice, support of planning, observation of activities, analysis and feedback of student performance, mediation of personal and professional development, formative and continuous assessment); iv) to mediate between the Education Centre and the Higher Education Institution; v) to participate in mentoring students of his/her Training Group; vi) to promote a climate of communication and collaboration among members of his/her training group; and vii) to propose to the Internship Commission the final grade of the Student, taking into account his/her own and the Cooperating Teacher's assessment, and the grade awarded in the public defence of the Final Report of Supervised Teaching Practice.

The Cooperating Teacher has the following functions: i) to assist the Supervisor in the implementation of the training project in the class in which he/she is the titleholder; ii) to monitor the process of training of Student(s) who develop the *Practicum* in his/her classroom; iii) to help to integrate Student(s) in the school; iv) to diagnose the needs of Student(s); v) to prepare, with the Student(s), the activities plan (with the support of Supervisor); vi) to observe Student(s) in several educational performances in

school; vii) to give continuous feedback to Student(s); viii) to perform formative and continuous assessment of Student(s); ix) to participate in meetings of the Internship Commission whenever appropriate; x) to participate in trainings organised by the higher education institution; xi) to maintain a close relationship with the Supervisor, to inform him/her periodically about the progress of the process and formative assessment of Student(s).

The student performing the Supervised Teaching Practice has the following functions: i) to develop, with the Cooperating Teacher, the plan of activities, structuring it according to the Educational Project of the School, the activity plans and the expectations of the school community; ii) to teach, in a qualified manner, in a system of co-responsibility with the Cooperating Teacher; iii) to attend classes of the Cooperating Teacher and, if applicable, of the training pair; iv) to participate, with support from the Cooperating Teacher, in performing the activities of curricular and organisational development which are provided by the School; v) to take part in the planned educational activities, in the scope of the School and the school/community interaction; vi) to engage in sessions of scientific and educational nature, carried out in the Education Centre or Higher Education Institution; vii) to actively establish relationships with all members of the school community, helping to improve the educational function of the school; viii) to foster the Education Centre, becoming involved in projects of educational renewal and innovation; and ix) to prepare all documentation inherent to the *Practicum* process and respective Final Report of Supervised Teaching Practice.

Training contents to develop during the *practicum*

Giving special emphasis to issues related to personal and professional development of the Student in the scope of Supervised Teaching Practice, the training shall focus on different activities and meaningful training experiences, taking into account the contextual differences.

Supervised Teaching Practice in Early Childhood Education: i) participant observation (of the context/group); ii) co-participation in activities of the group and the institution; iii) planning/implementation of activities; iv) design of evaluation documents; v) seminars for: survey of training needs experienced by Students during their teacher performance; performance profile of the early childhood educator; develop skills that enable the design, development and integration of the curriculum (lesson plans that meet the Curricular Goals); reflections on the educator as a reflective professional through the logbook/weekly reflections; approach to the assessment of children's development: development evaluation grids; approaches to teacher-researcher: action research and case study; and vi) analysis of transversal aspects and general guidelines: information/guidelines on the framework of Supervised Teaching Practice (regulation), guidance and monitoring in the

preparation of the documents: the *Practicum* and children assessment portfolio and final report.

Supervised Teaching Practice in Primary School Education: i) participant observation (of context/class); ii) co-participation in classroom activities and Education Centre dynamics; iii) planning and implementation; iv) design of evaluation documents; v) seminars for: survey of training needs experienced by Students during their teacher performance; performance profile of the Primary School teacher; analysis and reflection on the teaching-learning process: knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours of students; approach to observation methodology in educational situations, planning and evaluation of the teaching-learning process; reflections on the teacher as reflective professional: the reflective diaries; approach to research methodologies: action research and case study; and vi) analysis of transversal aspects and general guidelines: information/guidelines on the framework of the Supervised Teaching Practice (regulation), guidance and monitoring in the preparation of the documents: characterization of context, planning, reflections and final report.

References:

Alarcão, I. (2001). *Escola Reflexiva e Supervisão – Uma Escola em Desenvolvimento e Aprendizagem*. Porto: Porto Editora.

Alarcão, I. & Tavares, J. (2007). *Supervisão da Prática Pedagógica. Uma Perspectiva de Desenvolvimento e Aprendizagem*. Coimbra: Almedina.

Alarcão, I. & Roldão, M. C. (2008). *Supervisão. Um contexto de Desenvolvimento Profissional dos Professores*. Mangualde: Pedago.

Alarcão, I. (1982). Supervisão Clínica: um Conceito e uma Prática ao serviço da Formação de Professores, In *Revista Portuguesa de Pedagogia*. Coimbra: Imprensa de Coimbra, Lda.

Branco, L. (2007). *A Escola Comunidade Educativa e a Formação dos novos Cidadãos*. Lisboa: Instituto Piaget.

Canário, R. (2005). *O que é a Escola? Um "olhar" Sociológico*. Porto: Porto Editora.

Formosinho, J. (2009). *Formação de Professores Aprendizagem Profissional e Acção Docente*. Porto: Porto Editora.

Formosinho, J. (org.) (2002). *A Supervisão na Formação de Professores II – Da Organização à Pessoa*. Coleção Infância. Porto: Porto Editora.

Formosinho, J. & Ferreira, F. (2008). *Formação de Professores, I - Saberes Docentes e Aprendizagem Profissional*. Porto: Porto Editora.

Vieira, F. *et al*. (2006). *No Caleidoscópio da Supervisão: Imagens da Formação e da Pedagogia*. Mangualde: Edições Pedago.

PLAY, TOYS AND GENDER SOCIALIZATION

Esra EMOLU, Ph.D.,
Marmara University, Turkey
emolu@marmara.edu.tr

Abstract

Socialization is the process whereby the infant learns how to become a member of the society by adapting to the ways of the culture he/she lives in .Four agents of socialization: family, school, peer groups and mass media guide him/her through the way.

Gender socialization is a very important dimension of socialization, it is the process during which children of different sexes are socialized into their gender roles and are taught what it means to be male or female.

Amongst the most important components of gender socialization are play and toys which serve as the key tools that provide the infant with the appropriate gender traits.

Besides their psychological and pedagogical aspects, the sociological functions of play and toys can be analyzed in the cultural context in order to emphasize their importance in child development.

Culture plays an important role in the assignment of gender – appropriate traits to the infants and play and toys function as the key elements in the process.

Key Words: Socialization, gender socialization, gender roles, culture, play, toys

Socialization and gender socialization

Socialization is the process   by which human beings incorporate the social norms pertaining to a certain culture or cultural group, and it occurs throughout the life course. It is the process whereby societies have structural continuity over time; the values and norms specific to a culture is transmitted from one generation to another and hence endure over time.

Socialization connects different generations to one another and even though the members of a society change, cultural characteristics persist over time.

One of the main aspects of socialization is gender socialization which can be defined as a more focused form of socialization during which children of different sexes are socialized into their gender roles and are taught what it means to be male or female.

The classical example of gender socialization is the experiment done with a baby that was introduced as a male to half of the study subjects and as a female to the other half. The results are interesting and quite disturbing at the same time. When the participants thought they were playing with a baby boy, "he" was offered toys, such as a hammer or rattle, while if the participants thought they were playing with a baby girl; "she" was offered a doll. The participants also touched the baby differently. It was found that baby boys are often bounced, thus stimulating the whole body, whereas girls are touched more gently and less vigorously (Gleitman, Friedlund & Reisberg, 2000, as cited in Crespi, 2003).

Gender socialization begins from the moment we are born; with a simple question; is it a boy or a girl; and each of the agencies of socialization reinforces the gender stereotypes.

Most parents are extremely interested in learning whether their newborn infant is a boy or a girl, and *intentionally* or not, this knowledge elicits in them a set of expectations consistent with beliefs about gender-role-appropriate traits. Parents generally prefer that their children adhere to traditional gender-roles, and are concerned when they do not (Martin, 1990).

Theories of gender socialization
Social Learning Theory

Having its roots in behaviorism, social leaning theory suggests that gender socialization works when children are rewarded for engaging in appropriate sex-typed behavior which are consistent with their assigned sex category.

Sex-typed behavior can be defined as behavior expected and therefore seen as appropriate when performed by one sex. Children learn this type of behavior by observing others, mainly the same sex parent, as well as the messages communicated by media.

Children learn what behaviors and roles are expected of them by observing others' behavior being reinforced or punished. Seeing someone reinforced for a behavior, such as a girl playing with a doll being reinforced for being nurturant, may be expressed as the appropriate, reinforcing behavior for a female. Therefore, a girl may associate reinforcement with that behavior, which may make that behavior appear positive for a female (Crespi, 2003).

This theory suggests that predispositional characteristics to a certain sex can be nourished by learning from the people around us. Gender socialization works, according to social learning theorists, by rewarding

children for engaging in sex-typed behavior that is consistent with their assigned sex category. The classic example is crying; while a little girl may be soothed when she cries, a little boy may be told that boys don't cry. Crying is a sex-typed behavior, seen as OK for girls and therefore not a punishable behavior. But because it is not seen as an appropriate behavior for boys, the little boy may be punished or corrected for his crying behavior. Through these kinds of interactions, gender socialization occurs (Crespi, 2003).

Like every theory, social leaning theory has its limitations; it is mainly criticized for research results which has shown that children do not always identify themselves with the same sex parent nor do they always choose the same sex partners as playmates.

Cognitive Development Theory

This theory, derived mainly from the work of Piaget, suggests that gender socialization occurs as the child passes through the stages of development. As children pass these stages, they actively socialize themselves rather than being passively socialized.

The first stage happens between the ages of two and a half and three, when children acquire a gender identity. Children of this age should be able to correctly identify their own gender as well as identifying the gender of others around them (Crespi, 2003).

By the age of five, children acquire *gender stability*, they know that their gender is permanent and will be theirs for the rest of their lives. By the age of seven, children reach the stage of *gender constancy* which is the final stage of gender understanding. Once having reached this stage, children become aware of the fact that even though a person might make changes in his/her physical appearance; this does not change the underlying sex category According to cognitive development theorists, actual gender- typing does not begin until children achieve gender constancy at age seven, and afterwards children begin to actively select from their environment the behaviors that they see as consistent with their gender identity; once a little girl begins to see herself and others as gendered, she will be self-motivated to engage in feminine behaviors and to model herself on the other people she identifies as women in her environment. This is driven in part by children's need for cognitive consistency; if children know what their gender is, then what they do and think should line up with that gender (Crespi, 2003).

Cognitive development theory does not completely dismiss the importance of the external environment, or of society itself. Society obviously provides the material from which children pick and choose to achieve gender-congruency. But it does locate much more of the power in the process of socialization with the targets (children) rather than with the agents of socialization.

Cognitive development theory is criticized for its limitations in explaining the differential dynamic between boys and girls, because it puts the main emphasis on boys. Another critique for this theory is that there has been research findings on children showing that they demonstrate preferences for objects and activities based on gender by the age of three (Unger & Crawford, 1992, as cited in Crespi, 2003).

Gender Schema Theory

Gender Schema Theory, developed by Sandra Bem questioned why sex became the important organizing principle around which children built their identities. A schema is a cognitive structure and network of associations that helps to organize an individual's perception of the world (Bem, 1983).

A gender schema, is a cognitive structure that enables us to sort characteristics and behaviors into masculine and feminine categories and then creates various other associations with those categories (Bem, 1993).

Socialization occurs as children assimilate their self-concept, the way they think about themselves, to their gender schema. Children learn the content of their particular society's gender schema, or the network of associations around the characteristics of masculine and feminine. They also know that they fall into one or other of those categories based on their own sex. When they begin to think of themselves as masculine or feminine, that particular gender schema is also associated with their sense of identity. They learn that when they are picking behaviors and ways of thinking to assimilate into their own sense of selves, they should limit themselves to the particular subset of behaviors and attitudes appropriate to their own gender (Bem, 1983).

Since every culture puts emphasis on gender, the members of a particular society are convinced that the structures cannot function without the existence of gender categorization. Culture creates and emphasizes the importance of gender categories and makes us believe that they are indispensable. In the course of enculturation, external socialization agents teach the individual his/ her gender through gender schemas.

The androcentrism schema, that is the belief that masculinity is superior to femininity, exists in most of the cultures and has a deep influence on gender socialization. Unlike the first two theory, this theory is specific to gender socialization and tries to find the balance between the inside out and external process of socialization.

The Psychoanalytic Theory

Having its roots in Freud's psychoanalysis, this theory, again specific to gender socialization, emphasizes the importance of women and tries to account for the ways in which gender becomes deeply embedded in the psychic structure of our personalities.

Nancy Chodorow, the main defender of this theory, argues that learning to feel male or female derives from the infant's attachment to his parents from an early age and emphasizes the importance of mother, much stronger than does Freud (Giddens,2009).

Since the mother is the dominant influencer in their lives, infants tend to involve emotionally with the mothers, but the attachment should somehow be broken at some stage in their lives in order to allow them to develop their self- identities.

According to Chodorow, this breaking occurs at different stages for boys and girls; girls tend to stay closer to their mothers, they keep hugging and kissing her and imitating her and this is why they develop a sense that is more continuous with other people; first with their mothers and then with their husbands and this is accounts for their being more emotional and sensitive (Giddens, 2009).

However, boys experience a more radical break, learning masculine traits and avoiding to become" mummy's boys". As a result, they become less skilled in relating with others and more achievement and analytical oriented, male identity is learned in such a way that they perceive emotional closeness as a threat (Giddens, 2009).

Chodorow's theory has been criticized for undermining the importance of women's struggle to become autonomous, independent individuals and taking only white, middle-class family as a model, and ignoring the existence of different family types such as single parent families.

Gender role stereotypes

The category-based beliefs about gender-appropriate traits are called gender-role stereotypes. Parents serve as role models in teaching gender appropriate traits to their children, both explicitly and implicitly; explicit modeling occurs when parents teach their children the *appropriate* traits by directly telling them; for example when a parent tells a story of achievement associated with masculinity to his/her son, the theme is reflected as parental expectation.

Likewise, these expectations might as well be exhibited implicitly, such as a father driving the car and the mother sitting next to him teaches the child the *appropriate* gender expectation.

The extent to which cross-gender behavior in children is discouraged has been found to be dependent upon the sex of the child (Male or Female). Studies have shown that boys who engage in traditionally feminine activities are viewed more negatively than girls who engage in masculine activities (Feinman, 1981; Martin, 1990). Women have been found to be more accepting of children's cross-gender behavior than men (Martin, 1990).

We can observe the reflections of gender role stereotyping almost in every domain of children's lives; ranging from their bedroom colors to their toy preferences and play styles.

Gender –Stereotypical Toy Preferences

Children as young as eight months may already show a preference for 'boys' or 'girls' toys. Sex differences in toy preferences were noted in research as early as the 1930s (Parten, 1932. as cited in Alexander et. al. 2009). Even adult male and females display preferences for male- typical and female-typical toys (Alexander et. al., 2009).

Research with nonhuman primates implies that the toy preferences of boys and girls may be shaped partly by inborn factors. These innate preferences for certain features of toys, coupled with social influences may explain why toy preferences are among the earliest expressions of sex-linked social behavior (Alexander et. al., 2009).

Developmental psychologist Garvey (1990) traces the origins of sex-typed toy preferences to parental behavior, to the parents' influence as models. Children who choose traditional sex-typed toys are more likely to have parents who hold traditional gender role attitudes (Rheingold, 1975, as cited in Goldstein, 2012). Toys and games are often designed specifically for boys or girls and gender stereotypes are especially evident in the distribution of gender specific toys to children. In one study parents were asked to sort toys into three categories: masculine, feminine, and neutral. The parents were then asked to play with their toddlers while being observed. Researchers found that the parents of the boys tended to exclusively play with masculine toys while entertaining their child. The parents of the girl toddlers were a little more flexible in their choice of toys and would use both feminine and neutral toys to amuse their children (Wood, 2002). This study reflects the unyielding expectations by which boys are required to play with only masculine toys and the acceptance of girls playing with toys of a feminine and gender neutral nature. The distribution of toys has often been seen as one of the most prevalent forms of gender role socialization within the family (Campenni, 1999). Fathers generally have more strict gender stereotypes than mothers and this is also very much reflected in their toy purchasing preferences especially when purchasing toys for their boys, fathers hold strong gender stereo-typical preferences and usually go for, guns, cars, trains etc.., however they display a more flexible attitude while choosing toys for their girls, even though they usually end up with dolls, tea sets, etc. Mothers, on the other hand, have more positive attitude towards gender neutral toys; both for their boys and girls.

In another study aiming to investigate the reasons for different toy preferences between boys and girls; 120 infants, ages 12, 18, or 24 months' have been shown paired images of cars and dolls in different colors (Jadva, Hines and Golombok, 2010).

There were no significant sex differences in infants' preferences for different colors or shapes. Instead, both girls and boys preferred reddish colors over blue and rounded over angular shapes.

Benenson et al conclude in their study that indeed there are early sex-typed toy preferences, but that apparently color and shape are not the reasons for them. In their drawings, girls tend to draw butterflies, flowers and humans, while boys draw moving objects like cars and trains. It may be that the key to sex differences in toy preferences comes, not from the color or shape of a toy, but from its function, that is, what the toy can do. Boys may inherently prefer toys that (can) move, while girls show no such preference (Benenson et.al, 2011).

Gender Stereotypical Preferences for Play

Boys are typically more physically active than girls and this is reflected in their play. 'While children will still express their individuality, on the whole girls prefer to play more quietly and in smaller groups, boys will run around and tend to make more noise. Group play with girls can still be competitive, but it tends to be expressed emotionally rather than physically,' (Else, 2009). Efforts to suppress boys' rough-and-tumble play and play fighting are usually unsuccessful (Holland 2003).

Parental choices also influence the type of play; research has shown that fathers tend to get engaged in more physical play with their sons whereas there is no significant difference in terms of physical play choices of the mother.

Play is a form of social interaction for parents and their children and through play, parents tend to model the appropriate gender traits to their children; children are discouraged for cross gender play and are encouraged for gender stereotypical play. Masculine toys also promote physical play and body movement whereas feminine toys promote domestic and imaginative play.

Play styles for boys and girls are also strongly influenced by culture:

Culture refers to the traditions and values of our communities and through play, children explore and learn the rules and symbols of their communities. 'Through play, children recreate roles and situations that reflect their sociocultural world, where they learn how to subordinate desires to social rules, cooperate with others willingly, and engage in socially appropriate behavior. Over time, these competencies are transferred to children's everyday behaviors.

Cultural values are reflected in play and are transmitted from one generation to another. In congruent with cultural expectations and their appropriate gender traits; girl plays are often indoor, less physically active and even if physically active, far less rough and tumble; whereas boy plays are often outdoor, more physically active, and often rough and tumble.

This is modeled and secured by parental and societal role-models and can be observed in different cultural contexts, eastern and western and throughout the history.

Conclusion

Research has shown the reciprocal influence of gender stereotyping on plays and toys and plays and toys on gender stereotyping. Enculturation occurs during the course of socialization and gender traits, approved by culture, are reinforced by each agent of socialization.

Play and toys serve as the main tools of social interaction during the early stages of socialization, especially between parents and children, siblings and friends. Even though play and toys vary across time and cultures, their function remains the same. Gender roles are taught and reinforced by play and toys and this might have intended consequences in the future lives of the infants as well as some unintended consequences.

Among the intended consequences; securing the future traditional roles of the infants; girls as mothers and housewives and boys as fathers and breadwinners, even though there has been major changes in the definition of these roles especially in the past five –six decades, can be named, whereas among the unintended consequences are the gender stereotypical subject choices and their consequences in the labor market.

It is important to talk about the redefinition of gender roles, especially after the second half of the twentieth century, with the influence of feminist movements and the inevitable impact of these sociological changes in the toy industry. Toy market should become more gender neutral and promote toys which could be played by both sexes and more outdoor play, played by both sexes, should as well be promoted.

The double benefit of more outdoor play played together by both sexes would be the prevention of major health problems such as obesity and the reducing of gender stereotyping which would be beneficial for the overall labor market in terms of more options for subject choices. A good example of how toy companies become more sensitive to gender stereotyping can be found in the link (http://itunes.com/apps/tedconferences/ted), in the case of McKenna Pope; where Hasbro, a major toy company, started producing a gender neutral toy by modifying a feminine one. The issue, however, remains open to further discussion and research.

References

Alexander, G., M., and Charles, N. (2009). Sex differences in adults' relative visual interest in female and male faces, toys, and play styles. *Archives of Sexual Behaviour*, 38, 434-441.

Aronson, E., Wilson, T.,D. & Akert, R., M. (2010). *Social Psychology*. (7th edition). Pearson, Saddle River: NJ.

Bem, S., L. (1983). Gender Schema Theory and its Implications for Child Development: Raising Gender-Aschematic Children in a Gender-Schematic Society. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. *8, 598-616.*

Bem, S., L. (1993). *The Lenses of Gender: Transforming the Debate on Sexual Inequality.* Yale University Press, MA.

Benenson, J. F., Tennyson, R., & Wrangham, R. W. (2011). Male more than female infants imitate propulsive motion. *Cognition, 121*, 262-267

Campenni, C.E. (1999). Gender stereotyping of children's toys: A comparison of parents and nonparents, *Sex Roles*, 40, 121-138.

Crespi, I. (2003). Gender socialization within the family: A study on adolescents and their parents in Great Britain. Department of Sociology Catholic University of Milan.

Else, P. (2009). *The Value of Play.* London: Continuum

Feinman, S. (1981). Why is cross-sex-role behavior more approved for girls than for boys? A status characteristic approach. *Sex Roles*, 7, 289-299.

Garvey, Catherine. (1990). *Play*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Giddens, A. (2009). *Sociology.* (6th Edition). Polity Press, Cambridge: UK.

Goldstein, J. (2012). Play in Children's Development, Health and Well-Being. Toy Industries of Europe. Brussels.

Holland, Penny. (2003). We Don't Play with Guns Here. War, Weapon and Superhero Play in the Early Years. McGraw-Hill.

Jadva, V., Hines, M., & Golombok, S. (2010) Infants' preferences for toys, colors and shapes: Sex differences and similarities. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Macionis, J., J. & Plummer, K. (2008). *Sociology*: *A Global Introduction*. (4th Edition). Pearson, U.K

Martin, C. L. (1990). Attitudes about children with nontraditional and traditional gender roles. *Sex Roles*, 22, 151-165.

Wood, E. (2002). The impact of parenting experience on gender stereotyped toy play of children. Sex Roles, 47,39-50.

METHODS OF DESIGNING INTEGRATED LEARNING

Alina-Felicia ROMAN, PhD.
Faculty of Educational Science, Psychology and Social Sciences
"Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad, Romania
Romanalinafelicia@yahoo.com

Abstract: *The article approaches learning from the perspective of formal operational criteria transferred in learning situation contexts. Thus, we have analysed learning as possibility, as social-cultural manner and as specific postmodern operation. However, learning is insufficiently adapted to a efficient educational system.*

Keywords: *learning situations, postmodern curriculum, learning strategies*

1. Postmodern education and integrated approach of learning

Postmodernism in education as existential-humanistic approach brings along a new paradigm which places the person, the individual, the pupil and actor in its centre. The International Commission for Education in the 21st century draws a few conclusions about the necessity of reconsidering the status, level and instructional role of schools and teachers. The conclusions have pointed out that schools and teachers "have lost their position of leaders in the educational training of children and have to face a new challenge: that of making school more attractive for children" [1]. If curricular reformation has as main objective the substitution of teacher`s school to the pupil`s school then we can understand better the current status of educational act, which places the real, rational and sensitive pupil in the centre of its concerns: „we can talk about a return of the individual as actor of the social background and of a resurrection of pupil as person with specific-differentiated characteristics that need revaluation; this is the dominant dimension of postmodern pedagogy" [2].

In terms of educational policies, general curriculum of a global society tries to widen the access to education but also to increase the relevance and quality of educational acts. Thus, one should identify a relevant set of knowledge which youth needs to develop through cognitive learning processes and strategies, through skills and values which are based on the fundamental human rights. They should also benefit from experiences required by lifelong learning. The teacher becomes: „the initiator and organizer of the process but the proof of the activity`s success or failure are the pupil`s results" [3]. We notice that the interpretation of postmodern

statements in Romanian pedagogy maintains relics of modern school; the teacher is again in the foreground and traditional responsibility of success and failure is linked to performance not to personality built through quantitative mechanisms and through cognitive learning strategy.

A first conclusion should be drawn, namely that school pedagogy discusses postmodernism without understanding its meaning. The initiative character is kept but stressing out the pupil`s interests and the efficiency of its actions. Teachers have to prove qualities linked to adapting to changes, development of competences, creativity in highlighting each pupil`s abilities, all without benefiting from professional reconversion.

Another conclusion reflected in the framework of this pedagogic project or curricular reformation describes the theory of shape without fond or of change without modification. Other educational systems understood that "change without moral goal is change for the change`s sake", and „if teachers became agents of changes with moral skills they would make a difference in the children`s lives, no matter what they have acquired; they would also help children in the development of their ability to cope with changes" [4].

To sum up, an ethos of teaching staff is also necessary; it should promote responsibility, improvement and change as well as openness towards curricular act, classroom activity, stimulation of communication and collaboration with students etc. Thus, interaction remain theoretical, curricular connections are maintained in the area of reflection, transversal act becomes a happening some meet randomly while others don`t.

German pedagogy insists on the intervention of highly qualified trainers, who are capable of stimulating learning; Anglo-Saxon pedagogy emphasizes the need to develop cognitive strategies adapted to the society. Meta-competences trigger openness towards learning for both teachers and students: „Postmodern pedagogy stresses out the organization of situations and contexts in such a manner that they would riot learning" [5]. In a simple rhetoric, shifting the emphasis from teacher to student in the curricular reformation cannot be done without overcoming classical, traditional strategies of approaching education. We cannot ask teachers to use postmodern educational strategies if they are not trained in this respect. The development of competences is a key term in the educational process. H. Siebert shows that it is necessary to replace the concept of qualification with that of competences, which „are achieved live" in social and professional contexts through experience. Competences are developed through the interaction of organized educational acts with informative ones; through the mixture of social influences with intentional training activities".[6]

Another idea supported by the new theories about human intelligence (Multiple Intelligence Theory– H. Gardner and emotional intelligence– D. Goleman) argues that school favours an environment where children learn and practice social behaviours and adjustment behaviours. For instance,

theoretical knowledge is not enough to develop social behaviours; one needs to develop explanatory and adjustment behaviours in relationships with pupils and other members of the teaching staff: „Teachers and educators will try to develop practically notions referring to aspects such as (interdependence, dignity, freedom, justice, rights, nonviolence, mutual respect, respect towards others, empathy, negotiation, cooperation, discovery and overcome of prejudices. Such climate cannot develop as such. Teachers need to experience real and positive communication by themselves because pupils are receptive to what their teachers are and how they live as well as to what they say or teach their pupils. Communication involves the organization of school and classroom in a way that favours for such experiences". [7].

Daniel Goleman has analysed teaching activity in terms of emotional intelligence and has drawn the attention on the fact that the role of school should not be reduced to its rational and cognitive dimension. This dimension develops the emotional side maybe even without the teacher`s awareness. This aspect has been neglected by the curriculum and thus „school turns into a place where children grow up learning basic lessons about life, lessons that they cannot learn anywhere else" [8]. Another consequence of postmodern school emerges from this assertion, namely that teaching activity should develop the emotional side of human personality, too. This has been a constantly neglected aspect.

2. Curriculum and cultural evolution

The new curriculum stresses out what school lets you learn and understand practically. Quantitative explanations predominated in the past but today, critical theory stipulates that the role of school is no longer the development of „unitary cultural tradition" which would promote a non-critical culture, acceptance of authority and unselective dominance. Thus emphasis is placed on the development of pupils` personality regarded as socially integrated peers, who overcome the dominant tradition by cultivating „civic practice and participation" (Giroux., H. 1988) of all actors of social life.

There are also voices that argue against postmodern curriculum by using a justified criticism. A weak point consists of its lack of coherence, constant search, fragmentation, lack of pragmatic horizon and application examples. Thus, it is seen as a mere hybridization of modern curriculum through a "huge distortion of reality and a reductionist criticism of the domain" [9].

An international study conducted by pedagogues from 28 states and edited by W. Pinar (2003) started from the legitimate idea which places curriculum in „a cultural construction its significance depending on the manner educative-political tradition is built" (idem, p. 6). In terms of globalism, it is stated that: "*No curriculum can exist isolated and no*

curriculum can ignore international development" [10]. Aesthetic, sociological and political premises of postmodernism have become central curricular pillars in the USA, Canada, New Zeeland, Finland and Sweden. Special attention is given to research areas in the field of arts, hermeneutics, phenomenology, political theory, theoretical and practical feminism. A new sociology of education emerges in Holland and Norway under the influence of curricular development. It focuses on the humanistic approach to pupils` needs, interests and aspirations. In Great Britain, curriculum focuses on humanistic subjects not on school subjects. There are two key questions which pedagogues seek to answer: what should children know and what should they become?, considering that the aim is the mediation between knowledge and career in the attempt to ensure social order.

3. The design of learning situations which favour the development of competences

There are numerous definitions of the term competence but in procedural terms they all share functional terms such as: „a set of resources" – cognitive, motrical, affective etc. related to knowledge, knowledge of the self, attitudes and skills, action schemes, habits that „mobilize" dynamically so as to be able to „face" problem situations in learning, problem solving, projects (Le Boterf, Paquay, Rey, Wittorsky etc.).

Models for the development of competences can be built. They are the consequence of learning activities and learning situations in which children are placed. A learning situation which favours the development of competences relies on sequential, gradual involvement of ten types of activities:

1. Facing problem situations (new and challenging);
2. Exploration of resources (available through learning);
3. Acting internally and externally
4. Interaction (for research, confrontation, analysis, understanding, etc.)
5. Reflexive activities, attitudes
6. Co-evaluative activities
7. Structuring new acquisitions
8. Integration in systems, inter- and transdisciplinary context (to practice new long-term acquisitions)
9. Activities of constructing meaning and
10. Preparation of transfer possibilities.

Obvious progress has been registered in the development of formative aspect of learning but this area remains restrained to „learning to know" and „learning to do..". Aspects such as „learning to be" and „leraning to live among others" remain at the teacher`s decision.

Most teachers take into account the way pupils learn and cognitive strategies when planning learning situations. But how often do we ask

ourselves what do pupils feel about what they learn and about the learning situation?

Does the curriculum offer plenty experiences of affective learning so as to claim that school develops emotional intelligence and prosocial behaviour? It is possible that due to poor emotional stimulation or to a negative emotional stimulation, which generates discomfort (competition, summative evaluation) students look for other ways of expressing intense, mostly negative affective emotions?
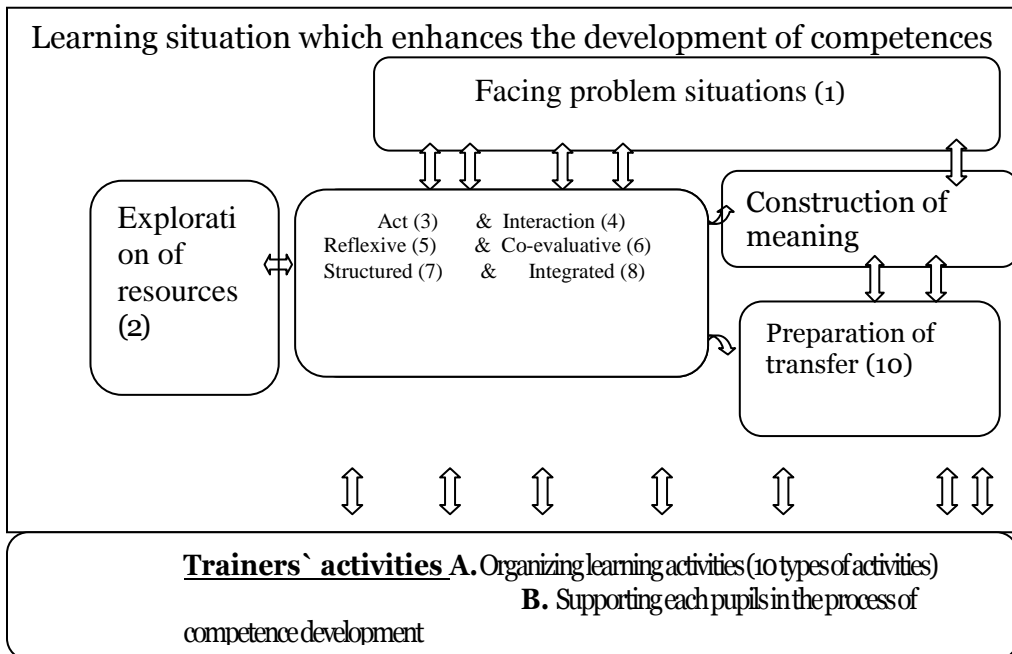
Fig. 1. Stages in learning situations

How long and how often are scheduled and organized activities for the development of affective expression and creative interaction? These rhetorical questions may be assumptions of an ascertaining study but their aim is only to support the idea that the fundamental element of school is the relationship and interactions between learning centered people; schools must shift from a competitive structure to a team-based organizational structure (R. Slavin, S. Sharan, S. Kagan, 1995).

4. Conclusions

„*Educational curriculum and the content of* education have periodically changed according to new values in culture and other fields – science, art, moral, religion, etc. [11]. The global approach to education has been reorganized since all human actions are analysed from at least two

perspectives. They reflect the general social dimension: „as cultural results and as interactive processes" (ibidem) which lead directly or indirectly to internalized values, to learning and training. The qualitative level of teaching-learning-evaluation style are the results of culture: culture in one`s field, psychopedagogic and methodological culture and general knowledge. In other words: „the issues and evolution of education and learning cannot be separate from the issues and evolution of culture; educational policy and educational model cannot be separated from the cultural model of a society" [12].

To conclude, since communication and culture go global, learning takes the same pathway. It becomes integrated by extending its school applicability beyond school. Learning was given up its post-aristocratic character of elite and academic type and has developed a new ontological, gnosiological and axiological basis. It also involves ideal ethical premises – of constructing a free and intelligent type of personality.

References:

[1] Delors, J., (coord.)., (2000)., *Comoara lăuntrică,* Iaşi: Editura Polirom, p.120.

[2] Păun, E., Potolea, D., (2002) *Pedagogie. Fundamentări teoretice şi demersuri aplicative.* Iaşi: Editura Polirom, p. 120.

[3] Vlăsceanu, L., (coord.)., (2002)., *Şcoala la răscruce. Schimbare şi continuitate în curriculumul învăţământului obligatoriu. Studiu de impact.* Iaşi: Editura Polirom, p. 50.

[4] Fullan, M., Forces, C., (1993). *Probing the Depths of Educational Reform.* London & Philadelphia. The Flamer Press, pp. 4,5.

[5] Siebert, H., (2001). *Învăţare autodirijată şi consilierea pentru învăţare. Noile paradigme postmoderne ale instruirii.* Iaşi: Editura Institutul European, p. 260.

[6] idem, p. 37.

[7] Dasen, P., Perregaux, C., Rey, M., (1999). *Educaţia interculturală. Experienţe, politici, strategii.* Iaşi: Editura Polirom, p. 185.

[8] Goleman, D., (2001). *Inteligenţa emoţională*. Bucureşti: Editura Curtea Veche, 2001, p. 33.

[9] Glanz J., Behar-Horenstein L. S. (2000). *Paradigm Debates in Curriculum and Supervision: Modern and Postmodern Perspectives.* London: Bergin &Garvey, p. 20.

[10] idem, p. 13.

[11] Ionescu, M. (2007). *Abordări conceptuale şi praxiologice în ştiinţele educaţiei.* Cluj-Napoca. Editura Eikon, p. 22.

[12] idem, p. 23.

ACTIVE LEARNING TECHNIQUES IN LITERATURE CLASSES

Diana PRESADĂ, PH.D., MIHAELA BADEA PH.D.,
University of Petroleum-Gas, **Ploiesti**
dianapresada@yahoo.com, mihaelagab@yahoo.com

Abstract

Active learning supports any instructional process, no matter the taught subjects. As known, at academic level, literature classes tend to be more traditional than other ones, ignoring the advantages of a cooperative and interactive teaching style characteristic of active learning.

The purpose of the paper is not to plead for the replacement of the traditional lecture, but to make teachers aware of the benefits of active learning in order to at least reflect on applying this kind of teaching strategies to their classes.

We consider that a combination between classical lectures and active techniques will increase students' motivation and involvement in the learning process.

Keywords: *active learning, teaching strategies, improvement, lectures*

1. Introduction

The present teaching strategies in most of the Romanian universities are mainly based on a traditional teaching approach consisting in lectures and seminars in all subjects, including literature. This approach is somehow in disagreement with the natural cognitive process, which requires an active involvement of the students instead of their passive way of receiving information. It is well known the fact that the more stimulated the human brain is, the greater its performance becomes. As many of the present day studies indicate, a possible way to improve the instructional process is to combine the traditional lectures with active learning strategies.

But what does active learning mean? Many researchers have tried to define this concept taking into account the fact that any instructional process should actively satisfy students' need if we expect this process to be successful. As Felder and Brent state "active learning is anything course-related that all students in a class session are called upon to do other than simply watching, listening and taking notes." (2009, p. 2). A similar

definition is provided by Faust and Paulson who define this concept as any learning process that engages students in a classroom activity "other than listening passively to an instructor's lecture." (1998, p. 4). Even though the two definitions above seem to be too wide to offer us the essence of the phenomenon, they refer to a precise set of strategies which characterize this approach, making it different from the traditional one which is mainly based on students' passive participation in the classes. According to the classification of Faust and Paulson (1998), active learning strategies can be divided into three types:

✓ listening practice (students absorb what they hear);
✓ short writing exercises (students react to lecture now);
✓ complex group exercises (students apply lecture material to real life situations).

It is worth mentioning the distinction that the same authors make between cooperative and collaborative learning. The former refers to active learning activities which, instead of individual or pair work, "employ more formally structured groups of students" (1998, p. 4) with the view to solving complex tasks (research projects, presentations). The latter places the students and the teacher at the same level, collaborating for "designing assignments, choosing texts, and presenting material to the class." (1998, p.4).

Using the classification proposed by Faust and Paulson (1998), we selected those active learning strategies that are most frequently used in teaching literature in our university. As to the individual work, the following are preferred by the teaching staff:

✓ The one minute paper – it is an effective method that can be used both during and at the end of the lecture, consisting in stopping the lecture in order to address students a question by means of which the teacher can check their understanding of the topic. For example, in a lecture on the aesthetics of Romanticism, a possible question can be: "What are the major features of this literary movement?"

✓ Affective response – it is a variation of the technique mentioned above, which has in view students' emotional response to the topic about to be discussed, as well as its preliminary evaluation by them; that is why they are asked to note their opinions, being a good way to make students familiar with the subject of the lecture. For instance, when presenting Byron's work, the teacher can ask at beginning of the lecture "What do you think of Byron's poems?"

✓ Reading quiz – it has a double aim: first, to encourage students to prepare class material, and then to check their comprehension of the same material. As an example, we can include the following questions meant to check students' reading of Kafka's novel *The Trial:* 'What particular detail

characterizes Leni's hand?', 'Who kills Josef K. at the end of the novel and how is he killed?'etc.

✓ Clarification pauses – this is one of the most frequently used technique during literature lectures, as it is a simple way to give students the opportunity to ponder over basic concepts presented by the teacher, who stops for a while in order to ask the students if they need any point to be clarified;

✓ Response to a teacher – centered activity – it consists in writing a short paragraph in which to reflect on the new ideas presented in the lecture;

Other techniques refer to questions and answers, literature teachers preferring the Socratic Method particularly in its variant that asks students to summarize another peer's answer.

As regards immediate feedback, teachers use the quotation technique, implying to choose an illustrative quotation belonging to one of the authors that was not studied to make students express their opinions before the teacher presents the topic. "In addition to testing students' comprehension of the material presented in lecture, this exercise develops critical-thinking and analysis skills." (Faust and Paulson, 1998, p. 11). For example, if the teacher has to present Oscar Wilde's aestheticism, he may ask the students' opinions on the following quotation: "There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all." (*The Portrait of Dorian Gray)* which stimulates their imagination and way of understanding literature as a particular field of the artistic creation.

The development of students' critical thinking is generally achieved by discussions in small groups meant to make students share their ideas on the concepts and literary phenomena presented in the lecture. At the end of the course, students may also be asked, by means of post-lecture questions, to formulate the purpose of the lecture they listened to.

As usually students have problems with note-taking during a lecture, an effective strategy is to allow them time to share their notes in order to complete gaps and to correct any misunderstanding of the information the teacher presented.

If students are assigned an individual task, an efficient technique to use during a lecture is to evaluate their partners' work, after being provided with clear criteria for its evaluation.

As regards cooperative learning strategies, we can mention:

✓ Concept mapping is an effective way "to establish meaningful relationships between the pieces of information" presented during the lectures; a good illustration of this technique is to realize the map of the characters and the plot of a novel or a play.

✓ Jigsaw group activities are complex involving all students' active participation and consist of several stages: firstly, students are divided into groups, each of them being assigned a specific task. Secondly, "students re-

form into focus groups centered on their selected topics" (Faust and Paulson, 1998, p. 17) to discuss and write down their common ideas. Thirdly, the initial groups re-form to share ideas within the group. In the final stage of the activity the groups apply the newly acquired information in order to solve their tasks.

✓ Panel discussions "are particularly useful as a way to include the entire class when students give class presentations or reports." (Faust and Paulson, 1998, p. 16). The chosen panelists should be prepared to answer the questions from the audience on a topic such as *The aesthetic features of the 19th century French Realism.*

2. Methodology

2.1. Objectives

The objectives of the present research are to find out if students' evaluation of their literature courses and seminars, performed at the end of each semester, influences the teaching process in a bad or positive way.

2.2. Participants

The people involved in the research are 90 students specialising in Philology, within the Petroleum – Gas University of Ploiesti. They are in their final year and they attend courses and seminars of English, French, and Comparative Literature as part of the curriculum.

2.3. Procedure

For this study the participants were asked to answer a survey which included 10 closed items meant to reveal their perception of the use of active learning techniques during literature classes. We decided for this quantitative method as the interpretation of the data we collected enabled us to draw conclusions on the way in which literature is taught at academic level. Our intention is to show students' opinions on the continuous changes of the educational process and the way they affect the process itself. Therefore, we are aware of the limits of the empirical method we chose, but the results may serve as a basis of reflection for both students and teachers.

3. Interpretation of results

In the context of the methodological changes affecting the instructional process, the first item in our questionnaire was intended to check if learners know the difference between student and teacher centred literature classes. As seen in students' answers below, their majority are aware of what active learning strategies mean and their importance for the teaching and learning process.

Q 1. Are you familiar with the concept of active learning?		
1.	Yes	54.44 %
2.	No	45.56 %

According to the answers to the following two questions, we notice a difference between courses and seminars as far as literature teaching is concerned: most of the students' answers show that it is during seminars that the teachers make use of active learning (44.44%) techniques more often than during their courses (31.11%), which explains why they are familiar with this concept on the one hand, and, on the other hand the teachers' preference during courses for a more traditional approach (43.33% of the respondents mentioned the active learning as taking place rarely).

Q 2. How frequently do your teachers make use of active learning techniques during literature courses?			Q 3. How frequently do your teachers make use of active learning techniques during literature seminars?	
1.	Every class	5.56%	Every class	8.89 %
2.	Very often	8.89%	Very often	10.00%
3.	Often	31.11%	Often	44.44%
4.	Rarely	43.33%	Rarely	30.00%
5.	Never	11.11%	Never	6.67%

The fact that a significant proportion of the students acknowledge the practice of active learning at academic level explains why they are familiar with some techniques most frequently applied during literature classes. Among these, as shown in the table below, are: clarification pauses, discussions and the Socratic Method. As for the other ones, the students selected them, but as their percentage is low, a clear conclusion cannot be drawn about the diversity of such techniques. Nevertheless, it is significant that the low percentage of the most interactive strategies, such as the jigsaw group activities, panel discussions, note comparison/sharing, peer evaluation and panel discussions reveal the traditional tendency of the teaching process.

Q 4. How familiar are you with the following active learning techniques. Tick the ones your teachers use during literature classes.		
1.	The "one minute" paper	6.67%
2.	Affective response	5.56%
3.	Reading quiz	4.44%
4.	Clarification pauses	20.89%
5.	Response to a teacher centered activity	6.67%

6.	The Socratic Method	10.22%
7.	Quotations	6.67%
8.	Discussion	15.56%
9.	Note Comparison/Sharing	6.67%
10.	Peer evaluation	4.44%
11.	Concept Mapping	5.56%
12.	Jigsaw Group Activities	2.22%
13.	Panel Discussions	4.44%

An interesting fact revealed by the students' answers to question 5 is that some of the teachers do not attach much importance to collaborative teaching and prefer individual teaching activities. The high proportion of students' who chose "never" (83.33%) demonstrates once again the traditional type of the instructional process that literature teachers tend to apply to their classes.

Q 5. One of the strategies for promoting active learning is peer teaching. How frequently did you take part in such classes?		
1.	Very often	0.00%
2.	Often	16.67%
3.	Never	83.33%

A special mention should be made of the fact that students' positive perception (86.67%) of active learning techniques is in contradiction with the teachers' attitude who stick to the traditional instructional style.

Q 6. How do you find active learning techniques?		
A	Very attractive	30.00%
B	Interesting	56.67%
C	Boring	13.33%

That is why, when asked about reasons for which teachers do not make use of active learning techniques, students found as main causes their teachers' lack of interest, the difficulty in preparing such active activities and generally their teachers' centeredness during literature classes.

Q 7. In your view what makes it difficult for the teachers to use active learning techniques? Choose from the following items.		
A	Lack of teachers' experience.	13.33%
B	Lack of teachers' interest in new instructional methods.	32.22%
C	Preparing such classes requires more resources (time,	27.78%

	materials, planning)	
D	Preference for teacher-centred courses rather than student-centred ones.	21.11%
E	Class management is more difficult if such techniques are applied.	5.56%

As regards students' opinion on the improvement of their skills as a result of active learning, this reinforces their positive perception of it, more than half of them considering them as beneficial for their professional development. However, about one third of the responds still remain sceptical about the use of such techniques, fact which can be explained by their being used to a more traditional approach of the teaching process.

Q 8. Do you consider that your knowledge and skills improved as a result of the use of active learning techniques. Use the following scale, where 1 means *"They did not improve at all"* and 5 means *"They highly improved"*.				
1	2	3	4	5
11.67%	21.11%	31.11%	25.56%	10.56%

Their positive view is again supported by the high percentage of respondents (63.33%) who trust in the effectiveness of active learning techniques as regards the solid preparation for a successful professional life.

Q 9. Do you consider active learning useful for your future career?		
A	Yes	63.33%
B	No	10.22%
C	I don't know	26.45%

As a result they consider that they would give great importance to such a teaching style, which in their view may contribute to the acquisition and development of the required competences in their future teaching career.

Q 10. If you were a literature teacher, what would you choose for your classes?		
1.	active learning techniques	67.11%
2.	teacher centred classes	30.89%

As these data show, a good thing is that at least during seminars (63.33%) students have the chance to take part in literature classes that are based on active learning techniques. Even though less than half of the respondents indicated that this is not the case during literature courses, they

are, however, familiar with such techniques, showing their preference for them.

Conclusions

As a conclusion to our findings we admit that the traditional methods are still present during literature courses in the academic environment, which can be explained by the general characteristics of the lectures, consisting in the following:

Firstly, teachers consider that lectures have the advantage of offering a large amount of information, organized thoughtfully and efficiently, in accordance with the requirements of the curriculum.

Secondly, lectures can be delivered in a quiet atmosphere which enables teachers to have complete control of the instructional process. This opinion is justified by the fact that students are passive receivers of knowledge, without interrupting the teachers' discourse.

Thirdly, teachers can adapt the content of the material according to the students' level of knowledge and needs and, in this way, they believe that the success of the learning process is assured.

Fourthly, lectures offer a model of a scholarly designed discourse which, due to the quality of the provided information, is perceived as being beneficial for the instructional process.

Although teachers are aware of the fact that active learning can increase students' performance, the analysed data demonstrate that they still believe in the efficiency of traditional lectures. This attitude towards the classical teaching style may result from the special conditions in which lectures are delivered. It is known from the instructional process that a teacher cannot handle a high number of students attending lectures as easily as he/she can do it during seminars, which are normally held with smaller groups. This explains why active techniques are more often used in seminars than lectures. As Bonwell and James (1991, p. 8) state "the total reliance on the lecture method" is a mistake as, naturally speaking, most people are not able "to listen effectively to any lecturer no matter how skilful over a sustained period."

Briefly, teachers should pay more attention to using active learning during lectures as it "makes dull, difficult or repetitive material interesting and engaging" (Schwartz Green, 2011, p. 10). By using such teaching style, the major advantage of the instructional process is that it builds "a community of learners who are cooperative, interactive and brain compatible" (Schwartz Green, 2011, p. 8). In other words if literature teachers combine the traditional lecture with the two major objectives of active learning, namely "self-directed learning" and "independent work" (Simons et al., 2000, p. 21), it will give students the opportunity to develop

their creativity and critical thinking making them partners in the teaching and learning process.

If students are actively engaged in their literature classes this will enable them to reflect more deeply on the course content and the instructional process taking place in the classroom will be more attractive stimulating their motivation which is the main purpose of any successful educational activity.

References:

Bonwell, C., Eison J. (1991). *Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom.* "Higher Education Report No. 1". Washington, D.C.: The George Washington University. School of Education and Human Development.

Faust, J. L., Paulson, D. R. (1998). Active Learning in the College Classroom. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching, 9* (2), 3-24.

Felder, R.M., Brent, R. (2009). Active Learning: An Introduction. *ASQ Higher Education Brief*, *2*(4), August 2009.

Simons, J.R., Linden, J., Duffy, T. (eds.) (2000). *New Learning.* Kluwer Academic Publishers. The Netherlands.

Schwartz Green, L., Casale-Giannola, D. (2011). *40 Active Learning Strategies for the Inclusive Classroom, grades K-5*. Sage – Corwin. USA.

PHILOLOGY UNDERGRADUATES' PERCEPTION OF TRANSLATION. A CASE STUDY

Mihaela BADEA, Ph.D.,Diana PRESADĂ,Ph.D.,
University of Petroleum-Gas, Ploiesti
mihaelagab@yahoo.com, dianapresada@yahoo.com

Abstract
This idea lies at the basis of the present pilot study, which aims at discovering the impact of students' evaluation of their literature classes on the classroom environment as, in our opinion, such assessment may lead to the improvement of the teaching strategies used during literature courses and seminars.

