

EDUCAȚIA-PLUS
JOURNAL PLUS EDUCATION



Volume XIII, Nr. 2/ 2015

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JOURNAL PLUS EDUCATION



Volume XIII, No. 2/ 2015

QUARTERLY JOURNAL, PUBLISHED BY
“AUREL VLAICU” UNIVERSITY, ARAD

VOLUME XIII, No. 2 October 2015

Journal Plus Education (JPE) is an official peer-review quarterly journal, issued by the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Psychology and Social Work, “AUREL VLAICU” UNIVERSITY, ARAD, which is also published online.

Coverage

- *CNCSIS classification B+ category*
- *Ulrich's*
- *IndexCopernicus*
- *EBSCO*
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**Volumul XIII, Nr. 2/ 2015
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Autorii își asumă răspunderea pentru conținutul și proveniența materialelor publicate în revistă.

ISSN: 1842-077X

E- ISSN (online) 2068 – 1151

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Arad, 2015

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CONTEMPORARY REPRESENTATION OF "SOCIAL PEDAGOGY"

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Abstract: *The author attempts to clarify a concept which, from the perspective of those interested in behavioural sciences, has multiple meanings. The author exemplifies the fact that 'social pedagogy' – as a science – deals, in the view of some, with social assistance, or, according to others, with the education of adults or with the problems faced by people with adaptation difficulties or with special educational needs. Anton Ilica defines the concept by stating the fact that social pedagogy is a branch of pedagogy which focuses on social integration, namely the systemic socialization of the young generation.*

Key words: *social pedagogy, the sociology of education, E. Durkheim, social psychology*

1. Preliminary explanation. *Social pedagogy* is a theory of public education supported by the sociological research of philosophers August Comte, G. Tarde and Emile Durkheim, who believe that the society is the main element in the formation and development of personality. Education begins from the individual, but it is influenced by society and accomplished in the favour of the community. *Social pedagogy* emerged as a reaction to *individualistic pedagogy*, which stated that education is based on cognition, on the hereditary configuration of the child, thus the need for knowing him through experimental research and the didactic capitalization of his identified potential. Child psychology is connected to social relationships, which means that the child's ambitions (wishes, needs) cannot be allowed to be completely expressed freely and naturally. The child is a future citizen, being the product of social and causative influences. Paul Natorp states the following: "*Social pedagogy means, in its widest definition, that the issues connected to education must be approached scientifically in regard to the social issues or, in the most restricted sense, that the science concerning education must be grounded on the science of*

*social life*¹. According to the educator Șt. Bârsănescu, ”*social pedagogy conceives education as an activity by which the social being is created, with knowledge, social ideals, social behaviour, all of these features being required to fit the given society*”². The purpose of learning is self-learning, while the purpose of education is self-education.

•

Social life, as an existential process taking place through the individuals’ interaction within a community, influences and educates in a desired or suggested sense. Just as nobody can jump over their own shadow, so does every member of a community influence and is influenced by the society to which he or she belongs. Overlapping educative norms or the moral demands of a community is not possible without exclusion. Children adapt to social mentalities which manifest themselves similarly to the influential civic attitudes.

In the opinion of sociologists, “education” would mean “*the transformation of an unsocial being into a social one*”³ by cultural practices. But what are the educative practices from a sociological perspective? They refer to “*the training of individuals from young generations by previous generations so as to actively take part in the culture they are part of*”⁴.

•

There is a mutual connection between social health and the psychological balance of the individual. Moreover, social harmony has beneficial direct or indirect effects upon the satisfaction and accomplishment of each individual to the construction of this civic harmony. The human condition is a source of social ideals, of virtues which determine the lifetime accomplishment of numerous individuals.

The human condition involves a social condition and the changing of people’s behaviours (children – youth – adults) according to formal (organized) and informal (random) demands of the social context is the consequence of the educational process. Thus, *social pedagogy* makes sure that *the individual’s education is made in compliance with the prescriptions of the society*. Social pedagogy explains the philosophy of opportune integrations of the self within civic life, thus building the human condition of *citizen*.

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¹Paul Natorp, *Pedagogia socială*, (în) **Anuarul pedagogic** (ed. O. Ghibu), Sibiu, 1912, apud Ion Gh. Stanciu, *Școala și doctrinele pedagogice în secolul XX*, The European Institute Inst, 2006, p.29.

² Șt. Bârsănescu, *Istoria pedagogiei*, The Didactic and Pedagogical Publishing House, Bucharest, 1968, p. 245.

³ Adrian Hatos, *Sociologia educației*, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2006, p.19.

⁴*Ibidem*, p.20.

2. The analysis of pedagogic „dictionaries”. Of course, in order to clarify a concept, one must first begin by consulting specialty dictionaries and continue by studying the thematic in treaties, volumes and articles of specialty.

The first Dictionary I came across was the one written by H. Schaub (n. 1934)⁵, (1995/2001⁶). **”Social pedagogy”** is explained in two essays, the first dealing with „the pedagogic conception and theory” and the second regarding the concept of „social activity” as *”offers of counselling, guidance and family support in the field of schools and work with youths who are socially threatened”*⁷. This perspective brings the activity of social pedagogy closer to social assistance. The explanation of German educators for **”Social pedagogy”** converges towards *”an emancipating pedagogy”* (the emancipation of those being educated) without referring to the relationship between education and society, between pedagogy and its social effects. Such an essay is of no use to the clarification of the concept.

In another dictionary⁸ by I. Gh. Stanciu⁹, **social pedagogy** is the *”pedagogic orientation and discipline initiated at the end of the nineteenth century, which states that the becoming of a human being is mainly conditioned by the social environment”*. Paul Natorp (1854-1924) is mentioned as its main theoretician, who defines it as *”a science of preparation of the individual will for society, state and humanity”*¹⁰. What is more, the sociologist E. Durkheim defines education from a societal perspective: *”education is the methodical socialization of the younger generation”*. Last but not least, in Romania, **social pedagogy** is connected to

⁵ Horst Schaub, Karl G. Zenke, *Dicționar de pedagogie*; Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2001, p.215.

⁶In such cases, the former year indicates the first printing of the volume in the author’s maternal language, while the latter refers to its translation (and publication) in Romanian.

⁷**Here is how an altered semantics of the concept has made its way in the public opinion: „Social pedagogy is the science which deals with the difficult situations of people and their environment, having a mediating role between the needs of the individual and those of the society. Practically, social educators support or create the premises needed by the people in assisted vulnerable groups to surpass the difficult problems they are facing.”** (taken from the argumentation of a project of one of the capital’s city halls: **„20 employees from the public and private social services specialize as „social educators”**, <http://www.primarie6.ro/> (Project 26 aug. 2014)

⁸ Eugen Noveanu, Dan Potolea (coord), *Științele educației: dicționar enciclopedic*, Sigma Publishing House, Bucharest, 2007, p. 1110.

⁹The article *Pedagogie socială*, in E. Noveanu, D. Potolea (cord.), *Științele educației. Dicționar enciclopedic*, Sigma Publishing House, Bucharest, 2007, p.835.

¹⁰*Ibidem*.

the regional education (I.C. Petrescu) and to the educative localism supported by Stanciu Stoian.

”**Sociological pedagogy**” is the term introduced by Stanciu Stoian in his *Dictionary of Contemporary Pedagogy* (1969)¹¹, where he states that the term has two synonyms: *social pedagogy* and *the sociology of education*. The terms refer to ”*a certain orientation in the research of facts pertaining to education, the consideration of the conscious formation of the human being by and for the society*”¹². However, S. Stoian highlights the following distinctions:

- *social pedagogy* appeared as a reaction against individualistic pedagogy, based on the fact that ”*the human being is a social being and becomes a human only in society*”;
- *the sociology of education* is the term promoted by E. Durkheim in her famous and well-known definition of education (”*the methodical socialization of the younger generation*”), which could even replace the term ”pedagogy” hence excluded from among the real sciences as it establishes *norms* and not *laws*;
- *sociological pedagogy* would be a branch or pedagogy ”*which studies the formation of the human being according to a purpose, which cannot have but a socio-human origin*”¹³

The article ends with the statement that „**social pedagogy**” is ”*a general theory of transformation of the human being for its integration within a social group*”.

Sorin Cristea¹⁴, discussing the leap from pedagogy to pedagogical sciences, identifies ”*the stages of separating ,pedagogy’ from ,pedagogy’ by means of certain ,models’*”. He mentions **René Hubert** (1965)¹⁵, who dilutes the responsibility of pedagogical science by relating it to ,interdisciplinarity’, by proposing a set of disciplines which cooperate with education: (1) biological pedagogy, physiological pedagogy, school hygiene; (2) **sociological pedagogy, socio-pedagogy, the sociology of education. George**

¹¹ Ștefan Bârsănescu (sub. red.), *Dicționar de pedagogie contemporană*, The Romanian Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1969, p.212.

¹²*Ibidem.*

¹³*Ibidem.*

¹⁴ Sorin Cristea, *Dicționar de pedagogie*, Grup Editorial Litera, Litera Internațional Publishing House, Chișinău-Bucharest, 2000, pp.355-362.

¹⁵The French **René Hubert** (1885-1954) was a philosopher teaching sociology at the University of Lille and Poitiers. He wrote a volume on social sciences, a treaty of general pedagogy and another one on the history of pedagogy.

F. Kneller (1973)¹⁶ writes about the *normative* (prescriptive) issues of general pedagogy, exercised within *The Theory of Education, General Didactics, The Philosophy of Education and The Ethics of Education*. The *descriptive* aspects of pedagogy are exercised within *The Pedagogy of Education, The Sociology of Education, Comparative Pedagogy and Educational Managements*. **Emile Planchard**(1968)¹⁷ includes within "*the general and philosophical pedagogy*" the following disciplines: *The Philosophy of Education, The Ethics of Education, The Politics of Education, The Theory of Education*, and within "*scientific and positive pedagogy*" *The Biology of Education, The Physiology of Education, The Anthropology of Education, Medical Pedagogy, Pedagogical Sociology, Pedagogical Psychology, The History of Pedagogy, The Stylistics of Pedagogy and Experimental Pedagogy*.

According to S. Cristea, the line of models continues with the presentation of numerous taxonomies. Other "enthusiasts" of scientific clarifications/classifications sit down at the breakfast table and enjoy the delicacies on the table of education, cutting either smaller or larger slices, to such an extent that they deprived "pedagogy" of its honour of being an honest and welcoming host. The shift from "pedagogy" as a science of education to „the education sciences" among which pedagogy is no longer included constitutes a serious attempt to its authority and even its right of being called an authentic science. Among these unwelcome guests, but good neighbours, are two pseudo-sciences: *Social Pedagogy* (the sociology of education, sociological education, socio-pedagogy) and *Psychological Pedagogy* (the psychology of education, pedagogical psychology, psycho-pedagogy). The „harassment" of the field of education, in the name of its vastest, comes from the „immigrants" arrived within the epistemic space of education having an "un-pedagogical" basic formation. I believe the lack of reaction of educators is due to a much too honest scientific tolerance. However, I cannot understand the fact that the contemporary specialists in the field of education (with PhDs in the field of „education sciences", obtained under the scientific supervision of educators) have assumed this concept called" education sciences".

¹⁶**George F. Kneller** (1908 - 1999), was a professor at the University of California (Los Angeles). He is the author of the volumes *Logica și limbajul educației* (1966); *Introducere în filosofia educației* (1971); *Introducere în antropologia educațională* (1973) etc.

¹⁷**Emile Planchard** (1905 - 1990), a Belgian, has a PhD in psychology. He taught School Pedagogy and An Introduction to Psychology at the University of Coimbra.

Sorin Cristea, a rational, balanced and hardworking educator with didactic expertise¹⁸, pleads for the regeneration of a positive attitude towards Pedagogy, so as to reinstate its legitimacy and prestige. He states: "*Pedagogy is a socio-human science with an independent status, which studies the functional-structural nucleus of education*". The other psycho disciplines support pedagogy from different perspectives of analysis and philosophy. Within this category, we find Social Pedagogy (or the Sociology of Education) and Social Psychology (or the Psychology of Education).

3. The analysis of certain volumes. As I have stated before, the university discipline dealing with the social issues of education (theoretically or practically) is called "*Social Pedagogy*" or "*The Sociology of Education*". We can notice the persistence of vagueness regarding the issue of other disciplines (as a field of knowledge), which are identically perceived differently on other occasions. We thus resort to the aid of the brethren who already have a more ample preoccupation, stated in volumes of specialty.

Dumitru Popovici (b. 1949, Cisnădie), professor in Sibiu, is the author of the volume entitled *The Sociology of Education* (2003), becoming an expert, through his Ph.D., in sociology with the thesis *The Social Conflict*. A philosopher by formation, the issue proposed is analysed from a theoretical perspective, constituting a vision upon "*the complex exiting relation between society as a whole and education as a social fact*"¹⁹. The individualistic (psychological) perspective, focused upon the exclusive education (thus the development) of the ego has a strong opposition in the education (thus in the development) towards social integration. In the opinion of the Sibian educator, "*the object of this science is constituted by the relationships between society (as a whole) and education (as a social fact)*"²⁰. To this very general assertion, the author proposes the following definition: "*the sociology of education is actually the sociological analysis of education as a social fact*". The persistence within the same sentence of the word „sociology” must be understood as an unequivocal connection of the envisaged direction of education in accordance with the configuration of society. In other words, „to educate” is a verb which becomes a scientific synonym with the verb „to socialize”, without ignoring the fact that education is also a personal issue.

¹⁸ S. Cristea (1996, 2000) classifies the "problems" of pedagogy as: fundamental (**The Theory of education, The Theory of Instruction/ General Didactics, The Theory and the Methodology of the Curriculum, The Theory and Methodology of Research**) or applied in different fields.

¹⁹ D. Popovici, *Sociologia educației*, The European Institute, Iași, 2001, p.5.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p.14.

Then, suddenly and quite suspiciously, the author feels the need to make other specifications: the sociology of education does not make an attempt to the status of science in the place of pedagogy; however, he states that "*education is the main connection of humanity*", because it identifies "*the nature, the place and the role of education in society*"²¹. Consequently, this discipline studies education from a sociological perspective. In support of his opinion, the author appeals to the authority of renowned sociologists like E. Durkheim, T. Parson, P. Bourdieu, G. H. Mead or H. Garfinkel (regarding *ethnomethodology*).

Next, one must make a semantic distinction between "*social pedagogy*" and "*the sociology of education*", an operation made by D. Popovici²². By mentioning Șt. Bârsănescu, D. Popovici realizes that *social pedagogy* was, in a particular previous phase, "*a theory of education for society*", and, after the fourth decade of the previous century, it became "*a theory of the educative assistance of youth*" by means of "*extracurricular activities*"²³. *Pedagogical sociology*, states the author, "*reveals the social role within the act of learning performed in the school*"²⁴. As two unquestioned sciences are involved (pedagogy and sociology), the gap between the two "*requires to be occupied*" by "*a new hybrid field*"²⁵.

Approaching the issue of the education process in Romania becomes a source of reflection upon its disorganization, starting from the contents of learning and the resources created. The reflections take the shape of certain critical opinion, derived from the parallelism between school and society: "*when it is separated from social knowledge, when it tries to force its autonomy, the school is guilty of its segregation from society, as well as also being a victim of the a-social school syndrome*"²⁶. Lastly, D. Popovici states (by quoting E. Stănculescu) that "*the main dimension of education is socialization*", by which we understand "*the process of producing the social self*"²⁷. Based on this definition, correlated with the meaning of education, *socialization* may have the following divisions: primary socialization versus

²¹*Ibidem*, p.27.

²²*Ibidem*, p.50 și urm. (The terms „*sociology of education, social pedagogy, sociological pedagogy and pedagogical sociology* are often used as synonyms).

²³*Ibidem*, p.52.

²⁴*Ibidem*,

²⁵*Ibidem*, pp. 53-54.

²⁶*Ibidem*, p.145.

²⁷*Ibidem*, p.163; an idea systematized in the following definition: „*socialization is the concept which denominates the effort of the society and of the individual towards the formation of the latter as an adaptable person within the existential niche where he leads his life, in all its dimensions*” (p.165).

secondary socialization; socialization for primate life versus for public life; professional socialization versus anticipative society.

Other issues are also part of D. Popovici interest for „the sociology of education (family, educational democracy), and the volume ends with the *”crisis and reform of education”*, as well as with the analysis of the problem of *”permanent education”*, defined as: **”Permanent education is a major principle of education regeneration, capable of continually orienting and regulating the organization and process of education by means of syllabi and practical activities, involving the integration of all the educogenous social factors within a system which can act upon each individual during his entire life, in varied and specific ways, but also correlated with the purpose of ensuring the continuous performance of the individual”**²⁸. The definition is impossible by its length and by the thickness of issues and the incoherence of arguments.

The word **”education”** is obstinately present within the text of the book mentioned, without actually mentioning the meaning that the author confers to this concept. However, D. Popovici situates on the preponderant position of the school the evolution process of the child towards his status of citizen, permanently adaptable to the obligations assumed by the integration within the different demands of the society with which he converges (family, school, community, and professional collegiality, civic, national, international and humanistic spirit). D. Popovici’s enterprise is one of clarification and of deceleration of the theoretical problem which connects pedagogy with sociology.