Keywords: *literature class, evaluation, teaching strategies, improvement*

1. Introduction

The present paper is intended to examine students' views on the effectiveness of the translation method as part of their English practical courses. Taking into account the fact that in order to graduate students take a written test which includes a translation module most practical courses teachers use translation exercises in a gradual manner. For first year students translation represents an auxiliary exercise together with other language teaching strategies, second year students start getting familiar with translating more complex texts during practical courses of English and the third year students take part in classes whose major purpose is improving their translation skills.

We chose to analyse students' perception of translation classes as such a skill requires a different approach from teaching the other skills. As known, translation represents a complex process that needs students' good knowledge of both languages (source and target) as well as teachers' good command of using adequate instructional strategies.

A simple definition of the translation process is that it consists in "transferring a written text from SL to TL, conducted by a translator, or translators, in a specific socio-cultural context" (Hatim, Munday, 2004, p. 6), the written product being generally of two kinds as shown by Bell (2000, p. 88): close and free translation. The first means literal translation from a semantic point of view, whereas the latter implies the communicative dimension which is based on rephrasing. Although Bell (2000) presents a

complex classification of translation consisting of seven subdivisions, Petrescu (2000, p. 81) suggests a more synthesized classification which better corresponds to our purpose, including only three technical procedures: substitution (replacement of the syntactic structure of one language to another), transposition (structures from the SL are replaced with semantically equivalent structures in the TL) and modulation (the change of speaker's point of view), representing "a series of transformations of the original message so that it can be incorporated in the system of the TL." (Petrescu, 2000, p.80).

Although the studies dedicated to translation as a special skill are numerous, indicating the complexity of this phenomenon, we preferred simplifying this vast material to several clear points to guide us in the analysis of the data that we collected from students.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research questions

The aim of the present study is to find out and interpret students' perceptions of their translation classes, performed during English practical courses at academic level.

In order to achieve our aim we established the following research questions:

1. To what extent do students appreciate translation classes?
2. Do teachers apply interactive strategies during their translation activities?
3. What is the students' opinion on the usefulness of translation classes as regards their future career?

2.2. Participants in the study

The 48 students who took part in the research are specialising in foreign languages (English and French) at the Petroleum – Gas University of Ploiesti. They are in their final year and they attend practical courses of English and French as part of the curriculum, this subject being a major component of their graduation examination.

2.3. Research instrument

We based our study on a quantitative method, the main instrument being a questionnaire that consisted of 8 items. The students' answers to these items provided us with interesting information that help us to have a general image of the way in which translation is taught and perceived at academic level. We are aware that the data we obtained cannot be generalized but they can be used as a point of reference by teachers who wish to improve their instructional strategies by taking into account students' feedback.

3. Data Analysis

The findings of our study offered us relevant answers to the research questions above, helping us to draw several conclusions based on the analysis below.

I 1. How frequently do you practice translations during English practical courses?
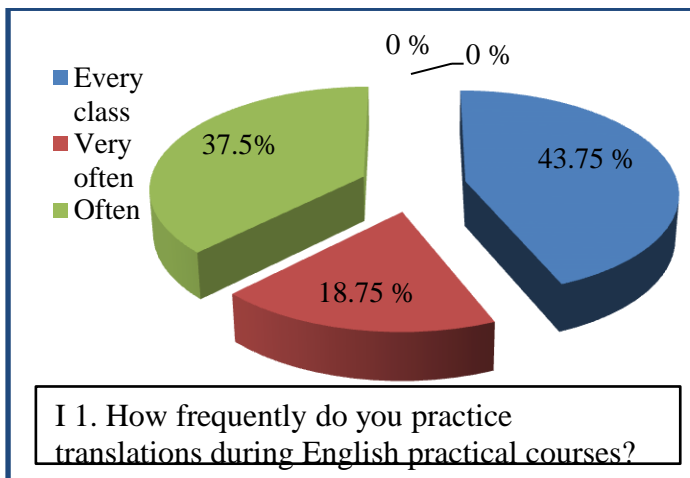
The first item aimed at checking the degree to which students practice translation within practical courses. As seen in the figure above the high proportion of students who practice translation demonstrates the fact that they benefit from sufficient training regarding the development of translation skills.

At the same time, this show that teachers follow the syllabus paying a lot of attention to tranlsations, having a view the fact that students have to pass a translation test in order to successfully graduate from our university.

I 2. How do you consider the translation classes you take part in?
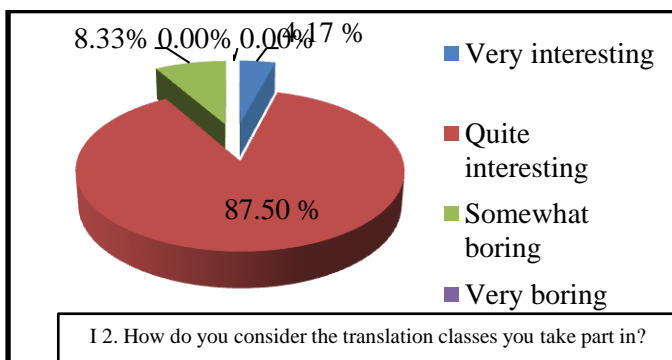
Another positive aspect is illustrated by students' answers to item 2. A very high percentage of the respondents (87.50%) have a favourable opinion of these classes, their motivation being a strong factor that

contributes to their very good performance and results as far as this skill is concerned.

I 3. Do you consider translation classes useful
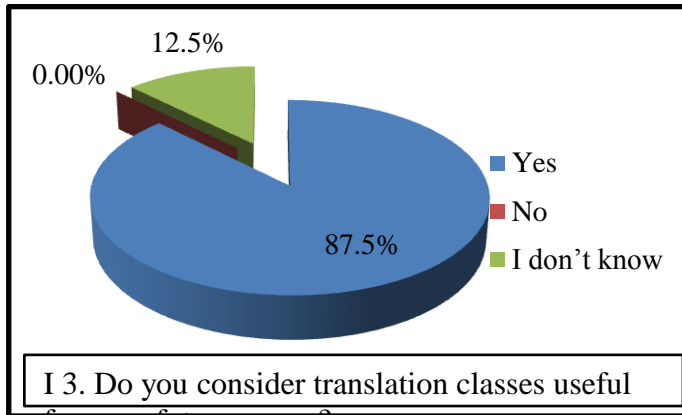
The answers to item 3 in the questionnaire reinforce the opinion expressed above, as the same high percentage of students attaches great importance to translation classes which are seen as a basis for their future career. We should mention that a possible explanation for the students' responses lies in the fact that after graduation they can practice not only the teaching profession, but also the translator or interpreter job, which, in their view, is more attractive.

I 4. Which types of translations do you find more useful for your future career?
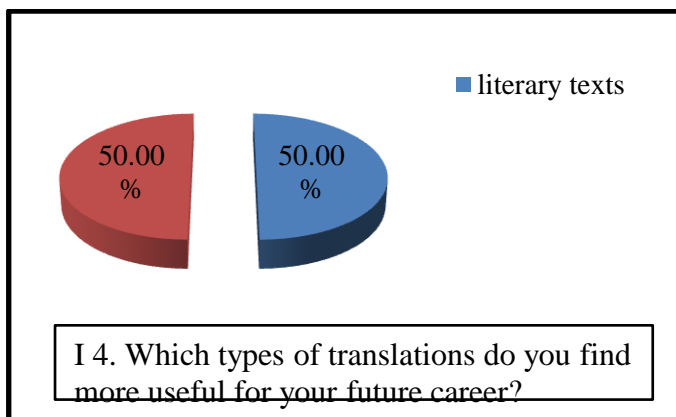
With regard to the type of translations students consider useful for a future career, their answers to item 4 show that they have equal preferences for literary and specialized texts. This equal proportion of their responses is not surprising because translations of literary texts are mostly used in the educational process, at high school and academic levels, whereas specialized constitute the field of activity of the ones who choose to work as translators or interpreters.

0.00%

100.00%

■ y
es

I 5. Apart from literary texts, do you translate
other types of texts? If yes, mention the fields.
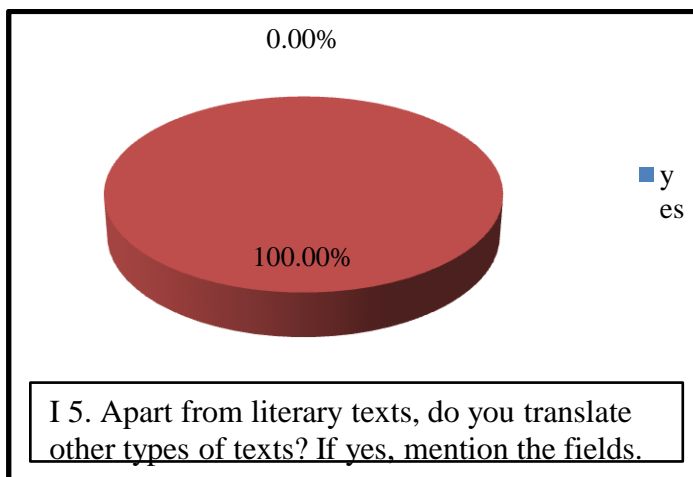
However, a negative aspect mentioned by the students is the fact that, even if specialized texts are considered useful, they do not practice this kind of translation during their classes, which shows that in the academic environment more emphasis is laid on the teaching profession rather than on working as a translator. This state of affairs is explained by the different purposes of the two academic cycles: the undergraduate cycle requires general knowledge of English, while the postgraduate one aims at developing skills specific to specialized translations.

6.25%

18.75%

18.75%

12.5%

43.75%

■ permanently
■ very often
■ quite often
■ rarely
■ never

I 6. To what extent do your teachers make use of
interactive strategies during translation classes?

■ Online dictionaries

■ Printed advanced learners' dictionaries

25.00 %

75.00 %

I 7. What are the most frequently used aids during translation classes?

12.50 %

■ yes
■ no

87.50 %

I 8. Do you consider the inclusion of translation tests in the graduation exams to be useful? Motivate your answer.

4. Conclusions

To sum up the students' opinions analysed so far, we may state that translation practice is a major component of the philological academic curriculum, helping students in obtaining the skills necessary for their graduation examination and their future career as a teacher or translator, which stands as a possible answer to RQ3.

The fact that teachers are preoccupied with it during practical courses shows that the requirements of the curriculum are fulfilled and students benefit from a suitable training in order to successfully graduate. This explains the general positive opinion of the students regarding the effectiveness of the translation classes they take part in. (a possible answer to our first research question). Their view of translation as an effective language teaching technique corresponds to the well-known teaching principle

according to which translation is "a linguistic skill-enhancing tool, with the aim of confirming its value as an indispensable activity in the language learning process" (Visintin, 2008, p. 460).

Even if teachers see translation as a necessary classroom activity, students' answers revealed teachers' tendency to choose traditional methods more than interactive ones during practical courses (response to the second research question). They seem to ignore the fact that translation is a specific skill that requires specific techniques. Thus, translation is a bilingual process which involves a semiosis, namely a communication process consisting in a transformation of the original message received by the translator into the TL system. To fulfil this transformation, the translator should be in command of a solid knowledge of both languages and translation techniques. As Jeremy Harmer (2007, p. 133) states, translation is "the fifth skill, after reading, writing, speaking and listening". That is why translation activities "should be done in groups because a discussion of the issues they raise is likely to be more revealing with two or more people than we just think about it ourselves" (Harmer, 2007, p. 133). Although most theories and researchers' opinions indicate that the translation skill should be taught in an interactive manner, classroom practice does not necessarily take this view into account. The major disadvantage of teaching the translation skill is that the essence of the process is ignored, that is, the equality of the translator and creator especially in the case of literary translations, which are so frequent at academic level, as our data show.

That is why, when teaching translation, teachers should make use of various interactive techniques meant to encourage and develop students' creativity, which is absolutely necessary for doing literary translations of a high quality.

References:

Bell, R.T. (2000). *Teoria şi practica traducerii.* Editura Polirom. Iaşi.

Hatim, B., J. Munday. (2004). *Translation: An advanced resource book*, Routledge. London and New York.

Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching.* Pearson Education Limited. Essex.

Petrescu, C. (2000). *Traducerea – între teorie şi realizare poetică*. Editura Excelsior. Timişoara.

Visintin, A. Z. (2008). Workshop on pedagogic translation as a skill-enhancing tool. *Memorias del IV Foro Nacional de Estudios en Lenguas. (FONAEL 2008).* pp. 460-468.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SCHOOL RESULTS OF

TEENAGERS

Adela Măgăţ CÎNDEA, Ph.D.,
West University in Timişoara
cndadela@yahoo.com

Abstract: *This study proposes to identify a relation between the school results on one hand and the emotional intelligence on the other hand and revealing the possible differences between male teenagers, respectively female teenagers regarding the level of emotional intelligence. As methodology, the Test for emotional intelligence (version for children) was applied, and the school results of students were quantified in the average grade at the semester's end.*
The subject's lot is formed of teenagers, students in schools within the Counties of Timiş, Caraş, Mehedinţi, Gorj and Hunedoara.
The obtained results reveal the existence of a positive correlation, statistically considerable, between the school results of students and their emotional intelligence. At the same time, we observe major statistic differences at the level of emotional intelligence between teenagers of female and male gender.

Key words: *emotional intelligence, school results, teenagers.*

1. Theoretic frame

The school results of teenagers, their performances, are established in a feedback, in a measure of efficiency regarding the educational instructive process involving both students as well as teachers.

Beside the cognitive potential of students, of the influences of the social-cultural environment they live in, the pedagogic related conditions, the school results of students can be influenced by other factors too, which aware of, can be molded in order to actually contribute to increasing the school performances.

One of these factors is considered to be the emotional intelligence. The importance of the emotional intelligence in determining certain good school results was highlighted in a series of researches. Thus, as a result of a

child development project initiated in California by Eric Schaps, the conclusion was drawn that there exist a large number of advantages involving emotional and social competence of children in order to stimulate their learning capacity. (Goleman, 2001).

Mayer and Salovey demonstrated in their studies that a series of factors which negatively influence school results of students can be eliminated by educating the emotional intelligence.

The term „emotional intelligence" was used for the first time in the year 1985 within the USA, and afterwards, as stated by M. Roco, there are three different levels of approaching the concept. The first level is presented by J.D.Mayer and P. Salovey, authors considering that the emotional intelligence refers to the capacity of the human individual to know, understand and exercise control over his own feelings as well as over the feelings of others, in order to contribute to the development of the person, to correctly perceive and express his own emotions as well as the emotions of others, to generate feelings when they facilitate thought and efficient action. Another level represented by Renven Bar-On highlights as factors of emotional intelligence:

- intra-personal factors (awareness of own emotions, optimism/assertiveness, respect and consideration for their own person, self-performance, independence);
- interpersonal factors (empathy, positive reciprocal interpersonal relations, social responsibility);
- adaptability (problem solving, reality testing, flexibility);
- stress control (tolerance at frustration, impulse control);
- general disposition (satisfaction, happiness, optimism).

According to D. Goleman, author defining the third level of approach, the emotional intelligence is formed of the awareness of own emotions, self-control of affective experiences, personal motivation, empathy and social aptitudes

2. Research design

The study focuses on teenagers between ages of 14 and 19 learning in schools within the Counties of Timiş, Caraş, Mehedinţi, Gorj and Hunedoara.

2.1 Research objectives

Proposed objectives:

1. Identifying a relation between emotional intelligence and school results at teenagers;
2. Identifying certain differences between the level of emotional intelligence at teenagers of female and male gender.

2.2 Research hypothesis

1. If the teenager disposes of a high level of emotional intelligence then he has also good school results;

2. We presume that female teenagers have a statistically higher emotional intelligence level as male teenagers;

2.3 Research methodology

The work desires a study aiming the observance of eventual differences between female teenagers and male teenagers regarding the emotional intelligence level, as well as the identification of a relation between the emotional intelligence and the school results of teenagers.

The involved test sample within the research is formed of 287 teenagers, students in schools within the Counties of Timiş, Caraş, Mehedinţi, Gorj and Hunedoara. The test sample involves 117 male teenagers, 40.8%, respectively 170 female teenagers, 59.2%. Regarding the age distribution at test sample level, the data are as follows:

- 44 -14 years of age teenagers, 15.3%
- 30 -15 years of age teenagers, 10.5%
- 57 -16 years of age teenagers, 19.9%
- 61 -17 years of age teenagers, 21.3%
- 41 -18 years of age teenagers, 14.3%
- 54 -19 years of age teenagers, 18.8%

The frequencies, in relation to gender and age, within the involved test sample,

can be found in Table 1 respectively 2.

gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	117	40.8	40.8	40.8
	female	170	59.2	59.2	100.0
	Total	287	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 The components of the test sample in relation to gender (frequencies and percentages)

age		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	14	44	15.3	15.3	15.3
	15	30	10.5	10.5	25.8
	16	57	19.9	19.9	45.6
	17	61	21.3	21.3	66.9
	18	41	14.3	14.3	81.2
	19	54	18.8	18.8	100.0
	Total	287	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 The components of the test sample in relation to age (frequencies and percentages)

In order to verify the stated hypothesis we applied the evaluation questionnaire for emotional intelligence adapted by Mihaela Roco after Bar-On and Goleman, as well as the school results of students expressed as average grade per semester.

Regarding the evaluation questionnaire for emotional intelligence, the applying instructions target the check off of the answer which fits best by the teenagers, for each individual item.

The quotation possibility of answers is performed according to the following data:

Item no (question)	Answer notation		Item no (question)	Answer notation	
1	a.b,c	20 points	6	b, c	5 points
				d	20 points
2	b	20 points	7	a	20 points
3	a	20 points	8	b	20 points
4	c	20 points	9	b	5 points
				d	20 points
5	c	20 points	10	b	20 points

The points of the 10 answers are summed up.
The signification of the global sense is:
- At 100: below average;
- 100 – 150: average;
- Over 150: above average;
- 200: exceptional

3. Interpretation of the research results

In order to test the proposed hypothesis, the program SPSS was applied performing comparisons by means of the t tests method for independent test samples, as well as correlations by means of the Person test.

Below, we will analyze the gathered results.

Regarding the first hypothesis, the data shown in table 1 highlight the fact that between the two implied variables there is a statistically major positive correlation. r= . 248. Thus, we can state that at the level of the test sample of teenagers involved within the study, a higher level of emotional intelligence is associated with higher school results.

		emotional intelligence	average
intel emot	Pearson Correlation	1	.248(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	287	287
average	Pearson Correlation	.248(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	287	287

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Table 3 Value of the correlation coefficient

Regarding the second hypothesis of this study, the T test for independent test samples confirms the statistically major difference between female teenagers and male teenagers, at the level of emotional intelligence values. The statistic data are presented in tables 4 and 5. The average of the male teenager group regarding the variable – emotional intelligence - (M = 80.94, SD = 21.60) is considerable lower (t = -2.24) then the female teenager group (M = 87.12, SD = 24.72).
Table 4 Value of t test for independent test samples

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
intel emot	male	117	80.94	21.605	1.997
	female	170	87.12	24.722	1.896

Table 5 Mean and standard deviations

4. Conclusions and proposals

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		
intel emot	Equal variances assumed	4.674	.031	-2.188	285	.029	-6.177	2.823	-11.735	-.620
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.243	269.208	.026	-6.177	2.754	-11.600	-.755

At the level of this study involving female and male teenagers with ages between 14 and 19 we observe, according to the mentioned statistical data, a powerful positive correlation between the emotional intelligence level

and the school results of teenagers expressed by the semester average. As result of the statistic interpretation of data we observe a major statistically difference between female and male teenagers regarding the emotional intelligence level, the girls having a higher level of emotional intelligence than boys.

As result of the gathered data, specifically the low level of emotional intelligence of teenagers (table 6), as well as the obvious correlation between its level and the school results, in the future we tend to propose and implement a counselling program to concretely contribute in developing the emotional intelligence of students.

Emotional Intelligence	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 20	2	.7	.7	.7
40	9	3.1	3.1	3.8
45	7	2.4	2.4	6.3
50	2	.7	.7	7.0
60	38	13.2	13.2	20.2
65	22	7.7	7.7	27.9
70	9	3.1	3.1	31.0
80	65	22.6	22.6	53.7
85	25	8.7	8.7	62.4
90	3	1.0	1.0	63.4
100	61	21.3	21.3	84.7
105	5	1.7	1.7	86.4
110	1	.3	.3	86.8
120	21	7.3	7.3	94.1
125	6	2.1	2.1	96.2
130	2	.7	.7	96.9
140	8	2.8	2.8	99.7
145	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	287	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 Frequencies and percentages of emotional intelligence values within the test sample

References:

Goleman, D. (2001). Emotional Intelligence, Curtea veche Publishing House, Bucharest.

Golu, M. (2002). Basics Of General Psychology, University Publishing House, Bucharest;

Gilly, M. (1976). Good Student, Bad Student, Didactic and Pedagogic Publishing House, Bucharest;

Hedges, P. (2002). Personality And Temperament. Guide To Psychological types, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest;

Hohn, M., Măruşter, L.(1998). *Course For Applied Statistics In Social Science*, Tipografia Universităţii de Vest, Timişoara.

Lelord, F., Andre,Ch. (2003).*How To Express Our Emotions And Feelings*, Trei Publishing House, Bucureşti.

Roco, M. (2004). Emotional Creativity And Intelligence, Polirom Publishing House, Iasi;

Ungureanu, D. (2001). Theory and Practice of Educational Evaluation, Mirton Publishing House, Timisoara;

STORY IMPACT ON THE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT, EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL SELF-CONTROL OF PRESCHOOLERS

Mariana NOREL, Daniela POPA
Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences,
Transilvania University of Braşov
mariana_norel@unitbv.ro

Abstract:

This article aims to highlight the results of a research undertaken to demonstrate the formative role of stories / tales in language and communication development, emotional and behavioral self-control of preschoolers. The research aims to answer to concrete problems posed by educational practice at micropedagogical level.

Keywords: *Preschoolers, language, communication, emotional self-control, behavioral self-control.*

1. Introduction

Communication, as a social skill, is perceived as the most important component that ensures the progress in child development. Preschooler's language develops massively under the influence of adults, with which establishes more and more complex communication relationships. Acquiring the language, the child obtains the means by which can make communication with others in higher forms. The language helps him to relate, but especially facilitates fullest knowledge of objective reality. The language in the preschool period becomes an active and very complex instrument of the children's relationships with the others and, at the same time, an instrument for organizing mental activity. At preschool age, language allows the child to perform complex relationships with adults and other children to express ideas and inner states, but also to understand and acquire information.

2. The research aim

The investigated aspect is centered on language development of preschool children under the influence of the stories, taking into account simultaneously, the emotional language, translated into nonverbal communication and the verbal language as vocabulary acquisition and spontaneous use in verbal communication. Hereby we present the results of

the research under our coordination, undertaken by Oana Miron, preschool teacher in Brețcu kindergarten with extended program, Covasna County, made to achieve the scientific methodological study to obtain the first didactic grade.

Affective structures in the preschool period are in the full process of formation. The satisfaction of children's needs and desires is associated with positive affective states, while contradicting and blocking their emotional cause emotional states of dissatisfaction, discontent. "Affectivity, centered first on family complexes, widens its register as social relations are multiplying and the moral feelings, related to the beginning on the sacred authority, evolve in the sense of mutual respect and reciprocity" (Piaget and Inhelder , cited in Sion, 2003, p. 110). At this stage it is programmed the switching from emotions to feelings, through imitation mechanism. The child acquires affective states and emotional expressions. "The preschooler emotional behaviors diversify, get rich and become more consistent and appropriate to the context; realizing a true emotional learning "(Sion, 2003, p 111).

But the child imitative behavioral patterns do not stop only to adults directly perceived (parents, teachers, grandparents, etc.). In terms of language, the child is learning patterns and phrases that he does not fully understand from the media (advertisements, cartoons). If the child sees that these verbal behaviors are admired and accepted by adult, he will repeat them. If the impact is not positive and awakens negative reactions from adult, he will gradually abandon them. As the child internalizes the imitated behaviors and understands the causality, the behavioral and verbal self-control appears.

In terms of emotional self-control, it occurs after the same model as for verbal behaviors, but with certain slowness, because the adults' reactions control is not the same. The child senses quite early that his emotional state influences the behavior of parents, most often for the purposes of his intentions and desires. Growing up, during the preschool period, the child observe the effects of his obedient or opponent behavior and tries to get what he wants by these forms. But as he grows, after the age of 5 years, as the socialization is more aware, in relation to the rules, moral internalization behavior occurs.

Internalization or crossing from the external controlled responses to behavior governed by internal standards and principles, allows children to behave in a moral manner, without adult supervision and vigilance. There is a path to be followed in the education of emotional intelligence. If at the beginning parents insists in telling the child all the time what to do and how to react, this control must be tempered and decreased with time, even in small preschool period. Children should only be guided in solving the encountered

problems, because only then will learn to set goals for themselves and practice the main dimensions of emotional intelligence:

a) The awareness of their own emotions (to be able to recognize and name the emotions and the differences between feelings and actions);

b) The emotional control (to be able to control his anger and frustrations without express them through aggression);

c) Personal motivation (the use of emotions productively, to be less impulsive);

d) Empathy (reading the emotions from the perspective of the other, listening and understanding the other's needs);

e) Directing interpersonal relations (development of interpersonal relationships on mutual understanding and sympathy without conflict or conditioning).

Most often children encounter the most eloquent moral models in stories and tales. From these characters, they see (when there are illustrated or animated), that truly moral individuals do not simply conform to social influences of others, that they do not acts only to obtain immediate benefits depending on the situation, as carry out by them as children.

From the discussions about the characters they notice that the characters adopt relatively permanent and general standards of conduct that govern their behavior in relation to many people (characters), in many environments and in a variety of circumstances or events. Thus, there is a desire to behave like heroes from the stories / tales, which are appreciated by the others. This attitude is reinforced only by maintaining the atmosphere of fairy tales and stories for a long period. Fairy tale atmosphere and is best maintained by kindergarten, with all its fittings, with all educational context, as well as themed activities.

The most significant progresses in the ability of self-regulation, emotional and behavioral self-control occur after the age of 5 to preschoolers. They are able to internalize the rules and obey them even when adults are not present. Preschoolers can, at this age, to inhibit the action much better to accept delayed rewards and tolerate frustration, after the heroes from the stories and tales models. They also manage to self-monitories their behavior according to the context, but often expect the confirmation from adults. Although it seems that emotional self-control is installed, the emotional intelligence is just developing, episodes of instability can occur at any time. M. Zlate specified "however, preschooler affectivity is quite unstable" (Zlate, cited Verza 2000, p 98).

In conclusion, emotional intelligence can be developed under the influence of education, from early ages, and is not dependent on the child's intellectual ability. Depending on how this intelligence is educated, the children are different, relate differently, integrate different in social groups.

Differences between children in terms of self-control capacity "predict" their life chances.

3. The research design

3.1. Objectives and research hypotheses

The research has the following objectives:

O1. Identifying the modalities in which the story can be exposed to influence the emotional and verbal language development of preschoolers;

O2. Valorization of the story highlighting shapes to develop at preschoolers the verbal behavior and desirable action in social group;

O3. Identifying the level of development of preschoolers' abilities in communication, mediated by stories.

The research has the following assumptions:

General hypothesis:

If the story is set properly to preschool age, in different ways, it can influence changes in the children's level of communication.

From the general hypothesis were derived the following specific hypotheses:

1. If the story is adapted in presentation, in an accessible to children language may influence the reception of the dominant formulas that the story highlighted;

2. If the story is deepened by different teaching methods (drawing, coloring, dramatization), its impact on the child's behavior will be increased;

3. If the story is presented and enhanced as content, it will determine the development of an emotional language relevant in expressive communication.

3.2. The research methods and instruments

Through systematic observation it was ensured the record of the behavioral manifestations of children's natural activity in normal kindergarten educational activities. It was provided qualitative data. Case study, with ascertaining function, provided in-depth analysis of the behavior of each subject, from the point of view of language, behavior, attitudes and emotional development. The pedagogical experiment, with a formative function, enabled verification of the causal hypotheses. The experiment consisted in monitoring the effect of the presentation of the story from different points of teaching methods, focused on language and conduct target group subjects. By introducing various techniques of presenting the tales was targeted the verbal language and emotional development of preschool subjects.

The activity's products analysis method captured data products regarding: children's mental abilities (quality of knowledge, skills, abilities)

the working style (chromatic analysis of the colored drawings), progress in learning (through repeated drawings). In the experimental stage were used as research tools: sheets with drawings for coloring, on which emotions are analyzed in terms of color. To investigate the verbal and emotional language were used: the sheet of language and communication evaluation and rating scale for socio-emotional skills. To analyze the activity products (designs), we used color symbolism and characterization criteria proposed by Max Luscher, who investigated the relationship between color preference and personality structure. The colors were split in: primary colors - blue, green, red and yellow and secondary - purple, brown, black and gray. Each of these colors has three roles: to be, which is to be active stance.

Table no. 1 Chromatic interpretation, after Max Luscher

color	what represents	personality	affectivity
PRIMARY COLOURS			
blue	depth of feelings	passive, sensitive, responsive to relationships	silence, satisfaction, affection
green	the suppleness of will	passive, defensive, tenacious,	assertiveness, self-esteem, perseverance
red	will power	active, competitive, effective	desire, excitability, domination
yellow	spontaneity	active, resourceful, ambitious,	originality, joy of living
SECONDARY COLORS			
black	negation, general conflict	renunciation, surrender,	protest towards the situation
brown	irreparable loss	has no lasting connections	emotional insecurity
purple	exaggerated imagination	need for understanding from others	lack of emotional security, sensitivity

For interpreting the chromatic analysis was used the color representation in which:
- Primary color representation of oneself and the other characters indicate sense of security, belonging, comfort, joy (appreciated by "+");
- Representation of all the characters with secondary colors indicate sadness, insecurity, conflict situations, fear, rejection (appreciated by "-").

Table no 2 Chromatic table used to interpret drawings

red, pink orange	yellow	blue	green	purple	black, grey	brown
Primary Colors				*Secondary Colors*		
Pleased with himself, goodwill	Cheerfulness Tolerance Ambition	Safety Responsiveness to relations	Resistance Emotional balance	Discomfort Sensitivity	Fear Rejection Conflict	Lack of security
+	+	+	+	-	-	-

The rating scale (Annex no. 1) has 18 items regarding the language and communication abilities of the subject, evaluated on a 5-step scale (1 – acquired, 2 – partial acquired, 3 – pending to acquire with verbal support, 4 -

pending to acquire with concrete support, 5 - not acquired). The 18 items are grouped thematically as follows:

- The ability to perceive verbal message (1 and 2);
- Intelligible verbal communication skills (3-8);
- Conscious and active communication skills (9-12);
- Civilized social communication skills (13-18).

To follow the evolution of language and communication, the rating scales are completed at the beginning of the experiment and at the end, observing the development on groups of items, without assessing or diagnosing the communication's level, so the instrument will be applied for ascertaining. The rating scale of the socio-emotional skills (Annex no.2) is composed of 20 items that describe children's socio-emotional behaviors. The rating scale is structured in 5 steps (1 – acquired, 2 – partial acquired, 3 – pending to acquire with verbal support, 4 - pending to acquire with concrete support, 5 - not acquired). It starts from acquired behavior, so frequently used, to the not acquired investigated behaviors. Items are grouped into the following areas:

- Relationships with adults (teachers), adaptation to educational activity - items 1-4;
- Relations with peers, adaptation to peers - items 5-7;
- Independent behaviors- items 8-10;
- Behavioral and emotional control - items 11-20.

Along with the described instruments was used a list of minimum vocabulary that can be induced by the story *The old woman's daughter and the old man's daughter,* by Ion Creangă, the story that stood as the foundation for the experimental stage.

Table no. 3 Inventory of vocabulary induced by the story

No crt	Expression	frequent		sometimes		rare		hardly ever	
		a	b	a	b	a	b	a	b
1	Once upon a time								
2	Beautiful girl								
3	Hardworking girl								
4	Obedient girl								
5	Good girl at heart.								
6	Lazy girl								
7	Grumpy girl								
8	Bad girl at heart								
9	Please help me								
10	I do / he does a good deed								
11	Neatly / nurture								
12	Patient, tolerant								
13	Gentle								
14	Blessing								
15	Shame								
16	Payback								

a – before experimental phase   b – after experimental phase

These instruments were applied at the beginning of the experiment and at the end, comparing subjects' evolution after the experimental phase.

3.3. The presentation of the experimental group

The research was conducted in Kindergarten "Pinocchio" from Breţcu Village, Covasna, in the teaching in Romanian language classroom, in May 2011 - April 2012. The experimental group has a number of 15 children, aged from 3 to 7 years, which complies with the characteristics of the community to which belongs. All subjects are part of the community as their parents and grandparents in the area, so being raised in the local traditions. The rural area of residence allows the group to know and understand certain elements of the story, such as fruit trees, fountain, bread baking oven, caring for domestic animals (especially dog), the forest.

3.4. The research results
3.4.1. Preexperimental stage

To follow the evolution of the emotional and verbal language were completed (Table no. 4), at the beginning of the experiment, the rating scales for language and communication and for socio-affective skills. The filling in was based on systematic observation in the first two weeks of September, before preschoolers starts the organized program of teaching, learning and assessment. Following the completion of the two rating scales, we found that the language and communication of 15 subjects had the following characteristics:

Table no 4 The level of language development by age, in the preexperimental stage

Characteristics of the language	Age	Number of children	Development	
			Normal	**Disorders**
The ability to perceive verbal message	3 years	4	**75%**	25%
	4 years	3	**75%**	25%
	5 years	4	**100%**	0
	6-7 years	4	**100%**	0
Intelligible verbal communication skills	3 years	4	**75%**	25%
	4 years	3	**66%**	33%
	5 years	4	**75%**	25%
	6-7 years	4	**75%**	25%
Conscious and active communication capacity	3 years	4	**50%**	50%
	4 years	3	**66%**	33%
	5 years	4	**75%**	25%
	6-7 years	4	**75%**	25%
Civilized social communication ability	3 years	4	**50%**	50%
	4 years	3	**66%**	33%
	5 years	4	**75%**	25%
	6-7 years	4	**75%**	25%

Table no. 5 The assessment model of language development in each subject

	LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION	developed normally			disorders in development	
		1	2	3	4	5
1	ABILITY TO LISTEN WHAT IS TOLD				X	
2	ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS TOLD			X		
3	ABILITY TO SPEAK CORRECT, COHERENT			X		
4	ABILITY TO SPEAK WITH SOMEONE				X	

The assessment algorithm showed that normal development of language (*Tabel no. 5*), according to age particularities, is present in almost all subjects. The percentage indicates that only one subject on each age level encounters some problems in development. The only area where they met lower percent, at age of 3 years, was civilized communication and usage of specific formulas and welcome address.

This level of language development and communication indicates that subjects fall within the age characteristics, indicating a willingness of subjects to develop under the educational influence. For the general

assessment of the socio-emotional skills it was used a specific rating scale, but the same way of evaluation.

Analyzing the data presented in Table no. 6, it can be appreciated that the relationships with adults are normally developed for preschool and the relationships with peers are closer to normality, given that for subjects of 3 - 4 years adaptation to group is only in the debut stage, especially because for some of them it is just the beginning of formal education. As regards the independent behavior, it is highlighted a lower percentage at ages 3-4 years, indicating opposing behavior, as they were described by H. Wallon, making the group of subjects to fit, however, in -a level of normality.

Table no 6 The level of socio-emotional skills development in preexperimental phase

Socio-affective Skill Level	Age	Children No.	Development	
			normal	disorders
Relationships with adults, adaptation to the educational activity	3 years	4	**50%**	50%
	4 years	3	**100%**	0
	5 years	4	**100%**	0
	6-7 years	4	**100%**	0
Relationships with colleagues, adapting to peer group	3 years	4	**50%**	50%
	4 years	3	**66%**	33%
	5 years	4	**100%**	0
	6-7 years	4	**100%**	0
Independent conduct	3 years	4	**25%**	75%
	4 years	3	**66%**	33%
	5 years	4	**75%**	25%
	6-7 years	4	**100%**	0

3.4.2. The experimental stage

In the experimental stage, which extended over a period of 6 months, from September 2011 to February 2012, was implemented the story of *The old woman's daughter and the old man's daughter,* by Ion Creangă, using different ways of teaching (Table no.7):

Table no 7 Stages and story presentation methods

Stage	Objective	Teaching methods	Educational means
I. Familiarity with the story	Familiarization with the story content in its logical conduct	Narrative Conversation	Collection of fairy tales Images
II. Awareness of logical sequence of text	Retelling the text based on a suite of image	Storytelling Exercise	Coloring book
III. Story	Expressing emotional	Didactic game	Worksheets

consolidation	impressions by color	Exercise	
IV. Dramatization of the story	Emotional expression by dramatizing the story	Simulation game Conversation	Decorative items

3.4.3. Postexperimental stage

In the post experimental faze subjects development was analyzed in terms of emotional language that precedes and influences verbal language in preschool period. Emotional language is analyzed in terms of color respectively unintentional use of color in the portrayal of the fairy tale. If we analyze the way the illustrated message is recepted by the subject and his emotional reaction, it can be seen that, the colors of distressedcharacters, injured dog, well broken down, tree full of caterpillars and broken furnace, were used in general dull, sad colors. Most of the drawings were completed chromatic with: black / gray, brown, red, blue and green. The color representation (Table no 8) for difficult situations indicate that the message of the story came to the understanding of subjects, and thus influencing the emotional state can implicitly determine the way of the verbal expression.

Color	*Significance*	*Interpretation*
Black - Grey	Fear, sadness	*Subjects empathize with the suffering character, feel the lack of security and show kindness to help and support, and relate to the animal or personified object*
Brown	Lack of security	
Red	Goodwill	
Blue	Responsiveness to relations	

Table no 8 The chromatic table

Given the fact that the tale presents the situation in two separate ways for four personified objects, there were compared the level of disadvantage colors, at their rehabilitation; in their case, the colors used are more diversified. Emerge as the dominant red, orange and yellow, blue slips between them, green and brown (Table no 9).

Table no 9 The color representation

Color	*Significance*	*Interpretation*
red, pink, orange	Pleased with himself	This chromatic indicates that the subjects are satisfied that objects and respectively the dog were rescued and are in good shape, even more, it rewards the good deed of the man that
yellow	Joy, tolerance	
green	Emotional balance	

blue	Responsiveness to relations	cared for them. Cheerfulness and responsiveness to relationships indicates that they would resort to helping anyone in need, which indicates a high emotional impact.
brown	Lack of security	

Analyzing the color expression at subjects aged 4-5 years it can be observed that 72% of these colors represented properly the emotional state which was transmitted by the drawing. To see if the color expressiveness is presented at the level of the human characters of the tale, namely to see what is the degree of sympathy for some of the characters, there was allso analyzed the chromatic.

The analysis was made by chromatic associating the old man, with his daughter, and the old woman with her daughter. By comparing them the two representations were analyzed. For characters considered positive (Daughter of the old man and the old man) the dominant colors are: yellow (joy, ambition), red, pink (benevolence), green (resistance), while for the negative characters (the old womans daughter and the old woman) the dominant colors are: blue (safety), brown (no security), purple (discomfort, envy). These colors indicate that subjects correctly perceived the tale message, distinguishing positive from negative behaviors, which expresses the awareness of differentiation between good and evil in fairy tale. Regarding the fifth human character from the fairy tale, the Holy Sunday, and her 'babies', represent the test of courage and tolerance to both daughters, the chromatics is different.

The entire chromatic drawing analysis indicates that the emotional message of the tale was acknowledged by subjects, which facilitates the assumption of a specific tale action vocabulary; moreover, it may favor the assumption of a borrowed behavior from positive characters. These findings support and confirm the specific hypothesis 3 that assumes that the tale introduced and strengthened content can cause the development of an emotional language that causes an expressive communication.

Use of language, especially the language induced by the action of the story, was assessed based on items (15, 16, 17) from "The assessment rating scale of language and communication".

Age	No.	Uses frequently greetings and presentation formulas		Uses often formulas request		Uses frequently formulas of gratitude and appreciation	
		Before experiment	*After experiment*	*Before experiment*	*After experiment*	*Before experiment*	*After experiment*
3 years	**4**	25%	**75%**	50%	**50%**	25%	**75%**
4 years	**3**	33%	**67%**	67%	**100%**	33%	**100%**
5 years	**4**	75%	**100%**	50%	**75%**	75%	**100%**
6-7 years	**4**	100%	**100%**	100%	**100%**	100%	**100%**

Table no 10. Changes occurred in free communication, after experiment

From Table no 10 it can be observed that the frequency of greetings, requests and thanksgiving used increase during the experiment. Thereby at the end of the experiment most subjects use these formulas in open communication within the group. These formulas entered in the common vocabulary, mainly with children of 5 and over 5 years old. The fact that 5 year old subjects, only 75% use request formulas and 3 of 4 subjects frequently use these formulas. It can be explained by analyzing individual subjects, as it is related to the individual characteristics of children. These findings support the hypothesis and confirm the specific hypothesis 1 that argues that if the tale is adapted from presentation language accessible to children, it can influence the uptake of dominant formulas that are highlighted by the tale.

Analyzing expression inventories acquired directly from the content of the tale we can appreciate that the highest frequency expresions used were recorded in following successful post: *beautiful girl, obedient girl, a good deed, gentle, shame, payback, help me (please help me).* The expression "once upon a time ...." as an initial formula for both tales and stories, was used by most children when initiating a retelling of a story or a fairy tale activity. This indicates that this expression was perceived as belonging to this genre, and was not taken as belonging to everyday life, thus it did not entered in the active vocabulary. All these elements of vocabulary helped greatly the awareness of expressions through role playing. The issues analized based on "The assessment grid of language and communication" indicate changes of 1-

2 points for each subject for the items: (9) *exploit* acquired vocabulary in various activities, (11) *memorize* texts, poems, riddles, roles, (12) *reproduce in a expressive manner* texts, poems, riddles, roles.

Table no 11. Changes occurred in language and communication after experiment

ite ms	3 yea rs	3 yea rs	3 yea rs	3 yea rs	4 yea rs	4 yea rs	4 yea rs	5 yea rs	5 yea rs	5 yea rs	5 yea rs	6-7 yea rs	6-7 yea rs	6-7 yea rs	6-7 yea rs
(9)	+1	+1	+1	0	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	0	+1	+1
(11)	+1	0	+2	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	0	+1	+1	+1
(12)	+1	+1	+1	+1	+2	+1	0	+1	0	+1	+2	0	0	+1	0

As can be seen in Table no 11, there were found changes to all three items in a positive direction in almost all subjects, thus, in terms of vocabulary valorisation 86.6% have made progress, in memorizing poems and roles progressvthe progress was at a rate of 86.6% and expressive reproduction progress was recorded only at 66.6% for preschool children. Following these observations, revealed by assessment tools, it can be appreciated that the subjects' vocabulary has a positive evolution. As was pointed out the fact that the development of language and vocabulary is consistent with the stages stressed out by the scientific literature, by highlighting the stories formative effect on children's language in the preschool period, there were conducted four case studies, the selected subjects were aged between 4-6 years and different genders, the tiebreaker criteria being the development of emotional behavior. Detailed presentation of the evolution of the four subjects will be carried out in the next issue.

4. Conclusions

Kindergarten brings the child in a position to communicate about various topics, while family communication is restricted to residence environment and parental concerns. Also in kindergarten the child has the advantage of obtaining explanations or intuitive support for many vocabulary acquisitions, while in the family he can assimilate words and phrases heared only from parents.

This point was included in the work developed by Miron Oana, which emphasizes the importance of the content analysis of stories and valuing them for a longer period of time, showing that for vocabulary and language of children not the amount of information is important, but the awareness of linguistic expressions. Another issue highlighted is that of adapting the language used in stories at the level of understanding and preschool age. As a first condition in the development, activation and plasticizing vocabulary is the quality of the chosen narrative text. Given the fact that the group participating in the experiment brings together children from 3 up to 7 years old, the way of adaptation of language used in stories was capitalized for it to be equally understood by all children. By adapting the language, there was

obtained the increase of active vocabulary words, measured by minimum vocabulary inventory, which indicates that a minimum of seven expressions (44%) were completely assimilated by all children, regardless of their age. The number of expressions increased as the age of the children was higher.

Emotional self-control, behavioral self-control, relational capabilities within the group of children are personality traits that begin to form at this age level, preschool age, and the present study showed what changes occur in a certain period of time. All these behaviors outline the individual way of manifestation of each child. Because cognitive development in children is very closely related to language development, pre-school teachers should constantly show concern for the communication capabilities of each child participating in this level of education. Increased attention to language development implicitly leads to the development of thinking and their operations, thus preparing school entrance.

References

*** (2008). *Curriculum pentru învăţământul preşcolar 3-6/7 ani,* Bucureşti: Ministerul Educaţiei şi Cercetării şi Tineretului.

***. (2002). *Educaţia timpurie în România,* UNICEF, IOMC, CEDP. Bucureşti: Ed. Vanemonde.

***. (2008). *Ghid de bune practici pentru educaţia timpurie a copiilor între 3-6/7 ani,* Bucureşti: MECT. Unitatea de Management al Proiectelor pentru Învăţământul Preuniversitar.

Miron, O. (2012). *Valoarea formativă a basmului în cultivarea limbajului copiilor preşcolari*. Lucrare metodico-ştiinţifică pentru obţinerea gradului didactic I. Braşov: Universitatea *Transilvania* din Braşov. Departamentul pentru Pregătirea Personalului Didactic.

Munteanu, C., Munteanu, E., N. (2009). *Ghid pentru învăţământul preşcolar*. Iaşi: Polirom

Norel, M.; Bota O.A. (2012). *Didactica domeniului experienţial „Limbă şi comunicare"*. Cluj-Napoca: ASCR.

Sion, G. (2003). *Psihologia vârstelor*. Bucureşti: Editura Fundaţiei România de Mâine.

Verza, E., Verza, F.E. (2000). *Psihologia vârstelor*. Bucureşti: Pro Humanitate.

ANNEX NO 1
Assessment Grid for language and communication
LEGEND:

1	- ACQUIRED
2	- ACQUIRED PARTIALLY
3	- UNDERGOING ACQUISITION WITH VERBAL SUPPORT
4	- UNDERGOING ACQUISITION WITH CONCRET SUPPORT

5	- NOT ACQUIRED

	LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION	1	2	3	4	5
1	ability to listen what is told					
2	ability to understand what is told					
3	ability to speak correct, coherent					
4	ability to speak with someone					
5	storytelling ability					
6	ability to explain					
7	ability to respond briefly					
8	ability to express in sentences					
9	harness acquired vocabulary in miscellaneous activities					
10	identifyes language elements: sounds, syllables, words					
11	memorizez texts, poems, riddles, roles					
12	reproduces expresivly texts, poems, riddles, roles					
13	capacity to express their opinions					
14	expressed interest for books					
15	uses frequently greeting and presentation formulas *					
16	uses frequently formulas of request **					
17	uses frequently formulas of thanksgiving and appreciation ***					
18	the ability to use and interpret means of non-verbal communication: gestures, attitudes, drawing					

* hello, goodbye, etc.

** pretty please give me, please tell me, please help me

*** thank you ... nice, I like ... I do not like ... it's fair to ... etc.

ANNEX NO 2

SOCIO-AFFECTIVE SKILLS ASSESSMENT GRID
LEGEND:

1	- ACQUIRED
2	- ACQUIRED PARTIALLY
3	- UNDERGOING ACQUISITION WITH VERBAL SUPPORT
4	- UNDERGOING ACQUISITION WITH CONCRET SUPPORT
5	- NOT ACQUIRED

	SOCIO-AFECTIVE SKILLS	1	2	3	4	5
1	EXPRESSES WITH EASE IN THE PRESENCE OF ADULTS					
2	TO RELY ON ADULTS					
3	ABLE TO REQUEST FOR OTHERS HELP					
4	ABLE TO COLLABORATE WITH ADULTS					
5	ENGAGES IN GROUP ACTIVITIES					
6	GOOD RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER CHILDREN					
7	PARTICIPATED IN ACTIVITIES INITIATED BY CHILDREN					
8	CAPABLE TO CHOOSE A FAVORITE ACTIVITY					
9	ABLE TO CARE FOR HIMSELF AND HIS OWN OBJECTS					
10	ABLE TO DRESS HIMSELF, TO HANDLE WRITING INSTRUMENTS					
11	ABLE TO MANIFEST EMOTIONS SPONTANEOUSLY					
12	ABLE TO EXPRESS FEELINGS VERBALLY					
13	CONFIDENT IN HIS OWN WORK					
14	ACCEPTS RESPONSIBILITY					
15	PREFERES TO BE A LEADER					
16	PREFERES TO BE LED					
17	CAPABLE TO CONTROL IMPULSES, REACTIONS					
18	CAPABLE TO WAIT HIS TURN					
19	ABLE TO SETTLE DISAGREEMENTS WITH COLLEAGUES					
20	EXPRESS CIVILIZED CONDUCT AND COMMUNICATION					

THE COMPUTER DEPENDENCE IN ADOLESCENCE

Olga D. MOLDOVAN, PhD
Faculty of Educational Science, Psychology and Social Sciences
"Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad, Romania
Dan Radu ROIU,
Psychologist

Abstract:

The virtual world created by the computer (games, internet) departs the children from the actual world. Through games the adolescents interact with simulated characters and different creatures and through the internet they assume different identities in interaction with strangers. These make that the limit between reality and virtually world no longer be clear in adolescents. Internet games reinforce the integration of virtual life. The authors present their research on two sample of 20 adolescents to investigate the youth personality differences between those who use the computer or play video games more than 20 hours per week and those who use it less than 20 hours per week. The results and the discussion on these findings are presented in the paper.

Key words: *computer dependence, adolescent, personality changes, virtual and real world*

Theoretical frame

The term of computer dependence was firts used by M. Shotton in 1989 in her book *Computer Addiction*, although the concept has been discussed much earlier by Nicholas Rushby. In his book *An Introduction to Educational Computing*, published in 1979, Rushby points out that people who become dependent on computer may have withdrawal symptoms. The first warning signs of computer games or internet addiction were drawn early 1980s. Computer addiction is a relatively new term introduced to describe the dependence on a computer, not just of the personal computer but of video games and internet and has many names: cyberaddiction, cyberholism, netaddiction, netaholism, Pathological internet use (PIU).

There is not yet a definition with which to operate and no precise nosological classification of computer addiction. It may seems surprising, but almost all human activities - such as work, food, sexuality, accumulation of material values, setting records, use of drugs, alcohol and other drugs can

take a dependency features. Addictive behavior is realized at some point as a more serious problem for themselves or others, but they still not giving up on it. In this regard, there is a similarity with other obsessive behaviors which may extend to damage the human dignity. There are changes of personality traits, but they occur in an insidious way and can go unnoticed for long. For example, the addicted behavior can push a man to self-deception and lies because the concerned person needs an intricate system of explanations for not losing his self-respect and the respect of others. Company values, freedom, self-determination and self-fulfillment of social functions and health, as long as they are respected is very difficult for someone to observe a pathological behavior (Gentile, 2009).

The international classification of diseases use currently the expression of dependency syndrome and provide clinical diagnostic criteria. If they are meet at least four of the six criteria than is identified the dependency syndrome, namely:

- the persistence of an intense desire to use the computer;
- difficulty of controlling the own behavior;
- functioning disorders, including the neglection of the pleasures and interests;
- danger to himself.

The remaining two criteria refer to signs of withdrawal and tolerance. It follows from here that four of the six criteria are related to compulsive character. This remains an essential component of the dependence syndrome. The DSM IV TR uses the expression "substance dependence" instead of addiction. A number of American professional organizations (American Pain Society, American of Family Physicians, American Society of Addiction Medicine and the Federation of State Medical Boards) prefers the term addiction instead of dependence because it makes a mor clear distinction between physical dependence and compulsive use. In 1957, WHO experts introduced the terms of "physical dependence" and "psychological dependence." The latter is reflected in the abstinence syndrome.

The physical dependence is manifested as a pathological state consisting of the organic need to use alcohol / drugs to avoid disturbances arising from cessation of use. It not occurs in all types of drugs, but occurs more frequently in alcohol and very quickly in heroin and morphine. There is a series of physically unpleasant phenomena called withdrawal phenomena.

The psychological dependence is manifested by behavioral changes and a particular mental state accompanied by the psychological imperative desire to consume alcohol (or to administer drugs) periodically or continuously to achieve a state of wellbeing or to remove the psychological discomfort. This dependence appears to all types of drugs used, including alcohol and those addicted to computer. These use the computer either to

regain pleasure or to avoid anxiety, restlessness, irritability, insomnia, depression, which are the withdrawal state main characteristics.

A typical wrong attitude of the future dependent exist long before the onset of the illness. To produce addiction, not the substance or the computer that sit practically to all people disposition is crucial. It is decisive the decisive boost of a person to use himself this substance to achieve certain effects.

The discussions about the mechanism by which the individual becomes dependent, in one way or another, involve one of the following assumptions:

- the hypothesis of a similar mechanism to the substance dependence.

- the hypothesis of a mechanism similar to the impulse control disorder.

- the hypothesis of similar mechanism to the disease "secondary" to other psychiatric "primary" disorders.

After the performed activities, computer addiction could have several forms:

- gambling addiction (persons who play continuously for hours without a break);

- dependence on chat (multiple accounts, several programs, including the use of mobile devices);

- internet browsing (in this category would be included also the "Internet addiction disorder" or internet addiction).

A person addicted to computer function of age, could realize that a mix between games, web browsing and chat.

About 90 percent of teenagers play video games and 15 percent of them, or more than 5 million children could be addicted. American researchers argue that these addictive behaviors are more common in children who start playing video games at a very young age. Those which often create dependency are those online, multiplayer, say the experts (Brown, 1991; Ferguson, 2007).

Research

We conducted a personal research, in which we planed to investigate personality differences to the adolescents who use the computer or play video games more than 20 hours per week (group A) and those who use it less than 20 hours per week (group B).

To achieve the objectives and verify the assumptions made were used two personality scales: Strong Personalities Questionnaire (SPQ) and Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI).

Results and discussions

The results of the two groups of subjects from EPI are shown in Figure 1.
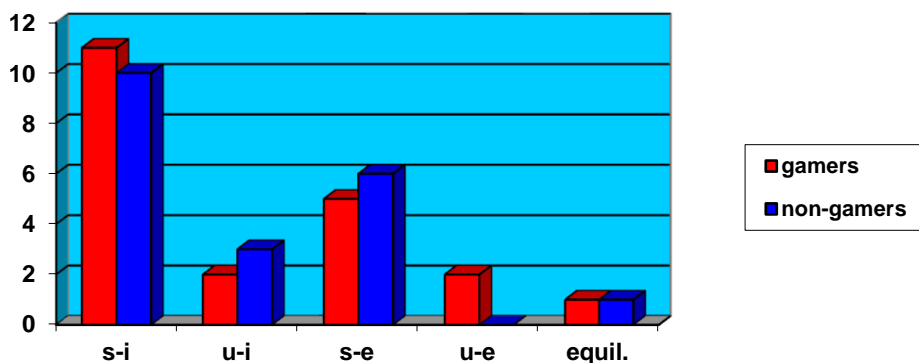
Fig. 1. The EPI results for the two groups of subjects
where: s-i = emotional stable, introverted
    u-i = emotional unstable, introverted
    s-e = emotional stable, extroverted
    u-e = emotional unstable, extraverted
    equil. = balanced

The vast majority of the subjects of the lot A show an euphoric mood most of the time and do not make any worry. We believe that the concern for the computer and the games is their only concern and they live in a world apart (that of the game) where the everyday worries have no place. In the group B the subjects nave no activities that keep them focused on a work (computer) and thus have more time to think about the problems and worries of everyday life.

According to the international studies, we were able to consult, in treating this subject, playing on the computer for more than 20 hours a week can lead to addiction and especially addiction to game. In the game, the individual can find all the qualities that he have not in the real life: to be strong, to have decision making capacity, to have the right of life and death over other celebrities. Winning the game leads to increased self-confidence and a more positive self-image (Olson and all, 2007).

Those who play on the computer more violent games (group A) are less compassionate because they are exposed to virtual violence. The adolescents from the Lot B are not subject to intense virtual violence and are more careful with their peers and others people around hem.

In the Lot A subjects are more impulsive, reacting quickly to stimuli, they may have low self-control due to the influence of games that require a

high reaction rate. Group B subjects are less impulsive, more balanced because they have a normal life style and more diversified activities

To both groups of subjects the degree of resistance to stress, the frustration of everyday problems are approximately equal.

The subjects from the Lot A are impulsive and will always be in the spotlight and impress the others. This demonstates the influence of video games because they make the subjects to become more competitive and self-confident. The subjects from the group B say they are not capable of anything when provoked. They are more balanced, and more reluctant calculated. One can see the seriousness with which treats each task.

The results of the two groups to the Strong Personalities Questionnaire are presented in the figure 2.
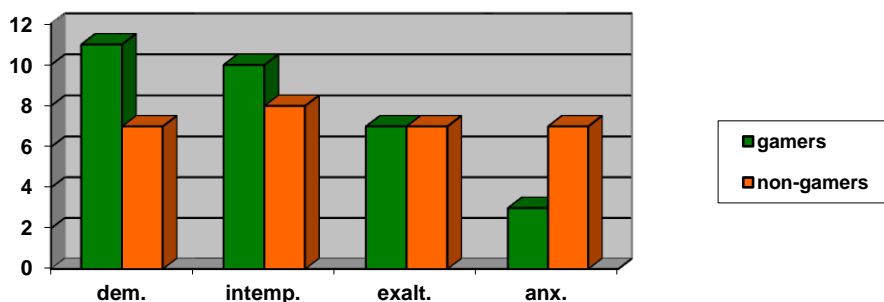
Figure 2. The results of the two groups of subjects to the SPQ
where: dem =demonstrativity

intemp. = intemperated

exalt. = exaltation

anx.= anxiety

In the group A we deal with individuals capable of change that can easily adapt to new situations, open-minded and see the opportunities in any new circumstances. The group B contains people who are not ready to accept changes, while the people are steadfast and analyzis more detailed the things and not soar into the new situations.

The group A consists of both impulsive which react without thoroughly analyzing things and the people more balanced. The group B subjects are more balanced and less impulsive than those in the group A

The young people who are more likely to become addicted to computer games are those who spend a lot of hours in front of PC, have problems in socializing with other adolescents and are more impulsive than others of their age. Becoming addicted to games, the adolescents are prone to depression, anxiety or other social phobias. Also, young people who live just to play on the computer have school performances much weaker.

Often the addict person hide himself from the eyes of the family because there is a verbal or emotional pressure that gives discomfort. They

prefer to avoid the criticism and then they go to the game establishments. Often patients come to therapy when they face family pressure or threats of divorce, for example, but when fit together, there is a new relapse, said Griffith and Meredith (2000).

Most video games are free and available online. Some are considered instructive, fun and harmless. Some games teach geography or how to fly a plane. Other helps the player to develop logical thinking and ability to solve problems. Some games are designed to exert a therapeutic effect on the player. For example, a game has been designed to help those who suffer from a disorder of reading. Also other games helps children to become familiar with computer language, language increasingly important in this era of technology. A category of online games have themes that defy social norms, issues such as violence, sex and bad language says David Walsh, the president of National Institute on Media and the Family. Unfortunately, it is the category that seems to have a special pass among children between 8 and 15 years.

Grossman argues that violence in computer games has the same effect on the child as the military training on soldiers, that makes them overcome their instinctive aversion to the act of killing. Violent games develop to children the skills and the desire to kill.

Conclusions

Among other somatic effects on adolescents (such as obesity, eye problems) appear also psychological effects that have a strong impact on adolescent personality. Violence presence in online games can be even more dangerous than the one presented on television or movies because the player identify himself with the characters who exhibit violent. If by using the TV the adolescents are the spectators to violence, the computer games make them even participate in it. Moreover, a movie can hold an adolescent just a few hours, while a video game can kidnap hundreds of hours from the adolescents life.

The prolonged use of the computer may cause emotional disorders: anxiety, irritability, low frustration tolerance, to depression. People who use excessively the computer are irritable, have a low frustration tolerance, are in a constant inner tension, dominated by impatience and restlessness. The computer acts as a means by which they shall discharge these inner states, but also it enhances them by their negative effects on health. These people are more shy, show physical discomfort, insecurity, vulnerability, irritation.

The dependent behavior push the man to self-deception and lies because the gamers require a complicated explanation for not losing their self-respect and the respect of others.

Bibliography:

Brown, R.I.F., (1991). Gaming, gambling and other addictive play, in J.H. Kerr and M.J. Apter (Eds), *Adult play: a reversal theory approach*. Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger

Ferguson, C.J., 2007. Evidence for publication bias in video game violence effects: a meta-analytic review, *Am. Psychol*, vol. 7 nr. 13, pp 84-96

Eibel-Eibesfeldt, I., (1995), *Agresivitatea umana: studiu etologic*, Editura Trei, Bucuresti

Gentile, D.A., (2009) Pathological video game use among youth 8 to 18: A national study, *Psychological Science J.,* 9/2009, pp. 134-148

Griffiths, M.D., Meredith, A., (2009), Video game addiciton and its treatment, *Journal of Contemporary Psychology*, nr. 8/2009, pp. 65-78

Olson, C.K. et al., (2007), Factors correlated with violent video game use by adolescent boys and girls, *Journal of adolescent health*, 21/2007, pp.324-34

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENTS WITH STUDENTS REGISTERED IN STEP BY STEP ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL CLASSES

Adela Măgăţ CÎNDEA
West University in Timişoara
cndadela@yahoo.com

Abstract: *This study focuses on parents who registered their children in traditional classes or classes teaching according to the Step by Step educational alternative, in order to identify certain social-educational features. The test sample consists of 202 subjects, ulterior divided in order to verify the hypothesis and statistic interpretation of data in 4 smaller test samples, as follows: 54 mothers of students in Step classrooms, 54 fathers of students in Step classrooms, 47 mothers of students in traditional classrooms and 47 fathers of students in traditional classrooms. As result of data interpretation we have identified important statistic differences regarding a series of variables implied within the study between the parents of students registered with one of the two types of classrooms.*

Key words: *Step by Step education, traditional education, social-educational features, parents of students.*

1. Theoretic frame

The words invoked by Viorel Nicolescu, *„the heredity lottery never draws the same number twice''*, underline the idea that every child is unique in its own way. (Nicolescu, V., (2006), page 5)

This is exactly why education should aim individualization at the level of its instructive-educational process and not the levelling of trainees, independent on the method applied.

The alternative education systems are shifting the balance center regarding education, from the teacher, from the exterior of the class towards the interior of the class. More precisely, towards the trainees, trying to sustain and perform at the same time this individualization of trainees considered torches which should be lid.

These educational alternatives coexist together with the traditional education system at the level of entire Europe, our country being involved as well.

Within this European context, after 1990 appear in the Romanian educational system a series of educational alternatives, such as: Waldorf, Step by Step, Montessori, Freinet, Jena.

As shown by Gh. Felea, the most extended educational alternative at the level of Romania is the Step by Step alternative.

Outside the extension area of this educational alternative at the level of Romanian educational system, other arguments leading us to focus on the present study and not the other mentioned above, were:

- the Step by Step alternative classrooms function within traditional schools thus contributing to create a powerful bond between teachers and students who embrace one of the two approach forms of instructive-educational activity;
- Step classrooms function according the same schedule as traditional classes, the approach form of the instructive-educational process is different;
- the extended program spent by the students of Step classrooms in school, the presence in the classroom of two teachers, lead to a better knowledge of students, a better socialization, a better unity, cohesion at classroom level etc.;
- by involving the community and the parents in the instructive-educational process, an opening is created for students outlining a better self-image and an efficient social adaptation but also, the initiation and consolidation of students cooperation;

Based on these arguments the present study focused on identifying possible differences between parents of 3rd grade students in Timişoara, parents who enrolled their children in traditional classrooms respectively Step by Step classrooms.

2. Research design

The study focuses on parents with students included in traditional classrooms and classrooms of the Step by Step alternative.

2.1 Research objectives

The proposed objectives:

1. Identifying certain features of parents guiding their children towards one of the two systems by tracing certain variables of social-educational nature (educational level, professional degree, family income level, daily activity schedule, time spent with their child, number of connection moments with the school per time unit);

2. Identifying the satisfaction level of parents as result of the choice made regarding the enrolling of their child within one of the two educational systems.

2.2 Research hypothesis

1. We assume that, at the level of test samples formed of mothers of students studying in traditional classrooms, respectively Step by Step, we can identify major differences which exemplify an increase for the mothers that enrolled the children in Step classrooms regarding the educational level, the professional degree, the daily activity schedule, the contacts with the institutor, the space assigned to her own child and the satisfaction level regarding the made choice;

2. We assume that at the level of test samples formed of fathers of students studying in traditional classrooms, respectively Step by Step, we can identify major differences which exemplify an increase for the fathers who enrolled the children in Step classrooms, regarding the educational level, the professional degree, the daily activity schedule, the contacts with the institutor, the space assigned to his own child and the satisfaction level regarding the made choice;

3. There are considerable statistic differences between the income levels of families who enrolled the child in traditional classrooms and those who enrolled the child in classrooms functioning according to the Step by Step educational alternative.

2.3 Research methodology

The work plans an ascertaining study aiming to identify different features of parents guiding their children towards the traditional educational system respectively the Step by Step educational alternative;

The research involves multiple test samples, as follows:

- **four test samples** formed of adults (parents – mothers, respectively fathers – of students in traditional classrooms, respectively Step by Step). We distinguish a test sample of mothers of students in 1st Step by Step grades formed of 54 subjects, a test sample of fathers of students in 1st Step by Step grades formed of 54 subjects, a test samples of mothers with students in traditional 1st grades formed of 47 subjects and a test samples of fathers with students in traditional 1st grades formed of 47 subjects.

For performing the study we obtained the parent's approval to participate at the research and we aimed:

- the identification of social-educational data of parents. Therefor we applied a questionnaire with 7 items;

3   Interpretation of the research result

In order to test the proposed hypothesis the SPSS program was applied, performing comparisons by means of the t test method for test samples. Below, we detail the gathered results.

Regarding the first hypothesis, the data presented in tables 1 and 2 feature major statistic differences between mothers with children learning

within the traditional education system and mothers with children learning in classrooms working according to Step by Step educational alternatives, at the level of the following variables: level of studies, time spent daily with their own child, frequency of contacts with the teacher and satisfaction level regarding the made choice of enrolling the child in certain classroom type, step or traditional.

Thus, the average of the test sample mothers step, regarding the variable –*educational level*- (M = 2.5741, SD = 0.49913) is considerable higher (t = 3.121, DF = 99, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.002) then the test sample of mothers traditional (M = 2.2766, SD = 0.45215). The trust interval 95% for the obtained difference (Mean Difference = 0.29748) reaches from 0.10832 to 0.48663. The statistic data reveal the fact that mothers who guided their children to Step classrooms dispose in larger number of a higher educational level, as opposed to mothers took their children in traditional classrooms and the majority having secondary school studies.

Applying the T test on independent test samples confirms in this situation again the fact that there exists a major difference between the test sample mothers step and the test sample mothers traditional regarding the daily allotted time for their own children. Thus, the average of the test sample mothers step, regarding the variable –daily allotted time for their own children - (M = 1.2593, SD = 0.44234) is considerable lower (t = -5.476, DF = 90, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000) then the test sample mothers traditional (M = 1.8298, SD = 0.60142). The trust interval 95% for the obtained difference (Mean Difference = 0.57053) reaches from -0.77727 to -0.36378. These data show the fact that most of the mothers Step allot daily for their children a reduced time interval (between 1-3 hours), as opposed to mothers traditional who, in a larger number, allot an increased time interval daily for their children (between 4-6 hours), respectively (between 7-9 hours).

Regarding the frequency of contacts with the teacher, test T for independent test samples confirms the fact that there exists a major statistic difference between the test sample mothers step and the test sample mothers traditional.

The average of the test sample mothers step, regarding the variable – frequency of contacts with the teacher - (M = 2.1852, SD = 0.61657) is considerable lower (t = -7.183, DF = 99, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000) then the test sample mothers traditional (M = 3.1702, SD = 0.76098). The trust interval 95% for the obtained difference (Mean Difference = -0.98503) reaches from -1.26152 to -0.70853.

The statistic data reveal the fact that while mothers step have contacts, meetings and relate quite often, in a higher number, with the teachers, at the level of mothers traditional the frequency of contacts with the teachers of the classrooms is very decreased.

The T test for independent test samples confirms the fact that there is a major difference between the test sample of mothers step and the test sample of mothers traditional regarding the satisfaction degree for the choice made for their own child. Thus, the average of the test sample mothers regarding the variable – satisfaction degree regarding the choice made for their own child - (M = 3.333, SD = 0.67293) is considerable higher (t = 2.962, DF = 99, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.004) then the test sample of mothers traditional (M = 2.9149, SD = 0.10894). The trust interval 95% for the obtained difference (Mean Difference = 0.41844) is between 0.13810 and 0.69878.

According to the gathered data, more mothers step are highlighted with an increased satisfaction degree regarding the choice made for their own child then mothers traditional, but on the other hand more mothers traditional then mothers step are unsatisfied with their own choice.

Tabel 1 Mean and standard deviations

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		
nivelul studiilor	Equal variances assumed	9,061	,003	3,121	99	,002	,29748	,09533	,10832	,48663
	Equal variances not assumed			3,142	98,831	,002	,29748	,09467	,10962	,48534
timpul alocat zilnic copil	Equal variances assumed	1,529	,219	-5,476	99	,000	-,57053	,10420	-,77727	-,36378
	Equal variances not assumed			-5,363	83,457	,000	-,57053	,10639	-,78212	-,35894
de câte ori pe sem ati luat leg. cu înv.	Equal variances assumed	,587	,445	-7,183	99	,000	-,98503	,13714	-1,25714	-,71292
	Equal variances not assumed			-7,079	88,506	,000	-,98503	,13914	-1,26152	-,70853

cât de mulţ. sunteţi pentru alegere	Equal variances assumed	,013	,911	2,962	99	,004	,41844	,14129	,13810	,69878
	Equal variances not assumed			2,940	93,469	,004	,41844	,14232	,13584	,70103

Tabel 2 Value of t test for independent test samples

Regarding the second hypothesis, the data presented in table 3 and 4 show major statistic differences between the fathers who's children learn within the traditional educational system and those of which learn in classrooms teaching according to Step by Step educational alternatives at the level of the following variable: level of studies, time allotted daily to own child and frequency of contacts with the teacher.

The results confirm the fact that there is a major difference between the test sample fathers step and the test sample fathers traditional regarding their educational level. Thus, the average of the test sample fathers step, regarding the variable –educational level- (M = 2.4815, SD = 0.50435) is considerable higher (t = 3.630, DF = 98.73, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000) then the test sample traditional fathers (M = 2.1489, SD = 0.41592). The trust interval 95% for the obtained difference (Mean Difference = 0.33255) reaches from 0.15078 to 0.51431. The statistic data reveal the fact that fathers who guided their children towards Step classrooms dispose in a higher number of a superior educational level, unlike the fathers who enrolled their children in traditional classrooms and most of them disposing of secondary school studies.

T for independent test samples confirm the fact that there is a major difference between the test sample fathers step and the test sample fathers traditional regarding the time allotted daily for their children. Thus, the average of the test sample fathers step, regarding the variable –time allotted daily to own children - (M = 1.1296, SD = 0.33905) is considerable lower (t = -4.632, DF = 78.72, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000) then the test sample fathers traditional (M = 1.5319, SD = 0.50437). The trust interval 95% for the obtained difference (Mean Difference = -0.40229) is between -0.57515 and -0.22942.

Mame		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
nivelul studiilor	mamei step mamei tradițional	54	2,5741	,49913	,06792
		47	2,2766	,45215	,06595
timpul alocat zilnic copilului	mamei step mamei tradițional	54	1,2593	,44234	,06020
		47	1,8298	,60142	,08773
de câte ori pe semestru ati luat leg. cu înv.	mamei step mame tradițional	54	2,1852	,61657	,08390
		47	3,1702	,76098	,11100
cât de mulțumit sunteți pentru alegere	mamei step mamei tradițional	54	3,3333	,67293	,09157
		47	2,9149	,74687	,10894

These data reveal the fact that most of the fathers Step daily allot a reduced time interval (between 1-3 hours), as opposed to fathers traditional who, in a higher number, daily allot a more extended time interval for their children (between 4-6 hours).

Regarding the frequency of contacts with the classroom teacher, T for independent test samples confirms the fact that there is a major difference between the test sample fathers step and the test sample fathers traditional. The average of the test sample fathers step, regarding the variable – frequency of contacts with the teacher of his own child - (M = 3.2037, SD = 1.10538) is considerable lower (t = -4.111, DF = 81.89, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000) then the test sample fathers traditional (M = 4.3191, SD = 1.54788). The trust interval 95% for the obtained difference (Mean Difference = -1.11545) reaches from -1.65516 to -0.57573.

The statistic data reveal the fact that, while fathers step relate in a slightly higher number, quite often (once a month, once a week, daily) with the teachers, at the level of the test sample fathers traditional, the frequency of contacts with the classroom is decreased, almost half of them never relating with the teacher.

	Tați	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
nivelul studiilor	tați step tați tradițional	54	2,4815	,50435	,06863
		47	2,1489	,41592	,06067

		N	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean
timpul alocat zilnic copilului	tații step tați tradițional	54	1,1296	,33905	,04614
		47	1,5319	,50437	,07357
de câte ori pe semestru ati luat leg. cu înv.	tații step tații tradițional	54	3,2037	1,10538	,15042
		47	4,3191	1,54788	,22578

Tabel 3 Mean and standard deviations

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		
nivelul studiilor	Equal variances assumed	27,11	,000	3,582	99	,001	,33255	,09283	,14835	,51674
	Equal variances not assumed			3,630	98,731	,000	,33255	,09160	,15078	,51431
timpul alocat zilnic copil	Equal variances assumed	54,40	,000	-4,757	99	,000	-,40229	,08458	-,57010	-,23447
	Equal variances not assumed			-4,632	78,729	,000	-,40229	,08684	-,57515	-,22942
de câte ori pe sem ati luat leg. cu înv.	Equal variances assumed	23,68	,000	-4,206	99	,000	-1,11545	,26520	-1,64167	-,58922
	Equal variances not assumed			-4,111	81,895	,000	-1,11545	,27130	-1,65516	-,57573

Tabel 4 Value of t test for independent test samples

Regarding the third hypothesis, the data presented in tables 5 and 6 reveal major statistic differences between the families with children learning

within the traditional educational system and children learning in classrooms teaching according to Step by Step educational alternatives, at the level of the family monthly income.

The average of test samples mothers/fathers step, regarding the variable − family income - (M = 2.5556, SD = 0.50157) is considerable higher (t = 3.937, DF = 98.053, Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.000) then the test samples mothers/fathers traditional (M = 2.1702, SD = 0.48090). The trust interval 95% for the obtained difference (Mean Difference = 0.38534) is between 0.19112 and 0.57957. Thus, the monthly income of families who enrolled their children in Step classrooms is considerable higher opposed to those in traditional classrooms.

Familii	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
venitul lunar al familii step familiei	54	2,5556	,50157	,06826
familii tradiţional	47	2,1702	,48090	,07015

Tabel 5 Mean and standard deviations

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		
venitul lunar al familiei — Equal variances assumed	9,967	,002	3,926	99	,000	,38534	,09816	,19057	,58012
Equal variances not assumed			3,937	98,053	,000	,38534	,09787	,19112	,57957

Tabel 6 Value of t test for independent test samples

4. Conclusions

At the level of this ascertaining study involving parents of students in traditional classrooms and Step classrooms, we observe, according to the evidenced statistic data, major statistic differences between the mothers as well as the fathers involved in the two classrooms types, at the level of the following variables: level of studies, daily allotted time for their own child, frequency of contacts with the teachers, satisfaction degree of parents for the made choice. Major statistic differences were also observed at the level of the monthly family income within the two types of families. No major statistic differences were observed at the level of the following two variables: professional status and daily activity schedule of parents.

References:

Burke Walsh, K, (1998), *Creating Child-Centered Classrooms 8-9-10 Years*, CEDP Step by Step, Bucharest;

Burke Walsh, K., (1998), *Child-Centered Teaching*, CEDP Step by Step, Bucharest;

Cerghit, I., (2003), *Alternative And Complementary Instruction Systems*, Aramis Publishing House, Bucharest;

Chiş, V., (2002), *Contemporary Pedagogy Challenges*, Presa Universitară Clujeană Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca;

Felea, Gh., (2002), *Educational Alternatives*, Triade Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca;

Herseni, I., (2006), Step by Step Educational Alternative and Quality of Education, in the Pedagogy Magazine issue 1-12, Vanemonde Publishing House, Bucharest.

LEARNER – SPECIFIC FEATURES AND L2 TEACHING AND LEARNING

Dr Jelena PRTLJAGA,Ph.D.,
Dr Tanja NEDIMOVIĆ,Ph.D.,
Dr Aleksandra GOJKOV RAJIĆ,Ph.D.,
Preschool Teacher Training College
Vrsac, Serbia
vsvassekretar@hemo.net

Abstract: *There are numerous factors affecting foreign language learning, involving both extrinsic (environment and context) and intrinsic (learner-specific) features. Learner characteristics in applied linguistics have traditionally been investigated within the context of individual differences. Even though people differ from each other in respect of a vast number of traits, four factors have received special attention in second language (L2) research: motivation, language aptitude, learning styles, and learning strategies. Broadly speaking, motivation was seen to concern the affective characteristics of the learner, referring to the direction and magnitude of learning behaviour in terms of the learner's choice, intensity, and duration of learning. Language aptitude determines the cognitive dimension, referring to the capacity and quality of learning. Cognitive potential, i.e. maturity of an individual is described in literature as a significant factor of foreign language learning. It is considered that higher level of cognitive development could be a precondition for easier and more efficient foreign language learning. Learning styles refer to the manner of learning, and learning strategies are somewhere in between motivation and learning styles by referring to the learner's proactiveness in selecting specific made-to-measure learning routes. Furthermore, the four factors seem to significantly interact with learning setting and general context. In other words, most researchers dealing with individual differences would now agree that the role of learner characteristics can only be evaluated with regard to their interaction with specific environmental and temporal factors or conditions. Having in mind the complexity of foreign language learning context, the paper considers learner – specific features, outlining dynamic systems approach and paying special attention to the interplay among language, agent (learner specific features), and environment in the language acquisition process.*

Key words: *learner specific features, L2, dynamic systems approach.*

Introduction

Language permeating all spheres of human life and thought, along with the complex nature of human beings as both individuals and various social settings members, imposes the need for research on the issue of speech and language to have interdisciplinary approach, including a number of scientific disciplines, like e.g. psychology, psycholinguistics, social psychology, sociolinguistics, linguistics, phonetics, neurology, speech and language therapy, anthropology… At the same time, particular scientific disciplines have in the meaning time emerged, e.g. communication studies, which deal with the study of language, integrating contributions and results of research undertaken within the above stated scientific disciplines. Communication skills, speech and language development, bilingualism, language learning, as well as foreign language learning fall within a significant field of interest for both theoretical consideration, i.e. scientific research and the application of the findings in immediate life and working (professional) aspects. The importance of communication has been confirmed by the list of "promising and desirable" professions for 21st century, within which communication experts have their own significant position. Furthermore, in contemporary social circumstances, communication also refers to exchanges in intercultural settings, involving mastery of a foreign language, preferably English. In this sense a modern man is expected to have mastered at least one of the world languages, and, according to the modern trends permeating school curricula, even two foreign languages. As a consequence, foreign language teaching methodology is relentlessly searching for new high quality and more efficient methods, procedures, materials and ways of teaching and learning it. In order to improve foreign language teaching and learning quality, research has to be informed about a whole range of factors, i.e. the interplay among language, agent and environment, with all those crucial and unavoidable issues determining each of them, with the addition of the relations, i.e. similarities and differences between one's mother tongue and his/her foreign language. It should be pointed out that reconstructing a language is more complex than its initial induction because, during development, L2 constructions are in direct competition with those of the learners' L1, and these may represent alternative ways of construing the same reality (Ellis and Cadierno 2009: 112). Thus, it seems that both language (mother tongue and L2) and the

environment are in the context of foreign language learning and teaching actually closely related to the agent.

Learner-specific features

Advocating for the standpoint according to which language is a complex adaptive system, a group of authors (Beckner et al 2009) point out that, language as such is a system of dynamic usage and its experience involves the following key features: (a) The system consists of multiple agents (the speakers in the speech community) interacting with one another. (b) The system is adaptive; that is, speakers' behavior is based on their past interactions, and current and past interactions together feed forward into future behavior. (c) A speaker's behavior is the consequence of competing factors ranging from perceptual mechanics to social motivations. (d) The structures of language emerge from interrelated patterns of experience, social interaction, and cognitive processes. When foreign language teaching and learning is in question, it could be said that the speaker is the learner, i.e. the agent. It is beyond dispute that learner-specific features are significant factors of foreign language learning and teaching. Learner characteristics in applied linguistics have traditionally been investigated within the context of individual differences, which are conceived to be attributes that mark a person as a distinct and unique human being (Dörnyei 2009: 231). Even though people differ from each other in respect of a vast number of traits, four factors have received special attention in second language (L2) research: motivation, language aptitude, learning styles, and learning strategies.

In general, motivation was seen to concern the affective characteristics of the learner, referring to the direction and magnitude of learning behaviour in terms of the learner's choice, intensity, and duration of learning. Emotional, motivational and conative (volitional) processes are fundamentally related to learning and development of speech and language (Radoman, 2001). These psychological preconditions can have stimulating or disturbing role in formation and development of speech and communication. Well developed attention and high motivation, for example, can significantly encourage development of speech and communication, while, on the other hand, insufficient motivation or fear of inappropriately pronounced word (especially in the case of adults learning a foreign language) can discourage learning and development of speech, language and communication. Children and adults differ significantly in all segments of psychological life.

Respecting the role of psychological factors in learning and development of speech and language, while having in mind the interaction with other preconditions (organic and social) we can in these differences search for possible explanations in abilities for foreign language learning of children and adults. Thus, it could be said that motivation is interconnected with age as learner-specific feature, since, on the one hand, children who are naturally curious and intrinsically motivated, learn foreign language spontaneously, while adults, on the other hand, need to be extrinsically highly motivated in order to be successful in foreign language learning. Another significant precondition for language and speech acquisition refers to certain social factors – speech acts, speech encouragements and acceptable and appropriate speech models. The role of this group of factors seems crucial, having in mind the fact that if there is no adequate early stimulation in speech development of children, the effects of such negative conditions could be irreplaceable and irrecoverable at older ages (examples to be found in the literature illustrate the cases of isolated children showing the consequences of such isolation for general development of children, including speech development).

Psychological assumptions for speech and language learning and development are in powerful interaction with biological and social, and this set of preconditions is reflected in cognitive processes and aspects (observation, learning, memory, thinking, intelligence). Language aptitude determines the cognitive dimension, referring to the capacity and quality of learning. Cognitive potential, i.e. maturity of an individual is described in literature as a significant factor of foreign language learning. It is considered that higher level of cognitive development could be a precondition for easier and more efficient foreign language learning. Most attention, especially in psycholinguistics, has been paid to the following question: does higher level of cognitive maturity *ensure* more efficient language acquisition, and, accordingly, are adults ahead of children when foreign language learning is in question. Namely, higher level of cognitive development should facilitate foreign language learning of adults, having in mind that the ability of deduction is completely developed in adults, opening up possibility to explain grammar rules in teaching which might be exceptionally useful (Ausubel, 1964, as cited by Pilipović, 2008). On the other hand, a tendency has been noticed in the immediate teaching process that children master foreign language successfully without additional explanations on grammar rules, which are used in work with adults; on the other hand, in spite of

higher level of cognitive maturity adults often have numerous difficulties in foreign language learning. According to certain authors (Rosansky, 1975, as cited by Pilipović, 2008), answer to these questions might be found in the fact that children still do not have developed ability of diffuse attention, so that they approach a problem focusing solely on one of its dimensions. In line of this approach, a child who learns a foreign language is not aware of either difficulty of the task or its significance in social sense. Unlike children, adults are aware of both difficulty and significance of the task at any moment, approaching it with the engagement of all cognitive capacities they possess. In other words, cognitive maturity can be a facilitating factor in understanding of abstract rules and definitions in foreign language learning, but, on the other hand, it can at the same time be a factor impeding the learning process, having in mind that it deteriorates complete focus on acquisition of a single specific category.

Learning styles refer to the manner of learning, and learning strategies are somewhere in between motivation and learning styles by referring to the learner's proactiveness in selecting specific made-to-measure learning routes (Dörnyei 2009: 231). Placed within the context of creativity, cognitive style refers to a strategy or a group of strategies a person uses in his/her approach to problems. The basic point of this is the way thinking is structured – not only thinking – but even broader – personality features (Gojkov 1995: 6). The need for this dispositional term and hypothetical construct has been created due to research outcomes confirming the contribution of non-cognitive features in solving the riddle of personality structure and abilities. It is considered that cognitive style has spontaneously appeared as a response to the need to encompass the complexity of creative potentials, but also addressing the need to overcome the gap between personalistic and cognitive personality theories. However, what is significant for us is that according to cognitive style the ways to express the differences in individual functioning of individuals have been searched for, not neglecting idiographic feature of the structures. In such a way individual characteristics and differences in the way of perception, thinking, problem solving are synthesized. So, cognitive style could be considered an expression of a link between cognitive and personalistic theories. It is considered that, like the term "personality", cognitive style is generic term, as well as dispositional term, emphasizing the fact that through its logical structure it refers to the search for operational definitions and that its main feature is complexity. Complexity refers not only to cognitive activity of an individual, but also to the processes of

accommodation in their broadest sense. Therefore Allport holds that "cognitive style is the way an individual lives in the world and gets to know it" (Olport 1964: 246). One of the frequently stated definitions is the one emphasizing the habits of a learner to acquire knowledge according to specific ways of perception, memorizing, thinking and problem solving. When foreign language learning and teaching is in question, it seems that, apart from maturity and age, cognitive styles or learning strategies are closely related to four language skills to be acquired, i.e. listening, reading, writing and speaking and directly correlate to teaching and learning methods and techniques. Having analyzed a number of contemporary textbooks for foreign language learning, we concluded that they are designed in such a way to offer a whole range of learning procedures and strategies suitable for various learning styles of learners and developing research and creative learning (perceiving basic ideas and key words appearing in certain language material, independent identification of collocations, organizing vocabulary in lexical fields, noticing semantic relations, supposing meaning according to the context, paraphrasing…). It is not possible for all the teaching methods to be suitable for learning styles of all learners, but it is undisputable that such activities permeated by strategies putting learners in an active position, developing their cognitive abilities in general while putting them in the function of foreign language acquisition. What should be emphasized is the need to guide learners through activities in such a way that they are fully aware and awake when analyzing, perceiving relations and rules, similarities and differences, making comparison, abstracting, elaborating or paraphrasing while relying on their prior knowledge.

Dynamic Systems Approach and L2 Learning

All of the above sketched factors seem to significantly interact with learning setting and general context. In other words, most researchers dealing with individual differences would now agree that the role of learner characteristics, i.e. individual differences, can only be evaluated with regard to their interaction with specific environmental and temporal factors or conditions. Having in mind the complexity of foreign language learning context, certain authors have recently proposed dynamic systems approach, paying special attention to the interplay among language, agent, and environment in the language acquisition process. According to this approach, a language learner is regarded as a dynamic subsystem within a social system with a great number of interacting internal dynamic sub-sub-systems, which

function within a multitude of other external dynamic systems. The learner has his/her own cognitive ecosystem consisting of intentionality, cognition, intelligence, motivation, aptitude, L1, L2 and so on. The cognitive ecosystem in turn is related to the degree of exposure to language, maturity, level of education, and so on, which in turn is related to the social ecosystem, consisting of the environment with which the individual interacts… Each of these internal and external subsystems is similar in that they have the properties of a dynamic system. They will always be in flux and change, taking the current state of the system as input for the next one (de Bot et al 2007: 14). Furthermore, what is characteristic for dynamic systems is complete interconnectedness. Complexity of dynamic constantly changing systems and dynamic interrelations between and among its subsystems makes it rather difficult to research and get valid insights into true nature of foreign language learning. Therefore the same authors admit that there are certain unresolved issues of the dynamic systems theory and point out that the literature on the application of the proposed theory in second language acquisition is still fairly limited (de Bot et al 2007: 8). However, it seems that such a theory, taking into account both cognitive (internal resources, i.e. capacity to learn, time to learn, conceptual knowledge, motivational resources, processes of perception, attention, learning, categorization, schematization, memory, etc) and social aspects (external resources, i.e. spatial environments to explore, time invested by the environment to explore, time invested by the environment to support learning, external informational resources, such as the language used by the environment, material resources…) of language development, and research based on such a theory would offer fully informative insights to various issues arising in the field of foreign language teaching and learning, providing grounds for establishing appropriate teaching methods and techniques. If we have a look at external resources, among other factors, frequency of exposure seems to be rather important, having in mind that it promotes learning to great extent. Psycholinguistic research shows how language processing is intimately tuned to input frequency at all levels of grain: input frequency affects the processing of phonology and phonotactics, reading, spelling, lexis, morphosyntax, formulaic language, language comprehension, grammaticality, sentence production, and syntax (Ellis, 2002, as cited by Ellis and Cadierno 2009: 118). Speaking of frequency of exposure, it is worth noting that, from the perspective of dynamic systems theory, language acquisition emerges through interaction with other human beings within a social context, where according to iterated learning model, the output of one

individual's learning becomes the input of other individuals' learning (Smith et al 2003: 371, as cited by de Bot et al 2007: 11). What seems important here, from the standpoint of foreign language teaching, is that we have to bear in mind that sometimes (due to inevitable occurrence of errors in language production while acquiring a foreign language) these interactions do not always have to be desirable ones.

On the one hand, it is sometimes suggested that individual differences, i.e. learner-specific features, seen as background learner variables that modify and personalize the overall trajectory of the language acquisition process, have been typically thought of as the systematic part of the background "noise" in second language learning (Dörnyei 2009: 231). On the other hand, what we need is theory with non-linear approaches, recognizing the crucial role of interaction of a multitude of variables at different levels: in communication, in constructing meaning, in learning a language and among the languages in the multilingual mind, i.e. one overarching theory that allows to account for these ever interacting variables, non-linear behaviour, and sometimes unpredictable outcomes, a theory that does not regard real-life messy facts as "noise" but as part of the "sound" you get in real life (de Bot et al 2007: 8).

Conclusion

What we were interested in here refers to learner-related factors (i.e. age, aspirations, previous learning experience, attitudes to learning, prior knowledge, etc) and extrinsic (environment and context) features in a dynamic system of foreign language learning and teaching. However, recent and current work in the field seems to be adding new factors and categories to the inventory, in the form of varied learning styles, communication strategies, personality factors, and psychological processes. The list of factors influencing the choice of method seems to be endless and all these factors are interconnected, interdependent and constantly changing in their interactions. So what we would suggest refers to a kind of amalgamation of a variety of methods adjusted to the context and learner-related factors, introducing certain knowledge and research based innovations into foreign language teaching and learning.

References

Beckner, C., R. A. Blythe, J. L. Bybee, M. H. Christiansen, W. Croft, N. C. Ellis, J. Holland, J. K. D. Larsen - Freeman and T. Schoenemann (2009). Language is a complex adaptive system. In: *Language Learning* 59 (Suppl. 1): 1-26.

De Bot, K. Lowie, W. and Verspoor, M. (2007). A Dynamic Systems Theory approach to second language acquisition. *In Bilingualism: Langauge and Cognition* 10 (1): 7-21.

Dörnyei, Z. (2009). Individual Differences: Interplay of Learner Characteristics and Learning Environment. In: *Language Learning* 59 (Suppl. 1): 230-248.

Ellis, N. C. and Cadierno, T. (2009). Construing a Second Language. In *Annual Review of Cognitive Linguistics* 7: 111-139

Gojkov, G. (1995). *Kognitivni stil u didaktici*, VVŠ, Vršac.

Olport, G. (1969). *Sklop i razvoj ličnosti*, Kultura, Beograd.

Pilipović, V. (2008). Kognitivna zrelost kao faktor usvajanja gramatičke strukture stranog jezika. *Pedagoška stvarnost*, 54(5-6), 525-533.

Radoman, V. J. (2001). Jedan prilog proučavanju i proširivanju predmeta proučavanja psihologije jezika i psihologije jezičkih poremećaja. In *Psihologija*, 34(3-4): 375-382.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE MUSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN AND POSSIBLE MODELS TO OVERCOME THEM

Eudjen CINC, Ph.D.
West University Timisoara – Faculty of Music and Theatre
Preschool Teacher Training College *Mihailo Palov* Vrsac – Serbia
eugencinci@gmail.com

Tanja NEDIMOVIC, Ph.D.
Preschool Teacher Training College *Mihailo Palov* Vrsac – Serbia
nedimovic.tanja@gmail.com

Jasmina STOLIC
Preschool Teacher Training College *Mihailo Palov* Vrsac – Serbia
jaca.stolic@gmail.com

Abstract: *Many authors have written about the importance of music in the education of preschool children and represented that importance of musical education in preschool institutions in different ways. In the book Metodika muzičkog vaspitanja predškolske dece Božidar D. Stefanović writes that all work in the education of preschool children is focused on esthetically, mentally, morally and physically preparing the child for life. The author stresses that esthetic education is unthinkable without musical activity in the work with preschool children. Experiencing music, whether through listening or performing, influences the development of a sense for beauty, and in that way they develop their artistic taste, and consequently their musical taste (Stefanovic, 1958, 19). This is why early musical experiences are important, here it is essential for the pedagogue and the parent to be capable and trained to encourage the child and develop a wish for further exploration of the "magical world" of music, through an adequate choice of music.*

Key words: *Experiencing music, aesthetic education, understanding and performing melody*

Musical development

The so called *musical babbling* is considered to be a period of vital importance for the musical development in early childhood. From three to six years children develop their musical ability at an astonishing rate, and

manifest their potential to study ad understand primarily the musical characteristic of their culture (Andre, 2009 : 24).

During the primary musical development, children develop the mental perception for understanding music. E. Gordon explains this period by comparing it to cable television in which the pictures are available to all channels but a television (sample) is needed for them to be visually represented.The music potential is very sensitive at this age it is susceptible to both positive and negative influences. There is no doubt that every child is born with a certain potential, but equally important is the so called *active dialogue with music occurrences, i.e.* the adequate positive environment (family, preschool, surroundings) which will follow the needs of the child and adequately react to them. The music development of children is closely tied to the level of general development; therefore a certain level of maturity is needed for certain music achievements. Pedagogues talk about the so called *sensitivity periods,* about the optimal period for learning music (Andre, 2009: 25).

New research shows that music development starts as early as the prenatal period (before birth), i.e. that the fetus reacts to sound by accelerating the frequency of the heart from the sixth month of pregnancy (Верњи, Ајзенберг). The famous music pedagogue Suzuki, considered that *prenatal stimulation* is of immense importance. In that respect, he recommended to future mothers to sing to their children even before birth, to expose themselves to the children as much as possible. Latter research showed that children whose mothers followed these instructions reacted to music and expected musical stimuli sooner than other children (Šetler, 1985). As soon as five weeks the child reacts to vary loud sounds and sudden musical stimuli by moving the body and contracting. From the third month most children develop the so called *sound localization*, the child turns its head in the direction of the sound. After the fifth month ensues a sound stimuli differentiation period, and shortly after that the child reacts to music not only through movement but with sounds. Around the ninth month, when first words start occurring, the child starts to show heightened interest not only for the melody the text of the song that it hears. In the second half of the first year it will start to imitate rhythmic but also tone elements, the development of music memory.

When we talk about the types of musical development, it usually refers to the ways a child reacts to music in a certain period of general development. Therefore, we will pay attention to the development of musical perception, cognitive musical development, and affective musical development, development of vocal reaction and to the components of musical development.

Musical perception of pitch is key for the understanding and performing melody. Confusion regularly occurs around these concepts.

Children are frequently dazed when the grown up ask them to define the tone as high or low, since they are used to these concepts in a different context (visual). Three year olds, for example, chose a picture of an airplane in the sky as an example of a low sound (since it looked small, low), and a picture of an airplane on the ground as an example of a high tone (Andre, 2009). Confusion around the concepts *high – low* can also be noticed in adults who have not been formally exposed to music enough. However we can help children understand these concepts through a parallel auditory and visual presentation of low that is high tones. The same principle can be used for the concept of tone length. When it comes to the concepts of loud and soft sounds we can conclude that children distinguish them spontaneously at the earliest age. Regarding to melody, the child will first notice the melodic contour, movement, and only latter melodic elements, intervals etc.

As a rule, rhythm represents an element of music language which children can perceive quite well from the earliest childhood, and the reason for that probably lies in the human primordial connection with ancient magic rituals and their mystical we could say exoteric function. Rhythm, defined as a sequence of different durations which do not need to incorporate pitch, is sometimes recognized by children in the first year of life. Of course we are only talking about differentiating length, without metrics (children can distinguish between long – short, but usually not between the mentioned length and accents). Rhythm at this age, and latter, is connected to movement firstly spontaneous and latter directed (by the preschool teacher).

Children often mix different terms such as *high, loud and fast* with the terms *low, soft* and *slow*. Mixing of these terms can also be noticed in latter development when it changes into unnatural merging of the terms. Therefore children or even adults with insufficient music experience will perform slow musical content softly, and fast content loudly. From the earliest age we have to work on distinguishing these terms or in other words correctly understanding them. For the correct perception of these terms adequate examples are of essential importance since children often form their own *code* and *key* for understanding, hence insisting on these terms if they are not followed by concrete examples is condemning them to failure due to the abstract nature of these terms.

When we talk about musical ability we have to know that this entails a whole array of abilities and that their identification and development in children presuppose an adequate level of competency of the teachers. Therefore it is essential to know some basic terms which are closely connected to the identification and development of music abilities.

Musical sensitivity (sensibility) is a genetic predisposition which is manifested in the child's ability to feel and show pleasure and interest towards a certain musical opus. We can say that it entails the perception and understanding idea of the musical work, musical phrase or just the topic. Of

course this predisposition can be developed through active engagement in music.

Musical perception represents a *logical continuation* of musical sensitivity and it is present if the sensitivity is already present, especially through active engagement in music from the earliest age. Musical perception represents the ability to perceive the musical opus not only as a whole but as a sum of different elements of the musical language (melody, rhythm, harmony).

Musical performance represents the ability to reproduce musical performances and images. That simultaneously presents experiencing music through a personal prism and understanding, the formation of a personal framework for experiencing musical harmony.

Musical memory is manifested through the ability to repeat acquired audio wholes. It is developed through systematic musical activity fragments of whole musical works of art.

Musical imagination represents a psychological process through which new musical pictures ate formed, starting from the existing and learned pictures. Their development is possible through specific activities.

Musical thought or *musical way of thinking* incorporates the existence of musical pictures, performances, musical memory and sensibility. It is developed through an active engagement in music but also through developing the *inner hearing* that is the ability to completely experience musical content without the need for its active interpretation. A listener who manages to acquire such a way of thinking, will approach the musical work in a completely different way, and his/her perception of the musical language elements (melody, rhythm, metrics or harmony) will in many ways vary from the approach of an ordinary listener. This musical phenomenon is frequently connected to the term *musicality* which incorporates three important elements, and they are: intelligence, sensitivity and creativity.

Difficulties in musical development

When we talk about difficulties, they are most frequently manifested in an insufficiently developed ear for music (imprecise pitch or rhythmic intonation) as well as in musical memory. The aforementioned difficulties are frequently interpreted as signs of the lack of musicality which is a misjudgment. It is common for confusion to occur when differentiating difficulties in musical development, and so for example insufficiently developed musical memory is interpreted as insufficient ability to intonate precise pitch.

Many studies confirm that every person is musical to a certain extent and that cases of someone being completely unmusical are very rare. Experts, however, speak about *slow hearing,* a term which adequately describes what

was once considered unmusicality. What actually occurs are problems in the global psychophysical development of the child and which are manifested in music, insufficiently developed ability to notice tone relations, etc. (Andre, 2009:35).

If we view the term musicality (as it should be viewed) as a complex system of appropriate responses to musical stimuli and not through a simplified version as differentiating of tone pitch and lasting in children, we can agree that nonmusical children do not exist. Reality has shown the writer of this work that a lack of adequate musical education, musical vocal or instrumental practice, can so thoroughly berry the existence of musical ability that it is very difficult to identify, and this is the most common reason for wrongly labeling children as unmusical.