As a colleague, I have asked, by e-mail, for his opinion²⁹: *”I perfectly understand your question mark (that is my puzzle regarding the use of the terms **Social pedagogy** and **The Sociology of education**). He answers: „There are numerous options regarding the object and the content of the two school disciplines. They all confirm the misery in which **pedagogy** struggles and it is not about the science of education here, but about its dilution into academic disciplines.*

*The two names exist in the history of the analysis of the problem of education, and the professors have done their best to give each of them a content which can permit the just placement of each of them in Educational Plans. I have guided my work after the following idea: **Educational Sociology** is a branch sociology, which justifies its presence in the sociology educational plans:*

²⁸*Ibidem*, p.241.

²⁹D. Popovici (e-mail, 16 sept. 2015)

- *It deals with the sociological analysis of the problem of education (the role of education in society, the involvement of the society in the problem of education, educogenous agents, socialization and education etc.);*

- *It appeals to the methods of analysis sociology.*

Social pedagogy is a pedagogical discipline;

- *it analyses pedagogical concepts in a sociological manner (social educability, goal, social objectives of education, forms, means of education, social context, etc.);*

- *its paradigmatic basis is social psychology;*

- *it completes the purely pedagogical analysis of education which is very individualistic;*

- *it is not included in the Curriculum from sociology, only in the one from pedagogy.*

D. Popovici states that *this draft can be criticized but I believe that it brings some light to confusion we experience while lecturing social pedagogy or educational sociology textbooks*³⁰.

I think readers have a clear picture of the concept if they find explanation from two sources. D. Popovici clears out and explains the concept in such a manner that he leave rooms for other explanations of the concept **Social pedagogy**..

Ioan JUDE (born 1952), professor at Medicine and Pharmacy University, of Tîrgu-Mureş (sociologist, head of Department for Teacher Training) expresses his daring ambition to “*write a monographic work about this complex phenomenon*”, called education – socialization in his volume “*Education and Socialization*”. He begins with the analysis of the “*social character of education*”, “*inerrant to the human society*”, so as it is understood by the whole evolution of humanity. Emphasizing E. Durkheim’s opinion, a French sociologist, I. Jude believes that the task of education is to develop people as requested by the society³¹. I. Jude selects from the work of P. Natorp the following appreciation: “*a man’s virtue is not only about living in a society but also about taking part in the construction of a human society*. After presenting some national contributions, the author believes that: “*school develops and strengthens the society, education bearing a deeply social character, fact that claims for a specific branch of pedagogy that would study this social phenomenon, i.e. social pedagogy or educational pedagogy*” (s.n.)³². The author considers that it is a current (a direction) in

³⁰ Ibidem (e-mail din 16 sept. 2015)

³¹ Ibidem, p. 36.

³² Ibidem, p. 40.

pedagogy which has two denominations for the same reality. The following aspects are mentioned among the functions of education:

- moral integration;
- transmission of cultural heritage;
- professional training;
- assigning status and training for certain social roles (organization of social ranking).

It is obvious that education is seen as a social phenomenon and a social action. Therefore, education and socialization are almost identical concepts³³. Both aim the integration of individuals in different social groups that would help them become a "human person"

J. Szczepanski says that "*The process of socialization represents that part of environmental influence that involves the individual in the social life, teaches him how to behave according to norms, how to understand culture, makes him capable of supporting himself and fulfilling certain social roles*". **Socialization** (namely education) is: positive and negative; concordant and discordant; primary and secondary; occupational, anticipatory or missed. Thus socialization is not only a function of education but education itself. Even the educational ideal – as guide of education – is a form of "social and professional ideal".

The individual's freedom of mental expression and the inborn manifestation right is restricted by the requirements of the society. Individuals are asked to behave harmoniously. Social organization as any form of organization has rules, norms and regulations which are in conflict with predispositions for individual behaviours (some of them antisocial or asocial). Socialization, like education, is normative, regulating what can be and what cannot be done. Norms are behavioural rules which coordinate the process of socialization and adaptation according to prescriptions assumed by a certain society (group, organization). Norms can be institutional, namely explicit or consensual, i.e. implicit. Their role is to ensure the coherence of the integrating group, to develop a standard individual behaviour, to impose social will for a **normal** coexistence of individuals in a society as well as to protect values, including a normal functioning of the social system³⁴. I was ready to praise I. Jude for the thoroughness of his opinions on the relationship between education and socialization when I found in the library his volume on "school psychology". There he mitigates several explicit aspects of educational sociology. His plea for the amplification the psychological,

³³ "**Socialization** is a process of learning and assimilating norms and social values, which has different aspects according to social-historical and content premises" (I. Jude, op. cit., p. 195).

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 234.

cognitive and axiological dimension in teacher training to the detriment of pedagogy brings about more enthusiasm than conviction.

The **conclusion** we draw based on the above listed considerations –as well as based on considerations that have not been identified is that:

- education is a process of socialization and socialization is an educational activity;
- the concepts "social pedagogy" and "educational sociology" are synonymous and both are considered branches of pedagogy.

Ioan NEACȘU (born 1945, Mățău) published his volume "*Introduction into education and development psychology*" in 2010³⁵, and in the same year he publishes the volume "*Social pedagogy. Values, behaviour, experience, strategies*"³⁶. This situation complicates the pedagogue`s placement among the supporters of a theory or another, namely the theory of "*developing humans through education*"³⁷. Now, we want to present "values, behaviours, experiences and strategies" which in I. Neacșu`s opinion are promoted by "social pedagogy". It would be easy for us to search the problematic meaning of the book, taking into consideration the beneficiaries the author addresses to: "*academics and students of psychology, education sciences, sociology, social work, special psychopedagogy, experts in social care working in different institutions – schools, centres, services, directions- ... counsellors who work in psychopedagogy centres in mainstream schools, specialists and even decision makers who work in agencies or public institutions specialized in prevention of social and personal risk behaviours*"³⁸. To conclude, I can say: **social work and protection of vulnerable people who have trouble with the integration**. It is easier now to identify the meaning that the author assigns to "social pedagogy". Selection of national and international opinions (318 bibliographical sources) shows the options we have to consider "**social pedagogy**" a methodological discipline which promotes

³⁵ Ioan Neacșu, *Introducere în psihologia educației și a dezvoltării*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2010.

³⁶ Ioan Neacșu, *Pedagogie socială. Valori, comportamente, experiențe, strategii*, Editura Universitară, București, 2010.

³⁷We cannot close this chapter without mentioning the opinion of Prof. Ioan Neacșu, PhD. After several attempts receiving his book, the order has been delivered to my house and the package contained two volumes: the pedagogue`s (**Social pedagogy**) and another one signed by Pantelimon Golu și Florinda Golu (*Applcational dimensions of social psychology*). I have noticed that both texts could change my opinion about the content of "social pedagogy", namely "social psychology", if ..."my guarding angel" wouldn't have kept my "critical thinking" unaltered. And you will see why.

³⁸ Ion Neacșu, Op. cit., p. 15.

equal chances for everyone, irrespective of their origin, mental or physical health, stress addiction or other causes of social exclusion. Chapters like "*Social care of children in schools*", "*child in difficulty*" (and family), "*deviance and juvenile delinquency*", "*strategies in approaching, knowledge and prevention of risky behaviours*" can be found in the book. As these issues are part of "**Specialpsychopedagogy**" and "**Social Work**", the semantics of "**Social pedagogy**", clears away the epistemological issue from the field of education.

A volume about "*socio-pedagogical approach*" to school is signed by **Emil PĂUN** (born 1937, Avrămești), professor from Bucharest³⁹. Starting with the "*educational dimension of social development*" and with "*the individuals` subjective needs (among which we mention sociability and need for affiliation)*"⁴⁰, E. Păun considers school an organization structured according to the principles of a society. What is an **organization**? Here is the author`s definition: "*a system of activities structured around clearly stated goals (aims, objectives), which engage a high number of individuals with well determined roles in various structures and having management positions*"⁴¹. The definition refers to the main characteristics of organizations, including school. School has structure, a hierarchy, requirements, functional differences and regulations. School is a "*socially organized environment*"⁴². Seeing school as a social organization, E. Păun identifies the elements of "*social organization*". He refers to their quality and identity, referring to *climate* (subjective and moral moods of its members) to management aspects and projects of organizational development. School is part of the social whole because here people learn how to cohabit and socialize. Individual freedom is constrained by the rules of a good social atmosphere. Public life is normative and restrictive in terms of uncensored freedom of speech. Society is prepared by education and improved through permanence. School and society are "*organizations that teach*", which keeps them "healthy, full of vitality and optimism".

E. Paun`s socio-pedagogical approach of school is a challenge for the school itself. The intention is to change the meaning of its functions and bring it closer to a different social order than the one generated by it. In sociological terms, school benefits from the most thorough systematic and

³⁹ Emil Păun, *Școala – abordare sociopedagogică*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 1999 (acest volum a fost anticipat de *Educația și rolul ei în dezvoltarea social-economică* (1974).

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p.7.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p.8.

⁴² The French sociologist E. Durkheim writes about "school society" considered "*a social group which has its own unity and features, an organization similar to adult society*".

experimental analysis. From Emil Păun`s considerations we draw the conclusion that schools should be restructured based on the principles of a well-structured society. A healthy school with an open climate (like a healthy organization) functions as "an educational community", promoting "autonomy, self-discipline, self-determination, open and honest relations and explores the potential of each individual"⁴³. Social climate as "sum of collective perceptions and emotional states found in an organization"⁴⁴, determines the quality of individual and public behaviours. School is like the society it is part of.

Adrian HATOS, professor in University Oradea (born 1972, Sfântu Gheorghe) sociologist, refers to the issue analysed in the volume *Economy, education and society. Main topics of educational sociology* (2004), abridged and reprinted under the name *Educational sociology* (2006).

"**What is educational sociology?**" is the author`s question. He gives an answer to what educational sociologists *say and do*. To explain the concept, he makes appeal to some sociologists who were very interested in the significance of the Latin word *educare* as "transformation of unsocial beings into social beings". Citing F. Znaniecki`s (1882-1958) study translated into Romanian and entitled *The object of educational sociology* (1975), Hatos considers that "educational sociology is defined as scientific study of educational practices found in different societies"⁴⁵. A pedagogue would have said that the definition refers to a history of general didactics, as didactics deals with "educational practices". But the meaning of "educational practices" is limited to sociology: "**Educational practices** are understood as training of individuals from young generations by members of previous generations to be able to actively take part in the culture they belong to"⁴⁶. Sharing the same point of view, A. Hatos states that "**educational sociology** is interested in aspects such as educational relations, educational roles, educational groups from past and present societies from all over the world"⁴⁷.

To be more convincing, the author mentions also M. Cherkaoni`s opinion (1986) that "**educational sociology**" is – "the sociology of educational systems" (a concept difficult to grasp by a pedagogue). The specifications complicate the semantics of this discipline: they refer to

⁴³ E. Păun, Op. cit., p. 135.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, p. 115.

⁴⁵ Adrian Hatos, *Sociologia educației*, ed. II revăzută și adăugită, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2006, p.20.

⁴⁶ Ibidem.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, p.20.

"school phenomena and the relationship between school and other institutions, especially family, politics and economy"⁴⁸. To convince the readers about his opinion, A. Hatos mentions Basil Bernstein's opinion (British sociologist) who believe that "**educational sociology**" refers to "*a relationship between generations*"⁴⁹. He also analyses the institutional elements of "*mainstream education*", of "*the role of schools in providing social order*", of "*investment in education*" and of *educational policies*. A. Hatos states that "**educational sociology**" is concerned with the reflection of education in economy, the school impact on educational inequality and social mobility, the effects of school results and trust in educational institutions (including the phenomena of home tutoring and its social consequences). The sociologist Adrian Hatos makes an honest and relevant analysis of the Romanian educational system by a using a comparison. The strengths of Romanian educational system (corruption, home tutoring, failure, unequal chances) have fundamental social effect on public behaviours and in reshaping the mental infrastructure of Romanian society. From his perspective, the educational system has another dimension due to cranky mechanisms, as well as lack of social vision.

A. Hatos's comments and suggestions point out that **educational sociology** (he did not mention the concept of "**social pedagogy**"!) is a branch of sociology, that is sensitive to the impact school has on essential aspects of society. Only a quality school can reverse the tainted effects of a society, only proper education (even constraining) leads to human solidarity and satisfactory organizational cultures.

Loredana Drobot⁵⁰ (2008) publishes the volume **Social pedagogy**, which contains mostly topics related to adult education. The chapters are entitled: "*From pedagogy to ontology*", "*Social pedagogy and adult education*" and "*Continuous training of teaching staff*". After having a look at the table of contents, we notice that the author's opinion is that "**social pedagogy**" refers mainly to lifelong education. The book discusses "the social work" conducted by "the social worker". The author identifies the values of social work (human dignity, tolerance, justice and humanism) and lists a few principles of social work, thus approaching the field of social work and counselling.

⁴⁸*Ibidem*, p.21.

⁴⁹*Ibidem*, p.21.

⁵⁰Loredana Drobot (n. 1970) is professor at Eftimie Murgu University in Reșița. She is a psychologist and handles teacher training within the Department for Teaching Staff Training. She also has a psychology office.

”*Social pedagogy was identified with adult education in the past decades*”, writes the author. Moreover, Loredana Drobot mentions that ”*after the 1990s, **social pedagogy** focuses more on adult education but it is also concerned with the role of family as socio-educational institutions and means of mass communication*”⁵¹ (cited from A. Neculau (2003)).

Loredana Drobot concludes that ”social pedagogy” is sort of a pedagogical science which deal with:

- professional training of adults;
- initial professional training of young adults;
- continuous professional training;
- general adult education.

These dimensions promote the idea of ”*permanent education as a main category of social pedagogy*”⁵².

Shifting ”social pedagogy” towards ”andragogy” and ”permanent education” brings about confusion but mostly shift away from the issues of general education. What is the purpose of education? How should be educational philosophy oriented: towards the development of individual personality or towards social integration of personality? Mental education or social education? I versus society or I in the society? Education for social inclusion is not only for people with special needs, but refers to integration policies used by all people who want to fit in the society. The individual is not free to change the civic requirements of good social cohabitation.

In the end, L. Drobot states that: ”*Romanian pedagogy from the Inter War period was a social pedagogy*”⁵³, and as Șt. Bârsănescu said, its issues were close to the topics approached by educational assistance (”*Social pedagogy become thus a theory of educational assistance conducted in social and state institutions*”). ”**Educational assistance**” is a concept used in ”social education”, as it addresses to children, teenagers and adults. The author’s conclusion is a restrictive one.

Many authors have written about the relationship between pedagogy and sociology, but unfortunately not enough pedagogues, sociologists, psychologists, philosophers, specialists or amateurs. Beyond academic lectures, synthetic visions are subordinated to training programmes which are

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p.12.

⁵² *Ibidem*, p.15.

⁵³ L.Drobot, *Pedagogia socială*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 2008, p.11. If he understands through social pedagogy what he understands that is opinion is faulty. Those were the times when Romanian psychology strengthened as a science, through language and beliefs.

addressed to teaching staff. Their purpose is the preparation for certain exams and thus developed on the contents agreed by the Ministry.

”Educational psychology was followed by ”social psychology thus an interdisciplinary field ended up in the custody of psychologists. They extended their interest in the social influence of individual’s behaviour.

1. Social psychology. The exercises and applications of a volume on *Social Psychology* (academic lecture) suggest the following questioning⁵⁴:

”In the study of *social psychology* one is interested in the influence of social aspects on individual behaviour, which can be translated into social interaction, communication or social construction, etc. Find clues of this interest in the following definitions of social pedagogy:

- “**Social psycholog y** is actually *the science of events, of interpersonal behaviour*” (Krech and Crutchfield);
- „**Social psychology** means *study of human interaction*” (Watson);
- „**Social psychology** explains and *examines the way in which the individual`s thinking, feelings, behaviour are influenced by the other`s imaginary or real presence*” (Allport);
- „**Social psychology** deals with the study of *people`s mental features, as socio-cultural being and their behaviour in the group as well as the study of group, collective and mass psychology as it is manifested in human activity*” (P. Golu);
- „**Social psychology** is a *scientific study of individuals` experiences and behaviours in their relationship with social stimuli*” (Sherif);
- „**Social psychology** is defined as *scientific study of mutual influence between individuals in their social context*” (Sabini)”⁵⁵.

Lecturers have the possibility to select their own point of view upon the development of the concept “social pedagogy.

The Muslim refugees` arrival in Europe has taken the form of an exodus. This aspect confirms G. Le Bon`s opinion that the era we live in is a ”mass era”⁵⁶. *Social psychology* refers to the analysis of collective behaviour, to the invasion of mass (people`s) passions over individual reason.

S. Moscovici coordinates a volume written by ”*European social psychologists*”⁵⁷ in which social pedagogy receives new dimensions being

⁵⁴ Cornelia Rada, Bianca Bogdana Peltea, *Psihologie socială. Dinamica grupurilor*, Editura Universitară, București, 2014, p. 9. I use this comparative situation to clear up the content of ”social psychology.

⁵⁵ Ibidem, p. 14.

⁵⁶ G. Le Bon, *Psihologia mulțimilor*, Editura AntetxxPress, București, f.a.

⁵⁷ S. Moscovici (cord.), *Psihologia socială a relațiilor cu celălalt*, (trad.), Editura Polirom, Iași, 1998.

bond to the "relationship with the other". Identity (self, ego) is opposed to otherness, developing a relationship between *egoism* and *altruism*. The volume elaborated by important "socio-psychologist"(as they refer to themselves) proposes a hypothesis that might set the bases of a boarder science.

Serge Moscovici is translated into Romanian with two volumes on ... social psychology: *Social psychology* or *The God making Engine* (1994, 1995, 1997) and *Social psychology of relationships with the other* (1998). Social psychology? Yes, it is a new science, which didn't receive big chances of survival because "the segregation pact awards the individual to sociology and the society to economy or sociology"⁵⁸. Moscovici states that anyone can observe "how an entire society is fostered by each individual"⁵⁹. Why is then a conflict between individual and society? This is the assumption which brought about the emergence of "social psychology as the science of conflict between the individual and the society"⁶⁰. The second definition complicates the first one: "social psychology is the science of ideological phenomena (social cognitions⁶¹ and social representations⁶²) and of communicative phenomena"⁶³. The man can be wise and worthy but among the crowds his behaviour can become foolish even stupid. Masses can be passionate and collective decisions are mostly driven by instincts, passions fierce. Do you remember the peasant from Liviu Rebreanu's novel *Rascoala*? They go to Miron Iuga's mansion to call his account, they march on the alley, avoid stepping on flowers, align with their hats in their hands and wait for the boyar. When asked what they want, they don't remember why they have come to the court. It is the respect for an authority. When one gets naughty, the others become angry and break into the boyar's house, destroying, stealing, killing and raping. Crowds have a brutal behaviour, they don't think, they are blind and passionate. Rumours trigger passionate actions specific for

⁵⁸ S. Moscovici, *Psihologia socială sau mașina de fabricat zei*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 1997, p.7.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*,

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p.8. Examples are given: oposition leader - group, resistance to the pressures of majority, the influence of crowds upon the individual etc.

⁶¹ **Social cognition** refers to the understanding of social world: mental schematas, daily actions, bond between affection and cognition (cf. P. Iluț, *Psihologie socială și sociopsihologie*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2009, p. 43.).

⁶² "**Representations are reference points, whici ensure a perspective for the interpretation of events, situations by individuals or groups. More importantly, they ensure reference points for the manner a person communicates with the others and how this person places the things that concern him/her and his/her world..**" (Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social Psychology, 1999)

⁶³ *Ibidem*.

the crowds. The individual loses his values and integrates into a social group.

Pantelimon Golu and Florinda Golu identify "**Applicative dimensions of social psychology**"⁶⁴, a generous volume of 340 bibliographical references all from allogeneic psychological literature. Social psychology is a "science with its own statute", which "has spread almost over all aspects of daily life"⁶⁵. This science is interested in "health, communication, relations, work, free time, justice, politics, etc.", suggesting "strategies and manners of finding a balance between man and social world"⁶⁶. The expertise of a social psychologist covers the street, the group, and social movements. He studies "the social behaviour and the consequence of social situations upon man"⁶⁷.

I suggest Tr. Herşeni's opinion that: "the individual and the society are aspects of the same human reality"; concretely, there isn't any individual without society and there is no society without individuals"⁶⁸. The meeting between mental ego and social ego shapes a bond between individuals and their social deeds. P. Golu believes that: "The social consists of organizations, institutions, professions, work places; the psychologist – of people, who inhabit them and populate them. ...The social means laws and regulations, norms and legislations; the mental means needs and reasons, wishes and expectations, hopes and ideals"⁶⁹ etc.

2. Conclusion. We didn't want to express our opinion about **social psychology or socio-psychology** because we want the disambiguation of "**Social pedagogy**". It can be easily noticed that psychologists and sociologists have found an interface, an extremely exciting area of knowledge where these two sciences meet. One refers to the mental dimension of individuals, the other one to their social dimension. Social psychology emerges from both of them. Pedagogy has been excluded from this "make up". Let's get back to the definition of "**Social pedagogy**". We believe that a contemporary dictionary of pedagogy should give the following definition for the concept of **SOCIAL PEDAGOGY**: ~ **branch of general pedagogy which deals with the individual's integration into the society by a**

⁶⁴ Pantelimon Golu, Florinda Golu, *Dimensiunile aplicative ale psihologiei sociale*, Editura Universitară, Bucureşti, 2012.

⁶⁵ Ibidem, p. 7.

⁶⁶ Ibidem, p. 9.

⁶⁷ Ibidem, p. 12.

⁶⁸ Prefaţă la A. Dicu, E. Dumitriu, *Probleme de psihopedagogie a educaţiei*, Editura Ştiinţifică, Bucureşti, 1973, p. 8.

⁶⁹ Pantelimon Golu, *Fenomene şi procese psihosociale*, Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, Bucureşti, 1989, p. 20.

systematic acceptance of its requirements. The value of ego is highlighted only based on values accepted by the human society. Social pedagogy has the following content: self-education, communication with others, group cohabitation, relationship between the freedom of ego and social prescriptions, assuming civic democracy as well as the contents of education according to a society's organizational culture. S.P. is a boarder discipline being claimed by pedagogues and sociologists. This definition has been written based on the above listed considerations but also taking into account the psychologists 'and sociologists 'opinions.

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SOCIAL PEDAGOGY - AN INTEGRATED ACADEMIC CURRICULUM OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

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Abstract: *Subject of this article is a specific higher education study program of the Cooperative University Baden-Württemberg, Germany, in the field of social work. There are two important aspects to be recognized: (1) With the term "Social Pedagogy" we indicate a professional way to deeply understand the life world of the clients and to interact with them in their every day surroundings. The social pedagogue tries to empower the client to deal with his problems and takes over an advocatoric position to him. (2) In the course of the 3-year-program the students are passing alternating phases in the university and in the social institution. Theory based courses are followed by practical trainings in different fields of social work. Thus the students are able to develop competencies not only based on lectures but also on permanent reflection of their practical work.*

Keywords: *Social Pedagogy, study program, practicum, life world*

1. What means "Social Pedagogy"?

There are very different views of how social work should be taught and performed. Today I would like to offer an understanding to you, as we try to carry it out in our university in Baden-Württemberg.

"Social pedagogy" means first and foremost support for children, young people and families in dealing with their everyday lives. We assume that the decisive contribution to the solution of educational problems must be carried out in the daily life of children, young people and families. Daily life poses problems which must be solved at the place, where they arise.

The social pedagogue is available for the clients as helper and partner. At this point is crucial, how he or she performs in the immediate interaction with the client. The client himself is not so much interested in management operations of assistance. Rather, he needs people who engage directly with him and deal with him face to face as his advocate.

Of course, this specific assistance needs also an effective administration in the background. Only where the helping arrangements are well, but also

flexibly organized and equipped with sufficient expertise and financial resources, only there can help be effective. But the center of the socio-pedagogical activity is the needy human being.

Theoretical foundation of our concept is the theory of the life world. It states that people construct their own reality. What meaning poverty, exclusion, education, work and performance have for them, all this is only to understand if we look at the world from the eyes of our clients.

Key concept of social pedagogy is thus understanding. Understanding means primarily: watching, listening to, requests, tracking the client in his way to overcome his problems. But also it means to recognize the competences of the client to deal with and to solve challenges.

If we really want to understand, we at first must forget all concepts which provide the explanatory Sciences of psychology or sociology to. Not that they were not important. But we should distance ourselves from ready-made patterns of explanation to the world of the clients.

Not till then in the second step, if we really have comprehend, how our clients experience their difficulties, only then we can develop concepts and make reasonable offers of help.

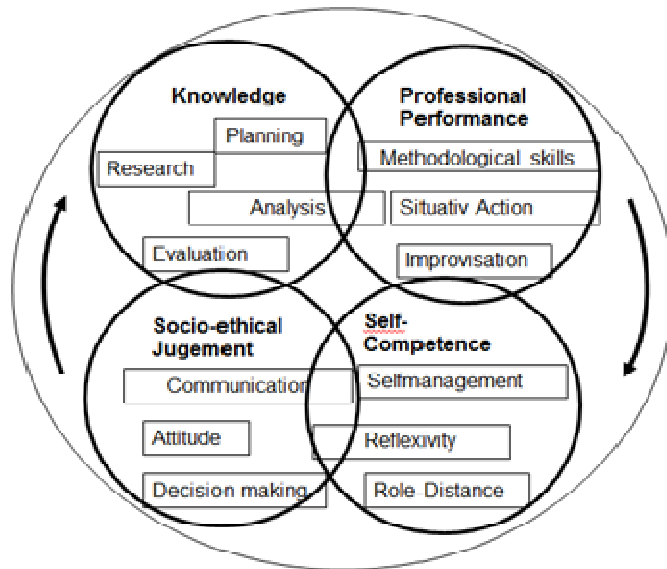
2. Promoted competences in the study program

Students at the School of Social Work at DBHW Stuttgart acquire appropriate cognitive, methodological and socio-ethical skills to understand complex problem situations and contribute professionally to their solution.

The study program of the social pedagogy gives of course first and foremost the necessary knowledge on the basics of the social sciences. The students should analyze problems and plan measures. This also includes that they know how the living conditions of the clients are and why they are so. In addition, they should know how to research and how the course of action can be evaluated.

But knowledge alone does not enable to act. Therefore concrete methods of action need to be acquired: for example: interviewing, group management, parent counselling, social training. All of these methods should be used in situation. In addition, there's the ability to improvise in open situations.

Figure 1: Model of Competencies in the Program of Social Work



In the everyday work of the social pedagogue are many situations to deal with, in which large uncertainties and no unique solution is possible. Basis for any social work is therefore the ability to make secure judgments on their own and foreign action in weighing different alternatives. Thereby it is important, to think about the reasons of the action and to communicate. Pros and cons must be evaluated and decisions must be made on this basis.

Students of social pedagogy need great skills, to reflect upon themselves and their work. Self-competence means to use purposefully and efficiently the own energies and not to stop in establishing professional distance from the own role. The study program provides many ways to train students their own learning behavior.

3. The Faculties of Social Work in the Cooperative University Baden-Württemberg (DHBW)

In the following I want to give a short overview on the structure of our school of social work. Our University is organized in the manner of a state university. The DHBW includes 9 different Universities represented in – overall – 13 campuses.

We have three schools of social work in our University: in Stuttgart, in Heidenheim and in Villingen-Schwenningen. In this three schools we have – overall about 2000 students.

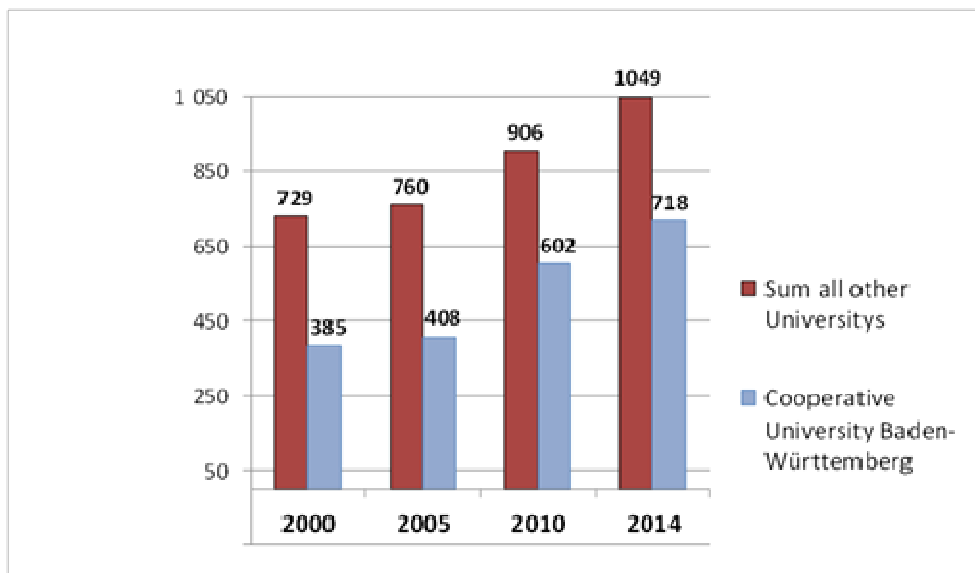
The requirements for the enrolment are:

- an A-level examination of school (Abitur)
- a contract with a social institution where the student will undertake his or her practical phases.

In the last 15 years we can notice a huge increase of enrolments in social work in the 14 Universities in Baden-Wuerttemberg from about 1100 in the year 2000 to about 1800 in the year 2014.

In the three schools of social work we had 718 new students in the last year. As you can see the enrolments in DHBW makes about 40% of all enrolments in social work in Baden-Wuerttemberg.

Figure 2: Beginners in Social Work at Universities in Baden-Württemberg



4. How the DHBW-curriculum works

An University is not just a place of study. Here also new concepts can be developed, how necessary skills can be taught and acquired. How is the concept of our "dual degree"?

The dual study concept or cooperative higher education combines academic learning with workplace training. The innovative study concept of our University includes alternating theoretical phases at the university and practical phases at a specific training partner. Students are not only taught theoretical knowledge, but also learn to apply this knowledge in practice.

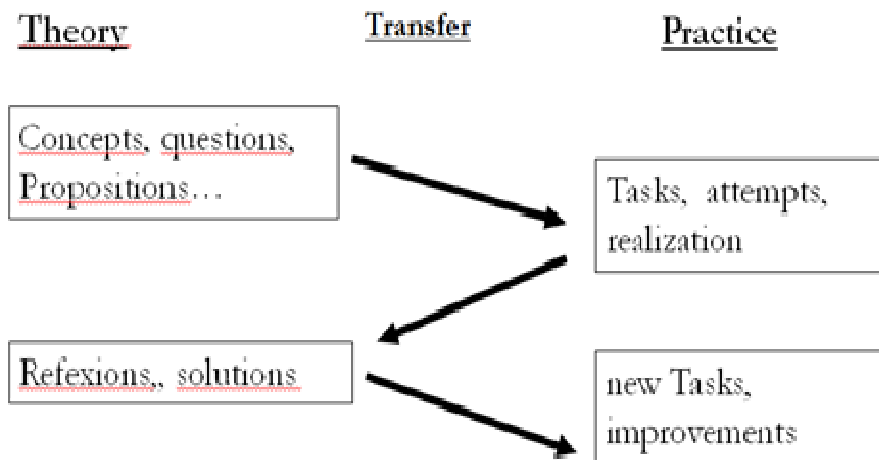
So the cooperative degree program is designed according to the real requirements in social institutions, and guarantees a unique combination of theory and practical work.

It is undisputed that the acquisition of skills not only can be made inside the lecture hall. Certainly, the student first needs concepts and theories, he can think about that. But immediately for him the question arises, whether a theoretical insight can be successfully implemented in practice. The Students in our curriculum are given the option to change the place of learning every three months. For three months they attend the College, for the next three months they learn at work in practice.

Our faculty collaborates with many social institutions. In these facilities we stay in contact with selected specialists, which guide the students in their work. In this way, students on one hand get a practice field for their theoretical knowledge, on the other hand they receive practical instructions and will be accompanied and observed in their solution tests.

The study program lasts three years, during this time the students are 6 stages in the theory and 6 stages in the practice. A permanent exchange between theory and practice takes place so. In this way, the students bring their knowledge appropriate to into practice and take practical problems back to the seminar.

Figure 3: Alternating Phases of Theory and Practice



5. Contents of the Curriculum

There is a broad consensus on the general curriculum of teaching in the study at the faculties of social work in Germany. Accordingly, all students acquire knowledge and skills in the core subjects sociology, psychology, philosophy, politics, law and so on.

This lessons includes a total of 1776 hours lecture visit in three years at our University. In this workload is included the basic study as well as the hours in the chosen area of specialization: so educational support, care for the elderly or family help. In the seminar the students thus spend 1776 hours of workload, about 28% of the whole workload.

A great amount of the additionally study time lies in the individual studies at home, in groups or on the bibliothek, i.e. 1625 hours, i.e. about 26% of the whole workload. 46 % or 1625 hours practice are practical training and reflection.

The study program includes therefore a total of 6300 heures workload and is rated 210 ECTS credit points. Within the Bachelor program students can specialize: depending on the practice posts, in which they are active, they take part in one of the following fields of study:

- Education and Learning Support – Child and Youth Care
- Child Care and Youth Services
- Youth, Family and Social Welfare Services
- Disability-Care and Rehabilitation
- Social Work in Healthcare
- Social Work in Early Years and Primary Education
- Forensic Social Work

We also have three master programs of social work:

- Social Governance
- Social Planning
- Intercultural Social Work

6. The cooperation between “theory” und “practice”

For the concept of our cooperative study program is a good contact between theory and practice necessary. The students must be guided well in both areas.