Of course, there is nothing easier than to label a child as unmusical, not care about the fact that its voice might still be underdeveloped, that because of insufficient musical stimulation in the environment in which it lived, it doesn't have a developed musical memory. Of course, for a successful outcome a lot of dedication is needed from the parents and preschool teacher. Recently inclusion has been in the center of attention as a model for overcoming different levels of development in certain children. On the other hand, musical education, in its professional form, is based on the individualized approach, since currently there doesn't exist a more efficient model for achieving the performance. When we talk about overcoming elementary difficulties in musical development in children, in the framework of the public system of education, we could say that the golden middle would be the best, that is implementing a certain level of individualistic approach towards children with special needs, which most certainly may not include separating them from the group because collective performance would have a stimulating effect. The same model should be implemented in the case of an insufficiently developed musical memory to in time gain self-confidence and to develop the ability to precisely reproduce musical fragments.

Possible models of overcoming difficulties in musical development – dedication to proper breathing and voice posture
Proper breathing in the function of a musical performance

Breathing technique in the function of a musical performance is the same as in usual breathing only during singing we inhale deeper and take in more air. During singing the exhale is more important, it should be controlled and much slower (Stefanović, 1958). Before every vocal instrumentation we need to focus on breathing exercises (inhaling and exhaling exercises), voice setting exercises – voice posture, as well as exercises for the right pronunciation of words and diction. During the preliminary setting of proper breathing, the best example is breathing through an open mouth while lying

on the back. In an adequately prepared room (aired room, chairs placed in a semicircle, harmonizing the room according to the activity which will be used etc.) a preschool teacher can tell a certain story, for example a bear who went to a cave to spend the winter there. The children will lay on the floor with open mouths and slowly inhale and exhale imitating a bear which is sleeping. In this way their body will be in the right position in which all of the organs which are needed for proper breathing will be activated. After this exercise the children can while still imitating a bear inhale deeply through the nose and slowly exhale through the mouth. Since all children enjoy lying on the floor, this position of lying will form a calm and relaxed exercise among children. After that next is waking up of the bear which is followed by yawning, deep inhales of ear, and also stretching of the body (since the whole act represents the resonator in singing, we need to wake it up). Of course relevant to the theme, this activity could be realized in late autumn or after the winter holidays, e.g. if the topic of the activity is learning a song about a bear.

Children have come across this breathing exercise many times at birthdays. While blowing out the candles on birthday cakes the children breathe in deeply after which they blow it out (they blow out the air quickly). Also, during everyday lunch while blowing on the soup, children practice breathing exercises (the air is slowly being exhaled). While practicing these activities in a preschool, the children should be instructed to puck their lips, inhale deeply through the nose, keep the air for a little bit and equally and with control exhale in order to cool the soup. An interesting example where more consonants are used is imitating the locomotive. Children form a line and imitate the movements of a locomotive. After that the preschool teacher can ask the children if the locomotive starts at the same speed and keeps the same speed during the whole ride, or if it changes the speed during the ride. The children than with the same syllables imitate the movements of the locomotive from the station, than its acceleration and after that its arrival at the station where it slows down.

Exercises for voice posture

Many authors recommend that the first exercises for voice posture be same tone games. It is desirable that the preschool teacher makes up a game or a story through which can imitate a phenomenon on the same tone. For example barking of a dog- aw, aw; duck- quack, quack; sparrow- chirp, chirp; car honking – honk, honk; bells – jungle, jingle etc. For the beginning we use intonation on the tone e1 because that is the natural pitch of a child's voice. Singing in the same tone is used to direct the children's attention to one tone. It is useful to use different rhythmic during the performance, in order to develop a feeling for rhythm and to direct the children's attention and escape monotony. Simultaneously the preschool teacher can notice which

child possesses the ability to reproduce the same tone and the ability to fluently repeat the same rhythm.

Games for voice posture on the same tone through onomatopoeia:

After the children had mastered the exercise through onomatopoeia, the preschool teacher can continue with small games. For example, the preschool teacher calls the children one by one, and they respond in the same intonation. The preschool teacher should as frequently as he/she can address the children through song, in order to encourage them to do the same. For example the preschool teacher asks the children a question through singing and asks them to give him/her an answer through singing. Games can still be in the same tone e1, but it is desirable to change the intonation in time, moving the tone a half a tone upwards (e.g. f1, fis1, g1, gis1, to a1).

After the games in the same tone, exercises on the descending minor third interval are used, which have already been mentioned (imitating the cuckoo, cuckoo). It is recommended that in the games in the descending minor third, in younger groups intonation: g1-e1 be used, after some time followed by as1 – f1 and in the end a1 – fis1. Games on the interval of descending minor third can begin with a calling game, one child has to hide, and the other has to find it while calling him/her, after which the hidden child answers (during the game the children exchange roles, or all children can be the "finders") .

Games on the interval of descending minor third in the form of calling:

However, while calling each other by name it can happen that children come to a name which cannot be sung from the tone g1, because the speaking accent changed, e.g. in the names Aneta, Mirela, Teodora, and similar. That is why the preschool teacher will be the first to start singing with a lower tone and then the children (if the children call each other).

References:

Andre, Lucija (2009). *Pedagogija muzičkog konstrukta*. Beograd: Zadužbina Andrejević.

Vasile, Vasile (2004). *Metodica educaţiei muzicale*. Bukurešt: Editura Muzicală.

Đurković – Pantelić, Milena (1999). *Metodika muzičkog vaspitanja dece predškolskog uzrasta*. Šabac: Viša škola za obrazovanje vaspitača.

Lelea, Jon (2009). *Manualul şcolar în funcţia păstrării identităţii culturale şi naţionale*. Vršac: Visoka škola strukovnih studija za obrazovanje vaspitača Mihailo Palov.

Lelea, Jon (2010). *Manualul şcolar în funcţia supradotării şi a inovaţiilor în învăţământul primar*. Vršac: Visoka škola strukovnih studija za obrazovanje vaspitača Mihailo Palov.

Munteanu, Gabriela (1999). *Metodica predării educaţiei muzicale în gimnaziu şi liceu*. Bukurešt: Sigma.

Nedimović, T. (2013). Podbacivanje darovitih – mogućnosti i ograničenja kvalitativnih istraživanja. U *Metodološki problemi istraživanja darovitosti* (ur. Gojkov, G., Stojanović, A.).Visoka škola strukovnih studija za obrazovanje vaspitača „Mihailo Palov", Vršac; Universitatea de Vest "Aurel Vlajku", Arad. 254-261.

Nedimović, T. (2014). Uloga nastavnika u razvoju stvaralačkih sposobnosti studenata. U *Daroviti i kvalitet obrazovanja* (ur. Gojkov, G., Stojanović, A.). Visoka škola strukovnih studija za obrazovanje vaspitača „Mihailo Palov", Vršac; Universitatea de Vest "Aurel Vlajku", Arad, Romania. 354-360

Pejović, Roksanda (2005). *Muzički instrumenti srednjevekovne Srbije*. Beograd: Clio.

Saks, Oliver (2010). *Muzikofilija*.Beograd: Clio.

Stefanović, D., Božidar (1958). *Metodika muzičkog vaspitanja predškolske dece*. Beograd: Nolit.

Činč, Euđen (2008). *Osnovi teorije muzike sa zbirkom rešenih testova*. Vršac: Visoka škola strukovnih studija za obrazovanje vaspitača Mihailo Palov.

Činč, Euđen (2010). *Osnovi rada sa dečjim muzičkim sastavima*. Vršac: Visoka škola strukovnih studija za obrazovanje vaspitača Mihailo Palov.

Činč, Euđen (2010). *Uvod u notno pismo i teoriju muzike*. Vršac: Visoka škola strukovnih studija za obrazovanje vaspitača Mihailo Palov.

Činč, Euđen (2012). *Muzička hrestomatija*. Vršac: Visoka škola strukovnih studija za obrazovanje vaspitača Mihailo Palov.

Činč, Euđen (2013). *Muzičko vaspitanje sa metodikom*. Vršac, Visoka škola strukovnih studija za obrazovanje vaspitača Mihailo Palov.

Činč, E., Nedimović, T. (2012). *Kompetencije vaspitača i mogući uzroci pogrešnih metodoloških pristupa identifikaciji muzički darovite dece.* Knjiga rezimea sa 18. Međunarodnog naučnog skupa „Metodološki problemi istraživanja darovitosti",Vršac, 20.

APPLICATION OF WEB PRESENTATIONS IN THE FUNCTION OF
PRESCHOOL EDUCATION AND UPBRINGING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Predrag PRTLJAGA, MA
Preschool Teacher Training College
Vrsac, Serbia
vsvassekretar@hemo.net

Abstract: *Education and education-related processes faced with the challenges imposed by rapid and unstoppable informational-communicational development bring along the need for all the levels of education, as well as teachers, as the agents creating and realizing it, respond to these challenges and prepare young people for life in constantly changing world. Constantly increasing changes reflected in other spheres of life have been an obstacle appearing as an impossibility to create clear picture of what the world will look like tomorrow.*

Preschool teachers in kindergartens are, on the one hand, faced with the changes children are going through, and on the other hand, with the demands for lifelong learning, requiring them as professionals to be reflexive practitioners, who learn permanently and improve their practice.

The omnipresence of informational technologies in everyday life of children and adults undoubtedly imposes the need for teachers to possess necessary knowledge and skills in order to purposefully use advantages offered by these technologies in the work with children. The paper deals with the design of internet sites and software which should address these needs and challenges of contemporary preschool education and upbringing. Apart from the possibility to offer what should be learnt, i.e. the content, they should also have impact on how and to what an extent certain contents should be learnt, introducing completely new methods and techniques of learning and teaching.

Key words: *preschool education, IT, communication, quality of education.*

Introductory considerations

When in 1949, shortly after the Spanish civil war and the Second World War, George Orwell published his novel under the title *1984*, the readers and the critics accepted it as a warning to future generations what stand to take against totalitarian ideologies like fascism or communism. The novel became and has remained popular until the very present days, even though its ideas have been more easily accepted by dictators hidden behind various ideologies, aims and unproven diseases. Those who were in the role of Winston Smith (the main character in the novel) often experienced his destiny, they used to be arrested, tortured and *rehabilitated.* Thus, *Julian Assange* (the founder of the controversial *WikiLeaks*) is nowadays an example of an ideal Smith's *double*; seemingly free, he lives (in a political asylum) in Ecuador's embassy in London, deprived from his basic human life to move freely, since he is under the threat to be arrested. Apart from this example, a number of newly coined words from the novel have been borrowed into every day language, showing to what an extent fiction can become reality (e.g. *Newspeak*, *doublethink*, *duckspeaker*), *crimethink*...)

Finaly, *Big Brother* has entered our homes through a TV show, also enriching our vocabulary by a collocation *Reality Show*. At the same time, informational shows have been informing us, just like *Big Brother*: *war is piece,* sending of the so called peacekeeping forces throughout the planed, as a *guarantee of safety,* reminds us of Orwell's words: *freedom is slavery. Self-isolation* of the states not ready to accept the requirements imposed by large and rich countries, has produced their slow ruination, or in accordance with the interests of powerful world forces, they become democratized – *liberated through the will of the people.* Finally, Orwell, as well as present reality finds their strongpoint in the statement: *ignorance is power*, man as an individual has been *liberated* – he does not have either to think or to know anything – it is much easier to *google* a piece of information, ranging from the recipe on how to prepare an easy meal to an on-line manual how to make a (space) aircraft.

On the other hand, conventional understanding and duration of the process of education, has become *lifelong learning.* The era of fast changes demands use of human resources, and at the same time investment in their quality in regard to their skills and knowledge. Education is expected to get adjusted to the market demands, so that it can at any moment offer possibility of retraining and additional training, with increased emphasis put on *informal* education and learning. As a consequence, traditional education methods have become improved and upgraded (projectors, presentations, interactive tables…), but even more often replaced by the application of modern information communicational technologies (on-line learning).

In the end of the 20th century computers in education were on the margins; however, today, while schools are still not on the cutting edge, the profound importance of the computer as a knowledge tool is widely recognized (Kurzweil, 1999). The Internet has become a great and open base of knowledge necessary to wisely use, for educational processes to be modernized and equipped to *prepare young people for the world of constant changes and help them find their own place in such a world* (Božić&Micić 2006: 216). Pupils and students own computers, more often smart phones, which through wireless communication canals provide them at any place in any time access to variety of contents, as well as teaching materials. At the same time, employers have realized that learning and knowledge have become a foundation for creation of *newly created value.* Multinational, as well as small companies have imposed a need for training and developing new skills to emerge as an ongoing responsibility in most careers, not just an occasional supplement (Kurzweil, 1999). It is also worth mentioning that these Kurzweil's words date back from 1999 when they were suggested as a prognosis how 2009 will look like. Just like Orwell, Kurzweil was in the time of rapid changes, able to realistically portrait the present time; it is therefore necessary to pay special attention to everything which is today offered as a future of education.

Initiatives and resources for open education

Open Educational Resources and the policies of open education have been significantly developed in recent years, creating new possiblities for the improvement of education; at the same time, they are great changes for all relevant participants in the process of education, i.e. all stakeholders. The initiative *Open Education in Europe* was initiated in 2013, putting the idea of open education in the centre of educational reform, accepting that openness is a value characteristic for increasing number of modern initiatives, as well as communities.

One of the problems facet by those who try to develop new forms of education in order to help new learning generations, as well as those involved in teacher education and training, has occurred in the conditions in which young people were raised and grew up in *digital era*. Jukes and Dosaj (Jukes and Dosaj, 2003) have made a difference between *digital immigrants* (majority of those nowadays involved in the field of education) and *digital natives*, i.e. current generation of young learners. They have found that teachers and those who educate teachers – digital immigrants – prefer lower level and controlled provision of information from limited sources, singular processing and giving one task or limited tasks, i.e. single/limited-tasking, at the same time provide text before image, sound or vide, that they provide a piece of information in a linear manner, logically and sequentially, they like

their students to learn separately and independently, rather than in a network or in interaction; also they prefer teaching just in case and giving and delayed rewards; they are also inclined to teaching within a curriculum. On the other hand, their students – digital natives prefer information quickly from multiple multimedia sources, parallel processing and multi-tasking, prefer processing pictures, sounds and video before text, random access to hyperlinked, interactive multimedia information, they prefer to interact/network simultaneously with many others, to learn in time, they prefer instant rewards, they are inclined to learning which is relevant, instantly useful and fun. It seems that in such circumstances informational technologies can give significant contribution to bridging the differences between the agents in education, introducing innovations in their work and improving their cooperation, thus increasing the quality of upbringing and education. In a nutshell: *We learn and solve problems in different ways...* (Gráinne Phelan, Programme Manager EMEA, Enterprise Google, Inc.)

As a dominant Web browser and as a company with overall approach to contemporary communication, *Google* offers more programs under a common name *Google Apps for Education*, a package of internet application in a cloud which through interconnectedness become more efficient and powerful, while enabling us do the job in a shorter time and in an easier and more interesting way. Curricula, syllabi, scientific projects, distance learning, testing in an on-line environment and real time are only some of possible applications of these systems. Insisting on the logics of *Any place, Any device, Any time* the company strives for adapting Education to new ways of working.

Khan academy is a centralized data based, containing more than 6000 recorded tutorials from all fields of education, which is currently being used or has been used by over 100 million learners. *A free world-class education for anyone anywhere* is an idea which came to life, and further development of the platform is heading towards gamification (Badges, Levels, Leaderboards, Progress Bar, Awards...) and personalization of plan and program of learning. Possibility of getting immediate feedback and development of platform for trainers leads to removing of the obstacle repeatedly pointed out by John Dewey: *if we teach today as we taught yesterday, we rob our children of tomorrow.*

Explaining what Wikimedia is, Jimmy Wales, one of its founders says: *Imagine a world in which every single person on the planet is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge. That's what we're doing.* Initiated in 2001, Wikipedia, as one of the projects of Wikimedia Foundation, has become the greatest encyclopaedia in the world, visited by 550 million interested individuals each month; at the same time it undergoes 11 million alterations and additions during the period of one month by 80.000 active

users in the whole world; it currently contains 30 million articles in 286 languages and it is the sixth most visited site on the Internet.

Packages, tools, data basis, encyclopaedias, courses like, e.g. OCW (Open Course Ware) ili MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses), Agile development frameworks (e.g. Scrum) appear every day; possibilities have been exponentially incresing and those involved in education should only choose their own way to learn and teach. Having sketched the current state in all spheres of life in general, as well as in education, in particular, we were interested in the extent preschool teachers use available possibilities opened up by ICT both in their everyday life and in their work.

Brief Analysis of the Current State
or Theory vs. Practice

In a survey (Prtljaga 2014) carried out in certain preschool institutions at the territory of Belgrade and Vrsac, on the sample of 200 subjects (130 parents and 70 preschool teachers), one of the questions was the following: *Do you use a computer*? The obtained responses are as follows:

Table 1 The extent to which computers are used by parents and preschool teachers

Use of a computer	I do not use it	I use it at work	I use it at home	I use it both at work and at home
Kindergarten teachers	10	0	60	0
Parents	0	14	36	80
Total	10	14	96	80

Graph 1 The extent to which computers are used by parents and preschool teachers, in percentages
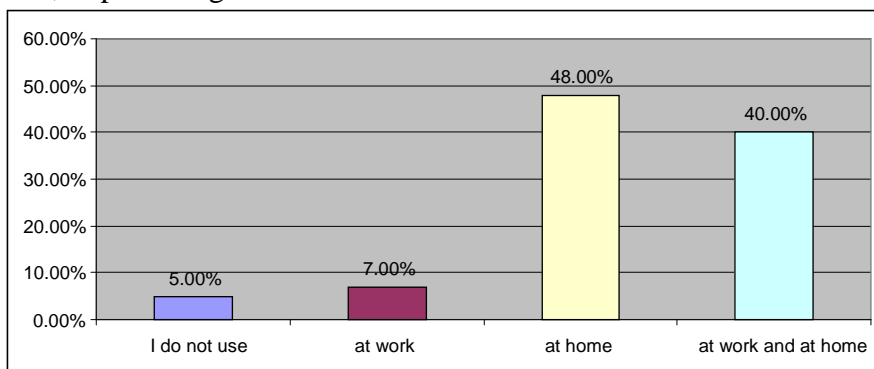
Considering application of web presentations in the function of preschool education and upbringing quality improvement it is important to point out that the research result have shown that none of the kindergarten teachers involved in the survey uses a computer at work, indicating that IT are not present in their immediate practical upbringing – educational work in a preschool institution. As a consequence, it is possible to conclude that preschool teachers obviously have acquired knowledge necessary for the use of ICT, having in mind that most of them use computers at their homes; however, they do not use them at work at all; thus, it seems that it is necessary to create technical preconditions for use of computers in their everyday work with children and for practical application of ICT in learning of youngest children.

Conclusion

Kindergarten teachers in preschool institutions are, on the one hand, faced with the changes of the very children they work with; on the other hand they are faced with the demands of lifelong learning, imposing the need to be professionals and reflexive practitioners who learn constantly and permanently improve their own practice.

The omnipresence of IT in everyday lives of children and adults inevitably imposes the need for preschool teachers to acquire knowledge and skills necessary for purposeful use of advantages these technologies offer in the work of children. Design of internet sites and software able to respond to the challenges of modern education and upbringing is expanding. Apart from offering should be learnt – i.e. content, they should influence the way and extent of learning, i.e. how to learn and how much to learn, introducing completely new methods and techniques of learning and teaching.

Furthermore, preschool teachers have to be adequately trained and competent, preventing children from spending too much time in front of a TV or a computer. In other words, they should be committed to their work on prevention from negative consequences electronic media might have for children (Bell 2007). Preschool teachers are expected to use ICT in kindergartens creatively, affirmatively and purposefully. In other words, it is necessary for preschool teachers to act in preventing its inadequate use while using its various and multiple potentials, to use it to make positive influence in all fields of children's development, leading to quality improvement of all segments of upbringing-educational work and development of media culture of a child (Andjelković: 2008, 70).

References:

Andjelković, N. (2008). *Dete i računar u porodici i dečijem vrtiću*, Beoknjiga & CNTI & Savez informatičara Vojvodine, Beograd.

Bell, A. (2007). *Hanheld Computers in Schools and Media Centers*, Linworth Worthington, Ohio, USA.

Božić, Lj. i Micić, Ž. (2006). IT u obrazovnom sistemu osnovnih škola. Book of Collected articles: *TOS Conference*, Čačak: 216-221.

Jukes, I. & Dosaj, A. (2006). Understanding Digital Kids: Teaching & Learning in the New Digital Landscape, The InfoSavvy Group, Singapore

Kurzweil, R. (1999). *The Age of Spiritual Machines: When Computers Exceed Human Intelligence*, Penguin Books.

Prtljaga, P. (2014.) *Upotreba Internet prezentacija u službi poboljšanja saradnje predškolskih ustanova sa društvenim okruženjem* [Use of Internet Presentations in the Service of Improvement of Cooperation between Preschool Institutions and Social Environment], master thesis defended at Univerzitet Union – Nikola Tesla, FAM, Sremski Karlovci.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY AGES

Gabriela KELEMEN, Ph.D,
Faculty of Educational Science, Psychology and Social Sciences
"Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad, Romania
gabrielakelemenuav@gmail.com; gabriela.kelemen@uav.ro

Abstract: *development and social progress depend on the investments that are made in children through services provided by the state for the children`s development in proper social and education conditions.*
Along with Romania`s adherence to the European Union the state policies for childcare have undergone serious changes. They have been given the chance to grow and develop harmoniously according to their innate data and nature.
Thus, educational, sanitary and social regulations have been adopted trying to offer children better development conditions. Romania tried to comply with EU regulations on early age care and development.
This article is a comparison between early education curriculum in Romania and other European states.

Key words: *Curriculum; child education; strategies; childcare;*

I. The importance of investment in early education

Early Childhood Education might be considered to be education which takes place before compulsory education. The term refers to education in its broadest sense, including childcare and development (http://www.csee-etuce.org/images/attachments/ETUCEPolicyPaperonECEEN.pdf).

The importance of early education in society is based on thorough studies conducted in Europe but mostly in the United States of America (Perry Preschool, Ypsilanti, Michigan, 1962). Studies have highlighted the fact that if education begins in early ages, namely in preschool, teenagers fit better into the society and their anti-social behaviour is reduced at maturity (Steve Barnett, 2008). Investment in early education is extremely important and the results consist of reduced anti-social deeds, increased physical and mental strength of individuals and resistance to life changes. Therefore, the past years` national education policies placed yearly education in the centre of education. The interest for the education of children aged 0 to 7 can be found in various documents and national but also international studies. Investment in education is essential due to its role in socio-economic development, as it is obvious that "education is the foundation of economic

development" (Păun, E, 1974). Education produces direct effects by training people for a certain field (profession, activity) and indirect effects by producing economic and social advantages. Quality education implies certain costs, which will be amortized through "strictly economic profitability". Education could produce cost savings by diminishing negative social phenomena which are generated or influenced by the lack of education or poor education of most society members" (Voiculescu, 2008). Romania has complied with the European Commission`s and European Parliament`s regulations on early education after the adherence to the European Union. European Council`s documents from the last decade mention that by 2020, 95% of preschool children with ages between 4 and school age will have been enrolled in kindergartens. Special emphasis is placed on integration of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. According to the European Commission all member states should give particular attention on aspects such as: „Investment in education and professional training is essential for increasing the productivity and economic growth", and emphasis should be placed on increasing efficient investments on all education levels" (C.E., 2012). The United States have also reconsidered their educational policies on early education. They consider it highly important for their national education system and therefore allot considerable sums of money for the integration of children aged 3 and 4. Programmes financed by the national budget are allotted for disadvantaged families (Steve Barnett, 2008).

II. Early age education and social development

In the last period, special attention has been given to the necessity of investment in early education. Studies conducted on this issue prove the necessity of education at childhood age given the features and characteristics of child personality, the manner of information assimilation, the child`s ability to acquire knowledge, develop skills and abilities that are required by an optimal future development. The child is not an adult in miniature; the child is a person with a personality in development, (Jean Piaget, Kolberg, Erikson, Gardner, Goleman, Bronfenbrenner). The child`s transformation into a responsible adult, capable of adding value to the society depends on the way education is made at this age. The child needs constant care and support to grow up according to his innate nature but also to socio-economic policies which promote anti-discrimination, equal chances, and rights for minorities (Bernard van Leer Foundation, 2007). Early childhood development and learning have been the focus of extensive research and initiatives over the past few years and the new scientific findings put a new perspective and an increased importance on teaching and learning in the early years. The term "Early Education" is used in all documents of the European Union institutions and this term is adopted by the majorities of EU countries. The educational politics see early education as a fundamental part of life-long

learning, and the curriculum, as a pedagogical tool, follows the main orientation that contribute to harmonies develop of the child in early childhood.
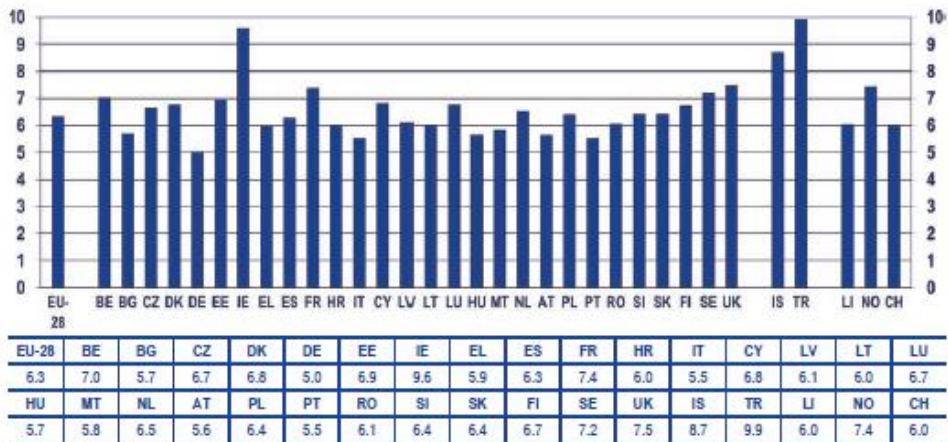
The Romanian Early Education Curriculum as Reference Framework incorporates also, as in the European Reference Framework the eight key competences:

- Communication in the mother tongue;
- Communication in foreign languages;
- Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology ;
- Digital competence
- Learning to learn
- Social and civic competences
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
- Cultural awareness and expression

The curriculum for early education in Romania aims to form the child not just as a spectator or witness, but an active participant in his own training. Thus, children are actively involved in different learning activities. Another goal of early education programmes is the approach of topics such as: exploitation of child`s work, inappropriate work which affects the child`s development, the connection between the young child`s education and future profession, the proper age for taking up work and its connection to different cultural models, gender relation in taking up work; the children`s response to adversity, measures taken to the child`s safety, the connection between economic development and family education (E. Vraşmaş, 2008). High quality education promotes pro-social values which develop a creative individual capable of lifelong self-education and willing to be actively and innovatively involved in social life.

The educational curriculum for early education promotes quality programmes for early childhood education and stresses out the importance of child development based on its innate nature and pace. It also promotes the idea of authentic education. The quality of education depends on the investment made in educational policies. They should lead to a progressive child development performed in a safe socio-affective environment. The coordinates of preschool education approaches are oriented and centred on children. The aim is to stimulate the child`s development on all its personality dimensions. The curriculum for early education focuses on three directions of early education set at European level. The first one aims a perspective focused on the child, on its development needs. It involves day-care centres which organize mainly educational programmes and use strategies for training professionals as human resource needed to offer various services to young children. Services provided by the society involve

resources used in day-care centres, which put forth preschool learning programmes based on pedagogic curriculum. They involve professionals trained in early education but also programmes for parents, families and the communities. The second direction consists of miscellaneous services, mainly homecare services and child centred educational programmes which normally don`t require professionals. The third direction is oriented towards a variety of services focused on parents and families. They offer support services for families and provide plentiful services and activities for various needs (EACEA P9 Eurydice, 2009). Currently, according to EUROSTAT there are 6.3 % children under the age of 6 in Europe.

EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
6.3	7.0	5.7	6.7	6.8	5.0	6.9	9.6	5.9	6.3	7.4	6.0	5.5	6.8	6.1	6.0	6.7
HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH
5.7	5.8	6.5	5.6	6.4	5.5	6.1	6.4	6.4	6.7	7.2	7.5	8.7	9.9	6.0	7.4	6.0

Source: Eurostat, Population statistics (data extracted March 2014).

Concerns in Europe and USA are focused on child care provided by health services and social protection services for children aged 0 to 2-2,5 and educational services for children aged 2,5/3 and 6/ 7.
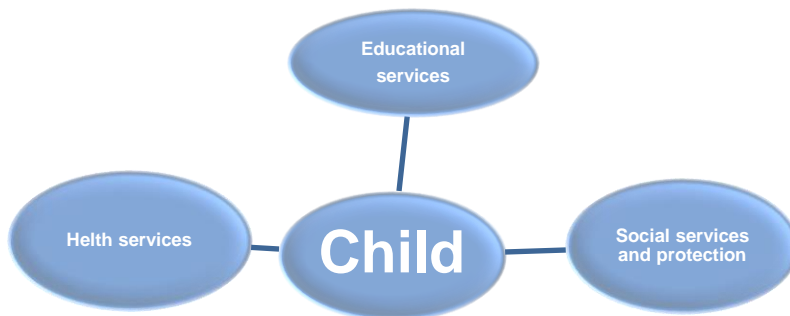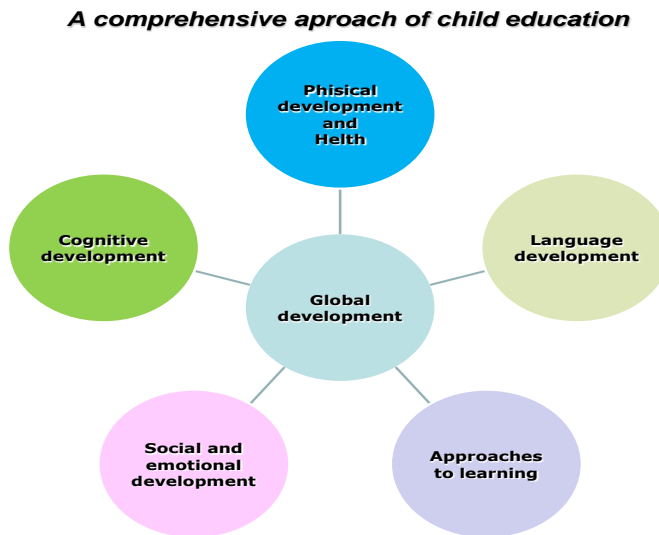
Figura nr.1.

The implementation of a proper curricular programme is not sufficient for an efficient early education. The long term efficiency is given

by the children`s, the school`s and family`s involvement in education. These factors should offer educational programmes and improvement interventions that take into account family aspects and the manner of approaching education at this age.

III. Early childhood Education in Romania

III.1.A comprehensive approach to the child in the Romanian educational system

Nowadays, as mentioned by the predecessors Frobel, Montessori and Steiner, the child is regarded as a personality in development, with its own training needs, with the right to education in a favourable environment. Each child is unique and non-recurring. Playing is specific to childhood, through games children assimilate knowledge, and develop their skills and abilities (G. Kelemen, 2014). Curriculumul pentru educaţie timpurie între 0-3 şi 3- 6/7 ani urmăreşte dezvoltarea copilului pe domenii de dezvoltare: dezvoltare fizică şi a sănătăţii, dezvoltare cognitivă, dezvoltarea limbajului şi a comunicării, dzvoltare socio-emoţională şi dezvoltarea capacităţilor şi atitudinilor în învăţare.

A comprehensive aproach of child education

If we make a simple comparison between the Romanian, European and American Curriculum we could observed that between them they aren't significant difference , as we see in Figures 2 and 3.
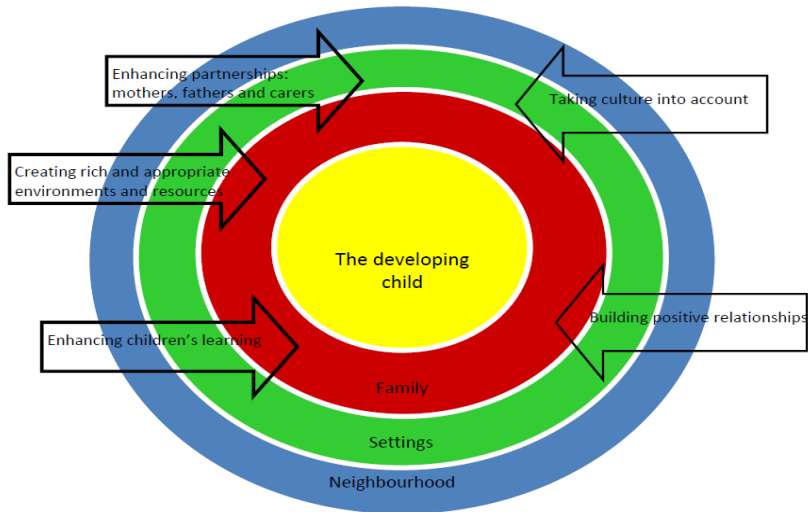
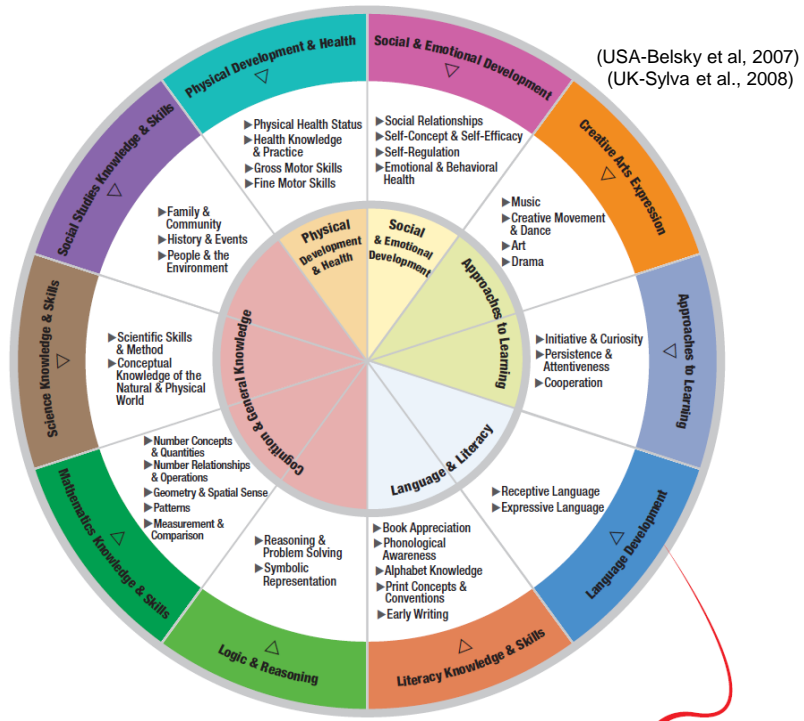**Figure 1 - The contexts of children's development**

Figura nr.2.

Figura nr.3.

III.2.Values promoted by the curriculum for early education:
• the child`s fundamental rights (the right to life and health, to family, to education, to be listened to and the freedom of speech);
• the child`s global development;
• inclusion, as process of promoting diversity and tolerance;
• non-discrimination and the exclusion of social, cultural, economic and gender inequity (equal chances for all children, irrespective of their gender, ethnic belonging, religion through a balanced educational approach).

III.3.Subject areas covered by the curriculum
Language and communication**, premises for reading-writing;**
• **Science** (knowledge of the environment, mathematical activities, ecological education);
• **Aesthetic education** (artistic-visual arts activities and musical education);
• **Physical education** (health education, games and movement activities);
• **Social education** (activities of self-knowledge and development with emphasis on independence, autonomy and cooperation; diversity with emphasis on inclusion, traffic safety activities, religious education activities, practical and home activities):
The subject areas covered by the curriculum are used in the following categories of activity:
• language education activities;
• mathematics activities;
• knowledge of the environment;
• social education;
• practical and home activities;
• musical education;
• visual art education;
• physical education.
The lay-out of topics for common activities is stipulated by the *curriculum for early education*, but the preschool teacher has the possibility to choose also other topics according to the syllabus objectives and the children`s interests.

The chosen games and activities are very important in the curriculum for early education. The predominant activities are fun games, movement games in open air, sport games, drama, puppet theatre, movie projection, computer games, walks, visits, etc.
The percentage of activity types during a preschool day is 50% frontal activities, 25% individual activities and 25% small group activities carried out as follows:
- frontal and in small groups;
- individually and in small groups;
- frontal and individually.
Activities in small groups are predominant in freely chosen activities when

children work in stimulation areas and the groups are built based on the children`s option.

The aims of early education in Romania are:

- Promoting the **concept of child`s global development** (the perspective of a child`s global development emphasises the importance of a **child`s development areas**, especially today when preparation for school and life should not focus just on academic skills but also on abilities, attitudes and practical skills);

- Creating a real link between **experiential areas and development areas** without searching for their perfect overlap;

- **Coordinating the joint efforts of all three partners** of the teaching-learning-evaluation process, namely: **teachers, parents and children,** but also of collaborators and educational partners whose involvement is equally important;

- A new series of **learning activities**: *Activities on subject areas (which can be integrated activities or activities on specific disciplines), Games and chosen activities, and Activities of personal development;*

- Organizing the yearly study programme around six major topics (*Who am I/Who are we?, When, how and why does it happen?, How was, is and will it be here on Earth?, How do we plan/organize an activity?, By means of what and how do we express what we feel?* and *What and how do I want to be*?*);* the order of introducing them has no connection with the moment when the teacher can do other projects with the children;

- Compliance with the **daily programme** (with hourly guidelines) established by the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth;

- Filling in the daily programme with **movement activities/ moments/ sequences** (movement games with text and song, physical education, refreshment activities, competitions or sport tracks, walks, etc).

The curriculum for early education provides a few annual study topics. We have to mention that they do not have to be covered in the given order but according to the children`s age. Thus, with children 3-5 years of age, it is not compulsory to cover all topics within one school year (teachers can cover at least 4).

The types of activities covered by the syllabus for pre-schoolers are: ***Routines, Transitions and Learning activities.***

The number of daily activities is correlated with the number of classes from a teacher`s working hours allotted to this activity.

Routines are guiding activities for the entire daily activity. They cover the child`s basic needs and make a contribution the its global development. Routines actually include activities like**: *child`s arrival to kindergarten, breakfast, hygiene – washing and toilette, lunch, napping/afternoon relaxation, snacks and departure* and** are different from other activities because they keep repeating every day, at settled times with almost the same contents.
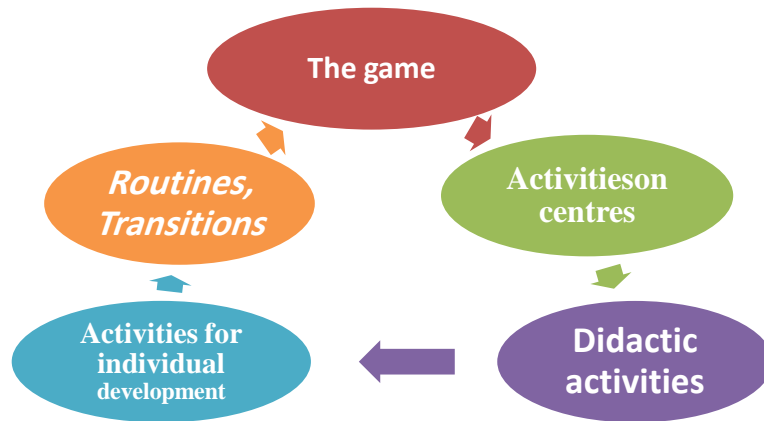
Figure 4. Daily programme

Transitions are short activities that make the transition *from routines to learning activities, from the moments of instructive-educational activity to those of hygiene* at different times of the day. The means of performing these activities vary according to the child`s age, the context and the teacher`s qualities. Therefore, they can be activities carried out in a fast pace given by music or by counting, tongue twisters or an activity which takes place simultaneously with the transition moment, namely a game with texts or songs or movements already familiar to the pupils.

The game is the child`s fundamental activity that supports routines and transitions and obviously, learning activities. Games influence the behaviour and foreshadows the child`s developing personality. Thus, the main means of conducting the instructive-educational process at infant and preschool level are: games (free, guided and didactic games), chosen didactic and/or learning activities.

Learning activities are a set of systematically, methodologically and intensively planned actions which are organized and conducted by a teacher. Their aim is to achieve the goals set out by the curriculum. Their unwinding requires joint efforts of all three partners of the teaching-learning-evaluation process, namely: teachers, parents and children. Learning activities are carried out either with the whole group or in small groups as integrated activities (knowledge with interdisciplinary character) focusing on certain subject areas: **Language and communication, Science, Aesthetic education, Social education, Physical education.**

Among the means used for these activities we mention: didactic games, storytelling, exercises with individual material, experiments, building, reading with pictures, observation, conversation, stories made up by children, memorizing, etc.

Learning activities at preschool age can be organized as educational projects. The teacher can organize not more than 7 projects with duration of 6 weeks/project in one school year. The teacher can also choose to work on smaller projects with duration of 1-3 weeks according to the importance of the topic and the children`s interest for the topic. There may also be weeks when children are not involved in any project, but the teacher sets weekly topics of interest for the children. However, there may also be daily projects or trans-semestrial ones.

The games and didactic activities are chosen by the children and they help them socialize in a progressive manner and initiate in the knowledge of physical world, the social-cultural environment they belong to, mathematics, communication, written and spoken language. They are organized in small groups, in pairs or even individually. Their success depends on the stimulation offered by the educational environment as well as on the proper organization of classroom on centres such as; **Library, Corner of the house/Role play, Constructions, Science, Aesthetic education, sand and water etc.** The centres are organized according to available material resources, space, children`s age. If there is enough space, the classroom can be divided into all centres or at least into two of them. **Optional activities** are considered also learning activities and are included in the daily schedule of a kindergarten child. They are chosen by parents from the offer presented by the educational unit at the 1st of September and approved by the School Board. Optional activities can be conducted by the group`s teacher or by a trained teacher that would work together with the other teachers. The timing allotted to an optional activity is equal to the other learning activities. Thus, there will be just one optional class for children of 37 – 60 months (3- 5 years of age) and two for children of 61 – 84 months (5 – 7 years of age). *For children under the age of 3 there are no optional activities planned.*

IV.
Early childhood education is seen as important and as equal to another level of education: "Educated side by side, untroubled from infancy by divisive prejudices, acquainted with all that is great and good in the different cultures, it will be borne in upon them as they mature that they belong together. Without ceasing to look to their own lands with love and pride, they will become in mind Europeans, schooled and ready to complete and consolidate the work of their fathers before them, to bring into being a united and thriving Europe."
Beside all the political and Curriculum reglementation important for child development is to provide early education statting with early age.

Figure C1: Participation rates in ECEC (children between 4-years-old and the starting age of compulsory education) as a percentage of the corresponding age group, 2001, 2011
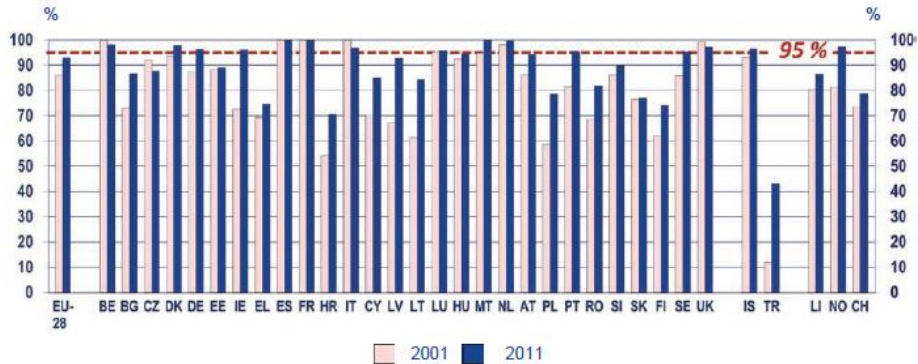
	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
2001	85.9	100.0	73.2	92.0	93.7	87.7	88.3	72.6	69.3	100.0	100.0	54.1	100.0	70.4	67.2	61.2	95.3
2011	92.9	98.1	86.6	87.8	97.9	96.4	89.1	96.1	74.6	100.0	100.0	70.6	96.8	85.0	92.7	84.2	95.6

	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH
2001	92.5	95.0	98.1	86.0	58.5	81.5	68.5	86.0	76.4	62.0	85.7	99.0	93.3	11.9	80.4	81.3	73.5
2011	94.5	100.0	99.6	94.3	78.4	95.4	82.0	89.8	76.9	74.0	95.3	97.0	96.5	43.1	86.3	97.2	78.7

Source: Eurostat, UOE (data extracted November 2013).

Figure C3: Participation rates of children under the age of 3 in ECEC, by hours per week, 2011
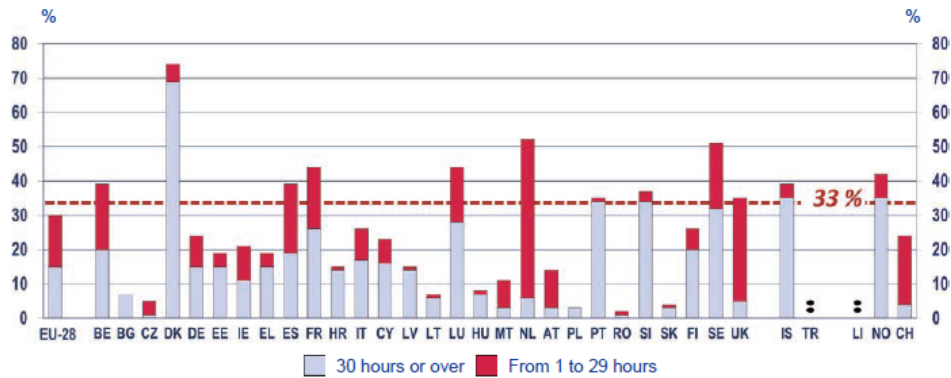
	EU-28	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
30 hours or over	15	20	7	1	69	15	15	11	15	19	26	14	17	16	14	6	28
From 1 to 29 hours	15	19	0	4	5	9	4	10	4	20	18	1	9	7	1	1	16

	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	IS	TR	LI	NO	CH
30 hours or over	7	3	6	3	3	34	1	34	3	20	32	5	35	:	:	35	4
From 1 to 29 hours	1	8	46	11	0	1	1	3	1	6	19	30	4	:	:	7	20

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC (data extracted November 2013).

PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) as international survey conducted under the auspices of the OECD observed that those

children who attended early education measured higher performance levels at the aged 15th in reading literacy, mathematical literacy and scientific literacy, than those who not attended early education. *The survey is based on representative samples of 15- year-old pupils, who may either be in lower secondary or upper secondary education, depending on the structure of the system. Besides measuring performance, PISA 2012 international survey includes questionnaires to identify variables in the school and family context which may shed light on their findings. All indicators cover both public schools and private schools, whether grant-aided or otherwise.* (http://www.oecd.org/pisa/aboutpisa/)

References:
Bennett, J., (2008). Early childhood services in the OECD countries: Review of theLiterature and Current Policy in the Childhood Field.UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre

Barnett, S., (2008).Benefits of Quality Pre-K, NIEER, (http://www.nieer.org)(on-line)

Bernard van Leer Foundation, Early Childhood Matters Journal, june 2007, number 108, Promoting social inclusion and respect for diversity in the early years, 2007, (OECD Report Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care, 2006, apud)

ETUCE-European Region of Education International 2012 Regional Conference (http://www.csee-etuce.org/images/attachments/ETUCEPolicy PaperonECEEN.pdf)(accesed 30.09.2014)

Kelemen G., (2014), *Early education Across European Countries (0-6),* in Play, Toys And Culture, Rocío Serrano, María Isabel Amor, Mª Elena Gómez y Dalila Lino (Coords.), Cordoba, Spain

Comisia Europeană, (2012). Regândirea educaiei:investiii în competene pentru rezultate socio-economice mai bune. Strasbourg 20.11.2012 (http://ec.europa.eu/education)(on-line)

Comisia Comunităţilor Europene, (2009). Competene cheie entru o lume în curs de schimbare. Proiect de raport de activitate comun pentru anul 2010 al Consiliului i al Comisiei peivind punerea în aplicare a programului de lucru„ Educaie i formare profesională 2010

EACEA, (2012). Date cheie privind educaţia în Europa 2012. (http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/educatioa/eurydice) (on-line)

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2014. Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe.2014 Edition. Eurydice and Eurostat Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key_data_series/1 66EN.pdf

Ionescu, M.,& col.,UNICEF & IE, (2003). *Situaţia actuală a învăţământului preşcolar din România*. Studiu de analiză. Bucureşti: Reprezentanţa UNICEF în România

Ravens,J., (2012). Conferinţa GPE/UNICEF privind calitatea educaţiei timpurii. Atena, 2012 (http://www.globalpartnership.org)(on-line)

Schweinhart, L. J, (2005). The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40 Summary, Conclusions, and Frequently Asked Questions. (http://www.highscope.org)(on-line)

Voiculescu, F., (2008). Educaţia în economia de piaţă. Iaşi: Institutul European

Vrăşmaş, E., (2011), *Reflecţii asupra direcţiilor actuale în studiile privind educaţiea timpurie,* REPERE. Revistă de Ştiinţele Educaţiei Numărul 5/2011

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING A DEEP APPROACH OF LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Camelia Nadia BRAN, PhD
Faculty of Educational Science, Psychology and Social Sciences
"Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad
brancamelia@gmail.com

Abstract:*Internationally there have been many studies on the effects of metacognitive intervention on learning approaches. We aimed to identify the learning approach of the students preparing to become teachers, enrolled at the „Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad. We have conceived and implemented a formative experiment revealing the influence of the metacognitive regulation on the deep and strategic approach of learning. Instruments such as: reflexive diary, self-analysis protocols, peer evaluation, metacognition portofolio were very effective in developping a deep approach of learning.*

Key words: *Learning approaches: deep, strategic, surface, metacognitive regulation, expreiment*

1.Theoretical frame

The analysis of some of the learning approaches in higher education started from N. Entwistle' conception (1998) which affirmed that *the development of the conception regarding students' learning (from memorising to transforming*) and intellectual development *(from dualism to relativism)* are factors that influence the option for a certain approach to learning and they are based on the argument that a learner doesn't approach leaning in just one way. Other research emphasise the role of ***the educational environment as the third factor of influence regarding the approaches to learning.*** This involves the nature of the working task, the circumstances in which performance will take place, providing the data concerning the task etc. (Bigss, J., 1987). Starting from the above we have identified three approaches to learning as noted in Table I :

Table.1 Ways of approaching learning			
	Deep learning	Surface Learning	Strategic learning
Definition	Examining new facts and ideas critically, and tying them into existing	Accepting new facts and ideas uncritically and attempting to store them as	Targeting the students' learning process

	cognitive structures and making numerous links between ideas.	isolated, unconnected, items.	towards achieving maximum academic performance, by the objective means of grading.
Characteristics	Looking for meaning.	Relying on rote learning.	Relying on both rote leaning and meaningful learning, depending on the assessment task.
	Focussing on the central argument or concepts needed to solve a problem.	Focussing on outwards signs and the formulae needed to solve a problem.	
	Interacting actively. Distinguishing between argument and evidence.	Receiving information passively. Failing to distinguish principles from examples.	
	Making connections between different module/chapters/units.	Treating parts of modules and programmes as separate.	Using systematic learning methods to receive the highest mark possible.
	Relating new and previous knowledge.	Not recognising new material as building on previous work.	Two focus points: the academic material and the requirements of the assessment.
	Linking course content to real life.	Seeing course content simply as material to be learnt for the exam.	
Encouraged by Students'	Having an intrinsic curiosity in the subject.	Studying a degree for the qualification and not being interested in the subject.	Choosing the subjects/specialisations where they get highmarks easily.
	Being determined to do well and mentally engaging when doing academic work.	Not focussing on academic areas, but emphasising others (e.g. social, sport).	Extrinsic motivation.
	Having the appropriate background knowledge for a sound foundation.	Lacking background knowledge and understanding necessary to understand material.	
	Having time to pursue interests, through good time management.	Not enough time / too high a workload.	Wanting to receive high marks and other external rewards (scholarships
	Positive experience of education leading to	Cynical view of education, believing that factual recall is what is required.	

	confidence in ability to understand and succeed.	High anxiety.	etc.) Driving to succeed. Paying attention to the teacher's requirement and to their own assessment.
			Good time management. Using efficient learning techniques. Pragmatic view of education and learning Results oriented.
Encouraged by Teachers'	Showing personal interest in the subject. Bringing out the structure of the subject. Concentrating on and ensuring plenty of time for key concepts. Confronting students' misconceptions. Engaging students in active learning. Using assessments that require thought, and requires ideas to be used together. Relating new material to what students already know and understand. Allowing students to make mistakes without penalty and rewarding effort. Being consistent and fair in assessing declared	Conveying disinterest or even a negative attitude to the material. Presenting material so that it can be perceived as a series of unrelated facts and ideas. Allowing students to be passive. Assessing for independent facts (short answer questions). Rushing to cover too much material. Emphasizing coverage at the expense of depth. Creating undue anxiety or low expectations of success by discouraging statements or excessive workload. Having a short assessment cycle.	Providing feedback only by means of marks. Not being aware that the educational environment which they created and coordinate leads to a certain students' approach to learning. Creating a competitive educational environment. Appreciating the students who receive the highest grades.

	intended learning outcomes, and hence establishing trust		

Deep approach to learning and especially strategic approach to learning involve students' good knowledge of the task, and of the ways of solving them efficiently. They also mean good planning skills, the monitoring and assessment of the resources and processes involved in learning. The premises for metacognision are thus created.