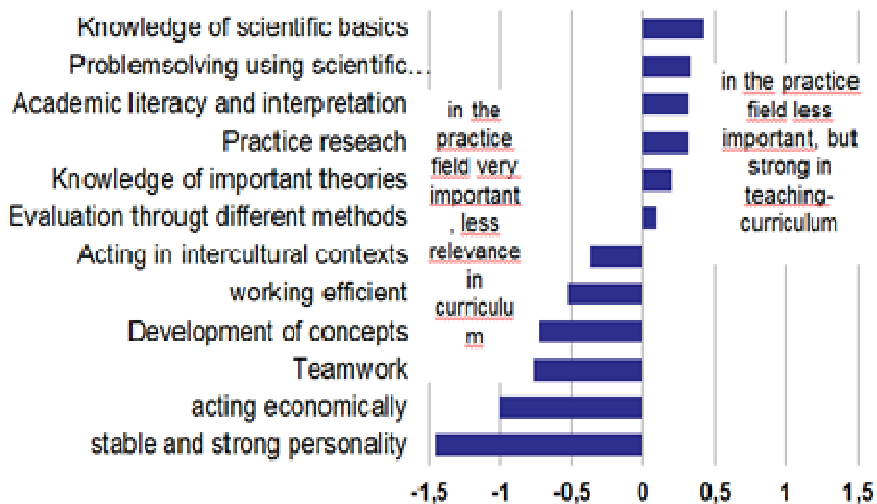
The cooperation between theory and practice is managed in the way, that a professor stays in contact with the practice institution by supervising the quality of the learning process. Therefore he or she visits the institutions and talks to the management.

Inside the practice institution every student is supervised through a social worker. With him the student has frequent counseling to reflect his work. Additionally our university organizes great conferences twice a year for the students supervisors. In these conferences they were informed about new developments in the university.

Not only in interaction between student and social worker but also in regard to the study content there are links between theory and practice: In special “transfer tasks” the students work out papers by reflecting special aspects of their work in the light of theory. Also in the written examinations they have to answer not only questions on knowledge but also they have to solve tasks of reflection. In the commissions of oral examinations we have also experts from practice institutions.

In a special research study we have asked the practice supervisors how relevant several competencies are in their daily work and to which amount they are imparted through teaching in the seminar.

Figure 4: Differences between estimated Relevance of Competencies In Institutional Practice and in Academic Curriculum at University



The figure 4 shows the differences between relevance measures of competencies in institutional practice and in the academic curriculum at the university. In the right upper edge you see the competencies, which the social workers see as taught well at university, but are less relevant in the practice field. These are for example:

- Practice research
- Academic literacy and interpretation

- Problemsolving using scientific methods
- Knowledge of scientific basics

In the lower left edge we can see competencies, which are necessary in the practice but are not best imparted through teaching in the seminar:

- stable and strong personality
- acting economically
- Teamwork

The results show that there is the need of acquirement of skills which can not be taught sufficiently through academic teaching.

7. Employment after examination

The last subject which I want to mention shortly is the professional career of students after leaving university.

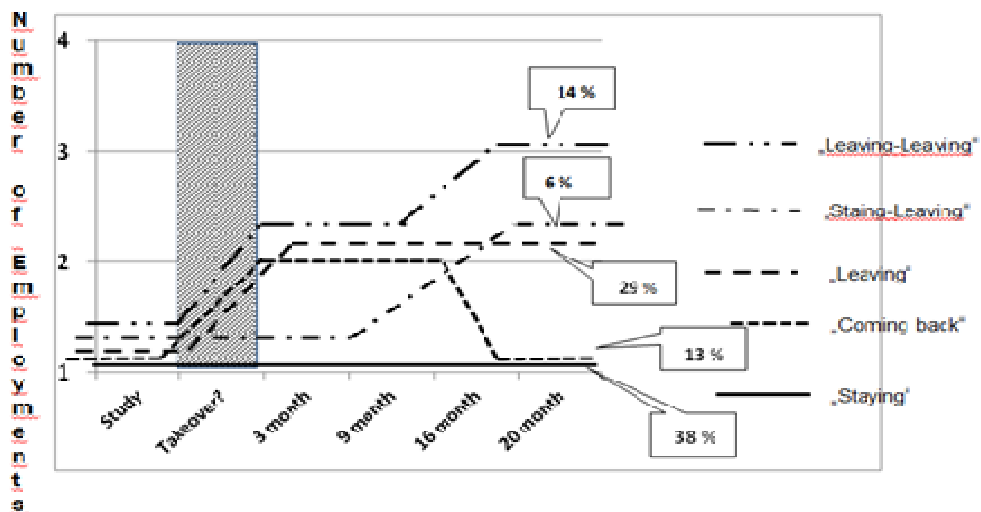
Two thirds of all alumni start their first job immediately after their final examination. About 10 percent continue studying in a master program.

Three month after their final examination 90 percent are employed or are in further qualification programs.

When we look at the first 20 month after the final examination so we can recognize:

More than one third of the alumni stay in the institution where they had their practicum during studying. 13 percent come back after about a year. 29 percent change the institution after examination but stay in the new institution for a long time. Overall we can see that 80 percent of the alumni have reached a continuous employment.

Figure 5: Typology of Careers after Examination



8. Conclusions

I will come to some conclusions.

Social Pedagogy – as I have said - is not only a principle of work. It is the attempt to overtake the perspective of the people, who address themselves to us and to whom we are addressed to.

Why do we need academic professionals in solving problems in the clients every day life? Why do we need Social Pedagogy at the university level?

The answer is very simple: The study program as well as the training in practice enable the students to reflect the underlying problems on an abstract level. Professionals are able to manage the helping processes inside the small units and arrangements of help, so as counseling units, foster families, youth clubs and houses of residential care.

In direct interaction with children, young people and with families they act as specialists not far away from the places where the families live. They bring in the innovations, which are individual and adequate for the situation.

The academic training expands the view of possible solutions on the basis of new scientific insights. The university offers for the professionals an excellent platform to develop and discuss concepts of treatments and intervention, not only in the administration but also in the helping institutions themselves.

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NEW TRENDS IN CURRICULUM DESIGN PROCESS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: *The aim of the paper is to present the actual tendencies in curriculum design for the university study programmes, taking in consideration the requirements of the labor market. These requirements consist in linking the qualification standards with the learning outcomes and with the competences, which will be assessed during the learning process, and at the end of the learning process, to the exam for licence, master dissertation or PhD. The paper presents few examples of curriculum design and curriculum lifecycle, proposed by European scholars.*

Keywords: *Qualification standards, learning outcomes, competences, curriculum design, curriculum lifecycle.*

The transformation of Higher Education systems and institutions in all countries in recent years has been characterised by an *expansion in the number of students and university graduates, the introduction of quality assurance policies and procedures and the adaptation of university curricula to meet the requirements of the new economy and present day labour markets*, mainly with regard to *the introduction of competences* as a fundamental learning objective in study programme.

The Bologna Declaration issued in 1999 can be considered the starting point for a paradigm change in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). But now, the European Qualification Framework (EQF) is the backbone of the paradigm change in Europe. It covers all aspects of qualification, including, but in no way limited to, the three cycles of the Bologna process, agreed upon in 2008. Its implementation has started all over Europe, it “*acts as a translation device to make national qualifications more readable across Europe, promoting workers’ and learners’ mobility between countries and facilitating their lifelong learning*” (European Commission, 2013), and more than that, promoting the new concept of *life wide learning* (a transversal learning not only a longitudinal one).

Nowadays, the European Qualification Framework set the basis to improve mobility and global work markets highlighting the role of University Education that have to adapt now to the new strategies. The formulation of an adequate strategy for competence-based teaching, the design of learning outcome based curricula and competence-based syllabus, are necessary elements of an up-to-date Higher Education.

„The formulation of the EQF level descriptors differs from the Bologna level descriptors developed specifically for higher education needs because, as a lifelong learning framework, the EQF also encompasses vocational education and training (VET) and work contexts, including at the highest levels.” (EQF, 2013). In this conditions Higher Education Institutions (HEI) all over Europe need to adapt to these new frameworks.

Each HEI needs to prepare sets of competences, consistent with the learning outcomes, for each degree programme and ultimately for each course, which will be used to demonstrate that students have reached the level of competence required for the respective level. These competences can and should build upon each other, hence, each competence needs to be defined in various levels. For example, the competence to use the IT requires different levels of expertise to full the requirements for Bachelor, Master or PhD cycles. These requirements will be additionally different for diverse fields of study.

But those requirements offer, at national level, the quality assurance of the educational system, and at international level, the learning outcomes can increase transparency, mobility and comparability. Learning Outcomes are acknowledged as one the basic building blocks of European higher education reform. They exemplify a particular methodological approach for the expression and description of the curriculum (modules, units and qualifications) and level, cycle and qualifications descriptors associated with the „new style” Bologna qualifications frameworks. Now, countries can reference the level of their own national qualifications to the eight common reference levels (6 for Bachelor, 7 for Master and 8 for PhD cycles). Using this approach, the level of knowledge, skills and competences of several thousand different educational qualifications become comparable.

The need for the formulation of learning outcomes is combined with the commitment of the EQF (European Qualifications Framework) to outline design guides with learning outcomes in order to promote the recognition of paths and therefore the mobility of job profiles and skills. A learning outcome is a student-centred statement of what you want your students to know, understand or be able to do as a result of a completed process of learning. Learning outcomes are generally seen to positively contribute to

teaching, learning and assessment at institutional level. Thus, they seek to describe the student's learning progress in terms of the knowledge acquired, the comprehension of that knowledge, the capacity to apply it, and the capacity to analyse, synthesise and evaluate.

Most theorists and practitioners agree that, generally, learning outcomes should be:

- a. summaries of essential areas of learning that result from a course of study;
- b. written in the future tense, often expressed as „you will be able to“;
- c. explicit and clearly expressed;
- d. limited in number;
- e. expressed with a verb indicating the relation to of the outcome to „domains (or types) of learning“;
- f. written with a level of learning/learner in mind.

There are many approaches *to making learning outcomes visible*. One of them is *to define competences* the students need to *acquire*, which *at the beginning of a course are used as learning aims, during the course will be used as learning guidelines and after successful completion of the course can be considered learning outcomes*. No matter how learning outcomes are exactly defined, *the shift from knowledge-based to competence-based teaching* is always a part of it. Of course, *defining learning outcomes* and respective *learning activities* which lead to their acquisition make it also much easier *to estimate the needed study time and to assess the amount of credits to be awarded*. In this way, competence-based teaching connects also to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

The concept of competence has always been one of the most controversial issues during the process of restructuring the university studies within the EHEA. It can be easily argued that competence is an integrated set of knowledge, skills and attitudes:

- Knowledge has to do with *knowing*. For example, you have knowledge of a particular culture, the operation of a device, the steps to solve a problem, etc.
- Skills have to do with *can*. It involves actions (mental or physical). For example, you replace a tire, give a presentation, operate a computer, etc.
- Attitudes have to do with *wanting*. Examples are showing initiative, empathy, motivation, etc.

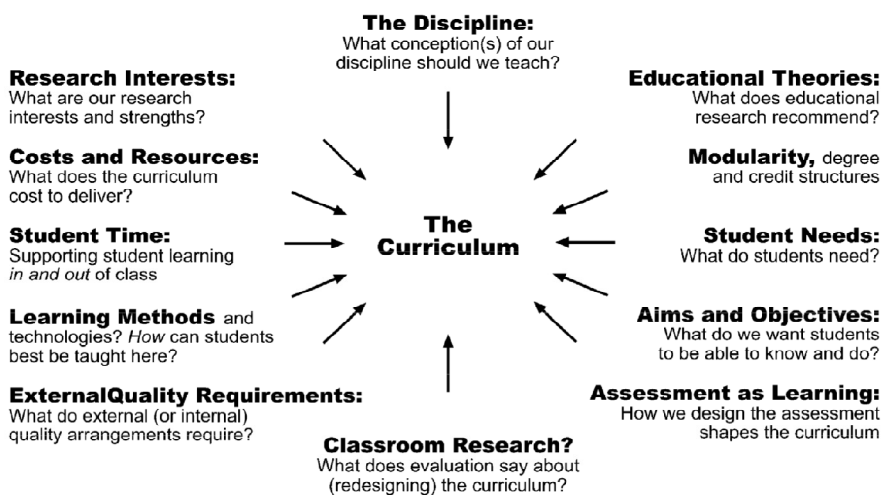
Someone is indeed competent if he or she can use certain knowledge, skills and attitudes in a particular context and act appropriately.

Both in the professional world and in the world of education there is a trend towards competency-based thinking. Competency based thinking is part of a number of notable social changes. Knowledge is and remains a determining factor in the global competition game. But only possessing knowledge is not sufficient. Especially „managing“ knowledge is the ultimate challenge.

Competences needed to participate in the labour market and in this modern society must be developed. Therefore, education cannot be done without thinking and acting in terms of competences but related with European Qualification Framework and National Qualification Framework. New perspectives on curriculum design impose themselves.

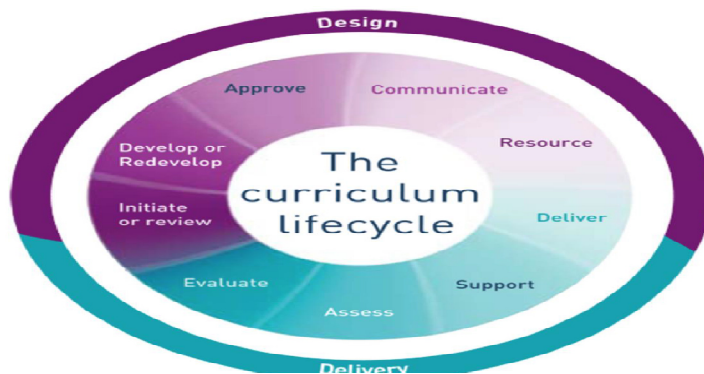
Curriculum design of the university study programmes and its lifecycle has passed through different approaches and most relevant are pointed out below:

- John Biggs (1996, 2003) wrote about curriculum coherence, by means of constructive alignment: *achieving congruence between the intended learning outcomes, the teaching and learning activities and the assessment.*
- Jenniffer Moon (2001) sees *curriculum development as a more iterative process, involving “checking and improving the coherency” of a course, promoting good practice.* Structuring factors here might include international, national, institutional or professional body requirements.
- Jenkins (2009) uses the analogy of a ouija board when considering curriculum design, showing different influencing “forces”.



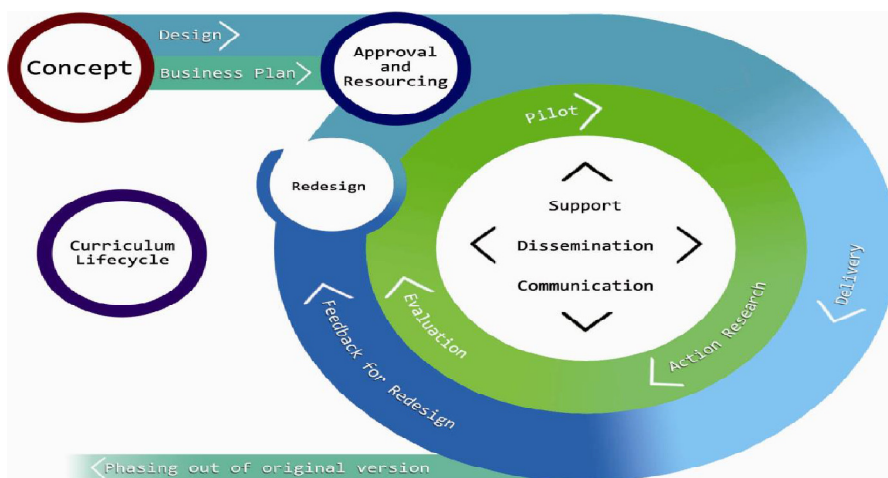
Scheme 1. Curriculum design through the analogy of an Ouija board (Jenkins, 2009:163)

- JISC (2009) present a curriculum lifecycle for integrating technology as an enabling factor.



Scheme 2. The Curriculum Lifecycle (JISC, 2009)

- The Duckling team (2009) at the University of Leicester, developed the curriculum lifecycle shown below, including action research and regular feedback from stakeholders.



Scheme 3. Curriculum Lifecycle (The Duckling team, University of Leicester, 2009)

All these approaches are to be taken into account in the current situation of Higher Education who wants internationalization, to become much closer and flexible to the labour market demands, more effective and efficient.

It is therefore not surprising that in addition to the structural reforms (Ba, Ma, PhD, ECTS, Diploma Supplement) that are at the core of the Bologna reforms, two objectives have been gaining importance and may now have come to the top of the Bologna agenda:

- the need to promote the competitiveness and attractiveness of European universities in the world, and

- the need to draw up a European framework of reference for qualifications, i.e. an instrument fostering the compatibility and cross-recognition of qualifications, whether for the purpose of further studies/training or access to the labour market.

It is interesting to point out that these two aspects have also become core concerns in recent initiatives taken within the EU's Lisbon Strategy. The Lisbon Strategy wants to create "more and better jobs" and at the same time to foster social integration and citizenship. These goals are strongly related to the emergence of a real European labour market, which is bound to shape a good deal of the university offering and functioning in the years ahead.