1. *The design of the formative experiment*

In order to identify the learning approaches of the students attending the pedagogical module at the ''Aurel Vlaicu' University of Arad, we have developed an experimental design among subjects using the technique of equivalent samples (Bocoş, M., 2003). The stages of formative experiment were as follows: stage I Implementation and analysis of the results and conclusions of pretesting, September-January 2008; stage II conducting the formative experiment on a period of 14 weeks in the academic year 2007-2008, February-June 2008; stage III **post-experimental** involves applying AIIAS questionnaire which evaluates the impact of formative experiment on both students from the experimental sample and the ones from the controlled sample; *June 2008; stage* IV - analysis, processing and interpretation of data *July-September 2008 ; stage* V- **retesting or distance checking** was done after a longer period of time – October *2008; stage* VI drawing the final conclusions of the research November-December *2008; stage* VII evaluating the research – rendering the experience acquired in the pedagogical practice.

Table 1: Sample of subjects

Table 1					
Types of courses specific to pedagogical module	**Faculty**	**Number**	**Percentage %**	**Experimental group**	**Control group**
Optional	Engineering	112	26,67	60	52
	Economic Sciences	104	24,77	60	44
Compulsory	Human Sciences	142	33,81	60	82
	Exact Sciences	62	14,75	30	32
	Total	210	100%	210	210

The instrument used was the questionnaire "Approach to Learning and Study Skills Inventory" (ALSSI). This is is an adaptation of the questionnaire "Approaches and Study Skills Inventory for Students" (ASSIST). ASSIST is based on ASI questionnaire (Approaches to Studying Inventory) developed by Entwistle, Ramsden N.and , PR, in 1981, for approaches to students' learning. The questionnaire has three sections. Section A- *Students' conception on learning*. In this section there are 6 items that describe a particular conception about learning, items a, c, e describe the rote learning, and items b, d, f refer to learning as understanding and development. Section B-The learning approach contains 52 items in Assist variant, and in the proposed variant 53 items, which when interpreted will be grouped into three categories: deep approach, surface approach and strategic approach. For each approach, items can be grouped into

several subscales some are major, defining that category, and others are complementary which can be modified according to the purpose of research. Section C- *preference for different types of courses and teaching styles* contains 5 items grouped in the scale for "promoting understanding" - items b, c, f, g and four items which may be included in the scale " transmission of information" - items a, d , e, h..

The results show that in the **pretest** the approach most used by students is **the surface approach (42.4%), followed by the strategic approach (29%) and deep approach (28.1%).** We have realised that we get different results depending on the compulsory or optional character of the courses in the module teaching. Thus, if the students are required to do the course *compulsory*, results are similar to those outlined above, surface approach is used at length, followed by the strategic approach. Deep approach is not much used. Even if the students who have the pedagogical module as an optional course, mostly use the surface approach it is followed by deep approach. The least used is strategic approach. The results for approaching learning from the point of view of the **specialisation of the faculty** show that a surface approach is predominantly used, with the exception of *students from the Human Sciences, for whom strategic approach prevails, followed by surface approach and finally dep approach*. For the students from other faculties surface approach prevails, followed by deep approach and strategic approach.

Inferential processing regarding the equivalence of the two groups show that during **the pretest stage we do not have significant differences statistically speaking at a threshold p <.05 between the control group and experimental group in terms of investigated dimensions.**

The identification of the purpose and objectives of formative experiment was followed by establishing general and specific hypothesis.

The general Hypothesis tested in the experiment was **"Consistent and systematic using of methods, techniques and instruments for planning, monitoring and evaluation of learning process (metacognitve regulation), within the methodological frame of problem solving, role play and case study, promotes deep approach of learning by students; learning as transformation and increasing performance"** and specific hypotheses derived from this are:

Is1*:"Behaviours of search meaning, establishing connections between knowledge, reasoning and curiosity towards the thematic study are influenced by the existence / absence of clear goals for subjects attending the courses of psycho-pedagogy module.*

Is2*:"Changing learning management is possible through the use of techniques for organizing, planning the time for study, monitoring and*

evaluation of learning and has the effect of increasing the level of self-evaluating performance in a specific subject. "

The sample of subjects was the same as in the pretest and the sample content was presented in connection with the subject-specific competencies "The Didactics of Specialty', the methodological framework of metacognitive reflection, and working tools used by students for metacognitive training.

3. Methods and instruments used for pedagogical intervention

Among the methods and instruments used for the training of the processes of planning, metacognitive monitoring and evaluation (in addition to problem solving, role playing and case studying) we have mentioned:

• **The self-observation method** of the process of solving problems by students, through the working tool designed to facilitate students' self-observation on the process of solving problems – working sheet with the process of resolving problems; it was used throughout the formative experiment. With this tool we have wanted to render the students' metacognitive processes involved in solving problems. Metacognition involves feelings about the difficulty of assessing the problem and solution, metacognitive knowledge about the problem and strategies held by the subject that can be used to resolve, plan and monitor the process of thinking and self-regulation. (According to Bakracevic Vukman, K., 2005)

• **Checklist of regulating cognition (RC) aimed to provide a comprehensive Heuristic approach to facilitate cognitive regulation. Best applied in the process of problem-solving, RC allows students who are less experts in metacognition to implement a regulating sequence by which to control their performance. RC comprises three categories of regulation: planning, monitoring and evaluation.**

• **The reflection diary.** This was written by each student at the beginning, throughout and at the end of the case study, students having the opportunity to develop in the process of reflection, open responses relating to planning, monitoring and evaluation of their learning activities.

• **Peer assessment** is an alternative method of assessment in which students' behaviours are evaluated by colleagues. To carry out peer assessment in the formative program we have proposed two formative working tools:. "Sheet analysis / the self-assessment sheet of the lesson" and "peer evaluation sheet of the quality of presenting the case studies"

• **The traffic light - accounting for their own activities** is a tool that facilitates the complex process of self-analysis, of learning processes, solving problems or tasks, of estimating successful and unsuccessful aspects and anticipating opportunities of further improvement.

• **Metacognitive portfolio** is a portfolio of progress and at the same time of evaluating the students' activity at the pedagogical disciplines

included in the sample content. All strategies, methods and instruments described in this chapter apply to the disciplines "specialty didactics', were personalized by each student, and were included in the portfolio together with other products developed by students on the way.

- **Semi-structured Individual Interview** derived from clinical interview, whose purpose is to reveal deep information about the subject under investigation; the interview, in the psycho-pedagogical experiment proposed by us aims at finding some in depth information about progress in approaching learning by developing metacognitive skills achieved by subjects included in the experimental sample.

The posttest was given at the end of the formative experiment in June 2008. The aim of the posttest was to measure the effects of formative experiment on way of approaching learning in the experimental group and compare them with the control group. The sample of subjects (both in the experimental and in the control group) were reapplied the AIIAS questionnaire on ways of approaching learning (described in Chapter IV) and the '**posttest questionnaire**' tool. Structurally, the questions in the questionnaire are closed and they are questions opinion reflecting the inner world of subjects (Rotariu, Tr, Iluţ, P., 2001) their attitude towards changes, in the formative experiment in learning. The questionnaire seeks to identify the difficulties students had to cope with in carrying out the activities proposed in the experiment and to highlight students' opinion on the effectiveness of working tools used for the training of metacognitive regulation. Though the proposed tool (the last item), we want to highlight students' intention to transfer instruments used in the experiment, in learning from other disciplines of study.

The retest was done after a longer period of time, in October 2008 to check durability, strength of students' acquisitions. And at this stage the same tool will be applied as for the post-experimental stage, i.e. the AIIAS on learning approach.

Collecting data provided by the instruments above was followed by a statistical processing and a qualitative and quantitative analysis to see if the proposed assumptions are confirmed or refuted.

4. Analysis and interpretation of the data received through the formative experiment.

In contemporary pedagogy where the stress moves from the learning outcomes of an activity to the process which generated them we considered appropriate and relevant training for the experiment, the analysis of the metacognitive regulation of training involved in students' leaning from the experimental group. Thus, the results that will ensue posttest and retest, will rely on the data related to the caracteristics of the formative process.

Interpretation of the self-analysing sheets of the process of problem solving. Primary processing of the data provided by this working tool work shows that scores cumulated by each student by processing the three sheets are distributed normally and symmetrically, i.e. the lower and higher than average results are relatively equal. The level of metacognitive awareness of the students involved in solving problems is on average higher by 17.68 compared with the average expected. (Significant for p. <01). Comparing the scores obtained by students after reflection on the process of annual planning, on the units of learning and lesson plans, we can see that they do not differ significantly from one type of problem to another. We notice that in all three cases, the scores are close; the value of standard deviation is low. There is a significant difference between scores obtained by girls and by those of boys, girls tend to get a higher score in metacognitive reflection on project done on units of learning and on the lesson plans than boys. Girls think they can solve the task and they consider that the task is not difficult and that they have achieved the expected result. The strategies preferred by students in solving tasks were (in order of preference, calculating the average percentage for the three categories of problems) step by step approach (41.91%), solving by analogy (21.9%), updating information out of memory (13.33%), and trial and error (11.43%), modeling (7.62%), and testing hypotheses (3.81%). The outcomes of processing the results of this working tool prove the formative function of the self-observation sheet on training the metacognitive regulation processes of students. From one task to another students showed a higher confidence in their forces and have become more aware of the resolution strategies used and they have appreciated the outcome in connection to the planned objectives.

Interpretation of analysis sheets presenting case studies and simulations. The scores obtained are distributed according to a normal curve and approximately symmetrically, the average being equal to the median and that of the module. The average of the score obtained differs significantly from the value at the middle range of data points, between theoretical minimum and maximum score, being significantly higher than the anticipated average. *There is a significant distinction between expected frequencies and the ones observed obtained by subjects boys and girls. Girls tend to have higher score in assessing their colleagues.* (Hi Square = 59.48, significant for p **<.01**). The observations that come with the assessment of supporting case studies and simulations are relatively small, most subjects in the formative experiment giving the items on the analysis scale only the rank considered adequate. We can see that both positive and negative feedback relate to the scientific / educational content which was transmitted, and to the didactic approach, to the teaching strategies used, etc. The feedbacks on para- and non-verbal communication given while presenting the case / supporting

simulation have a high frequency and show the participants' receptivity to the educational situation in this type of communication and emphasize the need for initial and continuous teacher training from the point of view of developing communication competencies.

The analysis and interpretation of the self-regulating metacognitive simulation tools: reflection diary, the traffic light – accounting own their own activities. Analyzing in terms of quality, the reflection diaries we can identify statements on the processes of cognitive regulation specific to the cognitive approaches of the discipline "Specialty Didactics' and less reflective statements, with a real metacognitive character. This can be explained by the students' previous insufficient training, starting in the lower cycles of schooling, in managing their own learning. This results in students' awareness of the aspects related to identifying the objectives of the task, evaluating it and the existing resources needed to resolve it and, and a low awareness of the processes linking these resources and drawing up a detailed plan of action to achieve the objectives. Subjects show high confidence in their action and are aware of the effort needed to work through the plan, but often underestimate the effort as indicators of performance in achieving the task and the steps to go in this direction are poorly identified by the students. Regarding the scores in the assessment process, the obtained average is higher than the theoretical one and it shows a medium to high level of students' evaluative capabilities from a metacognitive perspective. We can notice an overestimation of the activity and the achieved results. The prove lies in the high frequency of answers like: "everything worked, everything was perfect." Students are pleased with the product developed and propose few actional alternatives to optimize future activities.

Processing data from semistructural essay "How I made my learning more efficient. Following participation in Specialty Didactic courses, subjects identified a changing process being aware of the limitations of the surface approach to learning, based on memorising concepts and deciding to change the approach to learning to deep approach to learning. ".. The most effective way is learning logically, finding correspondences, and analogy with similar life situations"(C.R.)

Subjects showed the role of their own effort in achieving thorough, deep learning. Following formative experiment "I have discovered another very effective way of learning and that is learning through practice" (CR) It is noted that the subject does not only refer to the classical method of exercising, but to a different way of organizing learning through discovery, cooperation and implementation in practice of the things learned. "The preformed cognitive exercises led to the development of knowledge and improving the capacity of assimilating new information, students reacting in a positive way and being directly involved" (MD). Subjects were aware of

the importance of learning through discovery, of using activating teaching strategies.

The Assessment of the metacognitive portfolio of each student was made on the basis of the portfolio evaluation grid taking into account the following criteria: diversity of products included in the portfolio; scientific accuracy of the documents produced (annual, semestrially, unit of learning planning, lesson plans) bibliographic references; the aesthetics of the portfolio Originality and creativity. The observed average is significantly higher than the theoretical one (based on t test for one sample) which shows subjects' concern in preparing the portfolio. As a conclusion, it may be said that the results of quantitative and qualitative processing of the products of subjects included in the formative experiment shows an average level of metacognitive self-regulating processes involved in the processes of learning discipline "Specialty Didactics'. There has been a trend in reconsidering the students' way of approaching learning, some of them moving from mechanical learning, based on passive methods, to assuming their own learning and intensifying the efforts to achieve understanding and integrate knowledge into their own cognitive system. Post-test and retest results and will highlight the extent to which these changes have occurred and will confirm or refute the effectiveness of the instruments used in the training program.

Comparing the descriptive results of the experimental and control groups in posttest, we found that students undergoing formative intervention conceive learning more as a changing process, comparing to those included in the control group. The control group shows lower values of learning as transformation and higher values for learning as reproduction compared to those in the experimental group. The experimental group has a significantly higher level of deep approach to learning and strategic approach to learning than the control group in the posttest stage. Also, the level of surface approach to learning is significantly higher in the posttest stage for the control group.

We can conclude that the main assumption *"constant and systematic use by university teachers of some strategies (methods, techniques, working tools, forms of organisation) of exercising planning activities, monitoring and metacognitive evaluation (metacognitive self-regulation), in the methodological framework of problem solving, role playing, and of case study, promotes the use of deep approach to learning by students, learning as **transformation and increasing performance'** is valid and the intervention program was efficient.

At the end of the investigative-formative approach we have done, we emphasize the need for training the students to manage their own learning on the basis of academic performance and effectiveness (achieving learning

objectives with an optimum consumption of resources regarding activities and procedures appropriate to their own learning needs.

References:

Biggs, J., (1987), *Student approaches to learning and studying,* research monograph, Australian Council for Educational Research, Radford House

Blickle, G., (1996), *Personality traits, learning strategies, and performance*, în „European Journal of Personality", **10**, 337-352.

Bocoş, M., (2003), *Teoria şi practica cercetării pedagogice*, Editura Casa Cărţii de Ştiinţă, Cluj-Napoca

Bocoş, M., (2007), *Didactica disciplinelor pedagogice Un cadru constructivist*, Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca

Bradford, K., (2004), *Deep and Surface Approaches to Learning and the Strategic Approach to Study in Higher Education; Based on Phenomenographic Research,* www.arasite.org/guestkb.htm,

Chelcea, S., (1975), *Chestionarul în investigaţia sociologică*, Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, Bucureşti

Entwistle, N., (2000), *Promoting Deep Learning Through Teaching and Assessment: Conceptual Frameworks and Educational Contexts*. Paper presented at the TLRP Conference, Leicester (www.ed.ac.uk/etl/publications.html

Glava, A., (2007), *Metacogniţia şi optimizarea învăţării,* Teză de doctorat, Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca

Joiţa, E., (2002), *Educaţia cognitivă, Fundamente. Metodologie,* Editura Polirom, Iaşi

Marton, F., Saljo, R., (1984), *Approaches to learning,* în Marton, F., Hounsell, D., Entwistle, N., „The experince of learning", Edinburgh:Scottish Academic Press

Mashisi,M.K., Rabin, C.E., (1999), *A study of the approaches to learning, engagement with the learning context and conceptualization of learning of a group of fourth year accounting students,* HERDSA Annual Ineternational Conference, Melbourne, 12-15 July, 1999

Tait, H., Entwistle, N.J., & Mc Cune, V., (1998), *ASSIST: a reconceptualisation of the Approaches to Studying Inventory,* în C. Rust (ed.) „Improving students as learners" Oxford: Oxford Brookes University, The Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development

Veenman, M., &. Van Hout-Wolters, B., & Afflerbach, P., (2006), *Metacognition and learning: conceptual and methodological considerations,* în „Metacognition Learning" (2006) 1: 3–14, DOI 10.1007/s11409-006-6893-0

THE SUFFERANCE OF THE ALTERNATIVE (POSITIVE) AND *"THE GOLDEN CLOD SYNDROME"*

Gheorghe SCHWARTZ, Ph,D.,
Faculty of Educational Science, Psychology and Social Sciences
"Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad
ghschwartz@rdslink.ro

Abstract: We will begin with an annual hypothesis that *the alternative is the only reason (excluding the physiological causes) that is responsible for the discomfort mood, spiritual dissatisfaction or revolt. (Is useless, I believe, to specify that it is about a real existence for a present alternative or being considerate negative)*

Key words: *spiritual dissatisfaction, physiological causes, golden clod syndrome,*

1.   Let's begin with the exception: "accepting the physiological causes". It could be enough as an argumentation, to close this paragraph, the simple calling forth pathological mosaic (1.1.). What is out of perimeter that delimited the norm and is out of this introduction concerning, and the elements that are placed inside the circle are[4] answerable for the respective moment disposition. If we wouldn't ignore the way in which way our organism is behaving in that moment, to explain a certain obviously (dis)comfort mood, even psychical one, it is the same eloquent that my behavior will be affected (at least) by the time sequence. But totally incomplete is the explanation of soul dissatisfaction, beginning only with a inadequate answer from our body for the asked requirements at that time. If the revolt or the dissatisfaction give physiological effects is proved, as I said, I wouldn't deny their role for the disposition, as behavior moment. Much more, the physiological accompany for psychical discomfort moods could came as a cause, but as an effect too. The causes – when past moods are updated them too by excessive physiological answers and beginning from those updating, it will get "incomprehensible", a very bad mood; effect – when the psychical dissatisfaction is the one who gave the organic answers more then obviously ones, but always present. (And the sickness itself as psychical modification causes: tuberculosis increase the libido, cancer, unjustified optimism, and so on.) Situation founded, by example, in the chapter Emotions from *classical psychology* (The psychosomatically answers

---

[4] Them too

being present, of course, during a special satisfaction settlement). This would by my mood from the path. But how I will interpret my dissatisfaction unleashed on a good physical state or not less bad that a few seconds ago? From where is coming this soul sufferance, this dissatisfaction that does not let me and who tortures me, even nothing is painful?

2.   Let's turn back to previous example at 2.10.10., to the prisoner that lay down in his cool cell, after he took his breakfast, that no more no less, kill his hunger. So, hi is not hungry, no feel hot, without hard and continuous physical efforts, nobody tease him, and – however! – he is feeling deeply unhappy[5] by his situation. This "unhappiness" is not deeply struggling mood, neither deeply discovering mood, it hasn't nothing to do with new born from reverie melancholy. His unhappiness (which could go till the most explicit inferior revolt) follows in an obsessive way the wish to be "outside". "Outside", where his girlfriend is (sex need, but the affective energy re-balance) where it is his fellows (see security need and herd impulse, 2.14.), where is count – at least in the eyes of somebody – as being important (see the affirmation necessity, 2.20., the positive social pressure), where is not segregated and where it could express itself, *as anybody else* (see again 2.14.), more or less, fry. For this he would happily give up for the place safety where and when, just because is guarded, the security is guarantee, the food, a worm place, and so on[6].

3.   Why our prisoner would betray the safety necessity guaranty for an alternative who gave the freedom perspective on tomorrow un-safety perspective, by inherently discrimination in the case of his prisoner life reveal, by a hard work that will get for him food and a worm place guarantee (that was guaranteed in the prison)? The easier answer would, let's say, just the ancestral freedom necessity is the one who loads the wish. If he wouldn't had the "outside" pleasant moments memory (see 2.109.3.), it is hard to suppose that our man wouldn't give up by his will the minimum certain comfort. To give it away, for what, if those knowledge are missing? ("*Nothing couldn't be wish without being known before.*" 2.9.3.)

If the conscious wouldn't know that there is a first place, nobody would suffer knowing that is on the second place; if I wouldn't know that my neighbor had a better car than mine – that push me to take action for something like this or just to wish at least one same preferment – it wouldn't batter my old car as long as it is make its duty (but se 2.20. too); if I wouldn't know that there are rich people, I wouldn't batter to be poor. *Just the conscience of the alternative produces me spiritual sufferance.*

---

[5] We use here the "**unhappy**" word sense as being a result of a bigger dissatisfaction, dissatisfaction caused by some cause. The current word sense has nothing to do with the "**happy**" word, by the **2.10.8.** consideration and do not mean a contrary sense of it.

[6] Because we are talking about as it considered normal situations, we are referring to a prisoner from a democratic state, where the detention conditions guarantee an individual dignity and security.

4.   If at 2.11.3. we could give some examples where the envy and/or the competition spirit would be enough for justify the dissatisfaction feelings, and the need for better, for progress, fully explain them, other examples would let everything in charge of pure alternative: I want to go to the theatre, but by any reason I couldn't do it, I want to go to the see, but I couldn't get the hoped break, I would like to buy an object, but I don't have the necessary money. I am the one that want to go to the theatre and I have no idea about who will go there, there is a spiritual need and I find about that representation that is interesting. I am not in a competition with somebody to satisfy me that necessity just with an alternative that seems not being handy. Does mean that a false alternative by my capability point of view, but with a possibility about I knows and about I am not believed that is inaccessible to me. My dissatisfaction as a consequence of those three examples could be easier justified as being the present conflict between wish and possibility. Even in the Political Economy, the human problem is choosing, does mean that permanent conflict between preferences and possibilities. The choosing itself doesn't offer just the joy of getting something, but the dissatisfaction of obligation to give up something else too. When the satisfaction is big, the sufferance is little. Just, a in the case of dissatisfaction justification, revolt, unhappiness, through rivalry reason from the previous paragraph, the argumentation isn't enough without showing the eliminatory cause, that one through you know that there is another possibility, and the conflict between wish and possibility have no meaning if the wish wouldn't be for a certain situation, another one that the existed one. And, again, just the real alternative or just the imaginative one, is the one who stood at the sufferance origin. (See "*Happy are those who are poor by soul*", by the meaning "Are happy the ones who don't know" and "Unhappy are those who know".) Much more: a born blind and born deaf person, the same as a vegetative idiot, who don't know. The heat, food and memories of those aren't enough. They don't know that is possible somehow else, but they don't have regrets and they aren't unhappy. That is not available for a deaf or a blind person that wasn't born with that infirmity. That one knows what he lost. The same a blind or a deaf person who learned, in his way, what sort of facilities he doesn't get in a world of peoples who see and hear.

5.   Instead, the fact that I am hungry or it hurt means strictly physiological dissatisfactions which, to express them self, doesn't need alternatives, because those are elements by my biological survival depends. I am not dissatisfied because I am hungry, just because I am hungry. If I am dissatisfied because of that too, then I began to judge about the state where I am and to tell me that I could be somewhere else, somewhere where I wouldn't starve, so, to my physiological sufferance, there is added a rational spirit mood, beginning with my organism physiological necessities to eat, but added to this and happening in the same time.

6.   Let's turn back, to the rivalry problem, accepting it as a life real situation that could give birth to an envy feeling. The reality itself – the same as the jealousy - could not appear just if there is known that there is somebody else, another alternative for that situation. If I am not with Her, then could be him. Without knowing that there is a him, there is no alternative, without him there is no alternative and no jealousy. Eva hasn't had to be jealous.

7.   The alternative is the conscious of something else or of otherwise. It is advertised as the result of the choosing or of the choose one. (Choosing, when I decide to, my choosing when I am in that situation). And the fact that just now the show in go on, at which I could attend, (that mean it is happening something that constitute an alternative for my coming to the faculty course, alternative that I couldn't honored it) attention me that, parallel with my way, there are other ways too, some more interstate, ways which are forbidden to me now. Generally, when is the possibility to choose, the passed.

8.   We have three types of alternatives: the ones who are in the past, those who are in the present and those who are in the future:

a)   When the alternative is in the past, it could bear regrets.

b)   When the alternative is in the present, it could bear acute sufferance.

c)   When the alternative is in the future, it could bear my future projection alternatives. The ones, which I consider to be non-realizable, at the beginning, create sufferance, after that revolt, frequently resignation. When the subject is the one that I choose, there is taking place a retroactive hypothetically choosing: "it could happened somehow else…" If the result is not a happy one, this possibility (alternative) represents what it hurts. (I got married with Vasile, the animal who beat me. If I would take Ion, *for sure* it wouldn't happen something like this to me. But: I have just two ears and I am not suffering at all by this cause. But everybody around be would had three ears?)

9.   Not even the existential problems it could not be separate by the conscious of the alternative. I wouldn't be scarred by death if I wouldn't know that I could, just for a while, to live. As ill I would be, I couldn't get ill. As old I would be, there is the possibility (at least hypothetically) to add a year to my life. Sure, not just the only alternative is the one who makes me scarred by death, but the envy that other lives will go on, and the herd spirit (why exactly me?[7]), and self belonging (2.32.), and the big fear for unknown, and so on. But, at first, the alternative existence – as theoretical as could be - that I could not die make me *however* to suffer that I will die. (Without getting in little thinks, I will ask for attention for an interstate particularity of

---

[7] If the death treat is hover over the entire collectivity, the faith wouldn't seem to be so cruel, like when I am the imminent choused for disappearance. If the all student from the first year will fail n exam, won't be so sad comparative with the situation when I am the only one who didn't pass that exam.

this situation: the alternative, in its quality of main source of soul dissatisfaction – jealousy, rivalry, failing conscious and so on, non-existing being possible without the alternative - born sufferance even in this intimate parameter of behavior, self belonging – 2.32. For choose particularly case, the alternative is spreader and by this more dreadful, but, whatever, after death state will make me to became something else, the think that scare me the most, doesn't matter my situation, as precarious as it is, of the present situation. Again, the alternative is equal with something else, and that something else takes me off from that comfortable path).

10.   I have, from here, to take the conclusion that the going out (even a hypothetically one) from the path is necessary a discomfort source or a spiritual sufferance? We could exclude the situations when, after an inspired decision, we are full with hopes and we are feeling fulfilled? Then, why the majority of the grooms and brides are not unhappy when they say "yes", knowing that there are so many other possibilities for the choosing that they made it? Why I could, however, joy by a new acquisition from a shop, even if through my choosing I give up many other objects? Why it didn't create me dissatisfaction a daily gesture, that one when I wear a necktie, by all the neckties that I have, by those who fit with my suit. And other who update old pleasant moments. By such a view, the undoubtedly choosing, that accompany each decision, doesn't matter haw tinny, should place me in a forever-negative mood.

In reality, *here wasn't asserted that the alternative give soul pain, that this one, the psychical sufferance, is no more than the alternative existence result.*

11.   Anyway it has to be observed that the positive alternative doesn't exclude the sufferance, as the negative one will determine it. For me isn't a consolation the fact that I didn't broke the leg today, that my house isn't on fire and that even I didn't lost my wallet, because the fact that something less tragically was happened to me, like I miss the tram, which just left the tram station. No failure could be compensated by the belonged alternative of a severe event that could take place, but it didn't. *The positive belonged alternative doesn't submit opposed consequences to belonged negative one.*

12.   A particular expression of alternative sufferance - and including in this parameter – it is represented by the Golden clod syndrome. It is a part of 2.11., because it is referring to a positive alternative, a possible and a logical one which, when is not accomplished give birth as such a big pain as the one who is this case consider that he doesn't deserve it.

12. 1.   The golden clod conception came by a happening when someone own a golden clod and because he didn't need it he wished to give it to the others, to someone that this valuable thing should create satisfaction. But not the neighbor, any unknown person is not available to receive such an important present. *"Why he whished to give it to me?", "What is looking for though this*

present?", " It would be wonderful to receive the golden clod, who could satisfy me unnumbered wishes, but this kind of acts are not made for free in this world…"

12.2. The cause: a susceptibility that has borne by experience will determine a rejection for an act that is not included in the unwritten laws so, it has not a logically motivation.

12.3. The effect: a deeply discomfort mood as for the one who offered that was rejected, as for the one who missed such an opportunity by a reason which came from a deeply susceptibility, without any real motivation for the well specified offer. (I could never see the one who make me such a tempting proposal. I refuse because all who proposed me something till now wasn't disinterested in such manner. Perception that - see 2.29.3. also – is justified by unwritten laws.

12.4. If the receiver sufferance that refused the offer will die during time, the bidder sufferance is so deeply as long as is maintained available or any time as the binder remind about it. The resulted discomfort could be developed in such a manner as a syndrome; it could affect the entire personality and affectivity for that person. By example, a subject invented (or he believed that he invented) a special thing; something that could help the humanity welfare, but any enterprise, any inverter, any authority won't sustain him to put in practice his idea. Doesn't mater if there is a real thing or if there is something that is working just in the binder mind, this one will feel a deeply unhappiness, misunderstood, persecuted, destroyed The way to avoid this sort of dramas – numbered than anybody believe- would be if the society will explain to him where the inventor mistake or why is not opportune his investment. But the society never takes time for this sort of things, and the binder will have to explain him self why he is refuse, explaining which for many times, will pass over his judgment possibility, as the availability to accept the situation. (The binder felt that he is crushed down not just because of his communication necessity, but even for the affirmation and security necessity. More: he will see himself, as he doesn't own anymore the right for whom he worked, he made sacrifices and efforts. Many times, represent his life ideal. " And all of that for a world that is deeply ungrateful and ignorant"). But we have to admit too the variant when, many times, the binder is a veritable golden clod, and everybody around are completely opaque to his gift. The sufferance of this binder - motivated social too – is not bigger comparative with the one who jut believe that his clod is made from real gold.

12.5. The society is full with this sort of person who are unsuccessfully offer them golden clod. (The lack of the success is given by the lack of elements belonging to *success psychology – perseverance, social and historic moment, tenacity, chance, surrounding, assumed model, and so on, elements that are not analyzed here.) Society is full with unpublished writers, unknown*

painters, beautiful women un-admired by nobody, performers in a certain field lost on the pick of the mountain. Each of them had to offer once a golden clod (authentically one or not), each of them was ignored or refused, each of them carry out his disappointment and the sufferance through world.

12.6. The golden clod – in the condition of could be accepted but it wasn't – represent a particular model extremely important for 2.11., the sufferance of the alternative.

13. The sufferance of the alternative could not be considered as being a behavior status for self-pity. The sufferance of the alternative could generate a rage status, it could unleash energies, comparative with self-pity who fid satisfaction through resignation.

By other words, *the alternative gave different moods, being always liable to determine the path breakdown, just the moods that are determined doesn't have to be necessary negative moods. Instead, the soul sufferance is always given by the alternative hypothesis of a positive considerate alternative comparative ti existent alternative.*

References:

Gheorghe Schwartz, *Transversal Psychology,* General Part, *Aspects of the Philosophy of Behavior,* Editura Universităţii „Aurel Vlaicu", Arad

THE IMPACT OF THE OPTIMIZATION PROGRAM ON STUDENTS SELF-TRAINING COMPETENCES

Anca EGERĂU, Ph.D.,
Faculty of Educational Science, Psychology and Social Sciences
"Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad, Romania
anca_petroi@yahoo.com

Abstract: *The personalized strategy of self-training is a dynamic construct, with an adaptive role in relation to all the learning conditions characterized by uniqueness and originality due to contextualization. Student self-training competence involves the interdependent functioning of its components, the pre/sub competences: self-awareness- the determination of the internal resources of self-training, external resources of self-training and contextualization of personalized self-training, self-assessment strategies. We developed a theoretical pattern for STUDENTS' SELF-TRAINIG COMPETENCE based on the meta-cognitive, psycho-pedagogical (teaching) and (self)management perspective. Formation of STUDENTS' SELF-TRAINIG COMPETENCE involves primarily a pedagogical diagnosis, establishing a psycho-pedagogical diagnosis regarding the capabilities of self-training. Any such approach involves the following steps: setting objectives, methodological options for diagnosis, interpretation of results (diagnosis formulation and the formulation of possible predictions). Anyway, a training program of the self-training competence (of students) is basically an ongoing experiment. The design involves an adequate philosophical foundation, relevant criteria, consistency, balance, unity and flexibility.*
 Key words: *psycho-pedagogical counseling, personalized self-training strategy, self-training competence*

1. Introduction

Orientating institutions towards skill management determine a "rethinking" of higher education on the principle of training 'generic skills' (R. Foucher, 2000). Expanding the "European Higher Education Area in a global context", networks of transnational mobility of students, teachers and researchers increasingly increasing openness towards "long life learning" priority orientation towards forming generic/transversal skills training - leading to new theoretical and practical approaches in the training of professionals in education.

These are just some of the arguments in favor of the necessity of education for self-training. Higher education is a "reserved space par excellence, for self-training practices" (R. Foucher, 2000). Developing the skills of self-training should be an essential coordinate of policies and educational praxis.

The problem of returning to practices of self-training is contextualized. The need for self-education – as personalized, unassisted or minimally assisted self-training-and therefore education for (self) training - is driven primarily by strong cultural, socio-political and socio-professional mobility. Investigations of meta-cognitive strategies involved in academic learning was initiated in 1990 by M. Hrimech. Interest in theoretical and practical issues of self-instruction crystallize in conceptual elements more well defined (NA Tremblay, 2003), theories that tend to be unifying and inevitably interdisciplinary (AG Straka, 2007). As for Romanian university education the issues of self-education and self-training is a major challenge.

Developing students' self-training competences becomes more and more relevant to the continuous transformations in the field education. We defined competence self as a whole students' ability to organize (design-carry-evaluate) the conditions of their training. We opted for an approach meta-cognitive and self-management of the phrase, because it allowed the formulation of a suitable theoretical model and operational research.

Student self power (CAS) - having an open and dynamic nature, has a set of specific sub-competences: design their own strategies for self (SPA), output / its application and the (self-) evaluation. We developed a theoretical model based on meta-cognitive perspectives, pedagogical (teaching) and (self) management. Thus, the CAS has the following structure:

Table no.1. Students'self-training competence structure

Subcompetence	Subcompetence characteristics	Implyed and associated capacities
SPA self-projection	*Projection capacities, abilities and of conception*	Option formulation for strategy's personalized elements, relations between them and contextualized view*:* - using data of self-knowledge; -using data describing the context (external) of

		self-training; - harnessing data regarding external self-training resources *SPA Projection:* - formulating the aims of self-training; -establishing of methodological choices on self-training and evaluation; -selecting-organizing the information needed for self-training; -establish appropriate organizational forms; - setting options referring to the use of material resources (space, technology, time) and financial resources.
SPA realization	*Realization /implementation*	- using, in real life situations, self-learning methods and resources.
SPA self-evaluation	*Evaluation, meta-component*	–self-evaluating training results; –self-evaluating the process of self-training as a whole.

2. Coordinates of **the** training program

Personalized strategy of self-training is a dynamic construct, with an adaptive role in relation to the learning conditions, characterized by uniqueness and originality due to contextualization. Students self-training competence involves interdependent functioning of its components, its pre / sub-competences: self-awareness - the determination of the internal of

resources self-training, to determine external resources of their own training and contextualization of personalized self-training, self-awareness strategy.

Developing these skills requires psychological and pedagogical diagnosis on self capacities. An initiative of this kind involves the following steps: formulation of objectives, methodological options for diagnosis, interpretation of results (diagnostic and possible predictions formulation). This diagnosis is the starting point for the future pedagogical counseling of the student.

Based on the theoretical model we have developed an operational model that allowed the generation of variables and specific tools of investigation: a questionnaire to determine the general level of the CAS and an interview guide (semi-structured) on themes of self-training. The questionnaire is flexible enough, being adapted (Anna N. Tremblay - Questionnaire. Des besoins en autoformation) revealing "critical incidents", the difficulties faced by the student in self-training in a certain field, an issue focused on meta-cognitive aspects.

Individual and micro-group diagnoses set in time, within the current educational activity led to the idea that students do not have self structured coherent functional and efficient scientific skills. Hence the obvious need for experimental investigations centered on a formative program. Such a program is an ongoing experiment. Its core can be synthesized in a didactic principle: differentiation-customization–customization in (self) training, being interdisciplinary and requires a creative implementation.

The central aim of the intervention was to educate students' ability to project, use and evaluate personalized self-training strategies. This is based on didactic meta-cognitive principles, on the selection and organization of specific contents (flexible, permeable, dynamic and self-generating personalized strategies of self-training), on employing a complex methodologically set (adaptive in way of personalization purposes) and favorable forms of organization. Evaluating the results of the program focus on at least two dimensions: advances in self-training competences and the performances they generate.

We designed an experimental program that we have implemented in the MA programs conducted in the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Social Work (Aurel Vlaicu University of Arad) as an optional curriculum entitled "Autodidaxie". The overall objectives were: formation of favorable attitudes auto and self, attitudes of openness to self-education and self-education (especially professional) permanent, general skills training self (the profession in the first place). The program was tested with graduate students in year I.

Theoretical premises underlying the program are:

- prevalent academic learning activity is individual learning, developing self-training competences becomes an explicit formative objective of undergraduate curricular projects;
- opens real opportunities for development of qualities necessary to self-training (fundamental aspects for the modern man);
- the development of self-training skills is complex, dynamic and permanently experimental;
- self-training skills are a dynamic, flexible construct with an adaptive role, marked by originality and uniqueness (through contextualization);
- the formation and development of the specific skills of the teacher is important, the diagnosis one;
- developing self-diagnosis capabilities, the meta-cognitive, autonomy, responsibility, involvement in self-training, socio-professional adaptation to contemporary environment;
- key is the partnership between teacher and student, the program can be managed by one teacher only;
- It is necessary to create optimal conditions for structuring self-training skills (psycho-pedagogical diagnosis, information for developing meta-cognitive bearings, contexts of (self) training to exercise self-awareness capabilities, determining external resources for personalized self-training and (self-) evaluation;
- permanent feedback in relation to work is a necessity.

We hypothesized that overall student performance will increase by scientific development and development of self-training skills. From this hypothesis we derived secondary hypotheses: *self-training skills develop if special programs are implemented in this regard; self-training skills develop by ensuring conditions of practice in exciting activities chosen by the students (curricular or extracurricular).* The experiment was designed to monitor the formation - development of self-training skills by both the teacher, as well as the student.

Specific research objectives became:
- Developing a program of self-training skills diagnostic;
- designing of diagnostic tools;
- formulating individual behavioral / performance forecasts;
- generating individual and group psycho diagnostics;
- developing theoretical and operational model for formative intervention;
- development and implementation of self training skills;
- evaluating the results of the program.

The main variables involved in the experiment were the following capabilities: self-awareness; determination and management of internal / external required for self-training; design and implementation of personal

strategy self-training, (self) evaluation of the program and its results. The experimental program was applied to a sample of 120 subjects, students in masters programs. Optional curriculum was covered for one semester to 65 students.

3. Data analysis regarding the impact of **the** training program

Initial diagnosis revealed that students have weak and empirically structured self-training skills, of little effectiveness. They own and use little scientific information about self operational capabilities of knowledge management and internal resources involved in self-training, are almost unstructured and non-functional. With minor nuances, we can say the same about their capabilities for determining and managing external resources. Concerning the skills of design-implementation-evaluation of customized strategy of self-training, it was shown that they work spontaneously and are almost unstructured. Items of meta-cognitive characteristic for self-training are few, isolated, random and inarticulate. Therefore creating sequences in self-reflection, (self) training is both necessary and beneficial.

From individual and micro-group diagnosis, I gradually came to shape current and final attempt at self-diagnosis and self-evaluation. Inconsistencies, errors and hesitations were inherent in the diagnosis, monitoring and improving the skills of self are complex processes, contextualized and designed to substantiate the (re) construction of permanent self customized strategies.

Current diagnosis allowed monitoring the progress of students and the micro-group in terms of gradual, quantitative and qualitative structuring sub-competences in question. The final diagnosis and remote evaluations have demonstrated the usefulness of the program:

- at the beginning of the experiment nearly 66% of the students said that self-training is important "to a great extent", and finally 80% of them give a "very high" degree of importance to this question;
- initially, students' opinions regarding the elements required in designing a personal self-training strategy was oriented towards subjective factors, and after the experiment, students (44.6%) give the most importance to "self-knowledge";
- initially 25% of the students said the practice of self-training in at least one area after the experiment 32% of them own strategies based on scientific projects;
- 41.7% of the initial students said "I do not think there is a particular area of where self-training is required" after the experiment 44% of them indicate at least two areas;
- 44.5% of the students initially declared that deal "often" with self-training in a certain field after the experiment 60% of them say this;

- if 56% felt the matter as being of "average difficulty" finally the degree of awareness increased - 74% stated this;
- initially 37% of the subjects "rarely" thought about the fact that self-training involves the calculation of costs and 26% said they think "often" about this, in the end 60% of them said they think "often" about them;
- initially 32% of the subjects stated that "occasionally" they raise the issue of pre-establishing clear self-training objectives, and 30% do it "often"; finally 56% of them "often" think about this issue; it is interesting that 67% of the students considered it a "difficult" problem although initially only 30% perceived as that; this is evidence of an increasing degree of awareness and accountability in relation to the quality of self-training;
- before the experiment, 41% of the students said they think "often" about the design of self-training approaches; after the experiment 52% do so "very often" and 74% felt the planning problem as "relatively difficult";
- initially 33% of the students perceived self-training as being of "average difficulty" after the experiment 70% felt the need to consult other persons on this issue, changing significantly the perspectives regarding time management in special conditions;
- one third of the students declared before and after the experiment that they think "occasionally" about the need to identify individuals whom they may ask support from regarding self-training; but almost 10% more of them perceive it as having 'average difficulty'; students have come to put more frequently and more pertinently questions about assistance in their efforts to self-training; after completing the program they no longer have the impression that it is so "easy" to plan and find links with the experts;
- at the end of the experiment, 41% of the students (compared to 33% initially) said they think "often" about the problems of self-training, but I found that they have a very different feel about difficulty: initially they said it is of "average difficulty" after retesting they considered it "low difficulty"; enlightening discussions on the subject have shown that, in fact, they do not refer to specific aspects of self-training, but a general perspective; I appreciated that, at this level, specific sub-competence is "weakly" structured, although they are aware of the necessity of self-assessment, students' reflections (much less meta-reflections) are timorous;
- initially 41% of the students indicated that they should identify the necessary self-training materials; after doing this experiment 49% do so (78% of them perceive it as a problem of "average difficulty");

- 1/3 of the subjects initially said that they raise "occasionally" the problem regarding the required financial efforts; after the experiment 1/2 think in the same way; • initially 44% of the subjects reflected about the issue of environment and did it quite "rarely" after the experiment 60% of felt them as being "light" and 52% think "often" about these issues;
- first, 37% of the students said they "often" reflected about the practical transfer of theory; after one semester, nearly 34% do so only "occasionally"; is difficult for a student to design practical theoretical aspects, therefore, after the experiment, the majority (over 85%) said that they think the problem as being of "average difficulty";
- before the experiment, one third of the respondents stated that they "rarely" think about the need to distinguish between conflicting information, after experiment, over 44% of them "often" do this; almost 78% (compared with 41% initially) consider this problem as being of 'average difficulty';
- after completing the program, students realized what "discerning" between the contrary or even contradictory information really means when they selected bibliography, reviewed documents and prepared sets of informational contents;
- We found that 45% of students "rarely" think that during self-training, you may need motivational support (below 30% initially had this opinion); after the experiment 74% of the subjects feel it as being a "difficult environment";
- initially 41% of the subjects "rarely" reflected about their ability to self-train, after the experiment 48% "often" do this.

4. Conclusions

We believe that the program has led to targets being perceived favorably, opening more opportunities for research. We have demonstrated the necessity and usefulness of pedagogical advisors in academic environments. The curricular advisor is a facilitator of effective learning, students receiving support in self-knowledge, especially in terms of learning and training mechanisms. Subjects taking part in the experiment were entitled to realize their resources to activate and exploit them optimally in a personalized manner.

In this context, students can access information and tools to solve problems effectively, become progressively capable of a professional and personal management. Pedagogical counseling, used throughout the program is structured as a service to both students, teachers, managers of the educational process and the educational institution. To the extent that specific, personalized, micro-group, and institutional diagnoses can be made, the advisor becomes a key factor for those involved / interested in the effectiveness of the educational approach. The characteristics of the academic

environment allow us to appreciate that the most appropriate form of psycho-educational counseling are those for "effective learning" and "development".

References:
[1] Glava, A., (2009), *Metacogniţia şi optimizarea învăţării. Aplicaţii în învăţământul superior*, Editura Casa Cărţii de Ştiinţă, Cluj-Napoca
[2] Hacker, D.J., Dunlosky, J., Graesser, A.C.,(1998), *Metacognition*, in Educational Theory and Practice, Lawrence Enblaum Associates
[3] Ionescu, M., (2010), *Instrucţie şi educaţie. Paradigme educaţionale moderne,* ediţia a IV-a, Editura Eikon, Cluj-Napoca
[4] Joiţa, E.,(2007), *Formarea pedagogică a profesorului. Instrumente de învăţare cognitiv-constructivistă*, Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, R.A., Bucureşti
[5] Miclea, M., (1999), *Psihologie cognitivă. Modele teoretico experimentale,* ediţia a II-a revăzută, Editura Polirom, Iaşi
[6] Neacşu, I., (2006), *Învăţarea academică independentă. Ghid metodologic*, Editura Universităţii Bucureşti
[7] Negovan, V.,(2004), *Autonomia în învăţarea academică – fundamente şi resurse*, Editura Curtea Veche, Bucureşti
[8] Niculescu, R.M.,(2000), *Formarea formatorilor,* Editura All Educaţional, Bucureşti
[9] Perfect, T.J.; Schwartz, B.L.,(2002), *Applied Metacognition*, Cambridge University Press
[10] Tremblay, A.N., (2003), *L'autofomation. Pour apprendre autrement,* Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal
[11] Zlate, M., (1999), *Psihologia mecanismelor cognitive*, Editura Polirom, Iaş

DEVELOPING THE RURAL COMUNITY. VALUING LOCAL TRADITIONS. ROMANIAN TRADITIONAL VILLAGE. THE VILLAGES IN BANAT-CRIŞANA AREA

Mihaela GAVRILĂ-ARDELEAN, PhD
Faculty of Educational Science, Psychology and Social Sciences
"Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad, Romania
miha.gavrila@yahoo.com

Abstract

Banat-Crişana area defined as such in terms of the natural environment and history (Gheorghiu, 2008). Here a wide variety of ethnic groups live together: Romanian, Germans, Hungarians, Serbs, Bulgarians, Slovenes, Slovaks, Roma, as few Hebrew.
The territory had a troubled history.
After leaving Dacia by the Romans in the year 271, the Sarmatians migrated throughout the Banat, which will be romanized Christianizing once (after the second half of the fifth century), being gradually assimilated Daco-Romanians, forming future Romanian population. (Gavrilă, Gavrilă, Grivu, 2013).

Keywords: *village, houses, rural comunity, Banat-Crişana area.*

Research Objectives
Objective: To study the villages in Banat-Crişana area: history, structure, customs and traditions, to assess rural community development.
Specific objectives:
   1. The study of the types of houses in the area, according to the traditions of minorities inhabiting.
   2. Similarities.
   3. Differences.