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CURRICULUM BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE A FURTHER APPROACH OF CURRICULUM

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Abstract: *The paper intends to go further with the approach of discussing about the core concepts of curriculum. A brief theoretical presentation (structured on two chapters) intends to substantiate the practical approach which is briefly described, analyzed and argued further. It is an extract from a long term research developed with the students trained to be specialists in the area of education (bachelor and master degrees levels). This research is intrinsically connected to the didactic activity. It is the normality of a scholar's activity, in my opinion. An academic professor is firstly an educator and the indispensable research must be connected to the practical educational process seen both as field of research and aim of this research.*

Keywords: *curriculum models, curriculum as process and as result, metaphor and drama, committed learning style, qualitative learning*

1. Going further¹ with the presentation of curriculum – theoretical background; curriculum theory as fundamental for the practical approach of the educational process

1.1. Conceptual approach

If „the term curriculum is many things to many people”(Aoki, 1980/2005, p. 94) and the theorists of curriculum should call attention to the tools used for the shaping in order that the world being shaped by educators can be more beautiful and just (adapted after Huebner, 1975) this approach is focused explicitly on trying to propose a possible answer for this issue.

Discussions about curriculum are never ended. First, this is necessary because curriculum represents a complexity difficult to be completely covered, and it reflects a dynamic field developed along a continuing process.

¹ This article is a continuation from a special perspective of a previous one published in Journal Plus Education, Vol. XII (2015), No.1,pp.23-34

curriculum reform should have as fundamentals a more in-depth understanding but focusing on the essence of what curriculum means both as structure and process. A broad definition as the basis of the forthcoming submission is chosen: "*Curriculum is represented, in the broadest possible sense, of all the learning situations/ learning opportunities, which appear during the human being's lifetime, that have as a result, cumulative and progressively restructured, sets of learning experiences, expressed through competencies or their components*" (Niculescu, 2010:33)

Three intrinsically connected concepts are considered as core ones within the previously proposed definition: learning situation, learning opportunity and, respectively, learning experience as a result of learning process. This learning process is understood as an adaptive process to the task. The answer follows after the decoding of the information related to the request involved and their transformation into learner's own knowledge. The new knowledge is adapted to the previous knowledge, but they reconfigure the old structure. Performance of the learning process is measured by the relevance, adequacy, and the speed of response to the task. It is important to highlight that the literature does not involve a distinction between the three terms: *learning situation*, *learning opportunity* (Murray Print, 1993: 9), and *learning experience*. Sometime they are used as synonyms, or in other contexts they are distinguished but not in a clear way.

It appears that the term of learning opportunity is met with a limitative meaning only for the formal education context.

Thus, Print Murray (1993) defines learning opportunity as a planned and supervised relationship between students, teachers, equipment and environment, where an educational process is presumed. This seems to be implicitly determined by the defined meaning of the two terms: (1) opportune ("occurring at an appropriate time", according to Merriam Webster, or "suited or right for a particular purpose" according to The Free Dictionary), and (2) opportunity ("a good chance for advancement or progress"). They both suggest the intentionality of developing a situation that offer the chance to do something. This intentionality is specific, as essence, for the formal education and it appears in the non-formal education as well. But the intentionality belongs to the educator as initiator and designer of the learning situation. A learner is purposely involved in a learning situations in school or non-formal institutions, but depends on the learner's motivation the degree of his or her own intentionality to use it for developing the own learning abilities. The truth is, on the other side, that the educator mastery of teaching may support the learner motivation. The informal education puts the humans into a lot of learning situations. These have positive or negative effects but not all are consciously used for learning.

Consequently, the learners may participate in an active way to a learning situation (in formal – nonformal, and informal contexts), and use it as *an opportunity* or chance for advancement and progress of their own development.

As long as the term "opportunity" involves a positive connotation and a purpose, between learning situation and learning opportunity one may detect a nuanced difference. Both of them have not as designer the learner but the educators, except the context of self-education. However, the learning opportunity asks a voluntary implication of the learners themselves. The learning situation exists (as the educator has designed it, and he/she is implementing it). The learner uses it voluntarily as an opportunity to learn, with different degrees of success.

1.2. Interest for curriculum as process and as result

Generally speaking, references about curriculum are mostly done for the formal context of education. Teachers focus their attention on learning situations to be designed and run. They are interested in the process of curriculum, a process considered in relation to the expected results (students' competencies). Pupils' parents primarily are concerned about the curricular results, learning experiences expressed in new or restructured knowledge, new or developed capacities/ abilities, attitudes and values (adapted after Print Murray, 1993, apud Niculescu R. 2010:33). Therefore, to consider the learning experience as a different side of the issue seems to be obviously necessarily.

A foreshadowing of the difference between learning opportunity, learning situation and learning experience appears in the definition of curriculum given by Caswell and Campbell (apud Negreț-Dobridor I., 2008: 25). They say that curriculum is understood as the "path followed by students and involving all their experiences of children guided by teachers". If we understand the meaning of the term path as a set of learning situations designed by teachers, used as opportunities by students along the learning process, and lived by them as learning experiences, these learning experiences are unique, very personal. (Niculescu R. 2010:33) Thus, this manner of analysis is very close to my previous way of defining curriculum.

Consequently, learning situations, with their specific hypothesis as learning opportunities, on one side, and the learning experiences, on the other side, are two faces of the act of learning, understood in its essential meaning as acquisition, in a given context, of certain behaviors in response to specific situations that life puts the human beings in, with educational intentions or not.

The learning situation/learning opportunity involves the whole context created by educator, which requires the learner's involvement. They appear in formal and non formal education. Sometime, when one talk about self-

education the learners themselves may create or use learning situations created by the life as learning opportunities. The learning experience is the personal result of the act of learning, a result strongly influenced by the particularities of the situation, the actual time of “crossing” through the learning situation, with the individual’s psychological implications. As a consequence, the same learning situation may generate different learning experiences, sensitively nuanced acquisitions for each learner involved in the same learning situation; on the other side, the same learner, involved in different moments of his/her life in a similar learning situation, may have different learning experiences strongly influenced by the personal history of the set of learning experiences and by the context.

Learning situation and learning experience are to be considered as a ying – yang sides in curriculum theory and practice, even if the literature often considers them as synonym or does not make a difference between them. They are twin core concepts of the theory of curriculum in formal, non-formal and informal curriculum hypostases. Essentially a learning situation is designed by educators in formal and non-formal contexts, and it simply exists in the real life. If one understand that a learning situation is lived like a genuinely personal learning experience by each involved learner, the figure no.1 shows how the five core structural elements of a learning situation turns into five components of unique learning experiences.

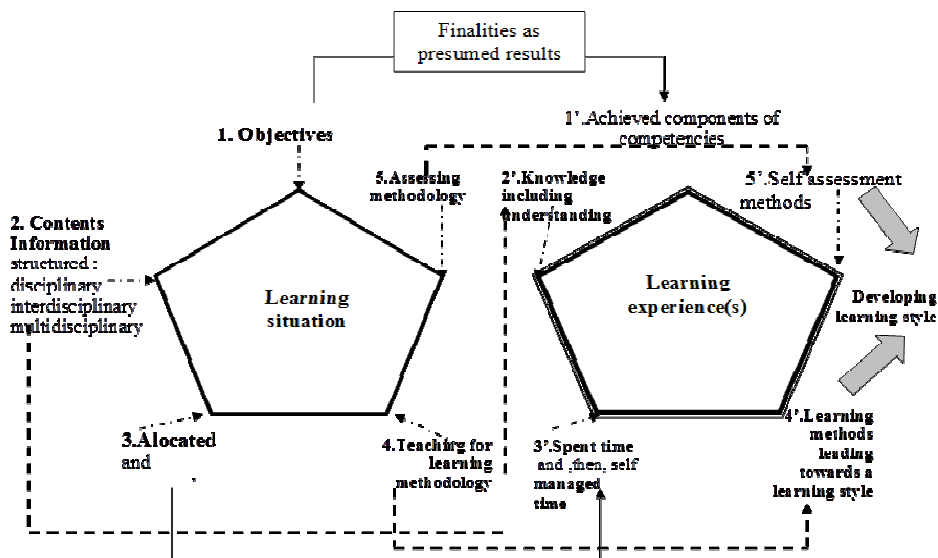


Figure 1. Learning situation turning into learning experiences

The components of learning experiences (involving knowledge, abilities/ capacities, and personality traits, as components of competencies) are determined by a number of individual, personal factors. These factors put their mark on some important issues: (1) the relevance of the learning context for each subject; (2) the quantity and quality of the previous major acquisitions, with a major role in the correct decoding of tasks; (3) the nerve strength, the capacity of attention concentration and distribution; (4) the emotional resonance with the learning situation; (5) the motivation for involvement; (6). the capacity of volunteer effort; (7) the degree of fatigue, etc. All these are reflected in the way in which each learner perceives the learning situation, the degree of his/ her motivational involvement in solving tasks, the emotions accompanying the learning process, the time and intensity of involvement, the nature and intensity of the volunteer effort put to overcome any obstacles, the degree and manner to storage the new acquisitions that result out of the total or partial settlement of tasks, etc. (Niculescu 2010: 33). And finally, they are reflected by the quality of learning, the degree of developing the resulted competencies.

2. Pentagonal model of curriculum seen as a tridimensional approach – a pyramid. Some more considerations

Various visions are connected to both issues: (1) the way of defining curriculum concept or selecting contents within curriculum context; (2) the curriculum structure. The literature presents and sometime considers as contradictory, a considerable list of described models

When it is about the structure of the learning situation one can find models anchored in three or five points: the triangular and pentagonal model. They are bi-dimensional models. Wragg has described in his 1997 version, a model with four basic roots a model labeled as cubic curriculum approach. This is the first try of passing towards a tri – dimensional vision, from a static and synchronic approach of the triangular or pentagonal models to a diachronic and more dynamic approach prepared by the tridimensional vision.

The components of learning situations are essentially five, but each of which may be related and other items. One of the five elements is represented by finalities (outputs of the educational process expressed by aims, goals and objectives, and described as competencies to be developed). They are placed in the top of the pyramid as the first moment of curriculum *design* and last moment of reference when the educational process has been already

implemented. The finalities, or outcomes, or expectations (as they are named in literature) determine the other four components of the learning situation. Accordingly, the five components placed into a three-dimensional shape are:

1. **Outcomes/expectations or finalities** expressed through *components of competencies*, or through generic competencies; these have to be required by the intended competence profile to be developed by a curriculum design. They are detailed by the aims/goals/ objectives of education, seen as outcomes with a decreasing degree of generality (from maximum to minimum /top – down direction inside the pyramidal model, where operational objectives represent the concrete level of the learning units)

2. **Content** structured in different ways under or not of a *transdisciplinary vision* (meaning to focus the process on the expected results behind no matter what way of structuring contents):

- *disciplinary*
- *interdisciplinary*
- *multidisciplinary/pluridisciplinary*
- *modular*

3. **Methods of teaching focused on learning**

4. **Methods of evaluation focused on learning**

5. **Time for learning** (including teaching time)

All these must follow a right **trajectory** that leads to the designed general finalities in order to achieve the curriculum reform targets.

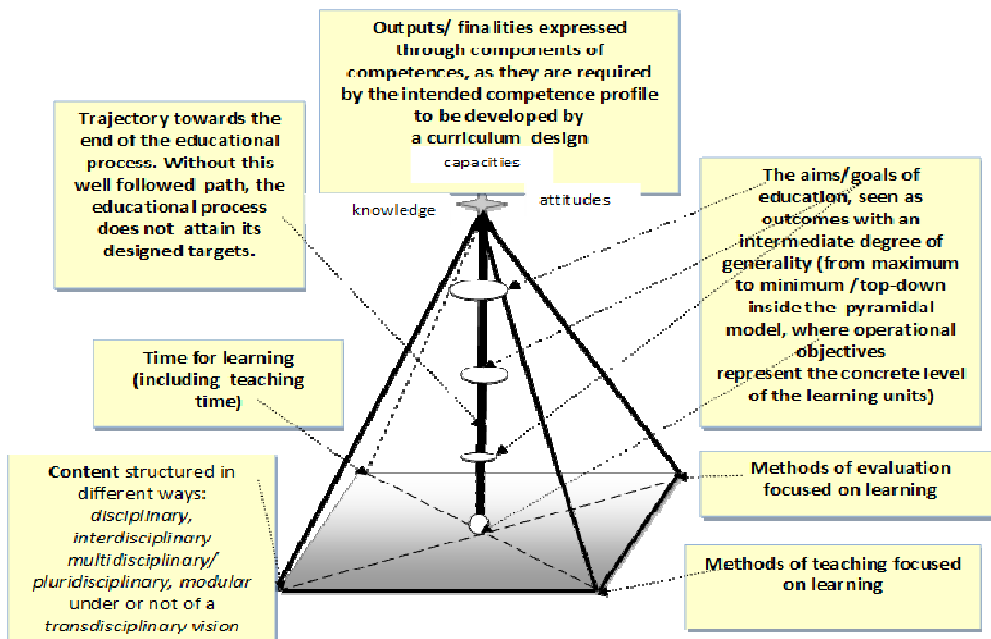


Figure 3. Relation between pyramidal approach and different interpretative models of curriculum

A cubic or a pyramidal vision (as I suggest) cannot essentially exceed the synchronic analysis; this pyramidal approach tries to move one of the five components of the learning situation on a third dimension; it is here a pentagonal model transposed in three-dimensional plane trying to encapsulate the germ of the dynamics of educational process.

I am trying to explain the dynamics of this approach suggesting a possible analogy with a “billiard table” model (together with Lear-Lord and, tangentially, with the dynamic billiard theory).

A synchronic analysis of the “billiard table” analogy could suggest a model which is as static as the others. But a “bird’s eye view” of the table shows: (1) a number of colored balls, with a specific configuration (differently structured contents, one component of the learning situation); (2) several billiard-holes (the general targets of the action, analogy with the general expected outcomes/ aims of learning situations understood as sets), with strategic points on the green-table as intermediate expectations (goals and objectives);(3) a billiard-cue which, following the milestones of the aims, goals and objectives (the strategic points figured on the billiard table) can give direction for the action; (4) we can also see the players. Without scrutinizing their strategy of playing, we can lose the dynamic side of the game. The action strategy involves the methodology of playing with assessment moments (two other components of the learning situation). A definite time for play is the other component of the leaning situation within the analogy. The billiard game can be considered a dynamic system (Kokshenev V. B.(2005) , when it is analyzed in motion.

The same dynamic vision is necessary for the multi-pyramidal approach of curriculum, understood in a Matryoshka dolls configuration (Niculescu,2010:85). A lesson plan only prefigure the motion involved by the implementation. The personality of the actors (educator and learner), the context, the feedback received through the intermediate moment of evaluation within the process, both in billiard game and the education process give life, show what is necessary to be done further, reveal the possible necessity of adjusting the initial design. This means dynamic.

Lesson plans implemented one after another lead to the achievement of the umbrella goals of their objectives, and further of the general aim. The same situation can be found within the context of a championship of billiard game. Motion according to a flexible strategy, interested and devoted actors, good conditions and favorable contexts are the ingredients of success both in billiard game and education process

3. A methodological approach aiming to develop the committed learning style as an effective factor of a qualitative learning

A previously published paper (Niculescu R., 2014: 244) has presented the concept of committed learning style with its core features seen at the specific level of the early education within curriculum reform context. This learning style (seen both as a connected condition and effect of a genuine curriculum reform) can be essentially developed at any age. More difficulties appear, of course, when it is about to change or correct an old and less efficient learning style wrongly developed along the ontogenesis process. The reason of a strong necessity for a learner to have an effective learning style is implied in the following argumentation. The existence of such a style determines the use of any learning situation as a learning opportunity turned into a rich learning experience. This is the reason of focusing our attention to developing this style to our students.

A long term research has been run in the last more than twenty years concurrently to the didactic activity. Only a few aspects involved in our research have been selected for the reasons of this paper. They are focused on curricular aspects, on the way to help the proper transformation of the learning opportunities into personal effective learning experiences to our students. The students are seen as citizens of a changing Planet who strongly need to learn effectively and, consequently they need an effective learning style.

Two main aspects were considered: (1) the learning process is seen as a *studying one*, involving voluntarily the learners, with conscious aims and self-control; (2) *metaphor and drama* have been involved as two effective methods both in teaching and in assessment process; they have been harmoniously connected to other methods of critical thinking and, where necessary, with traditional methods.

The methodological approach is seriously responsible for the students' involvement in the learning process. This methodological approach depends on (1) clarity of expectation, both for the designer of the learning situation and the learner; (2) flexibility of contents of curriculum structuring, aiming to maximally use the contents as important means of developing students' competencies; (3) the clarity and transparence of the assessment process; (4) mastery of educator as designer and runner of the learning situation; (5) material and financial resources; (6) degree of involvement of students accordingly to their developing personality involving their already existing learning experiences. (7) complex elements of climate and educational contexts.

An important factor of influence for this transformation process from learning situation to learning experience is the cultural/multicultural context. The context has an explicit and implicit influence upon the educational circumstances and on each involved actor.

A few core and synthetically considered conclusions are selected among a significant number of our theoretical and experimental approaches, after more than twenty years of teaching and experimentation of different methods of improving curriculum design and implementation.

As previously has been mentioned, a concept emerged from the educational activities, teaching - assessing focused on learning activities with the students. This concept expresses a *learning style* under the name of: *committed learning*. Some considerations have to be briefly mentioned.

First of all, I have to stress the idea of considering the learning process as *a studying one, involving voluntarily the learners, with aware aims and self-control*. Secondly it is important to mention the *role of methodology* of teaching and assessing and to stress the impact of some modern methods on the students' attitudes and especially on their motivation for learning. Primarily, it is about metaphor and drama that, as it have been mentioned, were used in harmony with a wide set of other modern and traditional methods. They have been involved as two effective methods both in teaching and in assessment process. The modern trend has been engaged in teaching and evaluation, while the modernism for its sake has been avoided.

During the academic years of reference focus groups with students were organized aiming to detach the core features of this specific learning style. Three categories of items, each with its subcategories, resulted from a long and interesting list, describing the necessary competencies involved by this committed learning style

A. Specific manners of activating knowledge and capacities within the learning process, connected to: (1) active manipulative and mindful learning, (2) complex learning looking for hypostases, perspectives, exploring for understanding; (3) effective communication involving proper capacities/abilities and actions

B. *Committed to learning as attitude* detailed in: (1) reflective attitude and action; (2) intentional learning

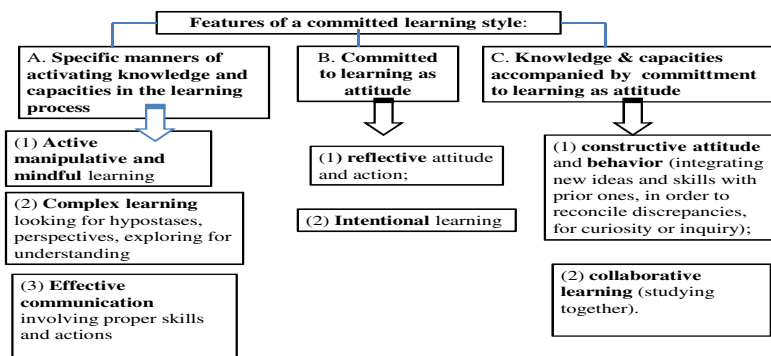


Figure 4. Features of committed learning style

C. *Knowledge & abilities accompanied by committed to learning as attitude* connected to the following details: (1) constructive attitude and behavior (integrating new ideas and capacities with prior ones in order to reconcile discrepancies, for curiosity or inquiry); (2) collaborative learning (studying together).

For three academic years (2012-2015) specific assessment items have been elaborated; they have been focused on each of the mentioned features of the committed learning style, according to the nature of the subject. The tasks including the items of assessment and the involved criteria have been communicated to the students from the very beginning of the period of study. The teaching process has been directed to obtaining the expected outcomes. The students have produced the written and/or oral presentation as team and individual tasks (mixed items for each subject). A clear algorithm for registering students' results has been imagined, in order to keep the same manner of assessment in quantitative terms, no matter what subject and what types of tasks the students had been asked to solve. The data has been and are going to be further processed in SPSS software. This is a multi-phase research still in progress:

Master y.2 RUE MC							Specific manners of activating knowledge and skills within the learning process			Committed to learning as attitude		Knowledge & skills + committed to learning as attitude	
Number 337-357	sex	level	Year of study	age	Specialty	Active manipulative Mindful learning,	Complex learning Hypostases, perspectives, exploring for understanding	Effective communication Skills and actions	Reflective attitude and action	Intentional learning	Constructive attitude and behavior (integrate new ideas and skills with prior ones in order to reconcile discrepancies, for curiosity or inquiry)	Collaborative learning (studyingtogether)	
						A1	A2	A3	B1	B2	C1	C2	
						1 point=100%	0,5 points=100%	0,5 points=100%	2 points= 100%	1 point=100%	1 point=100%	4points= 100%	
1.	B.A.	w	2	7	2	4	100	60	30	82,5	100	80	75
2.	B.A.M.	w	2	7	2	4	100	90	70	62,5	100	50	75
3.	B.I.A.	w	2	7	3	4	50	25	25	30	75	75	50
4.	B.S.	w	2	7	2	4	100	90	70	42,5	10	10	75
5.	<u>C.L.</u>	w	2	7	3	4	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
6.	G.O.L:	w	2	7	2	4	100	60	30	77,5	90	80	75
7.	M.R.E.	w	2	7	2	4	100	90	70	52,5	50	50	75

Figure 5 An extract of documents which registered the performance on each committed learning style feature

This is the subject of another future work. In this context I want to stress only several conclusions connected to the topic: the students can involve themselves (with a wide spectrum of involvement and qualitative results) in the learning process that is able to provide them the context to develop the previously described features of a committed learning style. A questionnaire applied to a consistent part of students showed that this way of working is not only accepted but even preferred, especially by the students who do their studies for a serious career development not only for being students. As everywhere in the world we have both these categories of students.

Students considered the committed learning style as an engine of an effective education, with distinct and interesting implication in their career development.

Several factors have been highlighted by the students as determinants of the proper evolution of the committed learning style. Firstly they have mentioned the methodology of teaching-assessment process. Thus, metaphor and drama as teaching and assessing methods have been highly appreciated by our students. The extension of using metaphor in different other moments of their activity, without being asked to, has mentioned and proved the. More than this, messages of stressing the utility of the use of metaphor in their daily professional life have been received many years after graduation. The clarity of the assessment items/ criteria, the climate of learning environment, and even the effects of the hidden curriculum are considered as factors that determine the existence and the development of this learning style. How much and in what specific manners these factors influence the quality of learning are areas waiting for response from the above mentioned research in progress. The aspects of a multicultural learning environment have been also analyzed but they will be a topic of a distinctive paper.

It was interesting to find out how the students assess what they feel about a stimulating learning environment within which metaphor and drama are considered methods. These methods had some main effects (according to students' opinion): (1) development of analogical thinking; (2) high level of practicing verbal communication; (3) communication, with a trained para-verbal and non-verbal component; (4) a better capacity of expression through symbols or images; (5) an obvious development of awareness and openness

when using body language in communication; (6) capacity of inter-evaluation; (7) capacity to argue in a synthetic but convincing manner.²

These ideas together with the quantitative results of the research will be fundamentals of other written synthesis of our work.

4. Final reflections

Some more reflections about curriculum and its connected issues and effects within the educational process will follow as normal steps of our research; the ongoing research process will have some more other steps with their specific results to be presented in distinctive papers. A core idea should be also highlighted: within our team of academic teaching staff, some other connected researches take place. Their results can and will be analyzed in their intrinsic connections. As a reflection in this moment, it is necessary to be said that never a scholar or a team of academic staff should forget the essential of their work : they work with unique humans' minds and souls, no matter from what perspective their didactic influence takes place. And professors as researchers are firstly educators. They must cooperate with the researchers as professionals, both of them being in the service of an increasing effective educational process.

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²A consistent portfolio with students' works (papers and DVDs are proves of these ideas

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DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE THROUGH ORAL FOLK LITERATURE FOR STUDENTS IN A BILINGUAL CONTEXT

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Abstract: *In the educational context, the goal promoted by school as a complex system is that every European should know other languages in addition to his/her own (Braidbach, 2003; Gogolin, 2002). Research data shows that oral folk literature is an effective tool to raise bilingual learners' interest and curiosity for other countries and cultures, such as Romanian culture, as well as to facilitate reflection about their own values, practices and beliefs. In an attempt to respond to the needs of instruction in bilingual education, this study explores different kinds of folk literature from different cultures which can be found in the classroom. Our objective is to develop teaching materials that provide academic staff with the resources to guide and support the learning process of students and we tried to assess if the oral folk literature contributes to developing the bilingual and intercultural competence.*

Keywords: *bilingual education, intercultural competence, folk literature*

1. Introduction

Bilingualism is a key element in the construction and development of the intercultural competence. In this increasingly globalized era, intercultural communication is a process that leads to the cultural globalization (Sorrells, 2012) of a world in which persons with diverse linguistic backgrounds must become adapted to a new community. Thus, the importance of language-learning is highlighted and the bilingual competences of students in our classes are highly valued as a means of forging their own identity. Consequently, folk literature represents an essential tool for bilingual education, a necessary step towards recognizing and comprehending one's history, one's roots and the unique symbols that form a nation's identity.

At present, the increasing arrival of immigrant students in Europe, especially in Spain, has obviously transformed all the schools. A large number of immigrants came to Spain from all over the world, but especially from Romania (NIS, 2015). This is the situation all over the Spain, but it

acquires special relevance in the case of Valencia where the immigrant students are in a context where the language of teaching (Catalan), alongside Spanish is extensively used in education and also different from student's native language (L1). Therefore, in this immersion context of bilingualism they must acquire new languages (L2 and L3), faced with learning difficulties and become familiar with their corresponding cultures. The main goal for the bilingual education is to guarantee that students obtain a good knowledge of Spanish and Catalan at the end of their compulsory educational period.

This study investigates the premise that oral folk literature has a considerable potential of expanding the learning process for Romanian bilingual immigrant students and therefore, can contribute to developing bilingual and intercultural competence. It draws on the developing teaching materials that provide academic staff with the resources to guide and support the learning process of students.

Considering that folk literature plays an active and important part in promoting bilingual competence and cultural enrichment, the goals and objectives of this study could be efficiently summarized in the following lines:

- to develop a didactic sequence among students, though a detailed analysis of the motifs that appear in Romanian folk literature;
- to foster bilingual and intercultural values of Romanian students by allowing them to get to know their own culture, as well as the culture of the new space they inhabit (destination culture).

2.Methodology: The didactic sequence

2.1. Justification

As mentioned, the main objective of the present sequence consists in the development of the bilingual and intercultural competence in the classroom. Furthermore, the didactic sequence (DS) is based on the constructivist methodology, meaning that knowledge is constructed by the pupils as they create and develop it. This process favours meaningful learning as the pupils reprocess their preconceptions on folksongs and folk literature, starting with their own observations. A basic methodological factor will consist in highlighting the need to work in a group and to share the results with the rest of the class: Organised in groups, the entire classroom collects data, while all the pupils present and analyse it. The distribution of the work to be done makes all the members of the group jointly responsible. The project will be more rigorous as long as each of them uses all five senses (Ramos and Ambrós, 2008).

2.2. Sequence programming

1. Understanding oral and written discourses in the different contexts of the social and cultural activity.
2. Utilising Catalan and Castilian in order to express oneself orally and in writing, in a coherent and appropriate manner for every communication situation and for the various contexts of the social and cultural activity, in order to gain awareness of one's own feelings and ideas, and in order to control their own behaviour.
3. Appropriately utilising the oral language in the social and cultural activity according to the various functions and communicative situations, while adopting a respectful and cooperative attitude.
4. Knowing and valuing the linguistic and cultural richness of Spain as heritage of all Spanish people, and considering, in a proper and respectful manner, the different situations which arise from the languages which are in contact in bilingual communities.
5. Analysing the different social uses of Catalan and Castilian in order to avoid the linguistic stereotypes which involve judgements of value and classist, racist or sexist prejudices.
6. Appreciating the possibilities offered by Catalan, language of the Region of Valencia, as a means of communication and structuring.
7. Applying, with some autonomy, the knowledge regarding the language and the rules for using it in order to understand oral and written texts and to write and speak correctly, with adequacy, coherence and cohesion, both in Catalan and Castilian.
8. Understanding literary texts by using the knowledge regarding the conventions for each genre, the themes and motifs of the literary tradition and the stylistic devices. Appreciating one's communicative possibilities so as to improve one's personal production.
9. Gaining knowledge of relevant samples of literary heritage and valuing them as a way to symbolise the individual and collective experience in different historical and cultural contexts.
10. Knowing and distinguishing the main artistic and literary periods, their characteristic traits and their authors and the most representative works for each of them. Knowing the representative literary works and fragments of the official languages of the Region of Valencia.
11. To interpret and use reading and writing as sources of pleasure, of personal enrichment and of knowing the world, and to consolidate reading through age-appropriate texts.
12. To use, with progressive autonomy, the means of social communication and the information technologies in order to obtain, interpret and evaluate information of different types and different opinions.

Activity	Organization	Resources	Time	Objectives
PA 1 (Preparation Activity) Reading the <i>Tombatoșals</i> folktale	The entire class	The text of the folktale and the characteristics of the genre	1 h.	1,2,3,6,8,9
PA 2 (Preparation Activity) Compilation of the folktales of different cultures	Groups and the entire class	Collected texts	2 h.	2,4,8,9,11
IA 3 (Implementation Activity) Popular folktales of the Romanian culture	Groups	The text of the folktales	1 h.	1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9,12
IA 4 (Implementation Activity) Characteristics of the Romanian folktales	Groups	Traditional and/ or digital writing resources	1 h.	2,3,9,10,12
IA 5 (Implementation Activity) The social function of folktales	Groups	Traditional and/ or digital writing resources	1 h.	2,3,4,8,10
IA 6 (Implementation Activity) Compilation of the aspects discussed regarding the Romanian folktales	Groups	Resources and materials for the preparation of the mural	1h.	1,2,3,12
IA 7 (Implementation Activity) Compilation of the aspects discussed regarding the folktales of different cultures	Groups	Resources and materials for the preparation of the mural	2 h.	1,2,3,12
IA 8 (Implementation Activity) The universality of popular literature	The entire class	Texts for reflection	1 h.	1,3,6,7,10
EA 9 (Evaluation Activity) Creative writing workshop based on folktales	Pairs	Traditional and/ or digital writing resources	2 h.	2,4,6,7,9,11,12
EA 10 (Evaluation Activity) Preparation of folktales	Individual	Traditional and/ or digital writing resources	3 h.	2,3,4,7,11,12

Table 1. Activities of the sequence

2.4 Methodological guidelines

It should first be noted that the DS presented has been scheduled for the duration of 15 hours. However, this schedule will have to be adjusted according to some variables, such as the linguistic and literary competence of

the pupils or the strategies they have developed in the previous courses regarding the skills required by the proposal.

Furthermore, the DS has been scheduled while taking into account the objectives and contents referred to in the official curriculum of the Region of Valencia for 4th year of ESO (Compulsory Secondary Education); nevertheless, it can be adapted to other prior or subsequent courses. As can be seen, the DS is designed for a classroom in which the percentage of pupils who are part of other cultures is noticeable, which has become common in the current circumstances. Specifically, the objective of developing the multilingual and intercultural competence presented in this proposal would build on the Romanian folk literature and that is why we have thought about a centre located in the province of Castellón, a province of our community in which the percentage of Romanian students is higher. For this reason, the folktale which opens the class proposed is *Tombatossals*, which talks about the origin of the city of Castellón. Given the nature of the proposal, we therefore think of a classroom of 4th year ESO, in which the percentage of pupils from Romania is about 20%; so that we can have a Romanian pupil in each group. In an average *ratio* of 30 pupils, the number of those who come from Romania will determine the number of groups in the classroom, about six or seven.

In relation to ICT, this sequence integrates it, since most activities can be done on digital support, thus it should be checked that the pupils have developed a certain expertise in this type of resources and that the centre has the necessary facilities.

It is advisable to give some indications on the development of the proposed activities and the materials used.

PA 1 Reading the *Tombatossals* folktale: reading the folktale *Tombatossals*, which tells the origin of the city of Castellón. To this end, we recommend edition 3 i 4, *l'Estel* collection, published in 1988. After reading the above-mentioned text, a debate is started regarding the folktales that the pupils know from their place of origin. To end the session, the teacher will present the basic characteristics of a folktale:

A folktale is a popular narrative which is transmitted orally from generation to generation. Its basic characteristics are:

- The use of a simple language and of an oral and colloquial register.
- The space and time are, at times, vague and distant.
- It presents a simple and repetitive structure.
- The author is anonymous.

-Normally, the presence of magical or fantastical elements is relevant.

PA 2 Compilation of the folktales of different cultures: we asked the pupils to bring, in writing, some folktales which remind them of their

place of origin or which a relative can tell them for this purpose. After organizing the class into groups, taking into account that each group will have to contain the maximum cultural diversity possible, with the presence of at least one pupil of Romanian origin, each member of the group will tell the rest his choice and they will jointly choose the folktale they liked the most.

The pupil who has brought the folktale which is chosen will read it to the rest of the class and, after each reading, it will be analysed and compared to the rest of the folktales, in order to assess how well it adjusts to the characteristics worked on in the previous exercise.

IA 3 Popular folktales of the Romanian culture: in this session, one would work with the folktales collected from the region of Moldavia in Romania (Devis and Chireac, 2014). Seeing that in each group there would be a pupil of Romanian origin, he would be the one responsible with reading it to the rest of the group and, if applicable, explain the cultural details which may cast some doubt among his peers. Next, the group would write the argument of the folktale and a representative would read it to the rest of the class.

IA 4 Characteristics of the Romanian folktales: each group would work on the folktale to which the following aspects apply:

- Theme
- Characters
- Presence / absence of fantastic elements

Next, the pupils would share their work, to see to what extent the points mentioned are similar.