Research hypotheses
Over the history there have been many changes in the composition of houses and villages in the area, but with the preservation of significant characteristics, defining Banat-Crişana area. **The study**
      The study was conducted by documentary and historical sources in the field, in the Banat-Crişana. Here were studied Romanian houses compared with houses of ethnic: Germans, Serbs and Bulgarian, in different historical periods.

The research methodology

For this study we used:
1. Historical sources documented in regional archive;
2. Documents and photographs from personal archives;
3. Fieldwork and documenting displacement field.

The research results

Since the second half of the fifth century, when the Sarmatians were Christianized and assimilated by the Daco-Roman forming future Romanian population, they lived in housing surface and buried in the earth.

The area houses the building materials were twigs "plastered" with clay walls and wood coating (beams). The huts level was about one meter from the surface, the earth being supported by rows of stakes side, the roof being supported by a central pillar. Outside the house were found hearths, kilns, landfills and traces of animal sheds (Bejan, 1995).

Representatives of the Austrian government in the eighteenth century describe similar homes: "The Romanian is building single his house. It is built mostly of trodden earth or of braided twigs or logs placed one upon another and thatched "(Ehrler, 1774). Period until the eighth century was marked by confusion in the area of the Huns, Gepids, Avars and Slavs. In the centuries X - XI were produced deep changes in the area, two strokes.

The first led to the appearance Voivodship of Glad (about 934) in Banat and Menumorut Criş area, under the influence of Byzantine and Bulgarian. In the third and fourth decades of the tenth century they disappear by the Hungarian intervention, forming Banat region's Ahtun (about 1028), a descendant of Glad, a vassal of the Byzantine Emperor, baptized at Vidin.

The second begins with the installation to precede Hungarians in Pannonia and especially with the trend of occupancy of the premises from the east. End occurs during King Stephen I (1000-1038) by replacing his violent Ahtun with Chanadinus (grandson of Glad, as Ahtun) and western Banat joining the Hungarian Kingdom in the eleventh century.

In the interval between the XI and XIII centuries, the Catholic Church appears by setting the Cenad episcopate (1030-1035), a new military organization by counties (Timiş County in 1177, 1197 at the Cenad, 1200 at the Caraş and the 1214 Arad) (Gheorghiu, 2008). During the same period sits Pechenegs and Cumans in the area. Pechenegs appear around 1000 and Cumans were placed here by King Ladislaus the Saint (1077-1095).

In 1333 in the city Caraşova settled southern Slavs Catholic groups, so-called "Craşoveni" or "Krashovani".

Serbs are mentioned in documents before 1389. It is also noted the presence of Ruthenians and Slovaks (Haţegana and Savulov, 1997).

In some parts of Banat (from XI century) and north of the Mureş were seated Hungarian Catholic community, whose numbers increased XIV-XVI centuries, although in Banat Ottoman occupation led to massive abandonment of the area by the Hungarian (Haţegana and Savulov, 1997).

On June 4, 1407 appears for the first time in an official document called "lower parts" of the Hungarian kingdom. "That was going to focus in an expression of committing multiple functions held by Filippo Scolari (1369-1426) in this area. Over time the term will be generalized for all counties of the Tisza and Carpathian Maramureş to the fords Danube" (Haţegana et al. 2007). It was, in fact, a military utmost importance in fighting against the Ottomans. Masters of law thereof will be castellans Timiş until 1552.

In 1429 the Hungarian king Sigismund of Luxembourg (1387-1437) instructs the Danube defense Teutonic Knights. This confirms the existence of the German groups in the area.

The predominance of Romanians in Banat is proven diploma King Ladislau V (1439-1457) of August 29, 1457, confirming the privileges of the eight districts Romanian (Caransebeş, Mehadia Almaj, Lugoj, Caraşova, Ilidia, Comitat and Bârzava).

On October 13, 1479 Banat troops led by Paul Chinezul (1432-1494) come on the Bread Field next Orăştie, where he beat Ottomans.

Despite the victories of John Hunyadi (1407-1456) and Paul Chinezul against the Turks in 1552 falls into their hands Timişoara, which is velayetul (pashalic) of the Timişoara. The city will be released only in 1716 by General Eugene of Savoy (1663-1736).

From Chronicle Banat, written between 1825 and 1827, Nicolae Stoica of Haţeg (1751-1833) we learn that in 1730 the Banat plain, wilderness, were colonized Germans, Italians and Spaniards, on the initiative of Count Mercy (1666-1734).

During the eighteenth century (from 1716 to 1717), under the reign of Emperor Charles VI (1711-1740), are brought about 80,000 settlers in southwestern Germany (Swabian). With them are brought Serbs, Bulgarians Catholics and Italians, French and Romanian come from Oltenia and Muntenia. Since 1763, under Empress Maria Theresa (1740-1780), continued colonization Swabians, Serbs, Italians, French (Lorraine), Bulgarian and Romanian. Finally, in the years 1823-1828 were colonized Germans, Czechs and Slovaks in Banat mountain mining.

"Baroque in southeast expansion will build by merging elements of German culture, Slavic and Latin own forms of expression / ... / (Konschitzky, 2006).

This explains why in Banat-Crişana villages do not differ by ethnicity, as in Transylvania. In addition, rural areas of the region were standardized by plans established in Vienna, Banat is a province owned by the House of Austria. Settled villages during the Terezian or Josephine were built after plans which provided mandatory road network layout as the chessboard (Ghinoiu, 1981).

By systematizing was intended abolition of the old rural settlement type, ie piled or scattered villages, and replacing them with the type expected (Sacar, 1987) mainly in the plain geometric form and in mountainous areas, the linear form, along valleys or major streets.

Before Habsburg colonization, house was built of native population beaten down, sticking with clay, the roof was with four slopes, reed or straw. By the '30s there were still such houses (figure 1).

Soon after colonization ethnic Germans made their houses too (figure 2).

Fig.1. Romanian house on Sacoşul Mare (1932) (after Konschitzky)

Fig.2. House of a German colonist in Ginlvăz (after Konschitzky)

After systematizing and entry made by Austrian baroque influence in the house began to resemble each other, regardless of the nationality of the owner. The similarity was maintained until the twentieth century, in recent decades is beginning his city building type homes. In figure 3 we present Romanian gable of a house in 1922, built at Hitiaş (Timiş) in figure 4 that of a 1863 German houses, in figure 5 the gable of a house Serb Variaş (Timiş County) in 1887 and in figure 6 of a Bulgarian house in Dudeştii Vechi (Timiş county). The similarities are obvious.
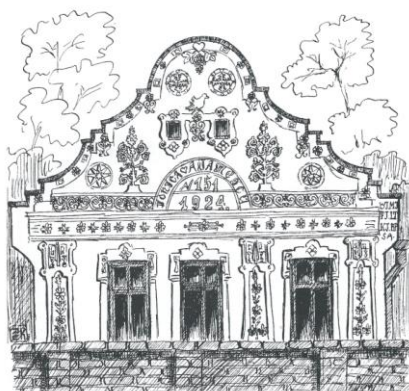
Fig.3. Romanian House of Hitiaş
(after Konschitzky)

Fig.4. German gable of a house,
1863 (after Konschitzky)

Fig.5. Serbian House of Variaş,   1887
(after Konschitzky)

Fig.6. Gable of a Bulgarian house in
Dudeştii Vechi (after Konschitzk

Even the locations of houses on the street are similar. The houses have a gable narrow street, stretching longitudinally depth. Next is the gateway into the yard and in the opposite court house are outbuildings.

Another type is the house facing the cross street. In figure 7 we present a Rustic house in Caraşova (Caraş-Severin), from the early twentieth century, and in figure 8, a Swabian house of Orţişoara (Timiş) from the middle of the nineteenth century. In this type of dwelling house outhouses are parallel to the backyard (figure 9).

Fig.7. Peasants House to Caraşova (after Konschitzky)

Fig.8. Peasant House with wooden transverse Caraşova (after Konschitzky)

Fig.9. Swabian transverse House in Ortişoara (after Konschitzky)

Churches in area villages are built mostly baroque, regardless of denomination.

Conclusions

Of course there are many variations in the composition of houses and villages in the area, but we believe that in the above we were able to present the most significant housing Banat-Crişana area.

References:

Bejan, A, (1995), Banatul în secolele IV-XII, Editura de Vest, Timişoara;

Ehrler, J.J., (1982), Banatul de la origini până acum - 1774, Editura Facla, Timişoara;

Gavrilă-Ardelean, M., Gavrilă-Ardelean, L., Grivu, O.N., (2013), Satul: celula de bază a comunităţilor umane, în ″Biblioteca Dezvoltării Comunitare 2″, Editura Eubeea, Timişoara;

Gheorghiu, T.O, (2008), Locuirea tradiţională rurală din zona Banat-Crişana, Editura Eurobit, Timişoara;

Ghinoiu, I., (1981), Tipologia aşezărilor rurale româneşti, În ″Analele Banatului″, Timişoara;

Haţegan, I., Savulov, L., (1997), Banatul medieval, În ″Analele Banatului″, SN Arheologie-Istorie V, Timişoara;

Hațegan, I., Savulov, L., (2005), Cronologia Banatului II/2. Vilayetul de Timişoara 1552-1716, Editura Banatul, Timişoara;

Săcară, N., (1987), Valori ale arhitecturii populare româneşti, Editura Facla, Timişoara.

FEATURES OF PERSONALITY STRUCTURE AND THE TEENAGE ATTITUDE TOWARDS SOCIETY

Sonia IGNAT, Ph.D.
Faculty of Educational Science, Psychology and Social Sciences
"Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad, Romania
Prof. Anca VLAD
Universitatea ”Aurel Vlaicu” Arad,
Școala Gimnazială Iratoşu
soniabudean@yahoo.com

Abstract:

The psychology of ''ages'' presents a complete picture of the evolution of the ontogenetical human being, an account on the bio-psycho-social development of each human in every cycle of life. This opportunity has become the initial impact in choosing the theme, the evaluation of personality rate at puberty and teen age.

In essence, our investigation has proposed to present a comparative study of several interrlated personalities, ,''two psychology ages'': the late puberty and the medium teen age. We have put forth to synchnically evaluate the following features of personality: identity, emotional maturation, anxiety and the way of valuing the actual Romanian society.For the realization of this study we have applyed to a number of 72 people between 14-18 years, students of the 8th ad 12th grade from Moise Nicoara High School Arad.

***Key words**: Adolescence, puberty, personality, identity, emotional maturation, anxiety*

In the sphere of our culture or the social political life, the term of personality is often used in otder to appoint the except individuals.Personalities generate important changes in our culture and during the hole history of population. Studies dedicated to the history of culture and civilization, dictionaries, handbooks ssynthetize the input of personalities to the transformation of activities, the social alternations, to cultural innovation.

Psychology, similar to other arts, studies personality on a total delimited area. Without ignoring the biological component and the social dimension of the human being, it explicitly concerns with subjective aspects, mental process and their interrelated behaviour. The description, the explanation of these and the elaboration of the predictions based on the knowledge of the acutal conditions establish the centre of the scientific perspective in which psychology integrates

the human being as a personality. Psychology applies to the human being that has come to its socio-cultural development the personality atribute towards the following synthesis (Filimon, 2004):

• Relative autonomy in relations with his background. The autonomy expresses the capacity of self-attendence, self-administration, the meintenance of whole, of balance and identity.

• The capacity of anticipation and self-control.

• The active integration in comunitiy, the assimilation of values and the living according to the community, the development in interpersonal relations.

• The accomplishment of several activities included in the repertory of the society

• Being aware of the proper existence in unity with the process of conceding the reality, the elaboration of the mental pattern of self and of the world.

• Transforming intervention upon the enviroment and the own self.

These qualities can be identified in any culture , but in differet forms. For example, in each culture there are parental activities of work or creation, but it scores significant differences in the style of growth and nursing of children, in the types of proffesions and occupations, in the attitudes towards work, in the dispeling and hyerarchy of values. The construction and the perception of the human's relations in his social life emphasizes the autonomy and the independence of self in the west cultures or the interraction and the interdependence in non-west cultures (Berry et al, 1992; Triandis 1994; Kitayama, markus 1995).

The attribute of personality is achieved by the end of the teen age or in the phase of passing from childohood to maturity. In the traditional cultures there are periods of final initiation through consecrational rituals of the begining of a new stage.

Uttering what personality is, operating on the logical rigors of definitons, would implicate either an accountance of the numerous attempts of elaboration of the specific teoretical perspectives, or a selection of definitions upon debatable criterions. None of these ways of presenting is not according to the objectives mentioned in the beginning. In consequence, we will insist on the common elements from the definitons of personality analyzed in the eories of reference. The most important are: consistence versus change, distinction versus similarity, public versus intimacy, standard versus outlandish.

In essence, the aim of this investigation is to offer an evidence, on one hand, if and in what measure the variety of age can induce changes in the entire structure of the tested personality, while on the other it demonstrates if and in what measure the puberty age and that of teen age can influence the formation of different ways of ''perception'' and the valorization of the actual romanian society.

Objectives:

• The evidence of a bond between the level of self esteem, the level of anxiety and the level of emotional maturity on the entire pattern of subjects.

• \The interception and the measure of different significants between subjects aged between 14 and 15 and subjects aged between 18 and 19 regarding the self esteem, the level of emotional maturization and the level of anxiety.

• The interception of significant difference between the two categories of subjects (in the puberty and teen age) on how they perceive the romanian society.

• The interception of several psycho-affective differences, between the two genres of the total sample referred to the level of emotional maturization, anxiety and self esteem.

Hypothesis:

• Anxiety as a feature is in conjunction with the level of emotional maturization and the affective dimension of personality (self-esteem) to the level of the studied sample.

• Between the sample of subjects aged 14-15 and subjects aged 18-19 presents significant differences in the level of self-esteem, anxiety level and emotional maturization.

• The attitude towards society of these two groups of subjects differs significantly.

• The variable of gender induces signifcant differences to the level of self esteem, anxiety and emotional maturization.

For the realization of these study we have applied for a number of 72 subjects aged between 14-18, students in 8th grade and 12th grade from Moise Nicoara High Scool in Arad. There have been used the following psychological assessments: questionary for the evaluation of the emotional maturization (Questionary Friedmann). The self-esteem scale (Scale Rosenberg), the schedule of anxiety S.T.A.I.- form (x-2). The semantic difference for the evaluation of attitude towards society.

Results of examination

After the statistic elaboration of dates, through the calculation of the interrelated coefficient (r-465) we have managed to approach the fact that in hypothesis 1 there is a significant bond between the level of self-esteem and anxiety (p=100), but proportional inverted: a high level of anxiety associated with a low level of a self esteem.

Table no.1. The value of the interrelated coefficient between the level of self-esteem and the level of anxiety.

Variable	The value of the interrelated	The significance	Freedom grade

	coefficient		
Self-esteem	- . 465	.000	70
Anxiety	- . 465	.000	70

On the other hand, there has been also observed an inverted proportional bond

VARIABLE	GROUP	N	AVERAGE	STANDARD ABERRATION
Moral - imoral	Puberty	36	3.14	1.20
	Teenage	36	3.50	1.00
Just – Unjust	Puberty	36	3.56	1.16
	Teenage	36	4.17	.85
Encouraging – Discouraging	Puberty	36	3.25	.97
	Teenage	36	3.22	1.02
Respectable – Unrespectable	Puberty	36	3.56	1.21
	Teenage	36	3.44	1.00
Competition – cooperation	Puberty	36	2.67	1.26
	Teenage	36	2.56	1.08
Conservator - progressive	Puberty	36	2.83	1.28
	Teenage	36	2.28	1.06

between the level of anxiety and the level of emotional maturization (r= -404, p= .000), which means that a high level of anxiety can be associated with a low level of emotional maturization.

Tabel no.2. The value of the interrelated coefficient between the level of anxiety and the level of emotional maturization.

Variable	The value of the interrelated coefficient	The significance	Freedom grade
Anxiety	- . 404	.000	70
Emotional maturization	- . 404	.000	70

Hypothesis no.2 ennounced has not been confirmed, thus, after the statistic elaboration of dates, through the calculation of test t for independent samples, it has been ascertained that between the subjects aged 14-15 and 18-19 there are no significant differences for the level of the three psychologycal interrelations.

Regarding self-esteem, between the two groups of subjects there are no significant differences, because both of them represent a high level of self-esteem, there aren't any differences in the level of anxiety and emotional maturization. Thus, if we look carefully at these results we can say that these two groups represent a medium level of anxiety and a low level of emotional maturization.

The attitude of the two groups towards the society in this study differs. Through this hypothesis no.3, we have been concerned with finding out the differences between these two groups in the way they percive the romanian society.

Table no.3–The average values and the standard aberration for the six categories of the doubled attributes.

Table no.4. The values of test t in the case of the six categories of doubled attributes

VARIABLE	VALOAREA LUI T	GRADE DE LIBERTATE df	PRAGUL DE SEMNIFICAŢIE
Moral – imoral	-1.388	70	.170
Just- Unjust	-2.558	70	.013
Encouraging-Discouraging	.119	70	.906
Respectable-Unrespectable	.426	70	.672
Competition-Cooperation	.401	70	.690
Conservator - Progressive	2.010	70	.048

Pubertys and teenages manifest a different ways of perceiving and understaning of the modern society.Thus, regarding several doubled attributes it inserts major differences: for the just-unjust category, the teenaagers go for an unjust society while the pubertys express their indecision, neutrality; regarding the category of encouraging-discouraging, teenagers perceive th society as being encouraging in a higher level than the pubertys do; regarding the category of respectable-unrespectable, puberties perceive the society as being unrespetable while teenagers adopt a neutral position; regarding traditionalism-nonconformism, we have come to the cobclusion that teenagers cosider the society as being nonconformist, while the puberties consider it as traditional.

There are no differences in the category of moral- imoral, this category stimulates competition and cooperation.Both groups plead for an imoral society, which breaks the rules and norms of a good morality and for a society which encourages competition rather than cooperation.

Hypothesis no. 4 - The variable of gender induces significant differences for the level of self-esteemm anxiety and emotional maturization.

This hypothesis has been partially confirmed, thus, after the statistic elaboration of dates through the calculation of test t for the independent samples, we have come to the conclusion that between the goup of girls and boys (whatever the age) there are significant differences for the self-esteem level and for the anxiety level. Girls present a lower level of self-esteem (m=29,03) than the group of boys (m=46,56). There aren't any differences between the two groups regarding the level of emotional maturization, both girls and boys present a low level of emotional maturization. (m= 18,16)

Conclusions

The results of the study has not totally confirmed my hypothesis of work, similar to the actual preconceptions in the pedagogycal practice or in the proffesional deontology of the academic teacher. On the other hand, the conclusions resulted from the evaluation of the hypothesis which demonstrated that, once again, the complexity of human personality, the evolution of many teenagers and puberties because of the behaviour which has been disturbed by a set of psychologycal factors but social also coming from the family background, school and group of friends.

**References*:*
Atkinson, R.L., Atkinson, R.C., Smith, E.E., Bem, D.J. (2002), *Introducere în psihologie,* Editura Tehnică, Bucureşti
Bandura, A., (2003). Auto-Efficacité, Le sentiment d'efficacité personnelle. Bruxelles: De Boeck Universite.
Băban, A. (1998), *Stres şi Personalitate,* Editura Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca.
Baumeister, R.F., & Vohs, D. K. (2004). *Handbook of Self – Regulation.* Research, Theory, and Applications. New York, NY: Guilford Press
Luca, M. R. (2004). *Personalitate şi succes*. Sibiu: Psihomedia,.
Lupu, D. A. (2011). *Implicaţiile activităţilor de consiliere psihopedagogică asupra diadei stimă de sine-reuşită şcolară*. Braşov: Editura Universităţii Transilvania.
Mih, C. (2010). *Învăţare autoreglată şi dezvoltarea metacognitivă*. Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărţii de Ştiinţă.
Miserandino, M., (2012). *Personality psychology*, Boston, M. A.: Pearson Academic.

Munteanu, A. (1998), *Psihologia copilului şi a adolescentului*, Editura Augusta, Timişoara

Neacşu, I. (2010). *Introducere în psihologia educaţiei şi a dezvoltării*. Iaşi: Polirom

Partenie, A. (2000), *Metode de cercetare psihologică a personalităţii,* Editura Augusta, Timişoara.

DETERMINING THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE USE OF A COMMUNICATION METHOD IN THE CLASSROOM

Evelina BALAŞ, Ph.D.
Faculty of Educational Science, Psychology and Social Sciences
"Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad, Romania
evelinabalas@yahoo.com

Abstract:
Within a broader research on the educational communication, the first step was to identify the way for achieving this type of communication, taking into account both vertical and horizontal communication in the classroom. The working tools used were two questionnaires, one applied to teachers in order to identify how the teacher - student communication in classroom is obtained, and the second aimed at identifying the teacher's style for leading the classroom. Teachers participating in the study were 46 in number and the context for approaching them for the collection of responses was attending a training course. The results of the questionnaire confirmed the formulated hypothesis.

Keywords: *communication style, experience, leading*

Introduction

In the relational context of education, the subject (teacher, transmitter) communicates and broadcast information and attitudes, stimulates the biopsychic potential, guides and influences the receiver of the education (student, receiver). In turn, the receiver responds to these influences, receives, selects, processes and assimilates the information, organizing them into their own structures. Arguably the educational phenomenon as a whole is achieved through human communication in general and educational communication in particular. The educational communication occurs *"as a particular form, mandatory in changing some determined content, specific for an act of systematic, assisted learning, ... it represents the basis of teaching and assimilation of knowledge, within the institutionalized framework of the school and between partners with determined roles: teacher-student "*(Iacob, L., 1999, p.181).

Unfortunately, the issue of teacher's communication style, a topic which surface relatively frequently in the studies regarding this aspect, has not yet got the attention of all teachers, therefore situations where the teacher uses a

unilateral, unidirectional communication and not taking into account the active role of the student in the process of his own development, still occurring.

The communicative style of the teacher

During his activity in class, the teacher brings his whole life experience, beliefs, values and conceptions that he had accumulated over time, that is, as it is called in the literature, his **personal style**. This personal style of the teacher integrates into his professional style (see Liliana Ezechil) which refers to its professional aspirations, to the values the teacher applies to his work, to the successes or failures met in the past.

Every teacher has certain views and conception about the classroom, about how it should be managed and organized. On the topic of managing the classrooms numerous studies were conducted (Dan Potolea, Emil Paun, Romiţă Iucu, Ioan Jinga Elena Joiţa, Emil Stan, Catalina Ulrich etc.) all emphasizing the idea that the teacher, as a class manager, has to permanently focus his attention on the learner, on the student. The class management appears in the related literature in three forms, each with its advantages and disadvantages. Regarding the **communicational style** of the teacher, seen here as way to communicate with students, these leadership styles can be characterized as follows:

AUTHORITARIAN (DIRECTIVE)
- accent only on emitting messages;
- doesn't consider the messages transmitted by students and sometimes neither the feedback;
- the messages are in the form of orders, demands, criticisms;
- multiple blockages in communication appear;
- doesn't stimulate the communication in classroom (neither vertical nor horizontal);

DEMOCRATIC (PARTICIPATIVE)
- stimulates student-student and student-teacher communication;
- constantly in dialogue with the students, helping and guiding them;
- emphasis on interactivity in communication;
- constantly alternates the transmitter – receiver role;
- communicational barriers are few and immediately removed;

LAISSEZ-FAIRE (PERMISSIVE)
- confusing and contradictory relations of communication;
- passive role in any communication;
- doesn't initiate dialogues, indifferent;

The communicative style of the teacher, his way to communicate with students is reflected, most often, as stated by Liliana Ezechil (2002, p.155) in: the quality of classroom interactions that the teacher manages; responsiveness to the student, as an interlocutor; the way the teacher facilitates the students' process of reception, understanding and processing messages; the way the teacher directs and controls the process of a message development by students; the ways in which the student to student communication relations are stimulated;

what the teacher thinks about effective communication; what the teacher evaluates in his interaction with the students.

All these aspects are part of the teacher's communicational style, which in the related literature appears in three forms:

1. **unilateral or unidirectional**, when the teacher focuses only on the transmission of educational information, regardless of the fact that he must also be a receiver for the messages coming from the classroom. The teacher characterized by this communicative style ascribe a passive role for the student in the teaching/learning activity, and considers that the student comes to school only to receive messages sent to him;

2. **bilateral or bidirectional**, when the teacher keeps in mind that he must constantly change the role of the transmitter with that of the receiver. He is the teacher who is constantly in dialogue and cooperating with students, taking into account their views and keeping in mind that the student can also learn from his own experience. He is a teacher open to communication, who believes that effective learning can be achieved through dialogue and cooperation;

3. **random**, or (in our opinion) **situational, contextual**, when the teacher hasn't formed its own communication style, oscillating between the unilateral and bilateral, thereby inducing confusion and ambiguity. He is the teacher from whom you don't know what to expect in terms of communication relationships

Experimental Part
Objectives
O1. Identifying the ways in which the educational communication is achieved, taking into account both vertical and horizontal communication in the classroom;
O2. Determining the factors contributing to the use of a specific communicational method in classroom, focusing on the classroom managing style and the teaching experience;
O3. Identifying ways to stimulate student-to-student communication, used by teachers.

Research hypotheses
I(1) The way in which the teacher communicates with the students is determined by his classroom managing style.
I(2) The previous work experience influences the way in which the teacher communicates with the students.

Subjects and sampling
In order to test the above hypothesis, we compiled a sample of 46 teachers with a work experience between 12 and 36 years. Those teachers come from 27 schools in Arad County, and the context of their approach for to the collection of responses was attending a training course, which demonstrates a common point, namely valuing lifelong learning and the realization that there

will always be an area to be improved. It pays to investigate why wouldn't that just be the educational communication.

Tools and working procedure

The questionnaire that was applied to teachers was developed with the aim of identifying how the teacher - student communication is accomplished in the classroom, zooming in on aspects that are first and foremost considered by the teacher. The questionnaire has 17 items, each with three possible answers, alternatives that aim to capture the teachers tend to focus primarily on the classroom (individuals) or the curriculum meant to be sent. Training for the questionnaire consisted in ordering to encircle a single choice. Following the interpretation of the questionnaire, teachers will be divided into three categories, depending on how they perceive and use communication in relation to students: teachers who practice a unilateral, unidirectional communication, from the educator to the educated; teachers who practice a bilateral or bidirectional communication, constantly alternating the roles of transmitter and receiver and first considering the needs of the student; teachers who practice a random or situational, confused, uncertain communication, depending on a particular context.

The "classroom management style" questionnaire for teachers, includes 18 items aimed at identifying the teachers style of managing the classroom. Depending on the answers to the 18 questions, the teachers are divided into three styles of classroom management: directive or authoritarian style, participative or democratic style and permissive or laissez-faire leadership style.

Results and Discussion

The study on classroom communication was conducted under a correlational experiment.

From Table 1 it can be seen that the subjects answered the questions of the questionnaire at the rate of 100%. There were no invalid answers. The average of the educational communication dimension demonstrates that bilaterality is the characteristic method of communication of the sample of teachers, with a standard deviation of only 0.37 to it.

Table no.1 – Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics	Number of subjects	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation
educational communication	46	1	3	2.00	.37
teacher's management style	46	1	3	1.91	.41
work related experience	46	12	36	24.61	5.35
valid answers	46				

The average for the teachers leadership style component is 1.91 and the standard deviation is 0.41, which demonstrates the participatory approach in educational activities. Low standard deviation indicates that this style is a representative characteristic of the sample.

The work experience of the teachers is between 12 and 36 years, which reinforces teaching experience, making communication styles and educational management to be stabilized. The classes in which we collected data are I, II, III and IV grade classes with which the interviewed teachers work.

We will focus the quantitative analysis of the surveyed data on objective aspects of the research objectives, namely the frequencies of responses to three quality dimensions: educational communication, teacher's management style and work related experience.

In the following we present data from a quantitative perspective, with the corresponding explanations.

In Table no. 2 we present the frequencies and percentages of the educational communication dimension, recorded after the application of questionnaires to the teachers. The results indicate the self-assessment by the teachers, and as we can see, 87% consider that they practice a bilateral educational communication. A graphical view of educational communication frequencies is included in Figure no.1. 13% of teachers perceive themselves as unilateral (6.5%) and situational (6.5%), which is a positive aspect on the validity of the data, meaning that the expectancy of these responses was much lower.

Table no.2 - Educational communication

Educational communication	Frequency	Percentage%	Cumulative percentage %
Unilateral, unidirectional	3	6.5	6.5
Bilateral, bidirectional	40	87.0	93.5
Situational, random	3	6.5	100.0
Total	46	100.0	

Figure no.1- Self- assessment frequencies on the educational communication dimension
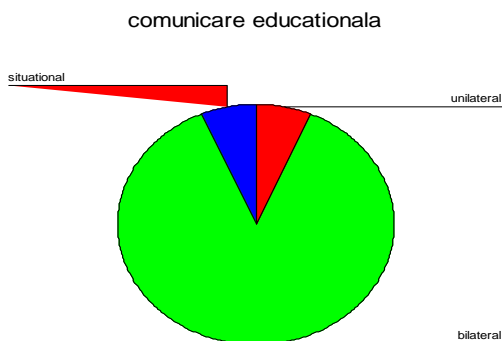
comunicare educationala

Table no. 3 summarizes the frequency of the data collected from teachers on their management style dimension in the educational process. One should also keep in mind that managing style is in itself a relative concept, which can not be extended to all aspects of life. The research took into account the management style of the teachers only in the context of education, namely relationships with students.
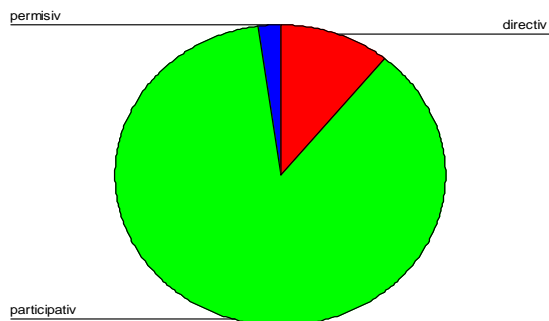
Table no.3 - Teacher's management style

Management style	Frequency	Percentage%	Cumulative percentage %
Directive, authoritarian	5	13.0	10.9
Participative, democratic	19	82.6	52.2
Permissive, laissez-faire	22	4.4	100.0
Total	46	100.0	

The data reveals that 82.6% of teachers consider themselves as participative during the educational activities, 13% believe they have a directive style, and 4.4% believe are permissive, which is a positive thing in the relationship with students.

We can see the self-appreciation frequencies on the management style dimension in figure No.2

Figure no.2 - Self- assessment frequencies on the management style dimension

We must also consider the influence of the label variables in shaping the educational communication and management style. The variable considered in this study is the work related experience of teachers, shown in Figure no.3.

Figure no.3 – Frequency of work related experience of teachers

vechimea in munca a invatatorilor
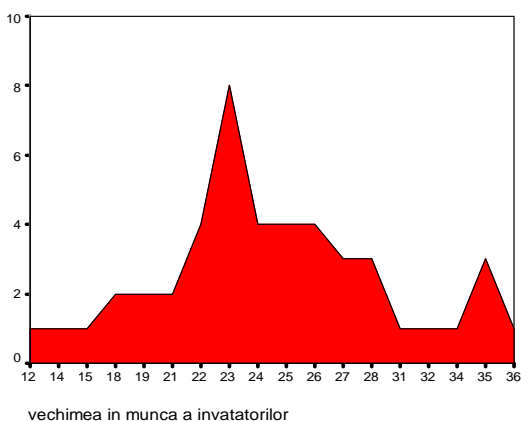
As can be seen in Table no. 1, the average is 24 years, which shows a rich educational experience. We can relate this through 6 generations of students who contributed in turn to the formation of these educational styles but also certain prejudices, generalizations and extrapolations that every teacher holds, even unconsciously.

Conclusion
The hypothesis that the method of communication of the teacher is determined by his class management style class (I1) was confirmed. The following interpretation of the data shows that questioned teachers perceive themselves as bidirectional in their communication with the students. This self-assessment is not necessarily in accordance with reality, but rather an idealization of reality as to always be bilateral in the educational communication

in the I-IV grade classes is a very difficult thing. 1st grade students are confused, have a lot of questions that await answers, they accommodate with difficulty with the schedule imposed during lessons and often personal characteristics, such as shyness or emotivity have a negative impact in the educational process, influencing the external perception of the teacher and colleagues. If you were to draw a parallel between the educational communication and class management style, we see that the percentage is kept approximately at bilateral and participative or democratic, following with the unilateral and authoritarian or directive and finally, a weaker relevance between the situational and permissive or laissez-faire.

To some extent it was expected that this hypothesis should be confirmed because the managing style of a teacher develops during a teaching career, is stable and also involves the ways to communicate with the students. It is normal that a participative, democratic management style, to be based on a bidirectional communication in which the student can also take the role of transmitter (due to numerous sources of information with he comes into contact), and the teacher should adopt a more flexible and adapted behavior, simultaneously developing specific receiver roles. Likewise, a directive, authoritarian management style, is based on an unilateral communication in which the major role of the transmitter is that of the teacher, demanding clarity, internal consistency and expressiveness.

The second hypothesis (I2) that previous work experience influences the way in which the teacher communicates with the students has been confirmed, but in the negative sense. In the case of the teachers in the sample, we are dealing with a wide experience in teaching (between 12 and 36 years). But the interpretation of statistical data leads to the conclusion that teacher's long work experience impacts the students in a negative manner, meaning that they believe that this contributes to the rigidity of the teacher, that he is more reticent when it comes to updated information, or in particular modern information other than books and the manual. It sometimes happens that good students have more information about a particular topic than a teacher with great teaching experience, obtained through media or the internet. This is one of the reasons why good students perceive younger teachers as more open regarding educational content and teaching methods.

Regarding the horizontal communication, the research shows that the method commonly used by teachers to stimulate student-student communication is cooperative learning, in which small groups work together to achieve a common goal. It was assumed that during cooperative learning students work in teams and being able to apply and synthesize knowledge in varied and complex ways, while learning more thoroughly than when working alone.

Interactive group methods enables and stimulates collaborative work carried out by those involved in the activity (students), in which all "bring" (participate) something and no one "leaves" with nothing. Following the group

work, even the student with poorer results in school takes part in discussions and remains with "something". Profit is both to the group of students (problem solving, finding the optimum response) and to the individual student (results, effects shown in the cognitive, emotional-affective, behavioral dimension, learning something new). Cooperative learning strategy offers students an opportunity to translate their need to work together, to constantly communicate with all their colleagues in an atmosphere of mutual aid and mutual support. The group enables the testing of ideas, opinions and the development of interpersonal intelligence. The group work also covers the shortcomings of individualized learning, offering a considerable importance to the social dimension by developing interpersonal processes.

Such group learning method is beneficial in many aspects, contributing to the efficiency of both horizontal and vertical communication, improving student-student, teacher-student, student-teacher, teacher-class, class-teacher relations, contributing to a more efficient learning, generating feelings of acceptance and sympathy, driving the growth of self-esteem and self-confidence.

References

Abric, J.C., (2002), *Psihologia comunicării.Teorii şi metode*, Ed. Polirom, Iaşi

Anghel, P., (2003), *Stiluri şi metode de comunicare*, Ed. Aramis, Bucureşti

Ezechil, L., (2002), *Comunicarea educaţională în context şcolar*, EDP, Bucureşti

Fiske, J., (2003), *Introducere în ştiinţele comunicării,* Ed. Polirom, Iaşi

Frenţiu, L., (2000), *Strategii de comunicare în interacţiunea verbală*, Ed. Mirton, Timişoara

Iacob, L., (1999), *Comunicarea didactică, în Psihologie şcolară* (Cosmovici, A.,coord), Ed. Polirom, Iaşi

Ilica, A., (2003), *Pedagogia comunicării educaţionale*; Ed. Universităţii „Aurel Vlaicu", Arad

Ilica, A., (2003), *Comunicare educaţională*, Ed. Universităţii „Aurel Vlaicu", Arad

Iucu, R., (2000), *Managementul şi gestiunea clasei de elevi. Fundamente teoretico-metodologice,* Ed. Polirom, Iaşi

Joiţa, E., (2000), *Management educaţional.Profesorul-manager: roluri şi metodologie*, Ed. Polirom, Iaşi

Pânişoară, I.O., (2003), *Comunicarea eficientă. Metode de interacţiune educaţională,* Ed. Polirom, Iaşi

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF PREPARING CHILDREN FOR SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY

Valentina PASCARI, PhD,
Institute of Education Sciences
of Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
e-mail: valentinapascari@mail.ru

Abstract: *The article is dedicated to the problem of psychological preparation of children for school learning activity. There are examined basic components of psychological preparation of children for learning activity in terms of various approaches. A particular emphasis is placed on the main dimensions on the preparation of volitional, motivational, intellectual and communicative child in relation to particularities of the learning activity in school. It highlights the interdependence between the psychological preparation of children for school and the success their adaptation to learning activity in school. Were structured a system of indicators on psychological preparation of children for school.*

Keywords: *training, learning task, operational actions, independence, self-control, indicators.*

1. Introduction

In contemporaneous educational space the issue of preparing children for school is acquiring a representational weight, all the more so as we take into account the importance of paideutic actions at the pre-school stage, given by the impact of this stage on the creation of a fundamental structure of child's personality, which is determining his further adaptation to various social contexts, especially his adaptation to school educational activity.

The problem of preparing children for school is a complex one, covering all the fields of child's life. In this paper we shall refer to certain aspects of children's psychological readiness for school, although the psychic characteristics that define the profile of the young schoolchild cannot be developed at the pre-school stage, however the creation of premises thereto is possible starting with the pre-school institution, as they represent a *sine qua non* condition of the process of preparing the child for school and of an active beginning of a systematic learning process. By means of these endeavors, we intend to point out the complexity of this subject, as well as the multitude of questions generated by the problem of children's psychological readiness for school.

The psycho-pedagogical science is showing a constant interest in the problem of children's psychological readiness for school, due to permanent changes occurring in child's psychics before school, as well as to requirements set by schools for children.

2.Psychological Dimensions of preparing children for learning in school

From this perspective, the high pre-school age (5-7 years) is defined in pedagogy and psychology as a period of transition. In this sense, L. Vygotsky is characterizing the transition to school learning activity not just as a change in external circumstances, but also as a new stage with new circumstances for the development of child's personality. This happens only when the child is ready during the entire period of previous development, after overcoming the interior crisis and when the tendency to a new state appears – the status of schoolchild. The transition period is also distinguished by the changes in child's behavior, which is harder to be subjected to educational influences. As result, this is a transition stage when the child is not a „*pre-school*" child anymore, but not a „*schoolchild*" yet, a period defined by the author as a *critical* one, calling it the „crisis at the age of 7" [1, pag.658]. Thus, the turning points in development are characterized by the transition from a stable period to another one, by cancelling previous social situations and the appearance of new ones, changes also occur in the system of relations with the environment.

The area of examination of children's psychological readiness for school also includes the sociocultural theory of L. Vygotsky. According to the author, learning involves the psychic development. L. Vygotsky defines the zone of proximal development as the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by child's independent problem solving and the level of potential intellectual performance as determined through the performance under adult guidance. The zone of proximal development, in interaction with the zone of actual development, is gradually exploited by the child, the latter reaching a new stage of actual development, determining the appearance of a new zone of proximal development [1, pag.203]. The evolution in the learning process takes place when this learning is exceeding the actual level and requires the forces from the zone of proximal development. Essentially, in the process of preparing psychologically children for school, it is important to determine correctly the level of actual development and the level of proximal development.

D. Elkonin is defining the period of transition from kindergarten to school as a stage of change of the type of activity [8, pag.46]. Hence, the psychological preparing for school, in author's opinion, is emphasized by the change of the dominant activity. The structure and defining traits of the learning activity suppose certain abilities that the child must gather since the pre-school age, fact that would ensure his psychological preparing for school.

Child's school performance is also impelled by his volitive readiness. The volitive development involves, on the one hand, the creation of volitive qualities, on the other hand, the creation of behavior regulation skills. As result, it is necessary to develop independence and self-control in children.

Making reference to the structure of learning activity, D. Elkonin has determined that one of the main links is the learning task and the operational content. The learning task, as the author noticed, is a complex formation, consisting of an entire system of actions. The child is learning general procedures of solving a wide range of problems from a field of knowledge [8, pag.67]. Thus, the understanding of the learning task must be a priority for the child during the learning process. From this perspective, learning importance consists in child's inner tenacious position towards learning, child's accommodation to learning process, to his personal experience.

We should mention the fact that understanding the learning task by the child is determined by peculiarities of the role-playing game which, in fact, represents the basic activity at the age of 5-7. From this viewpoint, V. Muhina is characterizing the role-playing game "as a school of social relations, within which forms of social behavior are constantly built and strengthened". Through play children learn to communicate, cooperate, set tasks to oneself, identify actions of accomplishment, learn how to be aware of the observance of certain rules, etc. In other words, through play certain premises are created for the development of psychic processes, which impel the creation in children of the necessary qualities for the learning activity in school [9, pag.58-64].

We should also point out the fact that through role-playing games the child starts to look about the procedure of obtaining the result, not only the result itself. Concurrently, child's capacity of looking about the result is in correlation with the awareness of the learning task and conditions of its accomplishment. Thus, the anticipation of actions' result and self-control are the key to activity's success or unsuccess.

The first self-control elements can be developed at a high pre-school age. There is an interdependence between child's action and words, between adult's actions and instructions. Self-control represents a basis for developing children's focus and attention towards the working process, produces essential changes in action procedures. From this perspective, the creation of the self-control skill represents one of the most important factors which influences changes occurred in child's conscience and behavior under the training influence, ensures the development of independence and eliminates mechanical imitations. Thus, self-control impels the quality increase of child's activity, such as the ability of analyzing his own actions, of consciously changing them, reorganizing them according to the obtained result. In this sense, the author in his day-to-day life, while exploring various learning actions, is asserting that children aged 6-7 can not only notice the discrepancy between the obtained result and the planned one, but also can successfully operate certain necessary remedies in their own

actions, although children's control actions in this period of time are still diffuse. As result, pedagogue's task is to take into account this peculiarity, creating self-control actions in children.

The creation of self-control actions supposes the observance of certain conditions: a concise formulation of requirements towards the child; focusing child's attention on result-obtaining procedures; setting the correlation between action procedures and the obtained result; while instructing and planning the working operations, the child must be oriented towards self-control actions; awareness of control necessity not only at the end of activity, but also during its performance.

At the age of 6-7, the possibility of child's intellectual activity is significantly increasing (N. Poddiakov, U. Schiopu, A. Bolboceanu, etc.). The development of thinking operations through practical actions ensures the direct interiorization of such actions, impelling the transition from the preparatory thinking to the concrete – intuitive operatory thinking. Gradually, certain elements of causal thinking are developing and knowledge activity is deepening. Simple logical thinking elements appear, oriented towards the systematization and generalization of phenomena and events, the capacity of operating with generalizing, schematic images. Nevertheless, psychic neoformations from this period of time are distinguished by an insufficient development, fact which proves that these processes are developing and do not fully fulfill their regulatory function in child's independent activity. Their manifestation is possible in collaboration with the pedagogue. Concurrently, at the age of 6-7 a new formation is creating at a new level of activity regulation. We speak about the conscious organization of the activity on the basis of a structured plan. As result, these psychological characteristics of children influence their psychological readiness for school [4, pag.78].

Children's psychological readiness for school is also including the *development of the motivational sphere* of child's personality, of the appearance of social reasons and their subordination. These reasons, as S. Rubenstein states, represent "building material" for "building" child's character. These reasons accomplish a double function: first of all, they encourage and lead child's activities, second of all they give a subjective character to the activity. Thus, the essence of the activity, including the one of learning in school, is determined by its reasons [11, pag.89-90]. Learning cannot take place in the absence of certain important availabilities of the functionality of the information process, such as *reasons*. This fact had been attested by several researchers, such as: A. Lazar, F. Turcu, D. Elkonin, S. Rubenstein, etc.

In authors' opinion, F. Turcu and A. Turcu, *motivation* is a condition for learning activity and in the same time is its product, expressed through interests and attitudes [3, pag.96]. In the same time, motivation, in the opinion of the researcher A. Lazar, is placed between the learning task and its achievement, thus becoming an intermediary variable acting for school progress [2, pag.8].

As result, being a psychological mechanism, motivation is the fundamental vector of child's personality, which, during learning activity, is orienting his behavior towards the achievement of objectives. Obviously, motivation ensures the interior organization of child's behavior, stimulates his learning activity, contributing to task awareness and execution.

The appearance of learning reasons represents a complex behavioral field, being determined by many factors. It is not characterized by a positive increase of the interest in learning, but first of all – by the complexity of the structure of the motivational sphere of child's personality. In this sense, we distinguish two levels of cognitive reasons: *learning reasons* oriented towards the learning process, its content and result (manifested through the will of going to school, the efforts applied for overcoming difficulties, general curiosity) and *epistemological reasons*, oriented towards information-obtaining procedures.

Thus, D. Uznadze believes that the main reason of the learning activity consists in the necessity of performance of child's intellectual forces. The criteria of children's preparing for school, as the author perceived, must be structured in relation to the level of development of their cognitive necessities [12, pag.48-50].

Other psychologists (L. Bojovich, D. Elkonin) emphasize the importance of social reasons for learning, which create premises for the further development of the young schoolchild position and determine the personal readiness of the child for school learning [8, pag.38-39].

Nevertheless, scholar psychologists state that one of the main conditions for the development of learning motivation consists in the creation of children's learning activity and in setting the interaction between its components. This fact had been attested by V. Davîdov, who stated that the efficient creation of learning motivation can take place during the gradual knowledge gathering process, according to the principle of evolution from abstract to concrete [6, 3-18].

Communication is also a structural component of child's psychological preparing for school. In this sense, at a high pre-school age certain changes occur in the communication sphere, such as the appearance of a new type of communication, which efficiently contributes to child's learning in school. As result, children who haven't been prepared for school encounter difficulties in the adaptation to the learning activity. Children perceive with difficulty the context of learning situations, fact which causes the misunderstanding of the learning task and of the conditions of its execution. As result, this category of children, in relations with the teacher, remain at the level of personal situational communication, being classified under the level of voluntary contextual communication.

3. Results

Based on content analysis of psychological preparation for the school we have identified indicators that correspond to the specific activity of the child's learning in school.

Table 1. Indicators of psychological preparation of children for school

Components	Indicators
Intellectual preparation	1. Has a knowledge about the system environment. 2. Possess knowledge processes: • ability to listen, ask questions, respond to questions, to experiment, to use charts, models etc. 3. Sufficient level of development of cognitive interest. 4. A certain level of development of cognitive processes: • sufficient level of development of perception • developing thinking operations (analysis, synthesis, comparison,generalization, writing, classification); • the level development of intuitive-concrete thinking.. 5. The development of fluent speech (monologue, dialogue, phonemic hearing).
Volitional preparation	• Manifestation of a voluntary behavior; • The acceptance of a goal in the motivation game; • The acceptance of some elements of instruction; • Start a topic and an activity plan, fragmented self control, with the help of an adult; • Establishing the link between purpose and action processes.
Self control	• Prevails situational self control; • Appreciate adequate succes reasons / failures of his learning process; • Realize the qualities of a good pupil; • Show interest towards adult appreciation.
Comunicative preparing	• Tendency to act based on the rules; • Mutual stable, selective relations; • Coordinates activities with those of colleagues in common activities.
Motivational preparing	1. Cognitive motivation: the need for the cognitive interests and gain new knowledge, skills and abilities;; 2. Social motivation: the need to communicate with adults in a

	new level, to occupy a new social position; 3. Ready to occupy a "position of school inner" child's attitude towards the natural environment, resulting from the combination of social and cognitive reasons;

4.Conclusions

Psychological availability for school is a result of the child's development throughout the preschool. It helps develop the child as a subject of learning activity to the grounds of this activity, system action and purpose. The concordance between psychological status of the child and school requirements is an indicator of its adaptive learning activity. Psychological preparation of the child for the school interacts with the cognitive development of the student, whose components constitute the premises for its formation.

The ascendant evolution of the development of the integral child's personality, the attempt to match the educational process with the requirements of the contemporaneous life went exceeded the matter of modernization of child's psychological preparing for school, which raises not only to the level of a central issue of the educator and teacher, but also to the levelof scholars interested in this matter.

References

Vygotsky, L. "Problema invatarii si a dezvoltarii intelectuale la virsta scolara. Opere psihologice alese" Vol. I. Bucuresti : Editura Didactica si Pedagogica, 1971, 432 p.

Lazar, A. "Situatii motivationale favorabile invatarii de tip scolar" Bucuresti : Editura Didactica si Pedagogica, 1975, 231 p.

Turcu, F., Turcu, A. "Fundamente ale psihologiei scolare". Bucuresti : ALL Educational, 1999, 184 p.

Schiopu, U. "Psihologia copilului". Bucuresti: Editura Didactica si Pedagogica, 1969, p.227.

Выготский, Л.С. «Детская психология, собр. соч. в 6-ти томах», т.4 (под ред. Д. В. Эльконина), Москва: Педагогика, 1984, 743 с.

Давыдов, В., Кудрявцев, В. «Теоретические основания преемственности дошкольной и начальной школьной ступени. Вопросы психологии, Москва, 1997, nr. 1, с.3-18».

Умственное воспитание детей дошкольного возраста (под ред. Н.Н. Поддьяков, Ф.А. Сохина), Москва: Просвещение, 1984, 207 с.

Особенности психического развития детей 6-7-летнего возраста / Под ред. Д. Б. Эльконина, А.Л. Венгера. - М.: Педагогика, 1988, с.38-39.

Мухина, В. "Что такое готовность к учению? " // Семья и школа. - 1987, №4, с.58-64.

Кравцова, Е. "Психологическая готовность ребенка к школе". - М.: Педагогика, 1991.

Рубинштейн, С. "Основы общей психологии", в 2-х томах, т.1. Москва: Педагогика, 1989, с. 89-90.

Узнадзе, Д., "Экспериментальные основы психологии установки"-Тбилиси, 1961, с.48-50

THE IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATION THROUGH ESPERE METHOD

Marlena Daniela MELINESCU,
Primary education teacher,
Secondary School "Mircea Eliade" Craiova
melinescumarlena@gmail.com

Abstract

A research of a few communicational understandings in primary school, having as a tag to assure an efficiently communication process, starts from the definition of educational communication in the Dictionary of pedagogy. Educational communication is defined as the fundamental part of the teaching process, where the pupils -being led by their teacher- get new a new knowledge, rules, formulas, laws. Modern pedagogy proposes a reconsidering of the pupil's role along the teaching process and it offers a great attention to the participatory methods, teacher and pupils being seen as a real team. As a conclusion, communication becomes a dynamic and alive complex process, it is a relational process, where one or more participants may do an information exchanging, they understand each other and can influence one another.