IA 5 The social function of folktales: the main social functions of folktales are presented:

- Cultural integration and validation
- Reaction against the rules imposed by culture
- Education and protection, especially for minors

Each work group would establish the function of the folktale, motivating their answer in order to later debate the presence or absence of the indicated functions.

IA 6 Compilation of the aspects discussed regarding the Romanian folktales: with the help of the teacher, the class would realise a mural summary of the Romanian folktales studied, using the following scheme:

TITLE	THEME	CHARACTERS	FANTASTIC ELEMENTS	SOCIAL FUNCTION

Table 2. Scheme of the Romanian folktales studied

In order to summarise the studied social functions, the following categorisation would be established: Integrating / reactive / educational social function in agreement with the functions specified in IA5 (Activity referring to the implementation phase).

IA 7 Compilation of the aspects discussed regarding the folktales of different cultures: with the folktales selected in PA 2 and taking into account that each one belongs to a different culture, we would make a mural summary resembling that of the previous activity, which would categorize the following aspects:

TITLE	CULTURE/LANGUAGE	THEME	SOCIAL FUNCTION

Table 3. Aspects regarding the folktales of different culture

We would notice and discuss how, despite the apparent diversity, aspects such as the themes or the social functions are very similar because they belong to the collective imaginary. With this reflection, we would achieve the main objective of DS: developing the intercultural competence.

IA 8 The universality of folk literature: we would work in class on the basic bibliographical references which support this idea; in other words, there is a common collective imaginary to all cultures, which is a part of universal folklore (Devis, 2013) and, therefore, it becomes evident in the popular literature, whatever its origin:

And yet, we could add an *intercultural function* through oral literature, it is possible to fight against racial or ethnic discrimination, develop respect for human diversity and reflect on the contact points which unite us as people (Morote 2010: 58). The «universal or widespread» concept means that the expressions of a particular genre are highly disseminated in the sphere of a language, and sometimes in different languages, as is the case of folktales or many sayings. Its universality of meaning has allowed the same story, song or saying to be encountered in the most remote places on earth and in the most distant languages. It is true that the tales, as in almost everything, excel in this supranational and intercultural dimension (Rodríguez Almodóvar 2009: 22, 27).

Bascom reflected on the functions of folklore and noted that it serves, among other things, to react against the rules imposed by a culture, as well as to validate it; in order to continue maintaining conformity attitudes among its members; and also to educate, which is to convey some teachings, values and rules of conduct (Oriol, 2002: 32).

In fact, the psychological constant underlying this reasoning is that the human condition is in constant need of stories, whose symbols are used in order to explain its experience which, precisely because of its human character, crosses eras and borders. (Morote 2010: 18)

The oral literature is the most intimate and direct expression of men and women from villages, who offer us their feelings, thoughts, ideas, actions, their vital concerns, religious and magical beliefs, their festive rites, their games, their histories, their stories... most of them, with their lexical and semantic variants, are similar in all cultures. The traditional-type literature transcends space and time and, although social changes may take place, the different cultures and civilizations maintain traditions from earlier times (Morote 2010: 47). There is a timeless kind of universal trait, of common symbolic background, which seems to originate from the human condition. When, with the help of the teacher, he «discovers» that, for example, a folktale which he encountered in his family environment, had already been collected by Afanasiev in Russia in the middle of the previous century, his astonishment will know no bounds. He would be in a perfect position to understand on his own many other things, such as the absurdity of xenophobia, the cultural solidarity among peoples, the respect for different features, etc. (Rodríguez Almodóvar 2009: 26). We will discuss the linguistic and cultural similarities of all cultures present in class.

EA 9 Creative writing workshop based on folktales: With the folktales gathered in activity 2 and the corresponding Romanian ones, worked with in activities 3, 4, 5 and 6, the pupils will work in pairs to do a creative writing activity following the guidelines below:

- They will choose one.
- They will modify it with the intention of substantially changing it in some aspects discussed during the sequence (characters, social function ...).
- The results will be presented to the class and it will be assessed to what extent the modifications made are reflected in the final proposal.

EA 10 Preparation of folktales: in pairs, the pupils will create a folktale taking into account the characteristics studied and they will reflect them by preparing a sheet of the folktale created following the example of the proposal in activity 6.

3. Conclusions

The present research corroborates other previous studies on this subject (Devis 2013; Devis and Chireac 2014), which pinpoint the importance of folk literature in the development of the bilingual and intercultural competence. In addition, other didactic sequences made with the same objectives as those presented in this study and applied to students of Compulsory Secondary Education prove their viability and effectiveness in

bringing together such diverse cultures present today in our classrooms. Therefore, we can confirm the conclusions obtained in the previous studies referring to a number of facts:

-Folk literature represents a key instrument in the acquisition of ethical and cultural skills, in particular, as well as those regarding aesthetics and linguistics, inherent in terms of literary education.

- The presence of folk literature in the classroom encourages the development of the bilingual and intercultural competence, since the symbols and myths of different cultures can be recognised by others, to the extent that they belong to the collective imaginary.

-This fact would undoubtedly favour closer ties among cultures and would furthermore allow the transfer of the results to other communities.

The present study has been a useful tool in identifying how folk literature, has the ability to develop bilingual and intercultural competence and link together different spaces and cultures.

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ESSAY- EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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Abstract: *Education ensures nobility to man dressing up the genetic heritage with cultural attires. Only education has the power to change humans and society, as stated by Rabindranath Tagore: all issues of the mankind find their main solution in education. The main function of education is to turn educational influences into competences. The paradigm of educational reforms is reflected by the following objective: to ensure a real democratization of school; to provide equal learning and training opportunities for each trainee/learner according to his/her own psycho-physical potential; to strive for equal results besides equal opportunities; to support an optimal development of personal potential. School must offer equal opportunities as an expression of the right to education and also promote a pedagogy which assigns meaning to learning.*

Key words: *education, school institution, competence, building, reform, postmodernism*

The strong core of any educational institution is created in such a manner that it would make a contribution to the development of human personality along all its stages from birth to the end of one`s life. Any individual needs education in order to develop from childhood to adulthood, thus turning from a biological being into a social being. The first educational institution is the family. A family is organized according to social standards and its primary interest is the child`s well-being in terms of physical and mental care, education and training for adult life. The development usually focuses on the child`s inner nature [1]. Further, education is carried out in an organized manner by the school. School offers a proper environment for the development of a child, its training as social being. The entire educational process is focused on the child`s development on all levels and all sides of its personality in a proper educational environment. Education is based on a curriculum adapted to the children`s age from kindergarten to university.

Certain authors believe that education and school are in times of crisis; some even mention the phrase „the end of education”[2], which is only a metaphor. Education will come to an end only when humanity as species comes to an end. As long as people live on Planet Earth or other planets, education will maintain its unquestionable role in the development of human personality. The belief of any educator and trainer is that school will also continue to last under a form or another. If we want school and education to overcome difficulties and the crisis, the educational process should improve its quality, support learners in their training for life according to their abilities, interests and motivations and also support brilliant minds who approach great ideas and have the courage to go beyond limits and explore the unknown.

Education is an important mission which can be completed only in an institution with professionals, who have a goal under constant modernization and revalue of positive experiences [3]. Modern didactics has implemented student centeredness. This approach involves changing the educational process in the entire educational system. „The all-knowing magister” has become a partner in the educational act along with the trainees. The subject and object of education are in a process of continuous mobility; the teacher is not only the learner`s educational partner but also a facilitator, mediator and mentor.

Postmodern pedagogy states that learners should be treated as individuals with full rights to education, responsible and in control of their destiny, capable of accessing knowledge and training in full freedom of expression.

Society is also a partner of the educational act, the community regarded as a third party is «the third teacher », besides teachers and parents. Thus all three educational partners: society, local community and family should support school in its strategic endeavour of training future generations. It is its undeniable moral and social duty. Family, school and community train the young generation for society; the future of the entire nation depends on the seriousness and thoroughness with which the young generation is trained so as to be able to take over the prerogatives of the society`s social-cultural and economic life.

Pedagogy, an educational science has well determined goals, namely to provide education under all its aspects through a complex educational process. It is subjected to legislation and norms and relies on all what pedagogic sciences have discovered along the years in terms of educational training. Each society tends to create an ideal; current educational policies aim the development of a socially well-prepared, competent individual, who

possesses enough knowledge to face the challenges of his profession. The individual has all tools that he needs to constantly access information, his abilities are developed according to the inner nature and he has desirable attitudes and pro-social behaviours. Pedagogy has an extraordinary strength given by its ability to develop, its interdisciplinary extension [4], the open dialogue with border disciplines, and revalue of positive experiences. Born out of an interrogation on the educational phenomenon, it experiences an important development due to relevant scientific analysis, components mostly efficient: teaching-learning-evaluation. This constant development gives a better explanation of categories such as instruction, training, self-training and the nature of learning process which is under constant expansion.

Pedagogy is open to new approaches, hypothesis, suggestions and meditation, which have conferred it an epistemic dignity. Not only the openness to collaboration with other disciplines and fields but mostly its closeness to culture and society with its institutions and methodological diversity and paideic practice turn it into an educational science. The postmodern era brings some fresh air and a less rigid and canonical approach of pedagogical sciences. Teachers and professors as school servants have a vocational profession. Apart from knowledge, teachers need qualities and abilities which are based on love for children, care and altruism, patience, empathy and knowledge transmission skills. Teachers, irrespective of their teaching subject, transfer knowledge through a proper methodological register. Therefore, besides high quality theoretical training, teachers need also pedagogical training and a proactive and empathetic attitude. Specialists consider pedagogical, field related and communicative competences mandatory for teaching profession. Pedagogues offer educational theories, pragmatic instruments that teachers can successfully use with their learners. Success is measured in results and results are quantified by different means. Responsibility is shared by all factors involved in education from decision makers in educational policies and theoreticians in educational sciences to practitioners in schools and the learners` families.

School, a first rank institution, needs to reorient education towards training and especially towards the training of learners in terms of eternal axiological benchmarks: the good, the truth, the beautiful and specific values: respect for others, respect for work, responsibility, tolerance, acceptance, civic sense. etc.[5]

The education process conducted in schools comes to meet these demands: education centred on learners` skills and interests, their abilities and needs, flexible curriculum, contents adapted to real life situations, practical use of information, motivation for knowledge. Contemporary

pedagogy encourages individual educational paths for each learner according to his/her skills. It also promotes objectively assessed results that would motivate the learners' thoroughness in their field. Change towards new pedagogical paradigms that would revolutionize school is a challenge for teachers. Authentic education requires stimulating teaching strategies that engage learners in the learning process, rise their interest, make them willing to be involved in their own training, and seek for educational alternatives in and outside school [6]. The educational process from schools needs reconsideration and new, dynamic, activating, stimulating and motivating formulas should be taken into consideration. A better practical orientation of school and extracurricular activities would make the training of youth for real life more efficient. Authentic training prepares learners to face the challenges of the society they live in, favours on-the-spot adaptation to daily life changes, teaches them to approach life with optimism, seek valid solutions, approach new ideas with courage and seek professional and social fulfilment. Pedagogy plays an undeniable role among sciences. It reforms school and future teachers, brings novelty in the educational process, stimulates the teaching staff towards a thorough and updated knowledge of modern teaching methodology. Pedagogues should offer viable solutions to educational situations which are placed at crossroads. The need for education calls for a reformation of the educational system. An important pillar of this system is school and its attendants. The teachers' mission is to identify ways to increase the efficiency of school activities and to redeem prestige to school. Pedagogues must reconsider the principles of postmodern pedagogy and implement suitable strategies for the young generation. Pedagogical principles should become the starting point for educational reformation and high quality teaching.

Educational reformation experiences changes fast nowadays. It aims the change of educational policies so as to rebuild *School*, but mostly to reform teacher training according to current trends. Each society and culture has a social model that calls for specific professional and pragmatic training of individuals. Postmodern society sets as new educational vision/philosophy [7] a future oriented educational system which would consider social and individual educational needs. Then it would direct them towards the need for intense development and national and international problem solving needs. They are considered a social and cultural priority nowadays. The fundamental function of education is to change educational influences into competences. *Competence has been defined as a person's ability to meet the requirements from a certain field* [8], so competences will offer learners a social status by actively involving them in the social life as producers of goods and as social progress triggers [9]. If man were born with adult

possibilities, education would no longer exist. This is one argument which favours education as essential aspect in shaping human personality to its highest peaks. Who is responsible for reaching these goals? The answer is society, school and ultimately teachers, irrespective of the level they teach at: pre-primary school or university.

The necessity of rethinking education involves teacher reformation besides the reformation of formal and non-formal education. Teachers should be able to face present and future social challenges. *Instruction and education have been pictured since Antiquity as means by which a usually still obedient subject is trained to respond properly to any stimulus s/he might face* [10]. In modern society, knowledge was equivalent to science and was considered important as such. Encyclopaedic knowledge was real knowledge and only those who possessed it were considered highly educated. In postmodern society, knowledge becomes pragmatic, functional, useful. One learnt not only to „know” and acquire information from different fields but also “to be” and most importantly to be competent [11]. Competences (knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes) are necessary to apply what has been learnt in daily life situations. A competent individual uses productively his/her theoretical knowledge. Besides knowing and knowing how to do something it is necessary to be. *The search for a new educational order is based on scientific training which is an essential part of scientific humanism* [12]. Postmodern education has a pragmatic desideratum, adapted to the new society. Learning means putting theoretical knowledge into practice and having efficient results from a productive perspective.

A concept operated by the new philosophy of postmodern education is lifelong learning. According to the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning, the concept stands for all *means available for people of any age, gender, social and professional background that they can use in lifelong training, with the aim of fully develop their abilities and efficient involvement in the progress of the society.* [13]

The role of education is not limited to mere instruction. School should be regarded as a centre of real, practical activities conducted together so that human personality is shaped according to social actions and changes. Educational activity is an activity with finalities and its main subjects are the teacher and the learner, the facilitator of learning and the one who learns. Both are involved in a system which consists of many outside factors: family, friends, mass-media, social environment as a whole [14]. In terms of psycho-physical and personality development, education plays a central role besides other components such as inborn heritage and social environment, because through «education and training»[15] the individual learns new behaviours

[16]. Starting with skills and abilities and continuing with knowledge and intellectual operations, everything is acquired through learning. Various authors have added valuable ideas to the implication of education, highlighting its permanent dimension: *insertion in real life, not just training for active and responsible existence* (René Maheu)[17]; the individual's possibility of becoming *the subject and instrument of his own training as much as possible by means of several forms of self-training* (Jacques Delors) [18].

New information technologies [19] already play an important part in informatics programmes used in the educational area. Marching on the idea that individuals will be able to continue their lifelong training, the goal of continuous development is to improve the attitude towards changes, the desire to be open and accept changes. The concept of lifelong learning draws attention upon the fact that educational influences should aim the wholeness of human beings. Thus we encounter the notion "integrated lifelong learning", the word "integrated" referring to the integration of all educational institutions and forms (preschool education, school education, adult education) and to the integration into a unitary system of all forms of social education (formal, non-formal and informal). Lifelong learning is a integrative process which integrates all educational influences into a coherent and convergent system. The influences are exerted upon individuals in varied and specific ways throughout their life.

Lifelong learning should therefore be understood as a way of organizing education and it bears a pragmatic character. Computers come to support lifelong educational programmes. Apart from the term lifelong learning, there are other terms that occur more and more frequently *knowledge based society, e-learning*. The concept of *knowledge based society* is the motto of borderless learning endeavours. Sometimes classical education is expensive, hard to align as approach to the pace of practical life; it wears out morally faster. Therefore alternatives are welcome and educators can enhance training programmes using *e-learning* for all those interested.

The last two decades have promoted a perennial humanistic desideratum, namely *everything for the man, client orientation, quality management*. In terms of learning relationships where each partner of the educational process is a client in relationship to others, *e-learning* is considered a way of improving the quality of the teaching act. It fully meets the requirements of adjusting the educational process to the client's needs, in this case the learner's. The eternal philosophical dispute on the *purpose of the individual and the goal of life* is very good represented in the current consumer society. The new approach aims hedonism, an easier life which is

oriented towards the fulfilment of immediate needs in a short period of time and with minimal effort. Previous generations have focused on duty and therefore a new approach should be adopted that would *cancel the distance between modern teachers and postmodern students* [20]. The share of those interested in comfort and pleasure as buyers/consumers is increasing in the last decades and can be witnessed at teenagers. It is known that learning requires sustained effort, sacrifice. These elements are considered out-dated if we observe the behaviour and attitude of new generations. Therefore, pedagogy must undergo a reformation process if it wants to achieve its goals.

The phenomenon of *e-learning* uses many comfortable methods with those who are interested in learning. Lack of teacher/learner contact, lack of group activities and its virtual character are key points for *e-learning*. However, these aspects have been considered fundamental for the learner development in classical pedagogy. Online tutoring is a differentiated educational alternative which is suitable especially for learners with exceptional intellectual giftedness. *Equality of chances* as part of *right to education* claimed by any social environment involves real learning opportunities for each individual besides access to education in a formal environment. *E-learning* is unanimously considered the solution to this desire.

Contemporary pedagogical thinking stresses out the importance of fundamental paradigms such as integration and competence.