Now we can easily talk about the codes used in the communicational process: word, gesture, image, sound, movement, moods. An innovative approaching to the communication subject was identified in ESPERE method - E as Energy, S as Specifically, P as Providing an, E as Essential, R as Relational, E as Ecology.

Key words: *learning, communication, ESPERE method, SAPPE method*

1. Educational communication as a particular way of communication

Teaching is, exclusively, a strong communicatory domain/branch at all its levels. This consideration is more obvious if we are able to look at it through the modern pedagogy's point of view, for what the followings represents:

□ instructional relation is a communicational relation what creates a specific type of language – pedagogical or educational, what represents the base. We can't understand from it that teaching means exclusively just a communication, but it underlines a communication's recognition as a constitutive and vital part of the educational-instructional process;

□ as a constitutive and vital part of teaching, communication actively and creative implies in its structure

 communication represents one of the fundamental conditions in for a proper performing of teaching process; we can understand from it that to organise teaching conditions means to organise all the communications what there are in the classroom, means to organise and to control the meanings exchanging between the teacher and the pupils

If we approach to the educational communication as a particular way of communication, specific to the educational process, we can identify more types of communications what interfere in the educational communicational level:

- oral (dominant)communication and written communication

- verbal, paraverbal and nonverbal communication

- referential communication (used for the theoretical information) and communication by attitude (used for valuable systems or for criteria of considering the values)

2. ESPERE method – a method what makes the communication easier at the educational level

The creator of this method, Jacques Salomé, explains the role of ESPERE method, specific energy for essential relational ecology, to offer people an easy, efficient and viable way of interacting. The main factors what make the process easier are: the relationship between the pupil and himself, the relationship between the pupil and his classmates, the relationship between the pupil and the teacher, the relationship between the pupil and his parents. But this is the distinctive piece what lacks we all know what are the elements what can constitute the communication: emitter, receiver, message, communicational channel. ESPERE method brings one more element's visualization- the relationship between the emitter and the receiver. Visualization is made using real elements, in this case a scarf what is kept on one end by the emitter and on the other one by the receiver. Now, those who are implied in the communication process are took in consideration as each of them keeping in theor hands the RELATION and both of them are responsible to the half part of the scarf.Two elements appear: awareness and empowering.

On the other side of considering the ESPERE method in a good approach to the communication, there is the SAPPE method – Suffering, Alienation, Pathology, Problems, Embarrassment. Its main manifestations are recognized by speaking for the other, which come in a variety of most banal expression mode.

- **Injunctions**: "Be strong! Be sincere! A man does not cry! "
- **Disqualifications**: "It is not possible to be so clumsy! You are so awkward! "
- **Guilt**: "How dare you talk to me this way?"
- **Threats**: "Attention, to the count of three, you know what is going to happen to you ! "

- **Blackmail**: "If only you were working better in school, I could be proud of you!"

Learning of the ESPERE method involves a chapter dedicated to the study of these main expression modes which structure the non communication and maintain forms of devitalised relationships to which we collaborate most of the time without even knowing it, by absence of model of alternative reference.

The E.S.P.E.R.E method refers to a set of theoretical and practical data constituted by tools, guidelines, beacons and mediations, which, put in relation and articulated one with another, aim to activate, stimulate and arouse a process of relational gestation, of becoming autonomous, of liberation and of taking responsibility by who takes means to resort to it with sufficient constancy, coherence, regularity and continuity.

The E.S.P.E.R.E method recognize a few main fundamental needs in every human being:

- **to be able to tell oneself** (to go from the impression to the expression);
- **to be able to be heard** (to go from the expression to the communication);
- **to be able to be recognized** (to go from the communication to the relationship);
- **to be able to recognized our value** (capacity to take our place in a social system, to exercise an influence on our environment, to have the feeling to be able to have something to do in what happens to us);
- **to be able to not say everything** (to go from the need to tell the truth to the capacity to speak truly, constitution of a space of personal or shared and sharable intimacy).

The ESPERE method is first of all a working tool.

Beyond its pragmatic function which proposes concrete guidelines, without dictating any procedure, the ESPERE method opens up on another way to take a stand and to live personnel or professional relationships (pupil-pupil, pupil-teacher, pupil-parents, teacher-parents). It aims to promote a relational dynamic different from the one which characterizes our usual relationships. In particular it arouses confrontation, sharing and non violence rather than fighting, power trip or dependency.

The ESPERE method allows finding stimulating alternatives to not maintain submission or opposition. It gives avenues and orientations which are as many solicitations to give up reactional (well-known irritation and annoyance) that sabotages exchanges and maintains in a state infantile partners in presence.

The ESPERE method is a guide that brings us to take responsibility for the part of the relationship that concerns us and it allows respecting ourselves in the main acts, choices and commitments of our life.

The E.S.P.E.R.E method refers to a set of theoretical and practical data constituted by tools, guidelines, beacons and mediations, which, put in relation and articulated one with another, aim to activate, stimulate and arouse a process of relational gestation, of becoming autonomous, of liberation and of taking responsibility by who takes means to resort to it with sufficient constancy, coherence, regularity and continuity.

Some main points studied

- To become aware of the spirit of the relational communication (What is to communicate? How to define lively relationships? What does the term relational ecology means?)
- To learn to go beyond the myth of spontaneous statement, good will and good intentions in matters of relationships. Communication can be learned at any age.
- To familiarize oneself with basic principles of the relational communication, in promoting mutual communications of reciprocity.
- To recognize a few main fundamental needs in every human being:
  - **to be able to tell oneself** (to go from the impression to the expression);
  - **to be able to be heard** (to go from the expression to the communication);
  - **to be able to be recognized** (to go from the communication to the relationship);
  - **to be able to recognized our value** (capacity to take our place in a social system, to exercise an influence on our environment, to have the feeling to be able to have something to do in what happens to us);
  - **to be able to not say everything** (to go from the need to tell the truth to the capacity to speak truly, constitution of a space of personal or shared and sharable intimacy)
- To exercise ourselves to self responsabilization by giving us means to go out of positions of victimization, accusation or non responsabilization
- To learn self respect and respect of other
- To promote confrontation over fighting, to develop the capacity to go from reactional which maintains reducing to infantile level, to relational, guarantee of maturation. Any change arouses inevitably resistances within us and in our close circle.

Relational hygiene rules :

Relational hygiene rules are means, supports, guidelines, beacons, to go towards a greater coherence possible between intention, desire and objective. It allows also confronting the effects on each protagonist of an exchange in terms of well-being, congruence or satisfaction. It constitutes propositions susceptible to be offered to interlocutors.

Contrary to what we often believe it is not necessary to be two to start practising it.

It is not necessary that both protagonists know and practice the relational hygiene rules. It is enough that only one introduces them, gives evidence of it, to initiate a change in the relationship. This change will be followed or not by effects according to resistances met.

Some basic rules :

1. Any relationship symbolised by a scarf has two ends.

2. In any exchange, as in any communication attempt, we are always three protagonists: the other, me and the link which links us, named: RELATIONSHIP. By reminding that if it links us, also separate us (if not it is no longer a link but a ligature).

3. I learn to give evidence, to speak about me to the other and not for the other.

4. In a relationship I learn to differentiate what belongs to the register of feelings and what is more in the order of the relationship (to give, to ask, to receive, to refuse).

As a conclusion, the educational communication as a particular way of communication, interferes with more types of communication: oral (dominant) communication, written communication; verbal, paraverbal and nonverbal communication, referential communication (used to transmit theoretical information) and the communication by attitude (used to transmit valuable systems or the criteria of considering the values).It gets the positive effects of the ESPERE method, what makes the pupil to be conscious of something new in the relational process: that there is something more, except the emitter, receiver, communication channel and the message, that there is the relation between the two interlocutors. Becoming conscious of this phenomenon and being helped to make the proper steps in this process, the pupil reconsiders his position in the relation and he fundamentally implies in his interactions with all the people around him, himself getting part of training process.

References

Ioan Cerghit, *Alternative and Complementary Training Systems*, Bucuresti, Publishing House Aramis, 2002

Dinu Mihai, *Fundaments of interpersonal communication*, Bucuresti, Publishing House All, 2004

Soitu Laurentiu, *Educational communication,* Bucuresti, Publishing House Didactic and Pedagogic, 1997

Jaques Salome, *The courage to be yourself*, Bucureşti, Publishing House CurteaVeche, 2008

Béatrice Bonfis, Laurent Saadoun et Anthony , *Jacques Salomé and ESPERE Method*

Living and Wellness, Editions de boeck, 2008

PROMOTING QUALITY IN LANGUAGE TEACHING
Ellinor Haase, PhD
Co-Chairperson ICC

The Motto of the ICC Association – The International Certificate Conference Languages – is available at http://icc-languages.eu/index.php

Mobility has increased worldwide and the European Union promotes it through specific programmes such as ERASMUS+ for students and pupils. European legislation „Free movement of workers "allows all EU citizens to live in any EU country, to work, start a business or enjoy their retirement. It is something common nowadays for youth to communicate with youth from other countries on holidays or at home. And we shall not forget the refugees and the asylum seekers; our countries are "colourful" and varied.

Language and foreign languages are needed in all these cases. Mastering out national language is not enough; we need foreign languages too if we want to understand the other and to be understood by them.

Our language shapes our thoughts and actions, language can heal or hurt, we comfort or hurt people through language; we also face the risk that insufficient mastering of the other language could easily lead to major misunderstandings.

Good foreign language teaching is of absolute importance. It should involve intercultural dimensions in the teaching process, respect students by offering them interesting and challenging teaching materials and taking into account their learning needs and habits.

We work to achieve these objectives. We can present excellent examples of teaching materials, language tests, course layout and teacher training.

We are very active in the following areas: a framework based on competence in teaching foreign languages for lecturers with less or no prior teaching experience: EUROLTA - http://eurolta.jimdo.com/ - a programme developed within a EU project involving organizations from 10 countries, including one from Romania: The University of Piteşti. The mutual training modules are compulsory for everyone, but each centre can develop teaching materials suitable for their and the participants` needs as well as teaching materials in their mother tongue. ICC issues certificates based on the participants` portfolios.

The following two projects are developed around intercultural communication: DEW - Diverse Europe at Work - http://www.dew-net.eu/ - intercultural communication at work place; and LINGUAPEACE - http://www.linguapeace-europe.net/ - language teaching materials for military, police and other professional categories involved in peacekeeping; this project was one among than other projects awarded for good practices in Helsinki in 2006.

The association is always active in European projects; two projects were closed in 2013: **CHINESE FOR EUROPEANS -** www.chinese4.eu – and PICT - **Promoting Intercultural Competence in Translators** - www.pictllp.eu. Both projects were very practical; Chinese or Europeans provides online courses for tourists, students, businessmen and children; the modules for tourists are very handy because they can be installed as a phone application. Apart from this, all Europeans can learn Chinese in their mother tongue because the modules are translated into 26 European languages. PICT involved the development of a curricular framework for integrating intercultural modules in training interpreters and translators.

This year EUROVERSITY - http://www.euroversity.eu/ - should come to an end. It focused on the development of a virtual teaching and learning network. Our institution has created many teaching examples, mostly for foreign languages but also for other subjects. You are kindly invited to have a closer look at this project or any other you are interested in.

ICC has been working for over 30 years in quality assurance in teaching foreign languages. Initially, it functioned as a foreign language certification centre but nowadays it focuses on training foreign language lectures for adult education and quality assurance of teaching materials, language tests and course layout.

ICC organizes annually a conference on topic of interest in foreign language teaching. This conference is open to anyone – you are kindly invited to apply!

THE EDUCATIONAL IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE DIALOGUE IN MULTIETHNIC ENVIRONMENTS

Ljubivoje STOJANOVIC, Ph.D.
Ruzica PETROVIC, Ph. D.
Mirca MARAN, Ph. D.
Preschool Teacher Training College "Mihailo Palov"
Vrsac
vsvassekretar@hemo.net

Abstract: *The topic of this paper is the theoretical research of dialogue in the educational system and its importance for reaching a higher level of socio-cultural unity in multiethnic environments. The goal of this research, as the authors see it, is researching the educational possibilities for enhancing dialogue as a method for learning, communication and self-change, which should eventually lead to improvements in the collective spirit and consequently the common good. Their theoretical view is based on the knowledge that cultural, religious, linguistic and other differences should be points of mutual connection and acceptance, and not of divergence, alienation and exclusion. In this work the postulated thesis is that dialogue which is founded on respect for others and their differences represents a sound moral basis for creative progress of individual in freedom and responsibility. Having this in mind the authors, with a wide scientific, theological and philosophical basis, developed the argumentation with which they confirm the codependence of sensitivity and care for others with personal moral development.*

Key words: *dialogue, education, multiethnic environment, culture*

In the context of the selected topic the authors study the phenomenon of dialogue, its place in the educational system and its influence on multiethnic environments. The topic will be explored through the theological, philosophical and socio-historical approach. The starting basis for the analysis is the differentiation between dialogue as a dialogue method and means of communication on the basis of which the analysis of these tow functions is formed: epistemological and ethic which is expressed in the educational process and socio-cultural effect which affirms itself in the communication and interaction role in multiethnic environments.

The principle assumptions

The skill of holding dialogues while respecting diversity should constantly be developed on the one hand by overcoming violence and on the other devaluing it. Then anyone can become successful – "big" in the extent to which one allows others to develop in their creative freedom. Unfortunately, in all of its currents history is a witness to the fact that people are starting to "talk more and more, but communicating less and less… there are too many professionals for holding speeches, but people are still beginners at having a conversation" (Šupnjić, 1994:9-10). This knowledge should not discourage us and freeze us in the state of established diagnosis; we should form stable foundations for the culture of dialogue in the multi pluralistic society of our time and region on the basis of the dialogue success examples form history. Multidisciplinary education system, multiethnic, multicultural and multi-religious society represent a creative phenomenon. They require creative innovation which brings to the present all of the achievements from the past and all creative insight and roles for the future.

Epistemological and ethical dimensions of the dialogue method:

In the research of the epistemological dimension of the dialogue method, the authors started from the authentic dialogue form which Socrates introduced and developed. It entails the participation of two actors: the student, who engages in dialogue with a need to learn the truth and the teacher, who has mastered the skill of logically and methodologically leading a dialogue. Through this form of dialogue multiple learning effects are achieved:

1. The understanding of what we know and what we do not know, by the principle "I do not think I know what I do not know" (Socrates)
2. The understanding of false knowledge or until then false conviction about knowledge
3. Release from conceited knowledge
4. Establishing a safe starting position for thinking and gaining true knowledge
5. The readiness to recognize the collocutors argumentation

Apart from this form of dialogue in which the collocutor directly through conversation develops the consciousness of borders and possibilities of one's own thinking, the teacher can by correctly leading the conversation prepare the student for self-dialogue, in which the internal awareness develops the consciousness of one's personality, identity, preferences, freedoms and possibilities. A person engrossed in oneself feels the need for others as cocreators and collocutors, who becomes "…the unknown self… then within me develops a new person with every encounter" (Šušnjić, 1994:2016). Viewed from this aspect dialogue incorporates not only the learning but also the moral dimension, because confronting oneself and ones characteristics, the good along with the ones which indicate weaknesses and inadequacies, created the need for development and personal change. Such an actor in conversation becomes freed from:

1. Underestimating the collocutor
2. Persuading and imposing one's own views onto others
3. Eristic (quarrelsome) attitude
4. Disqualification

The socio-cultural dimension of dialogue

When dialogue understood in such a way is applied in the system of interpersonal relations it contributes to its improvement. The principle of difference which is on a personal level discovered through the presence of personal gifts which people develop throughout their lives, on a social level in multiethnic surroundings this principle is recognized through the character of entities who are characterized by a different: language, culture, traditions, customs, histories and religion. This is indicated by the following: "If I can help you, I believe I can do so primarily by being different from you" (Žid, 1961:219). Difference in this way becomes creative capital of many, it is constantly expanding with the self-giving of each individual, as the best role which forms the capital of: socially free and dependable citizens. This should be recognized as a combined goal of all good-natured creators, who can develop only when "… no one conjures reasons for self-justification, everyone is good-willed and honest to others" (Stojanović, 2013:183).

The main importance of dialogue as a communication form in social interaction is affirmation of the socio-cultural values, the development of tolerance, moral sensitivity, altruism, care for others and solidarity with others. This entails constant effort from all participants, who know that "…questioning is always a sign of tolerance" (Šunjić, 1994:218). It is also important to know that "… in a dispute over an answer to a question the battle should not be waged on a race track, because speed does not win but truth" (Kjerkegor, 1980:51). Dialogue founded on these values contributes to:

1. Accepting others in their differences
2. Allowing the freedom of thinking, speech and action
3. Refraining from judging others in advance
4. Not judging someone as a bad person on the basis of a bad act, if an "evil intention" is missing

As an end result, a dialogue built on healthy, moral and social foundations enables the cultivation of community spirit, the development of a tendency of finding the good in others, encourages empathy and contributes to a continual development of a person's freedom and responsibility. It should be noted that the goal of education, especially in the age of swift technological development, is to "…guide the technological and scientific development towards the values of critical reflection, solidarity and creativity, global interest and the wellbeing of all" (Inđić, 2009:83).

Historical indicators of dialogue culture in Banat

Banat as an example of a peace-loving creative coexistence of differences, with its historical persistence in searching for and finding good dialogue forms,

represents a formula for success in achieving unity in difference. This was an obvious reality, long before the modern declarative advocacy in the world started, and has been acting without any real results. Multi-ethnicity, multiculturalism and multi-confessionality in Banat have been nurtured throughout centuries because the dialogue culture has been continually developing. An indicator of this are the multilingual schools which have existed from the very beginning of the Habsburg Monarchy educational system in the 18[th]century, in which Banat was a constituent part. This is confirmed by the existence of the Grammar school in Vršac, whose founder was the municipality of Vršac, in which the educational languages were: Serbian, Romanian and German but where Latin was also taught (milker, 2005:196-197). In addition to this we should mention the existence of the Serbian-Romanian clerical school (1822-1867) in Vršac, where future priests were schooled both in Serbian and Romanian (Gavrilivić, 1983). An interesting event is the signing of the Yugoslav-Romanian school convention in the year 1933. which enabled the opening of elementary schools in the Romanian language, as well as a Romanian class in the Teacher Training school in Vršac, along with a Serbian class in the Grammar high school and Teacher Training school in Timisoara (Popi, 1976:100-103). When it comes to the modern day higher education it should be said that at the Teacher Training College "Mihailo Palov" in Vršac students are educated in three languages Serbian, Romanian and Roma. This data indicates a high level of cooperation and it encourages innovative creative activities.

Concluding thoughts

From the short theoretical insight and concrete historical facts we can freely conclude that acceptance of differences represents the founding stone on which pluralistic society is built. School on all of its educational levels from the preschool to the higher education represents the most important dialogue space. This is why it is essential for everyone to have an opportunity to be educated in their mother tongue, with the presumed necessity of learning the language of one's fellow citizens from a different nationality. This is how common capital of all citizens is formed, since everyone feels richer for learning the language of his neighbor, who has also learned your language. Everyone rises to a higher level of understanding of the importance of the mother tongue precisely by allowing the other to have the same rights.

Harmonization of differences as a creative phenomenon is possible only when people succeed in putting their own origin and nationality in the creative context with the origin and nationality of others. In this way the selfishness of the individual and collective is overcome while identity and collective dignity are promoted. This is when differences are experienced as a good opportunity which needs to be continually developed, and not be perceived as a threat. Awareness of the fact that no one can endanger us as much as we can endanger ourselves encourages one to realistically rethink the relation between oneself and others.

Taking this into consideration we realize that violence and discrimination represent weakness and ignorance of those who promote them. Tolerance is then recognized as a life necessity but also as something which should be continually cared for until it develops into the fullness of a healthy philanthropy

Bibliography:
- . Гавриловић, Н. (1983). *Српско-румунско клерикално училиште у Вршцу 1822-1867.* Нови Сад: Филозофкси факултет, Институт за Историју.
- Ганди, М. (2008). *Пут ненасиља.* Београд: Службени гласник.
- Жид, М. (1961). *Ковачи лажног новца.* Београд: Просвета.
- Žižek, S. (2008). *O nasilju.* Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak.
- Инђић, т. (2009). *Технологија и културни идентитет.* Београд: Службени гласник.
- Кјеркегор, С. (1980). *Филозофске мрвице.* Београд: Графос.
- Маран, М (2008). *Културне прилике код Румуна у Банату 1945-1952.* Вршац: Висока школа струковних студја уа образовање васпитача.
- Милекер, С. (2005). *Повесница слободне краљеве вароши Вршца.* Вршац – Панчево: Историјски архив Панчево.
- Попи, Г. (1976). *Румуни у југословенском Банату између два рата 1918-1941.* Нови Сад: Институт за изучавање историје Војводине.
- Стојановић, Љ. (2013). *Култура дијалога.* Вршац: Висока школа струковних студија за васпитаче.
- Шушњић, Ђ. (1994). *Дијалог и толеранција.* Нови Сад: Издавачка књижарница Зорана Стојановића.

EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER EDUCATION: HOW TO ENHANCE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Dalila Lino, Ph.D.
Institute Polytechnic of Lisbon
Higher School of Education
linodalila@gmail.com

Abstract
Early childhood teacher education is a central component of the professional development process. Research points out that the training of teachers of young children is extremely important in the professional development of early childhood teachers, and for the development of the quality of educational contexts. This paper reflects on the contributions of in-service training for the professional development of early childhood teachers and for the development of their organizational contexts. Therefore presents an ecological model of professional development that involves all those implicated in the educational process.

Key words: Teacher education; professional development; in-service training; early childhood education.

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 change produced changes at several levels: the organization of society; at work; on relations and interpersonal communications; in teaching and learning (Dalin and Rust, 1996).

The constant changes in such 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 perpetual throughout professional life. Chapman and Aspin (2001), highlight the need for transformation of the existing education systems in order to support the new challenges of the knowledge and information society, which refers to a training perspective over life cycle. It is therefore necessary to acquire a number of skills, to learn a set of abilities and relearn other, to meet the new social and knowledge demands. This new model of society suggests a permanent learning that has to be carried out continuously, in order to improve the skills, knowledge and attitudes.

Teacher education is an important feature of school and educational systems that promotes 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; 2013; Perrenoud, 1993) and contributes to improve the quality of society.

Teaching is seen as a profession that entails: reflective thinking; autonomy; responsibility; creativity; research; personal judgments; and continuing professional development.

The reflection in and about the experience (Dewey, 1929; Shön, 1983; Zheichner, 1993), is fundamental for the construction of theoretical and practical knowledge, and for the professional development of teachers. According to Dewey (1953), reflective thinking requires three essential attitudes: open mind; absorbed interest; and responsibility. Another important ability required to teachers is autonomy, which enables them to develop a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate for the group of children they work at. Autonomy allows teachers to find the appropriate resources for the educational environment and act appropriately, and with creativity when they face emergent and new situations.

An early childhood teacher, to properly exercise the professional activity should: a) have good knowledge and good relationship with content subject; b) know in depth the curriculum and be able to recreate it according to the work situation; c) meet the learner and learning needs; d) master the processes of education, the various methods and techniques and relating them to the objectives and curriculum content; e) be familiar with the work context, namely the school and the education system; f) know himself/herself as a professional. To accomplish these competencies requires an ongoing training which leads to a process of professional development throughout the professional cycle.

In-service training

In-service training is a form of training for trained teachers, and has been the subject of study and theorization by several authors and researchers.

According to Formosinho "in-service teacher training is the training of teachers provided with professional initial training, targeting the personal and professional development" (1991, p.237). In-service training is distinguished from initial training, not by the content or methodologies, but by its recipients, professionalized teachers who had entered a teaching career. In this perspective, in-service training aims to improve and develop the technical skills of the teachers, and deepen and broaden their theoretical and practical frameworks within curriculum knowledge, content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge (Spodek and Saracho, 2003).

Teacher's professional knowledge has been the subject of many studies and reflections. It is a mixture of knowledge and know-how which receives

input from multiple sources. Relies on the accumulated experience of the profession itself, with its traditions, norms and myths, as well as knowing who will design the interface between the profession and other communities with whom they interact more directly. It is a process that develops throughout the life cycle and enhances professional development.

Professional development

Professional development refers to the development of a person in his or her professional role, and is defined as a growth that occurs through the professional cycle of a teacher (Crowther et al, 2000).

Teacher professional development has moved beyond simple in-service workshops and has expanded into a more robust system of continuing education. In order to advance in their careers, teachers should seek out professional development opportunities which are favored by collaborative contexts (institutional, associative, formal or informal).

Research in the area of teacher's continuing education stresses the benefits of training that is related with the organizations where they work, and connected with children's learning, and teachers' professional development (Epstein, 1993; Oliveira-Formosinho & Formosinho, 2001; Lino, 2005). Oliveira-Formosinho (2013) stated that professional development is a more experiential and more integrated process thus steadily moving away from the purely individual aspect towards valuing development in context. This model of in-service training is conceptualized as an ecological model of professional development, where teachers and their work contexts influence each other on the development of early childhood quality practices.

The ecological model of early childhood teacher professional development unfolds around a focused training that is carried out on the workplace, and is focused on teacher centered practices. This ongoing training model involves all individuals that work direct and indirectly with children, namely: teachers, auxiliaries, parents, principals, coordinators, etc., and links professional development to curriculum development, and to organizational development This assumption means that teacher training cannot be turned off of specificities of the know-how of the profession, and has a direct connection to the context of the practice.

An ecological model of professional development

The ecological model of professional development stems on a systemic perspective of school improvement, where the professional development influences and is influenced by the organizational context in which the intervention takes place (Fulan, 1982; Oliveira-Formosinho and Formosinho, 2001; Lino, 2005). The professional and organizational development develops around a focused training that is carried out in the workplace, and is focused on teacher-centered practices.

This training model links professional development to curriculum development and to organizational development, and involves teachers, parents, auxiliaries, directors and other staff in curriculum development, improvement of teaching methods, and fosters children's learning and development (Oliveira-Formosinho & Formosinho, 2001; Lino, 2005).

The characteristics of a context based training that promotes professional and organizational development are as follow:

- Context driven training.
- Co-operated training.
- Common and shared theoretical framework.
- Reflection and assessment.
- Mentoring.
- Development of projects and action research projects.

Context driven training

The workshops are a common approach in continuing training; however, to have an impact on the professional development must integrate a set of characteristics, namely: active participation; sharing opportunities among peers; follow-up sessions as educators seek to implement their ideas (Epstein 1993).

The workshops' planning stems on teachers, auxiliaries, parents, principals, identification of needs and interests, and aims to improve the quality of services provided to children and their families. The identification of needs and interests is done by the workshops' leaders, specialized professionals from different field areas, in collaboration with the professionals from educational contexts. Thus the topics to be developed at workshop sessions are agreed by all participants involved in the training process: the trainers and the trainees.

The workshops are organized in different sessions, according to different topics, and include theoretical and practical experiences, which are always followed by an implementation of different subjects at teachers' work context. They also include follow-up sessions, aiming to create opportunities for teachers to share their experiences from the field, and reflect on ways to better implement the new ideas and knowledge.

Co-operated training.

The process of training in context is a complex and demanding process that requires co-operative interaction of teams of trainers and agents in the context of early childhood education. It is a task that requires a learning community that promotes learning organizations (Senge, 1999; Oliveira-Formosinho & Formosinho, 2001; Lino, 2005). This complex process, which articulates the development and learning of children with professional development and organizational contexts of action, relies on sustained support from professionals and contexts through collaborative processes where training in the context plays a crucial role.

Team work is, therefore an essential component of context based training. The work in educational teams integrates elements with different levels of experience, knowledge and learning which enhances the learning at level of the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1979), where the less experienced teacher learns and builds knowledge with the support of more experienced and competent teacher through processes of collaboration and negotiation. This is not to transfer knowledge or skills but rather create, develop and communicate meanings through the collaborative use of meditated means (Daniels, 2003). This process actively involves teachers (the more and less experienced) in searching new ways to solve the problems and issues they face at their work contexts, and allows for continuously collective learning of all the members that make up the educational team.

Another important feature of co-operated training and professional development is the involvement of parents on the daily work of educational institutions, and on their children's learning.

The educational services for children and their families stems on the assumption that these services are a right of all families and communities, and an expression of social solidarity with children and their families (Moss, 1992). Thus aim at creating an educational context to meet the needs of children and of their families, actively involve them in children's learning in order to guarantee the right to a quality educational service.

This perspective leads to development of programs involving teachers and parents as partners in cooperative work at various levels, such as: educational planning; observation and documentation of children's experiences; and implementation of educational activities, whether carried out in the context of practices in the educational center or those that occur at home. The right of participation of parents in terms of curriculum decisions requires the training of early childhood teachers and other professional involved in children's care and education, in order to develop a cooperative work with parents. It also requires training programs for parents (Whalley, et al 2001).

Team teaching is the ability of being able to work and share events, tasks and responsibilities with other adults which fosters the professional development of early childhood teachers. To work in teams enhances the creation of educational partnerships that promote co-operative learning (Vygotstky, 2000), creating real zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1979). The work of teachers who are part of the educational team promotes sustained learning, where more experienced and competent teachers support the less experienced. Thus, by participating in the area of potential development teachers learn at inter-psychological level what they need to act autonomously at intra-psychological level (Vygotsky, 2000), which promotes their professional development.

Common and shared theoretical framework

The education of the early childhood teachers is focused on central questions of pedagogy, theories of development and learning, curriculum models and teaching methods for early childhood education, styles of parental involvement, techniques and tools of child observation and assessment, evaluation of quality practices for young children. The parent training focuses on key aspects of children's learning issues, and forms of how to help parents to understand and promote their children's learning.

The context based training, the training of early childhood teachers and other professionals working at the educational team, enables the development of a curricular approach for children that focuses on the capabilities of children which are actively involved in the construction of knowledge.

Reflection and assessment

Reflection on and about action is a central dimension of teachers' professional development widely cited in the literature of teacher education (Shön, 1983; Zeicnher, 1993; Alarcão, 2002), and stressed by some childhood educators, such as Dewey. In fact, the importance of reflection in building quality practices for children and for teachers professional development was analyzed by Dewey in several of his works. In "The sources of the science of education", he advocates that "science education is not found in books or in the experimental laboratories, or in classrooms where teachers teach, but in the minds of those who teach the educational activity" (Dewey, 1929, p.32).

Reflection is one of the tools used to support de development of quality practices for young children, as well as to enhance teachers' professional development. Teachers and all those involved in the process of context based training are invited by mentors, trainers and researchers to reflect on their educational practices, and about the process they have to go through in order to improve their professional knowledge.

Another important dimension of context based training and thus of teachers' professional development is assessment: children's assessment and educational environment assessment. To accomplish these task teachers, others professionals and, sometimes, parents are trained in the use of various assessment tools in order to enable them to monitoring the quality of their own practices, and to assess children's learning. This collaboratively process is done by all of those that are involved in the process of context based training: teachers, trainers, mentors, auxiliaries, principles and parents. Data resulting from assessment is analyzed and reflected by the educational team, highlights strengths and weaknesses of their members, allows the identification of new training for teachers and other professionals, and informs about children's progresses, interests and needs.

The context based training uses a model of teacher education that links teachers, organization, and children's assessment to inform and support the development of a training plan.

Mentoring

"Mentoring in the early years is a dynamic system of advice and support in the context of ongoing training and development which makes sense of reflective practice" (Robins, 2006, p.10).

The individual and group support is an essential element of the context based training. The cycle of observation, feedback and discussion that develops under the mentoring process focuses on the reflection of the contextualization of the content covered at the training workshops. Thus, teacher and mentor engage in a collaborative process of documentation, analysis and evaluation of early childhood practices, which is the basis for change, and for the reconstruction of educational contexts. This reflective process around the practical training is central to the professional development of early childhood teachers and other professionals working with young children.

Development of projects and action research projects

The development of quality pedagogical practices in early childhood education is only possible through the involvement of team members in research and reflection of practices centered on various childhood pedagogical issues and questions.

Teachers, parents and other members of the educational team are encouraged to engage in small-scale research projects with different focus, such as: the well-being of children; the importance of observation; parental involvement strategies; etc. The research projects undertaken have the support of collaborative partnerships that integrate early childhood teachers, principals, auxiliaries, parents and researchers from higher education institutions. The importance of partnerships between academic and early childhood educational centers has been highlighted in childhood pedagogy literature, particularly by John Dewey, who advocated that is only possible understand the importance of scientific discovery by connecting it to the contexts of practice. "The concrete educational experience is the primary source of all inquisition and reflection because it points the problems, and confirms, modifies, and corrects the conclusions of intellectual inquiry" (Dewey, 1929, p.56).

Dewey (1929) rediscovers the importance of connecting theory and practice, the theoretical investigation and trial practice through processes of reflective thinking. He proclaims that scientific and pedagogical innovation does not just happen at theory level, but involves a partnership between theory and practice, between academia and practice centers.

There only is a transformation of practice when summon the scientific knowledge and researchers, teachers, parents, and other professionals collaborate in partnerships for the co-construction of pedagogical science.

Conclusions

206

Professional development is considered a right of every teacher and group of teachers that integrates an educational community. It is an individual right of every teacher who belongs to a group, and a right of the group that works together as a whole (Rinaldi, 1994). According to Rinaldi, the "good professional development" is a vital aspect of teachers' personal and professional identity, and of their daily work, which implies change, renewal, and is a key element to improve the quality of interactions between teachers and children, and between all adults involved in the educational process.

Professional development is an important element of collective and individual processes. On one "hand", professional development is favored by collaborative contexts (institutional, associative, formal or informal) where teachers have the opportunity to interact with others and feel supported by them, where they can check their experiences and gather important information from the context where they act. On the other "hand" the teacher professional development has an influence on the development of the organizational and social context.

The ecological model of professional development aims to improve the professional knowledge of individual teachers, groups of teachers working at the same institution, and, simultaneously, to enhance the development of the quality services provided by the educational context. This requires a training that involves all the actors directly and indirectly implicated in the teaching and learning process, namely: teachers, auxiliaries, principles, coordinators, parents, and other adults working at the educational setting.

The ecological model uses an approach of context based in-service training that has specific characteristics, which can be presented as a form of lessons. There are six lessons learned about the characteristics of a continuous and context based training. The first lesson is that training with significant impact on practices must be carried out in the workplace. The second lesson is that only the continuous and consistent training take effect at the level of practice. The third lesson teaches that the training is more likely to be effective when based on a coherent conception of teaching and learning. This means that training should be developed from a comprehensive and well-articulated perspective about how children learn, and the proper ways to provide meaningful learning experiences. The fourth lesson learned maintains that the training of adults should be congruent with the way they are expected to organize the educational contexts for children. In fact, there is an analogy between the continuous training format proposed and the way teachers develop the curriculum. The fifth lesson states that continuing education requires time and continuity in order to produce meaningful learning and then professional development will occur. The sixth and final lesson teaches that the organization of an optimal environment for children is related with the creation of optimal learning environment for adults who work with them.

This model emphasizes the connection and integration of the organizational context on in-service training projects, which means the involvement of all adults participating in the educational process - educators, teachers, auxiliaries, parents, principals, and other elements of the community at large. It also emphasizes the centrality of collaboration and co-operation between peers and the organizational context as a key factor in career development and for the construction of a common educational vision, and assumes reflection as a transversal dimension for professional development.

References

Alarcão, I. (2002). Escola reflexiva e desenvolvimento institucional. Que novas funções supervisiva? In J. Oliveira-Formosinho (Org.), *A supervisão na formação de professores I – Da sala à escola* (p.217-238). Porto: Porto Editora

Day, (2001). *Desenvolvimento profissional de professores: Os desafios da aprendizagem permanente*. Porto: Porto Editora.

Daniels, H. (2003). *Vygotsky e a Pedagogia.* S. Paulo: Edições Loyola.

Dewey, J. (1929). *The sources of a science of education.* New York: Liveright.

Epstein, A. (1993). *Training for quality: Improving early childhood programs through systematic inservice training*. Ypsilanti: High/Scope Press.

Lino, D. (2005). *Da formação escolar à formação em contexto: Um percurso de inovação para a reconstrução da pedagogia da infância.* Dissertação de doutoramento em Estudos da Criança. Braga: Universidade do Minho.

Nóvoa, A. (1992). Formação de profesores e profissão docente. In A. Nóvoa (Coord.), *Os professores e a sua formação* (pp.15-34). Lisboa: Publicações Don Quixote.

Oliveira-Formosinho e J. Formosinho (Orgs.), (2001). *Associação Criança: Um contexto de formação em contexto*. Braga: Livraria Minho.

Rinaldi, C. (1994). Staff development in Reggio Emilia. In L. Katz, e B. Cesarone (Eds.), *Reflections on the Reggio Emilia Approach,* (p.47-50). Pennsylvania: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.

Robins, A. (Ed.) (2006). *Mentoring in the early years.* London: Paul Chapman Publishing

Shön, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner.* New York: Basic Books.

Spodek, B. e Saracho, O. (2003). The preparation of teachers for the profession in early childhood education. In B. Spodek e O. Saracho (Eds.), *Studying teachers in early childhood setings* (p.1-29). Greenwich: Information Age Publishing.

Vygotsky, L. (1979). *Pensamento e Linguagem.* Lisboa: Antídoto.
Vygotsky, L. (2000). *A Formação Social da Mente.* São Paulo: Martins Fontes.
Whalley, M. et al (2001). *Involving parents in their children´s learning*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
Zeichner, K. (1993). *A formação reflexiva de professores: Ideias e práticas.* Lisboa: Educa.

PORTRAIT OF AN EMINENT CONTEMPORARY PEDAGOGUE: FLOREA VOICULESCU

Anton ILICA, Ph.D.,
Faculty of Educational Science, Psychology and Social Sciences
"Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad, Romania
anton.ilica@yahoo.com

Abstract: *The text is the presentation of an eminent pedagogue and professor, a personality striving for knowledge and gifted with the spirit of well done things. After a short presentation of his biographical data, we have pointed out his pedagogical beliefs and opinions, his original vision on educational philosophy based on the analysis of his most important writings in the field of pedagogy.*

Keywords: *Florea Voiculescu, education in market economy, time management.*

FLOREA VOICULESCU (born August 11th, 1949, Făget, Prahova County) professor at "1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba-Iulia is concerned about management issues in education, institutional reformation as well as appropriate management of educational resources used to increase the efficiency of educational systems. Bachelor of Pedagogy from the University of Bucharest (1975) he holds a PhD in Educational Sciences from "Babeș - Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca since 1994. He was teacher at a Pedagogical High school, becoming latter one of the founding members of "1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia. He has been teaching at this university since 1993 and he holds the title of full professor since 2000. He is a dynamic presence in the national and Alba Iulia academic background, being for a while the vice rector of the university and also the head of the Department for Teacher Training (in our message exchange I have asked him the permission to publish his great and at the same time sad introspection about our generation: "I believe now that unfortunately for us and a part of our generation, change has come late, maybe too late (I'm referring to the changes occurred after 1989 with their good and bed sides). When I say "us" I am referring to those who were not university professors in 1989 and who have founded the universities we work in. We had to compress time and achieve many things in a short span of time (PhD, lecturer, associate professor, full professor, studies, books etc.) facts that other generations (either older or

younger than us) could accomplish in 10 - 20 years. We didn`t have the time to write fundamental works. We had to become mentors without experiencing the benefits of being mentored in traditional universities. We had to be mature at youth and young at maturity. The word "us" explains why we get along so well, why envy and selfishness are absent from our professional and personal bonds, why we can have divergent opinions but not adversities, why we share competition and not confrontation").

He wrote: "*Development of educational objectives. Theory, research, applications*" (1995), "*Methodological guide of statistics for pedagogy and psychology*" (2000), "*Time management. A Psychopedagogic Approach*" (colab, 2004), "*Resources-need analysis and strategic management in education*" (2004), "*Didactics of economic sciences– methodological guide with applied contents*" (2006), "*Measurement in education sciences*" (colab., 2007), "*Handbook of contemporary pedagogy*" (2005), "*Education in market economy*" (2008), as well as a coherent series of studies on controversial issues in contemporary pedagogy and didactics.

A constant idea of his writings is the search for a model of identifying needs in education; in this direction, Florea Voiculescu advances a coherent strategy of reconsidering the relationship between **demand** and **offer** in a properly functioning **market education**. F. Voiculescu`s concerns shape a new concept, ignored by the current pedagogic thinking, yet significant for an increased teaching efficiency and for the efficiency of the educational system: the functioning and organization of education in a market economy after its rules. He refers to "*pedagogical connections to the economy*", because these two realities obviously intercross: "*the pedagogic and economic dimension act as if they were part of two different areas*", but "education costs", and ensuring quality education entails "quality funding". To solve the directly proportional report between quality and costs in education, the author himself guides us towards an open dilemma: "*morality versus mercantilism*". The author states that it is encouraging the fact that the "*need for education and the demand for studies*" have increased in our society, but discouraging is that mercantilism of certain institutions generated "*qualitative degradation of the educational process*", as well as "*an axiological decay of education*". The pedagogue F. Voiculescu develops a thorough theory on this topic. The theory debates on overcoming the deceiving from education and on the responsible promotion of "*educational services market*". Financing school education and educational institutions is not just a national priority but a necessity. Decent future for society and its individuals requires funds. The issue of "*education in economy market*" is related to educational policies. It is a reality of modern and present society but it remains hidden under ideological beliefs such as the statement "*constant crisis in education*".

"*Education in market economy. Between cognitive analysis and political views*" (2008) is a challenge in terms of educational policy which should be read by

anyone in charge of education. Financing education gives credit to quality of life and the health of economic institutions: ”*the price of a certain quality is determined by those who pay it*”, inflaming the ”**open dilemma**” between morality and mercantilism, namely ”*between (impartial) cognitive analysis and (mercantile) political views*”. The author stresses out the "need for education" (regarded for a long time as a ”must”) through fundamental questions such as: ”*What for? For whom? Why this way and not in another way? Why that much and not more or less? Why now and not later?*”[8] These are questions that should be answered by any decision maker or financer in the field of education. The multiple question: ”Who and how sets the "need for education" so that the educational system finds solutions for social problems”? should also be answered. The need for education, just like social needs, motivates the interaction between society and education. Needs drift from our ability to offer social (systemic) and individual satisfaction. Social failure is not about their transfer upon school nor about the educational system`s involvement in their production. Therefore, ”*goals based on need analysis is the primary condition of credibility, reason and success of any reform strategy in the field of education*”. The author discusses the contents of education in his classification of educational needs. He links contents to collective and personal needs: (needs of) intellectual education, professional training, social-moral education, aesthetic education, ”new education” placed in divergent or competitive interaction. We have to admit that such an approach does not overcrowd the pedagogic literature; moreover the analysis need as motivational resource generates several solutions to overcome the waste of time resources and rational consumption of intellectual and motivational effort. The fulfilment of needs (no matter what needs) – calls for resources – which are always insufficient -: ”*the educational institution and teachers are constantly dealing with the issue of fulfilling growing needs with limited resources which don`t increase as fast as the needs*”. Human perspective is essential for the fulfilment of educational needs among other three types of resources (human, material and financial). ***The teacher*** ”consumes” the educational act for ”*effectiveness, reason and usefulness*” which is visible in children as distinctive personalities. When learning, children have a potential – a certain ability to work – with limited parameters though. Therefore, ”*rational distribution of the ability to work in terms of objectives, school subjects and activity types divided on moments of the day, weeks and school year are deciding factors in an effective educational process.* Learning activities, the framework for the children`s ability to work use intellectual, motivational and behaviour-instrumental resources. The author mentions **time**[9] as one of the most important educational resources and points out that more value should be assigned to it. He also presents models of institutional management, various analysis made to decide on the

---

[8] Florea Voiculescu, *Economia de piață*, Institutul european, Iaşi, 2008.
[9] Florea Voiculescu, *Managementul timpului. O abordare psihopedagogică*, Editura Risoprint, Cluj-Napoca, 2004.

situation of education. He suggests managing organizational resources by means of **transferable credits** (to measure time used for learning). In his discourse, F. Voiculescu blends pedagogic terminology with psychology, sociology and even economy and thus using a distinctive language in modern pedagogy. The following texts proves the above mentioned statement: „*increased intellectual effort made for one subject matter reduces the effort availability for other subject matters. The same situations occurs with motivational resources, when interest for one subject matter is accompanied by a reduction of motivation for other subject matters*,,[10]. "Efficiency" is defined in terms of time management: " *an activity is more efficient, if quantitative and qualitative results are higher using reduced time consumption* ". The analysis of "educational services" (pupils in school service or school in pupils` service!?), of "goods and education market", "use of educational goods", "beneficiaries, clients, buyers" and many other economic factors which influence education draw our attention upon what Florea Voiculescu calls "*the economic law of pedagogy: education costs*" (chapter 4), but the lack of education costs even more. Cost analysis of educational services, of accounting costs and financing on pupil (carefully explained through a research) leads towards the identification of effects brought about by the investment in human educational capital. Economic culture and the terminology used in pedagogic performance lead towards a complex development of economic functions and the role of school in society. Florea Voiculescu`s writings and analysis focus on an essential statement addressed to decision-makers": ***don`t ask school to give you more that you give it but to give you what it does***".

Extremely rigorous, almost mathematical F. Voiculescu has the vocation to restructure, to "place" education in structures and clearly, scientifically proven principles, guided by the economic rule of "in and out" of the educational system. He can bring arguments to support his ideas, changes theory into practical solutions, carefully select scientific arguments and use notions in a proper manner. His writings are fluid because he operates with interesting ideas, linking his personal reflections to scientific arguments. F. Voiculescu prefers isotopic aspects of pedagogy and avoids common statements because the main aspects of pedagogy find a solution in his statements. His opinions on the new manner of approaching education based on economic regulations will assign a new dimension to the development of educational policies.

---

[10] F. Voiculescu, *Analiza resurselor-nevoi şi managementul strategic în învăţământ*, Editura Aramis, Bucureşti, 2004, p.120.

COUNSELING PARENTS - SOLUTIONS TO OPTIMIZE THE PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN PARENTS AND SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Corina Iurea
Educational Sciences Department,
Petroleum-Gas University, Bd. Bucuresti, 39, Ploiesti, 100680, Romania
corinaiurea@yahoo.com

Abstract

School counselor - family relationship has a particularly important role in the social, mental and intellectual evolution of the beneficiary education (the student).

The investigative approach confirms the idea that Counseling Programs in/ and school - family partnerships are useful to parents and students because they offer information; they form skills and develop the necessary experience to identify an optimistic and realistic way to build their existence. Counseling is meant to be proactive, involving the prevention of students' personal and educational crises. Counseling parents is necessary both for its role in raising and educating children and for the democratization of education by training them to participate in decision making regarding to children's education.

Keywords: *counseling parents, professional partnership between parents-school counselor, counseling program*

1. Introduction

School and family are two institutions that need one another; they must (re)find their path towards authentic collaboration based on trust and mutual respect, on the love for children, in order to make room for an open and permeable relationship, favoring the exchange and communication of ideas by counseling programs in school-family partnerships.

Creating professional partnerships constitutes a challenge in finding solutions to complex issues society is facing.

In making a partnership between counselor and parents, professional interventions are required, which can be achieved through cooperation and educational activities for parents by means of counseling services. A partnership between counselor and parents is not possible without educating parents first, how one cannot speak of educating parents in the absence of their collaboration with school and the school counselor.

Any system of education, no matter how scholarly it would be, remains helpless if spattered against the indifference, opposition and divergent opinions from parents. Attracting them as partners in the process of educational counseling and in the act of education, unlocking the educational potential of family and the coordination of school and family efforts towards common objectives constitutes a target for any system of education in any society.

The counselor supports the family in the process of knowing their own child, in identifying and unlocking his potential in overcoming constraints, in keeping a balanced, harmonious family climate. Intervention is effective if the information is provided through a direct contact, established mutually between specialist and parents. The partnership between counselor and parents shall be governed by the principles of: confidentiality, professional responsibility, trust, respect and effective communication.

Specialists show concern for parents of children with difficulties proposing, through their services, ways of professional intervention for both parents and children, in order to strengthen the relationship between them (see Eftimie, S., Suditu, M., Mărgăriţoiu, A. 2010).

The complex action of counseling parents aims to suggest a way to act or a way to behave that should be adopted in a given situation in daily life. Counseling is a relationship governed by principles, characterized by applying one or more psychological theories and a recognizable set of communication skills folded on the intimate concerns of the subject (parent, child), on its needs, interests and aspirations. Counselor's task is to provide parents with the possibility to explore, find and clarify ways of living, of connecting with their own children, resorting to more resources and heading towards a better existence and life experience.

Counseling is also a learning process aimed at guiding the client to action. Problematic behavior (observable, measurable and apparent) is the result of inadequate learning. During counseling, the parent feels invested with the power to accept and recognize problematic life situations, to find alternative solutions and create own strategies for solving problems.

2. Methodology

The study shows the impact of a counseling program for parents started by the school counselor, on the relation between parents-children-school. The design of such a program has highlighted the importance and the role of counselor in the school.

2.1. Objective
The exact formulation of the objectives in the intervention plan is the first step in the approach:

- **Educational purposes:** adaptation to school life, discipline and responsibility for children, increase in school performance, improvement of absenteeism, reducing school abandonment.
- **Family purposes:** developing assertive communication between parent and child, establishing balance in family relationships, accepting and accommodating the child's need for counseling (understanding the issue), time management.
- **Emotional purposes**: strengthening the self image and self esteem, resolving the emotional difficulties of the child and the disputes between generations, controlling aggressiveness, self-assessment.

Practice has shown that the most powerful influence on a child's personality development is family. A constant relation between family and school is for the benefit of children both from an academic as well as a behavioral point of view. Difficult school issues like absenteeism, dropping out, school failure, have the following consequences among parents: school is accused of being guilty of children's failure; parents identify with children and break the ties with school. Under the same circumstances, school considers the child a source of problems and most of the times, ignores the potential of the family in the process of solving difficulties.

School counselors initiate beneficial partnerships between family and school, which ensure the success of students, from the individual, educational and social point of view. Unfavorable conditions such as: an increase in divorce rates, low living standards and low income, transition to a market economy, the crisis of moral values, promoting a pragmatic attitude regarding children determined changes in family values, of the attitudes toward the independence of children and changes at the level of educational practice. Families have a need to know the proper methods of education, to take advantage of counseling services to deal with these situations.

The initiative of the school counselor to carry out a counseling program for parents was triggered following a survey study (questionnaire and interview with parents) performed in two schools e counselor's coordination. The results have been decisive and started the media coverage for the Counseling Program for parents, the presentation of the program's objectives and the scenario of activities. In the initial phase there were 37 participant parents.

2.2. Sample and Hypothesis

Sample: 37 parents (27 women and 10 men, aged 28 to 55 years of age, took part in counseling meetings). It is found that a significant percentage of mothers (78%) participated in the counseling meetings. The sample has been under the guidance of the school counselor, which in certain sessions teamed up with other specialists (doctor, social worker, homeroom teacher). Children of the parents participating in the counseling program are aged between 8 to 16 years (it must be noted the significant percentage of adolescents (61.7 %) with counseling

needs and also the genre of children**:** 10 girls and 33 boys (boys' percentage is significant at 74.6 %).

Hypothesis: if we identify the factors that can give rise to difficulties in the family and the behavioral disorders of the child, then the role of the counselor is to mitigate the effects of these social risk factors and adopting methods and techniques adapted to each situation.

2.3. Procedure

Information on the social risk factors were collected by interview in the initial phase of the study and contributed to the design of the counseling program themes: lack education and vocational training, unstable employment, unemployment, wavering income, unsystematic supervision from the social and educational point of view, poor cooperation with school; conflicts, lack of cohesion within the family. Prevention of these factors, occurring simultaneously or separately requires a detailed interdisciplinary documentation on each item in the list (including other indicators of social or psychological prediction). These factors are associated frequently with a series of educational and family reason:

- vulnerable family: poverty, promiscuity, lack of education
- deterioration of the family situation from the material, social and psycho-emotional point of view
- disruption of relations within the family
- devaluation of educational institutions
- social environment
- marginalization
- mental illness, mental retard
- reduced concern from the part of the teachers
- inappropriate educational level.

For persons in risk situations, the networking spirit and the community spirit are particularly important aspects in developing their civic skills and for the assimilation of role models for future generations (see Mărgărițoiu, A.,Eftimie, S. 2012).

Number of counseling sessions: 7 meetings, organized as group sessions, but in specific situations individual counseling has been used in school, in a classroom or in the counselor's office.

The objectives of counseling sessions (have been established on three axes: educational, domestic and emotional, after analyzing the needs of parents, as expressed in the centralized answers following the interpretation of the results of the questionnaire applied in the initial phase)

Their statistical exposure is presented as follows:

Educational objectives:	Family objectives:	Emotional objectives:

217

adaptation/ integration within the class of students (21.2%);	managing free time with the child (10%);	improve self image, self esteemand confidence in oneself (34.2%);
reducing absenteeism (8%);	assimilation of ways of interrelation between parent and child (5%);	development of the capacity to face conflicts between generations (12.7%);
discipline and responsibility, negotiation (10%);	building the proper entourage (4.5%);	managing aggressiveness (12.8%);
reducing the risk of dropping out (9%);	improving and adapting family relationships (vertically: mother-daughter, father-son, mother-son, father-daughter, grandmother-grandson; horizontally: husband - wife (19.2%);	solving the emotional problems of the child (12.6%);
developing the teacher - student relationship (8.4%);	improving assertive communication between parent and child (35%);	self-knowledge (13.2%);
collaboration with the counselor (4.2%);	accepting the stalemate in the child's situation (12.6%).	motivation (5%);
effective learning management (4.2%).		respecting the child's needs (9.25%);
		anxiety/ capacity to deal with obsessions (4.2%);
		freedom of speech (4.2%);
		security of the school environment (4.2%);
		learning relaxation exercises (4.2%).

Table 1. *Objectives of Counseling*

The counseling methods and techniques used in counseling sessions were selected based on the objectives and the requirements of each case encountered during the program. The counselor has selected and used:

Teaching methods	Counseling/ psychological methods	Exercises
Brainstorming 4.2%	Anamnesis - free associations 14.8%	Know yourself 6.8%
Demonstration 2%	Self-portrayal 10.2%	Self-identity map 6.3%
Debate 80%	Active listening 6.3%	Classification of feelings,

		emotion 10.65%
Conversation 80%	Auto-suggestion 2.1%	Priorities ranking 14.4%
Dialogue 16.8%	The questionnaire 100%	Choosing values 6.3%
Explanation 4.2%	Stress assessment scale 2.1%	Social atom 4.2%
Speech 6.3%	Empty chair technique (parent-child, mother-father) 4.2%	Conflict map 14.2%
Case study 9%	The interview 100%	Life line 4.2%
Cluster technique 6.2%	Anger management 2.1%	The action plan 10.3%
Homework 8.4%	Negotiation 6.3%	Bridges between present and future 6.3%
Narration 6%	Decision-making 4.25%	"Ordinary day" scenario 9%
Mosaic technique 3%	Case study 100%	Letter to my son/ daughter 8.4%
The exercise 8.4%	Simulation 4%	"Time wheel" 2.1%
5 minute essay	Metaphor 2.1%	"The role of the ideal mother/father" 4.2%

Table 2. *Counseling Methods and Techniques*

2.4. Data analysis

The counselor combined traditional teaching methods with psychological methods and adapted some techniques in the field of psychotherapy as working instruments in group and individual counseling for parents. Reality centered approach, behavioral approach and humanistic approach represented the theoretical foundations selecting and processing the working methods and techniques.

Counseling sessions for parents valuable information. All information obtained are recorded and sorted following statistical evaluation, in an inventory of discussion themes as follows:

Identified difficulties	Type of support requested	Living conditions and economic situation	Spare time (parents mentioned in order of frequency)
educational: 13 situations: 13 cases	helping children cope with school difficulties: 25 cases,	9 parents are living in spacious houses, luxury residential areas, having a very good socio-economic situation; they pay large sums as monthly fees to a private school	using a computer (games, work - 22 situations)
emotional 10	improving networking	37 parents live in	sport - 18

situations	and communication between parents and children - 24 cases	blocks of flats with 2, 3, 4 rooms	situations
emotional and educational: 9 situations	helping children cope with emotional difficulties - 14 cases	1 parent lives in precarious conditions and is looking for a house,	meetings with friends - 4 situations
behavioral and educational: 5 situations	helping children cope with school difficulties - 25 cases	2 fathers are unemployed	listen to music, watch movies - 6 situations
behavioral: 10 situations	supporting children's integration in the classroom - 6 cases	1 parent is looking for a second job	walks in the open air, games 4 situations
behavioral, educational and emotional: 8 situations	improving relationship with spouse - 1 case	8 stay at home mothers	traveling 4 situations
educational and physical: 2 situations	providing information for parents: on education, efficient learning techniques, ways to relax, ways to find a job - 4 cases	5 parents/guardians are pensioners (2 mothers, 2 fathers, 1 grandmother).	shopping 3 situations
emotional and behavioral: 1 situation	helping children cope with behavioral difficulties - 5 cases		reading 4 situations
physical, educational and behavioral:1 situation	developing relations between teachers and parents - 1 case		drawing 2 situations

Table 3. *The Inventory of Discussion Themes*

3. Results

Interventions lead to a development in confidence, self esteem and personal dignity, as well as the communication and problem solving skills. The implementation of the group program emphasized the self esteem and team spirit. Results, in the case of parents, can be spectacular and transformative, as they became aware that success and fulfillment can be measured in a number of ways. Others are aware of the fact that a series of personal attributes, such as perseverance, confidence and character must be valued and, with some effort, can also be proved.

The counselor has reached the objectives set for conducting the counseling sessions. These objectives may be measured through the following aspects:

• parents feel the need to keep in touch with the school counselor. They believe the support provided by the counselor is important in improving the

parents-children relationship, with a view to ensuring effective integration of children in the school environment (11 cases).

• in 7 cases, it was insisted on recognizing the mother- daughter / son (parent-child) feelings.

• parents appreciated the counseling process because they have received emotional support, in such a way that in their turn were able to help the children in solving school difficulties and improve school results. Benefits were: reduced absenteeism and improvement of school performance, with positive effects on children.

• in 2 cases, parents wanted to involve all members of the family in the context of counseling sessions.

• there is a situation in which a mother discontinued the participation in the counseling sessions due to economic and social difficulties.

In some cases, parents have expressed a negative attitude towards school, considering that school is guilty of the child's failure and not the family.

4. Conclusion

In comparison with parents' expectations, counseling sessions were an obvious success, the counselor appreciated it positively and the results reflected the quality of the school counseling process and the school - parent partnership.

The counseling program helps parents who feel helpless in the fight with their own children, for the parent - child relationship has turned, in some families, into a battlefield. Neither one nor the others are winners, therefore the counselor must find solutions to turn them into individuals whose full victory is education.

The school counselor - parent partnership is intended, in the first place, for parents - as main partners in the educational process. The counselor suggests an organized, formal and non-formal framework for the counseling sessions, partnerships to inform about and increase children's performances in the education process.

Counseling parents represents a contemporary necessity of school, considering the crisis that family goes through in the Romanian society and whose symptoms consist of restructuring traditional family values, confusion regarding the educational means used in the relationship with children and the simultaneous reduction of the role and authority of school (see Vrăşmaş, E. 2002).

The counseling program is modern, competitive and will contribute to increasing the value of the educational act, it will ensure compensatory activities for both children and parents and establishes a high motivational level for the participation in the interpersonal development activities that value every moment and take account the fact that "each learns from each".

When family and the school counselor cooperate effectively, a positive learning experience ensues, whose prime beneficiaries are children. Any parent wishes for their child's success and it is in their power, the school counselors and

teachers' ability approach them and ensure academic success, for school and parents prepare them for life.

For most parents, school remains the institution in which they continue to place their highest trust for their children's education. Their interest for counseling programs is motivated by an increase in quality/ performance/ results of the education process, by development, social integration and health of the child.

References

Cosma, T. (2001). Şedinţele cu părinţii în gimnaziu. Idei suport pentru diriginţi, EdituraPolirom Iaşi.

Eftimie, S., Suditu M., Mărgăriţoiu A. (2010). The Impact of Mass Media Upon Aggressiveness, Conferinţa internaţională Mass Media şi educaţia, Buletinul Universităţii Petrol – Gaze din Ploieşti, Seria Ştiinţele Educaţiei, vol LXII, nr. 1A/2010, (cotat B+), EdituraUniversităţii Petrol-Gaze din Ploieşti, pp. 121-126.

Ionescu, M., Negreanu, E. (2006). *Educaţia în familie. Repere şi practici actuale,* Ed. CarteaUniversitară, Bucureşti.

Mărgăriţoiu, A., Eftimie, S. (2012) The Impact of a Counselling Program for Abused Children, the 4th World Conference on Educational Sciences, WCES, 2-5.II.2012, Barcelona, in ProcediaSocial and Behavioral Sciences Journal by Elsevier, Vol. 46, indexed in Science Direct, Scopus, Thomson Reuters Conference Proceedings Citation Index (ISI Web of Science), pp. 4746-4750.

Neculau, A. (2001). *29 trepte pentru a-I cunoaşte pe ceilalţi*. EdituraPolirom, Iaşi.

Vrăjmaş, E., A. (2002). *Consilierea şi educaţia părinţilor.,*EdituraAramis, Bucureşti.

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY COHESION: HOW TRAINING IN CHILDCARE ADDS BENEFIT

Hazel Wright, Anglia Ruskin University

Abstract

This paper examines the education of the semi-voluntary pre-school workforce in England in terms of the benefits to local communities to capture its utility in real terms.

It revisits qualitative research data collected as biographical narratives from ten cohorts of adult women training to work in childcare in English pre-schools during the political reforms of the New Labour Government, 1997-2010.

It examines the advantages to their local communities of the women gaining a qualification and found positive educational, social and economic consequences beyond the direct benefits to the women and their own families and the children with whom they worked. The training also created a local resource, raising the level of education received by local children and the learning levels in the communities in which the women lived. There were clear economic benefits in terms of women returning to work and low-cost upskilling of local provision for children but also less tangible changes. There was a greater incidence of networking and social cohesion as a consequence of students broadening their outlook on life.

This study supports recommendations that policy makers should be careful to protect initiatives that work, and that grew up slowly to serve the needs of local people. The benefits to local communities may be far greater than those derived from changes imposed from above in the name of "raising standards" and "establishing cost-effective childcare", and once lost such initiatives are hard to recreate.

1. Introduction

This paper examines data collected for a doctoral study of women training to work in childcare with a view to identifying how the training adds benefit to communities beyond that which would be in place if the women remained untrained. Thus it applies a finer filter to data that in the first instance was

analysed to ascertain expectations for, practices within, and consequences of, studying to become a childcare worker (Wright, 2011).

The original research involved the retrospective collection of background information from nine cohorts of students, all of whom enrolled on a childcare diploma in an English Further Education (post-compulsory and vocational studies) College that I taught. An additional tenth ongoing cohort were occasionally asked to verify or clarify some of the findings to enable further validation that, when this was intended, I was developing an appropriate group voice.

2. Research design

The focus of the research was the student experience not the tutor role so I had to be inventive to ensure that it did not become a form of action research (McNiff, 2013). Rather than follow a set methodological framework I decided to adopt the notion of "emergent methodology" (see Wright, 2009) and develop my research strategy as I worked on the project. This idea derived from Robson's (2002: 5) *Real World Research* where he draws upon Anastas and MacDonald's (1994) distinction between "fixed" and "flexible" designs. He defines the flexible as one in which "much less pre-specification takes place" and this conceptualisation offers an alternative to the postmodern notion of "bricolage" as it offers a principled approach to method choice rather than accepting that "anything goes". I combine methods that share similar or complementary ontological positions when carrying out biographical research, as the focus must be holistic when dealing with people's lives.

Clearly as a former tutor I was an insider-researcher (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) so needed to consider my role and any biases that I might bring to the project very carefully. Seeking ethical approval from the University (which I did) was only the starting point in ensuring that I respected student confidentiality and the boundaries between tutor and researcher. I have worked with former students on several occasions in the past and have a long track record of teaching adults so felt fairly confident that I could manage the "enactment of power relations between researcher and researched" (Usher, 2000:165-6). The project was to be a qualitative one to enable exploration of the student voice but I was ever mindful of the need to offer all students the chance to become involved so that I could not be accused of choosing those I liked, those who were articulate high achievers, or those who were easily accessible as they had chosen to stay in touch. Thus I eventually contacted nearly all the students eligible to participate and established a process to ensure fair sample selection even though this is not a requirement for qualitative studies.

2.1 Population and sample

In total there were 170 students in the population. I was able to contact almost of all them and 150 agreed to complete simple surveys. These later enabled me to determine whether the complete group was representative of the larger cohort of childcare workers (which they were according to the *Labour Force Survey*, Simon et al, 2007) and to ensure that those students that I was able to interview in depth represented the larger group. This was achieved by drawing up a matrix that set cohort against type of childcare work to ensure that data spanned the Early Years sector before cross-cutting the sample with known characteristics like age, marital and maternal status, ethnicity, prior educational qualification and work experience. By grouping the nine main cohorts into threes, and then selecting two out of three possible interviewees for each category of work I was able to correct for differences in cohort size and add another level of anonymity to protect student identity. One cohort only comprised six students so this was necessary to avoid exposing an entire group at the interview stage. Through this process I was able to select 33 students to interview in person.

2.2 Interview style

There was a level of adjustment in the first three interviews as I experimented to find the best way to exploit my insider knowledge without allowing my own role to dominate and thereby diminish the student voice. I had decided to use an open biographical approach to interviewing so that ultimately the choice of topic and level of depth was determined by the student. Asking them to consider their whole life in relation to education encouraged them to talk about aspects that were new to me rather than just the educational process we had shared. I went to the interviews with a list of prompts I could use if the conversation failed to flow but rarely needed to do more than express interest in their views. However, I found my insider knowledge enabled me to question areas of discourse that seemed problematic and learned from the literature that I was instinctively adopting a psycho-social method of interviewing whereby I probed any hesitations, contradictions and juxtapositions as they arose, taking my understanding (and often the student's too) to a higher level. This is a method clearly expounded by Hollway and Jefferson (2000) in their invaluable text, *Doing Qualitative Research Differently*.

2.3 Data analysis

One problem inherent in this style of interviewing is that the researcher amasses vast quantities of highly variable data. Transcription itself is time-consuming and analysis very demanding (but also exciting). Immersion (Strauss, 1987) enabled a degree of holistic analysis and I began to see patterns within and across the narratives. This led me to create two sets of typologies (see Tables 1 and 2), categorising students by their occupational level (a form of educational outcome given this was vocational training) and their attitude to life (a means of identifying their sense of agency, in part their personality). This served two purposes.

Table 1: Typology based on occupation

Name	Definition
Sampler	One who drifted into childcare, found it lacking and quickly moved on
Stager	One who found childcare work convenient when the children were small
Settler	One who chose childcare as a career after experiencing a range of alternatives
Switcher	One who chose childcare as an alternative career to a previous one
Step-upper	One using childcare work to access an associated, better paid position/career

Table 2: Typology based on attitude toward life

Name	Definition
Accepter	One with a relaxed, opportunistic approach; often a reactive decision-maker
Agoniser	One who reflects intensely before making decisions; may analyze guilt
Accumulater	One steadily acquiring qualifications and experiences; maybe with a focus
Asserter	One with goal-oriented behaviour; a striver to 'get on' in life

Initially the typologies provided me with a "handle" on the data, a means of starting the process of seeing connections across the different life stories. Later they enabled further analysis in association with Amartya Sen's Capability Approach (CA) (Sen, 1999). Their contribution to the CA lies beyond the current paper and is addressed elsewhere (Wright 2012, 2013a,b,c) but for completeness the two typologies are included here (Tables 1 and 2).

Some understanding of the capability approach is useful, too. Briefly, Sen recognises that policy making can be more effective when personal choice is

enabled. There is less wastage and individuals and groups derive satisfaction, and consequent efficacy, from being able to decide what they want to achieve from the possibilities open to them. He claims that resources are no more than a means to an end "ultimately the focus has to be on what life we lead and what we can or cannot do, can or cannot be" (Sen, 1987: 16) and calls for governments to abandon utilitarian practices and, instead, provide options so that individuals can turn (*convert)* their potential abilities (*capabilities*) into actions or achievements (*functionings*) that they find desirable.

I chose not to use mechanical means of data analysis but hand-coded the transcripts, marking recurrent themes and conceptualisations, significant words and phrases, apt quotations, and embedded stories; able to keep these within the individual narrative structure even when I saw connections across the narratives. This is important in biographical research to avoid fragmentation of the data (West, 1996) and reduction of people's lives to disconnected elements. At times the transcripts failed to reflect the nuances of the interview process fully. Where I prompted a student it could appear that I was asking the question and then answering it. To record the verbal interchanges accurately I decided to adopt the coding common to conversation analysis (Ten Have, 1999), using this selectively within the text for areas where it assisted a more accurate interpretation. Such coding can highlight examples of hesitation (which can reveal uncertainty as well as need to recall) and places where we were working with a high level of intersubjectivity through marking cut-ins and simultaneous talk. By showing tone of voice, codes can make visible irony, jest, negativity, exaggeration and many other linguistic devices where the words do not precisely convey the intended meaning. Possibly this occurs more frequently when the interviewer and interviewee already know each other, so interact informally.

Together these processes enabled me to make initial sense of the data and I chose to develop a process of analysis-through-writing whereby I turned my hunches and themes into argued narrative that enabled me to consider every piece of evidence and add to the bigger picture. Like Richardson (1994) before me, I found that through the process of writing I reached new understandings that I had not anticipated. This process gave me lengthy texts from which to write my thesis chapters but did not greatly assist me in reining in the data to enable a focus on education. Eventually, I came to understand that there was a reason for this. If I listened to the data rather than trying to bend it to my own ends it was telling me very clearly that the women sought an integrated lifestyle, that embraced family, work and study within a single framework, enabling them to avoid cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). This shared focus gave them what one student termed "the best of both worlds", a foot in both the private and public spheres (Landes, 1998).

My analysis changed direction and I examined the data anew, realising that it supported a theoretical "Model of Integrated Lives". This shows diagrammatically how the student is reciprocally linked to elements of family, work and study, and where the community aspect of the childcare work further strengthens these connections. I have discussed this model in detail elsewhere (Wright, 2011) and here show the community as an encircling power protecting the relational associations (Figure 1).

Over time it has become clear that this model has some relevance to women in general (or so I have been told at conferences) but it was the positioning of the childcare settings – mainly committee-run pre-schools – in the local community that enabled me to see the reciprocal links so clearly.

In recent years these pre-school groups have been threatened by new policy initiatives in the early years sector so before proceeding further I need to provide an overview of the English context.
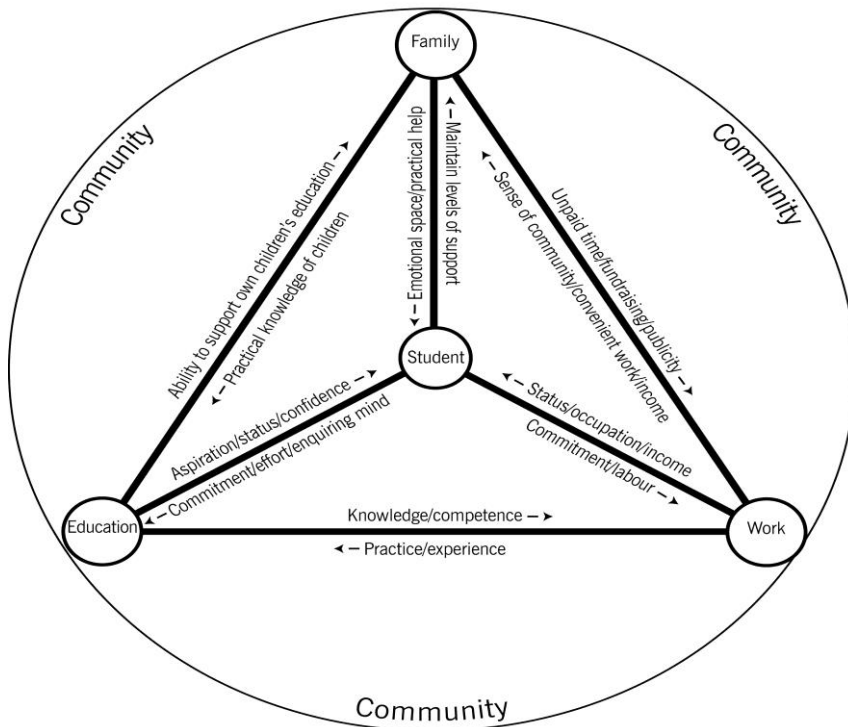

Figure 1
The Model of Integrated Lives showing how the students are vital to their local communities

3. The English context of Early Years provision

In England the compulsory school age was arbitrarily set at 5 by Disraeli's liberal government in 1870 and provision for children below that age remained largely voluntary for
more than a century. Fortunate children were able to attend the pioneering nurseries established by innovators – the followers of well-known European figures, Froebel, Steiner, Montessori, and British pioneer, Margaret McMillan. Some children attended Dame schools, where unqualified women "minded" multiple children, often in premises on or close to a private home. A very few children were accommodated in the state nursery schools that were set up during World War II to enable women to do war work or train as teachers to fill roles vacated by serving men (Wright, 2015). Even in the 1950s the majority of mothers and toddlers were isolated in their homes and this was viewed as normal in a society where Parsonian views of domesticity prevailed: in a functionalist society men went out to work and mothers did the household tasks and cared for children (Parsons & Bales, 1956).

This social isolation was publicly challenged by a newcomer to Britain, Belle Tutaev. With friends she set up the first community playgroup whereby groups of mothers met together in a local hall and took it in turns to care for their collective children while others enjoyed some child-free space (Playgroup Movement, 2014). Tutaev encouraged other mothers to set up similar groups and from this first endeavour in 1961 a flourishing association of playgroups developed, supporting each other through the Pre-school Playgroups Association. Later (1995), bowing to political pressures for reform, this became the Pre-school Learning Alliance (2013). Groups continued to flourish and largely filled the role of Early Years provision despite the advocacy for state nurseries of the Plowden Report (CACE, 1967), and Margaret Thatcher's White Paper *A framework for Expansion* (Thatcher, 1972).

Following the Education Reform Act (1988) that established a National Curriculum for compulsory education (Taylor, 1999), attention turned again to the Early Years sector. A series of influential reports (DES, 1990, *Rumbold*; National Commission on Education, 1993, *Learning to Succeed;* Ball, 1994, *Start Right*; Audit Commission, 1996a,b) led the Conservative government to introduce a new curriculum initiative for Early Years in 1996 and this was taken up and modified by Tony Blair's New Labour government in 1997. In a frenetic effort to revolutionise the sector (the then Minister of State for Children, Margaret Hodge talks of a "silent revolution") Early Years provision was

brought, in stages, firmly into the education fold. A new curriculum and inspections were effectively made compulsory in 2000 (in reality in 2002). To survive financially, settings had to conform as children could only receive funding in those that met government expectations. Alongside the reforms, initiatives to increase provision encouraged the private sector to invest heavily in nurseries. Commercial chains set up new premises that offered all-day care, leading to a situation where community provision was often sidelined.

For a time the Sure Start programme guaranteed subsidised places in a range of newly established Children's Centres but the continual reduction in funding, 28% from 2010 to 2013 (Waldegrave, 2013) left many struggling to survive, often doing so only when supported by other charitable organisations. This situation can be problematic for some newcomers to Britain who need Children's Centre services but who still associate our charities with enforced institutionalisation of needy children. The erosion of local pre-schools is problematic for communities as informal self-help initiatives that grew up to serve the local people are replaced by profit-seeking facilities staffed by personnel who may, or may not live nearby.

4. Community benefits of childcare training

A closer examination of the benefits that a trained pre-school workforce brought to local communities draws attention to what is potentially being lost as this transition takes place. The research revealed significant benefits to individuals in terms of confidence, social contacts, accreditation, upskilling, and employability. Like Ingrid, who claims the course helped to "bring myself into perspective and become another person", many students described aspects of self-development, but these are set aside as they are not the main focus of this paper. Nor will this paper explore the evidence for deeper learning when claimed by individual students, beyond reporting Frieda's statement that what matters is "what has really gone into making your brain *think* about how you feel about things rather than just pleasing the examiner". It would be inaccurate, too, to explore community benefits by merely examining the reciprocal connections between the individual and education or education and the workplace as analysis shows that when community benefits are captured through open dialogue, they emanate from a number of areas and differ from student to student. At times, however, to reveal how factors work together to create direct benefits for local communities, the paper will draw on elements that present as individual attributes.

4.1 Second chances within education

4.1.1 Direct benefits of adult learning

The rhetoric around social justice in Britain talks of excluded minorities (Craig, Burchardt & Gordon, 2008) but acknowledges that the incidence of inequality extends beyond the geographically defined areas of social deprivation. There are people who lack qualification scattered across the country. Because students were eligible for financial support for the childcare diploma it offered an opportunity for further education at a time when many routes into adult education were being closed to reduce public expenditure (Parrott, 2007) When she started the course Irma claims that: "I'd never done anything like this before and at school I just didn't enjoy it". She says: "I didn't even know what an assignment was". Nor did she realise that computers lightened routine tasks: "when it came to a word count I am manually adding them up". By the end she knows how to study and is confident she can cope: "if somebody said to me, now, it would be absolutely fine. I'd say 'Okay, yes, I can do that' but, before, I'd have said I can't do that but I *did* it, and that was a good thing for me".

Irma's story represents a "second chance" opportunity at its starkest but there are many others who see the diploma as an opportunity to strengthen their level of accreditation. For Heidi the diploma represented job security: "yes, I've passed. I can keep my job. I'm happy now". Hansa, recently arrived in Britain from Asia, already had a degree but sought to improve her English and find a place within her local community, perhaps with a view to becoming a teacher at a later date. She worked a forty-hour week in a local supermarket to support herself and her husband and still found time to come to college one day a week and to carry out the compulsory sessions in a pre-school setting. This shows commitment: "I really wanted to finish and get a qualification but the thing was because I had not time to read books and *enjoy*, yes".

Hansa's story was partially one of conversion; someone with an existing qualification adding another to achieve a change of direction. Graduates, Gina and Greta, saw the diploma as giving them vocational knowledge so that they could apply their broader knowledge to their working lives; Fiona used it to meet the entry requirement for a nursing degree, Irene and Ilsa saw that it would make them eligible for teacher training at a later date.

Thus *real* second chances need not be confined to basic skills as is commonly the case in the literature, and at whatever level, benefit local communities in that they enable individual members to improve their own lives and their ability to contribute to the public good. They are turning capability into functioning. An

important part of this transformation lies in the way that adult educators treat their students. Many of the students were pleasantly surprised to find the atmosphere at odds with their school experience, commenting that they could come and go as they pleased, that tea and coffee breaks and opportunities to "chat" were encouraged, as were supportive working practices. Arianne, for example, thought that: "I was going to sit there at a desk, be told off for talking, but no, it was great. You could go to the loo [toilet] when you had to, that sort of thing".

4.1.2 Generational benefits of adult learning

There is evidence within this research that having a parent who studies successfully encourages children to achieve a better education. This can be because the parent feels knowledgeable and is confident to intervene directly in children's studies. Heidi recognised the need for her children to have IT facilities, Evelyn the need for a place to study away from the distraction of television. For Celia new learning was limited to understanding: "it certainly did awaken in me an understanding of why my son struggled so badly through primary school" but she felt that her voice was not strong enough to stand against the combined forces of school practice: "I didn't go and address it with the teachers because it felt pointless but it was not the teachers but the whole system, how the system worked at that particular school". However, for Alex certification meant that: "I can go and check out whatever life throws at me". When her son had problems in school she took action: "because now I know if I push and I push and I push I am going to get somewhere. You have to persevere…". It was her "background knowledge into how the systems work" that enabled her to sort matters out for her son. Enabling even one more child to achieve his goals in life reduces the chances of him becoming unemployed, possibly in trouble with the police, and eventually a drain on the local community.

Although most long-term benefits of success have similar consequences for communities, sometimes the impact of women studying is visible only within the family. Ingrid persuaded her teenage children to help her out when her assignments were due and this role modelled the importance of studying: "they typed up notes for me, they, you know they were really interested in what I was doing". Heena specifies that it is "good for my kids to see me working and studying. It's good for them to see that they can do it." When children see that their parents value education it encourages them to value it too, making it more likely that they will be able to make a positive contribution to their local

communities in later life. In terms of the capability approach, they are more likely to turn their capability into useful functionings.

4.2 Social impacts beyond education

4.2.1 Inclusive ethos

Communities benefit when their members support each other. Putnam (2000) clearly demonstrates in *Bowling Alone* how diminishing cultural cohesion leads to a loss of shared values and undermines trust, starting a vicious cycle of further deterioration. He uses a social capital framework in this American study, adding real world examples to extend Bourdieu's original theorisation that value is not confined to monetary exchanges. Putnam's account is a story of social capital lost (Fukuyama, 1999) but my research study, although on a local scale, clearly captured social capital formation among the women and young children at neighbourhood level. Students were aware that they contributed to the community and often saw themselves as altruistic, seeing that as compensation for low levels of remuneration. Evelyn clearly states that 'for me, the reward isn't the pay' and is proud that "I went into work [in school] on Sunday for two hours and didn't get paid for it and I won't get paid for it…they don't need to know but I know that I went in and I've done my best". Frances quite explicitly states that she and her fellow staff "loved children and we wanted to help them and we wanted to help the community and the mothers that perhaps couldn't do that".

Danni was persuaded to take on the job of playgroup leader, as no one else would do it.
Her own children were quite young causing her to "lock myself away in the bedroom" in order to achieve the necessary diploma. She clearly knew that she was making sacrifices to carry out the role for she declined to complete a further optional qualification as "to pass the course I would have needed to have given up everything else in my life and I felt that was asking too much". Her altruism is clearly displayed when she recognises that she is substituting for other parents who "just don't seem to spend five minutes with their children and I find that just very, very sad". It can also be seen in her comment that "being village-based you know that you're going to see them [the children] for the rest of their primary lives… and you hope that you have done the best for them".

Daisy derives personal satisfaction from working with children, claiming: "I love them like my own really" and found that a return to study "was the highlight of the week really". However, she too, recognises what she gives up,

describing her "worst Sunday" as one in which she was "locked in the bedroom doing an assignment and *all* my family were downstairs". Bethany sees her playgroup as playing an important role in attracting children outside her village into the local school to maintain its numbers and reputation. She talks of "being successful for the benefit of the school of which I'm governor", revealing an additional, and completely voluntary, role that she takes seriously. There is plentiful evidence that the diploma students contributed to an inclusive ethos in their local communities.

4.2.2 Broadening outlook

An inclusive ethos relies on personal attitudes that are tolerant and collaborative and the study provides evidence that many students shed underpinning prejudices as a result of the diploma course. At a practical level, simply experiencing adult education – regular involvement in a class that catered for mature and younger students, and that welcomed students whatever their ethnicity or ability – paid dividends. Some classes tended to be inclusive from the outset, with others it was necessary to work quite hard to prevent cliques forming and to smooth over fundamental disagreements. Denise, one of the more nervous students, describes her class as "altogether" but claims that they also "went into, like, groups" and believes that even if I had shaken them up "we would have all quietly have wiggled our way back to where we wanted to sit". However, she also believes that "it worked" and that she became more confident and "enjoyed going in for a laugh in the end".

That students were prepared to discuss this situation during individual interviews suggests that they felt secure in their relationship with me, and indicated that they felt that they had moved on in their thinking during the course. The talk was generally of "others" who used to irritate them rather than of ongoing irritation. One student (of several), who found mixing in a class quite difficult, claimed that she "found working with women horrendous, studying with women is slightly better". However, she did eventually realise that she could only change her own behaviour not that of the others and explained how through watching someone who sought a lot of intention, she learned to curb her own "urge to tell your own little story".

My strategy of asking the more able to support others played a role in the integration process and Deirdre specifically talks of going to visit another student for help. "I'd go round and say, 'I can't do it'. She'd say 'yes you can. Sit yourself down and I'll read it through'. As soon as she read it through I'd think 'yes I do understand' but some of the words…!'". Others choose to work in

pairs that were more evenly balanced. Arianne, for instance used to go to Alice's house weekly to "do it between us".

More importantly for community cohesion, there is evidence that growing tolerance spread beyond their direct work with children. Several students (Celia, Evelyn, Emily, Frieda, Heidi) talk of becoming more confident in addressing parents, others of being more aware of how to do that appropriately (Avril, Beryl, Cindy, Heena, Irma) and Ingrid very noticeably embraces cultural diversity. This is clearly spelled out:

> "… you sort of explained to us about the different cultures and then I would go back to the group and think "Oh that's why they do that and this is why they do that" because I know now why they do that. Instead of looking at their habits as being "strange" or not right you look at their habit and think but this is part of their culture, this is why they do this, and I am now in the knowledge so I know this instead of looking at them as being totally – a bit…weird."

She feels "less judgemental" and "a lot nicer person for it" and really enjoyed inviting people to celebrate the Hindu festival, Holi, in her setting. Most importantly she now talks to people outside of her immediate circle whereas: "I would probably have just passed them by in the street before". Given her role in a community pre-school this must have significant consequences for the way it operated and the hidden messages conveyed to parents and children and to other staff. Avril too believes the course "teaches you not to be judgemental" and Beryl claims that simply working with children "broadens your mind" as you see a wide range of family practices. Bethany believes that she "is growing with the children". Arianne demonstrates a "broader" outlook when she allows a grandmother with no English language skills to sit in on sessions. Grandma's initial attendance was to help the grandchild settle but when this was achieved she told her working daughter that she was lonely at home. Slowly she began to undertake small tasks unasked – like washing up – so may progress to greater involvement. Certainly the group offered an opportunity to observe English life and hear the language spoken in a friendly environment. As the building was sufficiently large to cater for additional people her presence was not a problem for the pre-school.

As former students move on to new jobs, or their children progress through the system, the inclusive ethos that we strove to develop on the course maybe goes with them, following certain students into schools, into hospitals, into local authority work and into different nurseries and pre-schools.

4.2.3 Knowledge resource

In a society where mobility means that many new parents lack nearby familial support, pre-school staff who have qualified, play an important role as a knowledge source for other parents. Semi-voluntary, semi-professional, often living in the communities in which they work, they are available to give non-threatening advice to parents and this role is frequently mentioned within the interviews. Emily mentions parents who "wanted to know what was normal at what age" and Gina is asked to work specifically with teenage mothers experiencing difficulty so finds the "childcare side of it" essential to her work. Fiona demonstrates the retention of considerable theory and claims to have used her knowledge to help her fellow nursing students grasp the principles that were poorly taught on their course**.** Here knowledge is crossing into a different community of learners. Ilsa shares her new knowledge within the family. Her "sister-in-law is struggling with her youngest at the moment … 'and I can advise her'... whereas if I hadn't done child development I shouldn't have been saying that".

We should remember, too, that this supportive role developed out of the women's greater insights into children and their needs and many felt that this benefited their personal parenting skills. Cindy talks of now knowing "how to understand children"; Holly says: "If I learn all this I can transfer it to my children, my children shouldn't go amiss" even as she plans career progression within childcare. There is evidence in the interviews of significant learning taking place: Ingrid says "you then taught us to sort of look behind the behaviour"; Daisy claims that "some things you learn and you are not quite the same afterwards"; Heidi believes "if you tie it all together there is no reason why you should ever have a child every crying…"; and Imogen, one of the younger and childless students, begins to really understand children: "I see them as people who need to be treated well and given respect and love mainly – and cuddles".

The community benefits whenever children are treated with compassion and insight, whoever the parents are, and even when the new knowledge is accessed after the familial need has passed. Children are very adaptable and parents have many opportunities to put matters right as they learn better ways to show they care, and the retrospective anguish reinforces the new learning. So when Celia talks of "saying out LOUD 'I wish I'd known that when C[xxx] was two years old', why doesn't anyone tell us these things?" society still benefits. She can see that the new knowledge has been "the most useful, specifically because I have

been working with mums and two-year-olds …saying: 'that's okay, that's normal, don't worry'."

4.2.4 Active contribution

Just through being members of the community, through their roles as parents, and as workers, all the students were directly contributing to society. Overall, there is evidence that most of the students were running pre-schools on minimum rates of pay and working far longer hours than they were paid for. Even those working in schools, like Evelyn, were doing far more than they were expected to do, according to their contracts. Some were seeking to further their experience to support personal career development but many were simply continuing to do whatever they could to be helpful and to support the children in their care, raising questions about where working with "fuzzy boundaries" crosses into exploitation. Heena makes this problem apparent when she complains that willingness sets up new expectations. "Why we take on all that extra work is because we are asked to do it *slowly* and it builds up, that's what I found, it builds up, builds up, builds up until it's too much". In contrast, Irene has walked away from a leader's job as the voluntary committee challenged her judgement, and is turning down offers of new full-time posts. She thinks that "what is expected of volunteer parents is too much" and does not intend to go down that route again, preferring instead to undertake some advisory work for a local private nursery.

For some students, however, it is possible to claim that the diploma course enabled them to stand up for values they believe to be important. Despite not being a "joining-committee-er-running- things-type person really", Avril went on to become an adult education tutor and spends a great deal of energy trying to shape the future of the Early Years profession in appropriate ways. She is vocal in favouring external taught courses over in-house training as this perpetuates local practice rather than enabling change. She is also concerned about competence-based National Vocation Qualifications as the assessment for these is a tick-box exercise and "doesn't mean they [students] can do it, or understand it, or have gained anything form it whatsoever". Beryl took a job in a school but stands up to practice that permits school ideas to come "right the way down to the nursery". Her Headteacher, unaware of the needs of young children, imposes success criteria incomprehensible to them on all classes – paperwork, and parental consultations, management strategies (like formal absence reporting) and curriculum behaviours (set literacy and numeracy policies, zoned activity planning to share scarce resources) – that are inappropriate.

A few students take on additional voluntary roles but the incidence of this was less than I expected and maybe reflects the unbounded expectations of their main roles Very busy people balancing family, study and workplace needs have little time left for other activities and certainly not those that impinge on family time at week ends and in the evenings. Bethany and Ingrid serve as parent governors, Celia runs a Sunday school class, and Irene helps with the local Rainbows groups (but mainly as her daughter attends). Any energy left over is focused on maintaining their integrated lives rather than engaging in further voluntary work. Fiona sums up this attitude when she states: "I've done my bit of free stuff and now's my turn to get paid".

4.3 Economic impact

Any activity that helps women to be gainfully employed makes an economic contribution to society. That they are working willingly in the communities in which they live bring benefit to those communities, as professional and personal ties work together to create social capital.

4.3.1 Return to work

Community childcare work is renowned for its flexibility and convenience. It is work that fits in with the school day and with school holidays so enables many women to return to work part-time without incurring travel costs. The low rates of pay reflect the market situation. There is a continual supply of new mothers with children reaching pre-school age and many want a gentle re-introduction to the workplace. Pre-school leader Arianne states that: "All of these girls, do this job because it goes well with their children". The course enabled the women to achieve a qualification that allowed them to manage a setting, therefore opening doors for future advancement (but since the research was carried out the requirement is slowly being raised).

For some students the diploma represented a horizontal progression. Several graduate entrants sought out the diploma to provide them with a vocational qualification, seeing their original degrees as insufficiently focused for work. Amy described her undergraduate study as "absolutely brilliant" but admitted that at the end of it: "I wasn't quite sure what I wanted to do". She is very clear that she wanted "to be at home with the children" and, on starting to work, to have the flexibility to avoid that "can't come into work today because someone is ill". Gina knew that she would like to work with children after graduating and, exceptionally, sought out the diploma as "there were a lot of things that I needed

to know about". Greta, enrolled on the diploma as the local pre-school asked her to, but was "quite keen to learn more" not seeing her history degree as sufficient: "I didn't know what to do with a degree".

4.3.2 Upskilling

Many of the students were able to articulate the consequences of studying for the diploma and at the outset I stated that the personal benefits in terms of confidence were significant.

Some particularly mentioned how studying updated their skill set, making them eligible to return to the workplace. One of the older graduates, Amy, found commonplace jargon new to her. She had already completed a word-processing course before coming onto the diploma but still felt insecure when people talked about "orientation", "presentation skills" and "teamwork"; ideas that had not been important when she graduated. She felt that the diploma "bump-started you back into studying" and gave her the opportunity to rehearse these new skills. Felicity, too, felt that learning to do a good presentation contributed significantly to her gaining her advisory job but attributed most of the learning to the foundation degree that built upon her diploma.

Barbara talked about getting help with her grammar and spellings, and Avril, the most organised *Accumulater,* set out to acquire every skill she could by joining most of the courses available to her, before pouring all this knowledge back into the community as an adult education tutor. Aileen, who had returned to study to gain her own GCSE (level 2) qualification in Maths and English, similarly chose to share her new knowledge with others, and set out to help children struggling to acquire numeracy and literacy skills in a school setting. She is very concerned that in current society: "there are a few people around still that still can't read and write" pointing out that when they have these skills "we can educate them more". All the students agreed that they learned useful knowledge and most can list specific instances of the skills they acquired or improved as a result of the diploma.

As the women were working in community pre-schools, these childcare institutions benefited from their upskilling. There are multiple narratives of students making changes to raise quality in their settings. Sometimes these centred around bringing existing practice up to an appropriate level as in the case of Celia, who found that her manager saved money by reducing the number of purification tablets in the bottle steriliser to below adequate levels. Others were able to initiate new ideas in their settings. Arianne, too, took on Leader of her setting knowing that it needed a management committee that supported its

charitable status. She had the confidence to do this as: "I knew what had to happen, I knew what I had to do to legally make it work". She rejoices that: "the whole thing changed really with me going to college". Felicity and Frieda jointly took on management of their community setting on the retirement of a senior member of staff. Coming on the diploma together they felt that "if we were going to be learning how to run a playgroup it made sense that we were learning it together" and saw all their studying as "for the benefit of the future of the group". Danni was not only able to make improvements in her setting but also to support her local community primary school. Her setting was temporarily relocated onto the school site and the Headteacher, impressed with what he saw in the pre-school, sent his newly qualified reception class teacher into the pre-school: "just to see what we do and to see how we operate", as she was "really struggling" to control the behaviour of some children.

4.3.3 Career progression or change

Time has lapsed since I carried out the initial interviews and progression onto a foundation (two-year) degree has become commonplace. Many of the 150 students in the population have since enrolled for higher-level study. At the time of the interviews, the foundation degree was still a new initiative but, from this smaller sample, Danni had started undergraduate study and Felicity had just completed the award. She had moved rapidly into a higher-level career (as Early Years business advisor), and several students (Aileen, Beryl, Ingrid and Evelyn) had found jobs as teaching assistants in schools. Some students were planning progressions within education, while a few moved into parallel sectors where their "caring" skills were equally valued. Using the diploma as evidence of recent study and of achievement, Amy took up a post as hospital play specialist while Fiona enrolled on a nursing degree, the diploma enabling her to meet the threshold requirements for this. Thus, in Sen's terms, the diploma was a functioning in itself but it also opened up new capabilities for students to convert into further functionings. Exceptionally, Diane moved into a job that more closely aligned with her previous environmental work but was still "working with community groups" so found the diploma provided useful transferable skills. Of the 33 interviewed, only Irma had decided to move away from work that directly benefited the community. She decided to return to running her own business, but there were clearly stated personal reasons to take her away from the Early Years sector.

5. Conclusion

This paper has used narrative evidence to show how enrolment on the diploma course together with the accompanying work within childcare settings significantly contributed to community cohesion. It should be remembered that the focus has been on the effects of coming on the course; a discussion of the benefits to local communities of having a more educated female population, the intergenerational consequences of mothers being better qualified, and the ways in which the qualified students contributed to change within local community settings by challenging poor practice and bringing this up-to-date.

In its entirety, the research found significant additional benefits, but it lies outside the scope of the current paper to do more than mention the horizontal social capital consequences of students forming new friendships or the vertical links when a succession of staff members enrol sequentially on the diploma course, enabling the management team to develop a shared outlook. Nor does this paper truly reflect the more personal and familial elements that help to weave the public threads together. These are addressed elsewhere (see Wright, 2011).

This research captured Early Years practice at a time of significant change. Hodges (2000) "silent revolution" in the Early Years saw a significant expansion of the sector and an imposition of professional standards that brought the traditional practice of "drifting" into childcare work and then choosing to qualify, into question. However, with the change of government in the UK in 2010, the pace of change slowed down, arguably before the revolution was complete. We are yet to see how well the community pre-school sits alongside the private nursery chains and children's centres, established when public funding was more readily available. Nor can we tell whether newly established groups will function as community centres providing nuclei for social cohesion like those that grew out of the neighbourhoods they served; set up, staffed and managed by local residents and catering collectively for the children living nearby. However, the findings of this study suggest that care should be taken to protect initiatives that work and that grew up to serve the needs of local people as the benefits may exceed those that are immediately apparent within narratives of 'raising standards' and extending 'cost-effective childcare'.

References

Audit Commission (1996a). *Counting to five.* London: HMSO.
Audit Commission (1996b). *Under fives count.* London: HMSO.
Ball, C. (1994). *Start right*. London: Royal Society of Arts.
CACE (Central Advisory Council for Education) (1967). *Children and their primary schools (The Plowden Report).* London: HMSO.

Craig, G., Burchardt, T. & Gordon, D. (2008). *Social justice and public policy: Seeking fairness in diverse societies.* Bristol: Policy Press.

DES (1990). *Starting with quality (The Rumbold Report)* London: Department of Education and Science.

Festinger, L (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Fukuyama, F. (1999). *The great disruption: human nature and reconstitution of social order.* New York: Free Press.

Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (1995). *Ethnography: Principles in practice,* 2nd ed. London: Routledge.

Hodge, M. (2000, February 3). Matter of fact, BBC1.

Hollway, W. & Jefferson, T. (2000). *Doing qualitative research differently: Free association, narrative and the interview method.* London: Sage.

Landes, J. B. (1998). *Feminism, the public and the private.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McNiff, J. (2013). Action research: Principles and practice, 3rd ed. London: Routledge.

National Commission on Education (1993). *Learning to succeed.* London: Heinemann for Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

Parrott, A. (2007). Testing times. *Adults Learning.* November, 19(3), 24-27.

Parsons, T. & Bales, R. F. (1956). Family, socialization and interaction process. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Playgroup movement website (2014). Retrieved December 5, from http://www.playgroupmovement.org.uk/.

Pre-school Learning Alliance (2013). *Our history.* Retrieved December 5, from https://www.pre-school.org.uk/about-us/history.

Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Richardson, L. (1994). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Robson, C. (2002). *Real world research* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.

Sen, A. (1987) *The Standard of living.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Simon, A., Owen, C., Moss, P., Petrie, P., Cameron, C., Potts, P. & Wigfall, V. (2007). *Working together: Volume 1, Secondary analysis of the Labour Force Survey to map the numbers and characteristics of the occupations working within social care, childcare, nursing and education.* London: Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education.

Strauss, A. L. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, T. (1999). Movers and shakers: High politics and the origins of the English National Curriculum. In B. Moon & P. Murphy. *Curriculum in context.*

London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Ten Have, P. (1999). *Doing conversation analysis: A practical guide.* London: Sage.

Thatcher, M. (1972). Written statement launching education white paper (*A framework for expansion*), 6 December, DES Press release. Retrieved December 1, from the Thatcher Archive, http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/102233.

Usher, R. (2000). Deconstructive happening: Ethical moment. In H. Simons & R. Usher. *Situated ethics in educational research.* London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Waldegrave, H. (2013). *Centres of excellence? The role of children's centres in early intervention. London*: Policy exchange. Retrieved December 5, from http://www.policyexchange.org.uk/images/publications/centres%20of%20excell ence.pdf.

West, L. (1996). *Beyond fragments: Adults, motivation and higher education, a biographical analysis.* London: Taylor & Francis.

Wright, H. R. (2011). *Women studying childcare: Integrating lives through adult education.* Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

Wright, H. R. (2012). Childcare, children and capability. *Cambridge Journal of Education* (Special Issue on children and capability approach), September, 42(3), 409-424.

Wright, H. R. (2013a). Choosing to compromise: Women studying childcare in an English further education college. *Gender and Education,* 25(2), 206-219.

Wright, H. R. (2013b). From individual choice to social good. *Higher Education Skills and Work-based Learning*, UALL Conference Special Issue, 3(2), 141-148.

Wright, H. R. (2013c). In search of stability: Women studying childcare. *Journal of Further and Higher Education,* 37(1), 89-108.

Wright, H. R. (2014). *The child in society*. London: Sage.