One aspect is highlighted by the paradigm of educational reformation which has the following objective: to ensure a real democratization of school; to offer equal educational, training chances for all children according to their psycho-physiological possibilities; equal results; to enhance an optimal development of personal potential.

New pedagogical orientations refer to *inter, intra, multi and pluridisciplinary education*. The tendency is to develop educational programmes that integrate different disciplines in order to develop global abilities. Emphasis is placed on the development of competences which favour the integration of knowledge through a pedagogy which assigns meaning to learning. This type of pedagogy should also blend functional and structural activities [21]. This new approach tries to give an answer to a fundamental criticism addressed to objective-based pedagogy: division of study matters into separate (closed) objectives. Competence-based pedagogy do not focus on mere acquisition of knowledge. It starts from objectives which need to be achieved so that learners know “how to do” something at the end of the lesson, semester, school year or educational cycle. We need to take into account the risk of assimilating “savoir-faire” abilities [22] which

won't be able to handle real situations if they aren't correctly assimilated. These abilities should be based on efficient learning which starts from the learners' qualities and their potential.

An *inclusive school*, a school for everybody with education for all, which takes into account the features of each learner should start from the premises that each learner is a unique personality, who learns in a certain pace and style and thus needs learning differentiation.

Here we refer to everybody in general, to all learners, including those with special needs, disabilities and to the gifted. Education for all involves access to quality education for everybody and has two general objectives:

- *Ensuring access to education for all children, irrespective of how different they are and how far they are placed in terms of personal development from what society considers normal. Participation means first of all access and then finding ways for everyone to be integrated in the structures that facilitate social and individual learning. Everyone should make a contribution and feel active. Access involves physical possibility of benefiting from educational influences offered by the society (family, school, community), ability to integrate in schools and respond favourably to its demands.*
- *quality of education refers to finding the dimensions of the process, of learning contents and quality of educational agents that would support everyone's learning, ensure success and turn the system into an open, flexible, efficient and effective one [23].*

Gifted children, children with special skills and abilities need special attention from their teachers. The educators must take into account their mental structure which is different from other children and also their special needs. Children with high skills must be protected by specific educational measures due to their special personality (asynchronous development) as stated by the European legislation [24]. They need special attention from the pedagogical society in their integration into a coherent educational system. Lack of a proper background can lead to loss of their creative potential and can lead to alienation, failure, and school dropout as well as antisocial behaviour [25]. Therefore, gifted children must benefit from proper educational conditions, which would allow them to reveal their possibilities and use them to their own benefit but also to the benefit of the society. Wasting talents means wasting human resources. The legislation [26] promotes and support human excellence and talents in all fields: science, art, management, *leadership*[27]. A critical part refers to training specialists in *gifted education*. In the context of adherence to the European Union, the development of educational system has become a national priority. A society

that respects differences of any type supports also special programmes for gifted children which encourage their personal development [28].

Curricular reformation promotes a new idea for the selection and organization of contents by a curricular approach of education. It brings about changes in one's conception about school, about planning and organizing learning. This new approach implements a totally different understanding of learning. Emphasis is no longer placed on contents but on competences while learning results become more important than learning goals. The new methodology of curriculum urges educators to select, use and design all stages of teaching activities according to objectives and in a balanced manner [29]. School is no longer the scene for a mere teaching-learning process, or knowledge assimilation process. It becomes an institution which ensures an overall development of learner's personality. Current programmes promote individual study and the development of originality. Learning focuses on fundamental concepts pertaining to new learning theories and is oriented towards new educations according to contemporary challenges. Foresight specialists predict a difficult and changing future for schools. They also anticipate that it is in our power to determine a desirable future as stipulated by the foresight for higher education in Romania *"in 2025 society will be centred on the individual and his needs that would become more and more complex and varied. Diversity, equality of chances, creativity, flexibility, ecological spirit and transparency will last as important values of a society in the foreseeable future.* [30] Education as main promoter of development in a society is called to find the most appropriate solutions for the socio-cultural progress of humanity.

The target is building a better future for the mankind. The perspectives of a knowledge based society have been drafted in Lisbon in 2000 and improved in Stockholm. The perspectives support a multidimensional and multicultural society, capable of activating the economy. Therefore, youth that would perform in such a globalized and multicultural society need competences that make them capable of high performance. Only the competitive ones succeed in a knowledge based society. Only those who are capable of on the go adjustment to changes, who have general, basic and specific competences required for good professionals are able to perform well. The Romanian educational system has undergone tremendous changes in the past 20 years. The integration into the European Union has brought about new dimensions to the development and reformation of the educational system as a whole. Adherence to the European Community causes deep mentality changes in terms of education at all levels. Institutional reforms try to align to the

demands of European education. These reforms involve many conceptual and factual changes which lead to the reorganization and restructure of traditional ways of thinking and acting (that still try to resist) and to the enforcement of new orientations that are not easily accepted. Reformation means sustained effort of all involved factors, either subjects of education or beneficiaries. Any change is distrusted as it implies the destabilization of a model of thinking and acting.

The reformation of education in Romania after the integration into the European Union and thus adjustment of national educational policies to the requirements of European ones has caused qualitative changes. For instance, higher education underwent an assessment process which ranked universities according to performance: education centred universities (only with undergraduate studies), education and research centred universities or education and art centred universities (with undergraduate and master programmes) and advanced research and education universities (with undergraduate, master and PhD studies). Each study programme has also been ranked based on European quality standards, designed by The European University Association. The European University Association (EUA) elaborated a network of interconnected universities, partners in educational process and deeply involved in advanced research. Assessment was conducted *“according to the quality of teaching and learning in universities, quality of scientific research, relationship with the external environment and institutional ability of reaching objectives, adapt to changes and modernism”*. The Ministry of National Education stated that this type of assessment wanted to be *„a tool in favour of universities that would help them centre their activity much better*. The positive aspect of these events is that each university has to revise its mission and its offer so as to use its resources to the benefit of the society. The mission of universities is to create economic, social and spiritual culture. On the other hand, its specific mission is to train specialists in various social fields and therefore universities should comply with local and regional labour market demands. Faculties and departments should revise their course offer according to labour market requirements and adapt curricular standards according to the National Qualifications Framework in Higher Education.

In this respect, curricula must be compatible with the standards of National Qualification Framework. When revising the curricula, special attention should be given to knowledge transfer by finding a balance between fundamental disciplines, field related and complementary disciplines as well as internships.

Thus the concerns of educational policies are oriented towards initial training without neglecting continuous, lifelong training. Social constraints call for professional training in all fields. Competitiveness on the labour market has different causes such as: restructuring, advanced employment standards, etc. Under these circumstances, professional training should be reconsidered. Students` diversity requires customization of academic system. Undergraduate studies imply initial training, which is a complex process of building a set of competences which permit learners to act flexibly and creatively in the field of their professional training. Competence is *a person`s recognized ability, skills of practicing a profession and deciding upon something based on thorough knowledge in the field s/he acts.* Competence [32] *sums up a set of integrated knowledge, skills and attitudes which are necessary to the subject in the handling of situations. It involves adaptation, quick problem and project solving, proper decision making.* Competence is considered a contextualization of *global acquisitions at high performance level* (knowledge, skills, abilities) which are used in a particular context. A competent person is authorized to conduct a certain activity due to his/her performance level in a certain field, certified by a specific authority.

The individual`s adaptation to changes is needed as we live in a continuously developing society which is subjected to constant changes determined by development in science and technology. Institutions which offer education give everyone, especially adults, the possibility to continue training in their field of activity but also professional reorientation and retraining. These adjustments to their own training are essential to their reintegration in economical-social activity. Thus we notice that adult lifelong training has become a necessity of the contemporary world. It is an action of reshaping individuals according to the requirements of current society.

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ENGLISH CLASSES AND EFFECTIVENESS OF GAMES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: *Although games may be viewed as an instructional tool for young learners of English, their use in higher education could be of great help when teachers want to diversify their classroom strategies. Used in a sensible way, games can become a stimulus for grammar and vocabulary lessons which students tend to perceive as boring and unattractive. The purpose of the paper is to show teachers' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of games in teaching practical courses of English to Philology students. We consider that the findings of the present research may help both teachers and students in becoming aware of the great instructional value of games at academic level.*

Keywords: *games, grammar, vocabulary, teachers' opinions, advantages and disadvantages*

1. Paper Rationale

Starting from the premise that games can be used in higher education during practical courses of English, the paper aims at identifying the advantages and disadvantages of their use in such classes. These aspects are presented from the teachers' perspective, as part of a broader research which aims at the improvement of teaching techniques at university level.

2. Theoretical foundation and related literature

There is a common perception according to which all learning should be serious, implying the principle "no pain, no gain". Consequently, having fun and using humour in the classroom cannot lead, in some people's opinion, to real learning and solid acquisition of knowledge. Pedagogical and psychological research has proved the opposite of this common belief. It is possible to learn a language as well as to enjoy oneself at the same time. Therefore, one of the most useful and enjoyable methods to encourage language acquisition consists in using language games. They are powerful means whose goal is that of developing meaningful language skills. Generally speaking, irrespective of their age and level, students love to play, and they participate in a game with greater enthusiasm and willingness than

in other classroom tasks. In spite of their attitude, teachers sometimes fail to realize the importance of games, considering them not an opportunity for real communication, but an uncontrolled and noisy waste of time.

It is hard to define the concept of game in several words. All definitions start from the description of the most common characteristics of games. According to these descriptive definitions, games can be broadly defined as rule-based activities that teachers use during the classes. It is noteworthy that teachers should be aware of the complexity of the concept of game if they want to use game-based strategies during their classes. Therefore, some definitions of the concept should also be taken into consideration:

- “an activity or sport involving skill, knowledge, or chance, in which you follow fixed rules and try to win against an opponent or to solve a puzzle.” (Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary, 1988, p. 596);
- “any specific contest, engagement, amusement, computer simulation or sport involving physical or mental competition under specific rules, as football, chess or war games.” (Webster’s New World Dictionary, 1991, p. 554);
- “a form of play or sport, especially a competitive one with rules”. (The Oxford Pocket Dictionary of Current English, 1992, p. 359);
- “an activity or sport in which people compete with each other according to agreed rules” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2001, p. 581).

Along with the definitions provided by the most important dictionaries used by English learners, language researchers have also worked on defining the concept of game. Among the most complex definitions are:

- a game is “a set of rules. In particular, it is a set of more or less elaborate and explicit rules about the constraints under which a goal is to be achieved with certain resources” (Inbar & Stoll, 1970, p. 54);
- a game is “an agreeable way of getting a class to use its initiative in English and as it is gently competitive, it increases motivation. It is also a contrast to periods of intensive study” (Haycraft, 1978, p. 94);
- a game is “an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun” (Hadfield, 1990, p. 5).
- a game is “a form of play governed by rules” (Byrne, 1995, p. 15).

In brief, the essential feature of language and vocabulary games consists in students’ active participation in the process of learning in a relaxing atmosphere. They involve precise rules to govern the instructional process, the outcome being to improve students’ linguistic knowledge of the second language. Moreover, using them in English classes enhances communication in a competitive and challenging environment. According to Richard-Amato (1996), even though games are often associated with fun, we should not lose

sight of their pedagogical values. Games are effective because they provide motivation, lower students' stress, and give them opportunity for real communication.

3. Methodology

The purpose of the research: identifying teachers' opinions on the effectiveness of using games at academic level in teaching grammar and vocabulary.

The objectives of the research:

O1: identifying teachers' views of the advantages of games;

O2: identifying disadvantages of game-based classes in teachers' opinions.

The hypothesis of the research: vocabulary and grammar games can be a successful tool for improving students' knowledge during the practical courses of English.

Description of the instruments

The instrument used in the research was the questionnaire, which included 15 statements to which the respondents had to agree or disagree. The following aspects were aimed at by the items in the questionnaire: the pedagogical value of using games in language teaching, teachers' attitudes towards the use of games in grammar and vocabulary activities, their opinions about the effectiveness of using games in teaching grammar and vocabulary, and the frequency of games in teaching.

Target group

The questionnaire was administered to a sample 25 English teachers from the Philology Department of the University of Ploiesti, whose teaching experience ranges from 5 to 20 years. They all teach English practical courses to students specializing in Romanian and English language and literature.

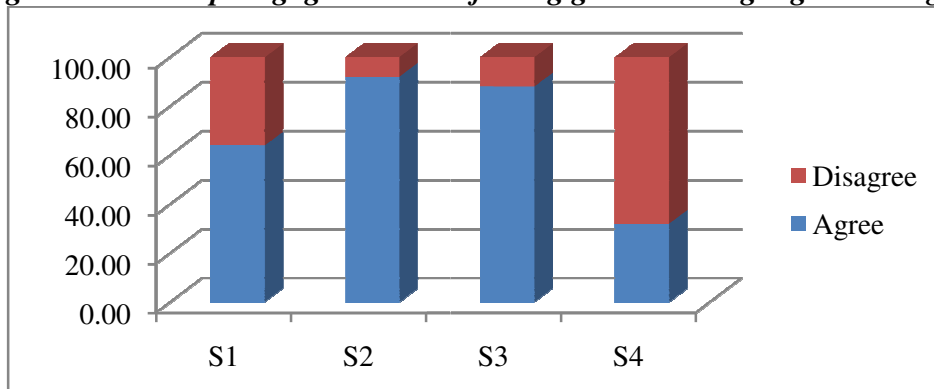
4. Results and discussion

As a general finding, it should be mentioned that the teachers expressed a very favourable opinion concerning the instructional value of games in teaching grammar and vocabulary. Analysing this opinion in detail, the following data can be highlighted. According to Table 1 and its accompanying visual representation, which focus on teachers' perceptions of the role of games in language teaching, we noticed that high percentages were obtained especially for S2 and S3, which aimed to find their opinions on the importance of games in a language syllabus and in teaching grammar and vocabulary. This proves that teachers prefer the communicative approach to their teaching style which demonstrates their preoccupation for effective classroom strategies.

Table no. 1: The pedagogical value of using games in language teaching

	Statement	Agree %	Disagree %
S1	Games are both fun and educational.	64.00	36.00
S2	Games should be given a special role in a foreign language teaching syllabus.	92.00	8.00
S3	Games offer the learners the possibility to prove their skills in grammar and vocabulary.	88.00	12.00
S4	Teachers must use games as an alternative for avoiding boredom in the classroom.	32.00	68.00

Figure no. 1: The pedagogical value of using games in language teaching

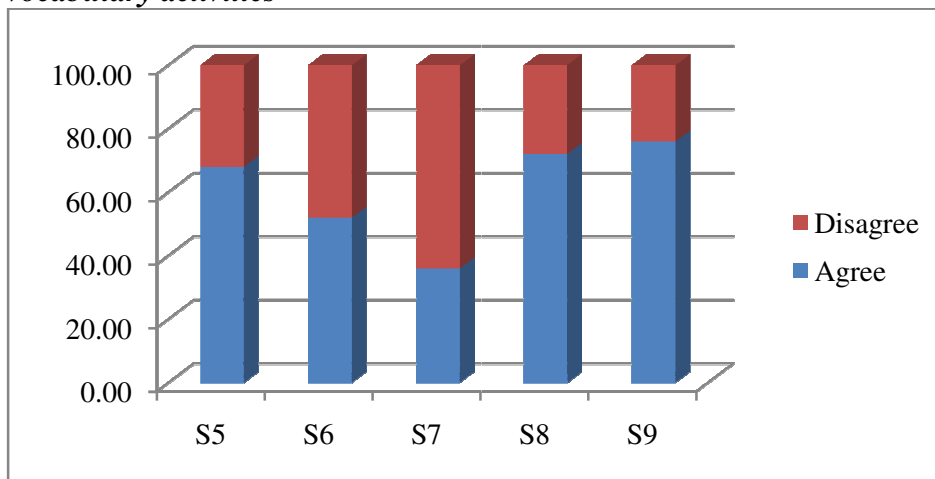


Although teachers' general perception of using games is positive, they are aware of the difficulties implied by designing game-based classes. The data in Table 2, which is visualized in Figure 2, highlight several obstacles that teachers usually encounter when dealing with such classes. The highest percentage (76.00%) indicates that teachers cannot find enough games to teach grammar and vocabulary structures and, as a result, they have to be inventive and create their own games, which is time-consuming. Another shortcoming of using games in grammar teaching, as shown by the results of S8, is the teacher's uncertainty as regards students' acquisition of grammatical items. This is emphasized by the answers given at S5, as 68% of the respondents admit that, due to the fact that games are free activities, students' knowledge cannot be evaluated properly.

Table no. 2: Teachers' attitudes towards the use of games in grammar and vocabulary activities

	Statement	Agree %	Disagree %
S5	One cannot measure students' knowledge of grammar and vocabulary when using games during the class	68.00	32.00
S6	Using games to teach grammar and vocabulary may distract students' attention during the instructional process.	52.00	48.00
S7	Using games in grammar and vocabulary teaching can be time-consuming.	36.00	64.00
S8	I feel uncomfortable when I do not give the exact rules for grammar items.	72.00	28.00
S9	I find it difficult to find a game suitable for every grammar or vocabulary notion.	76.00	24.00

Figure no. 2: Teachers' attitudes towards the use of games in grammar and vocabulary activities

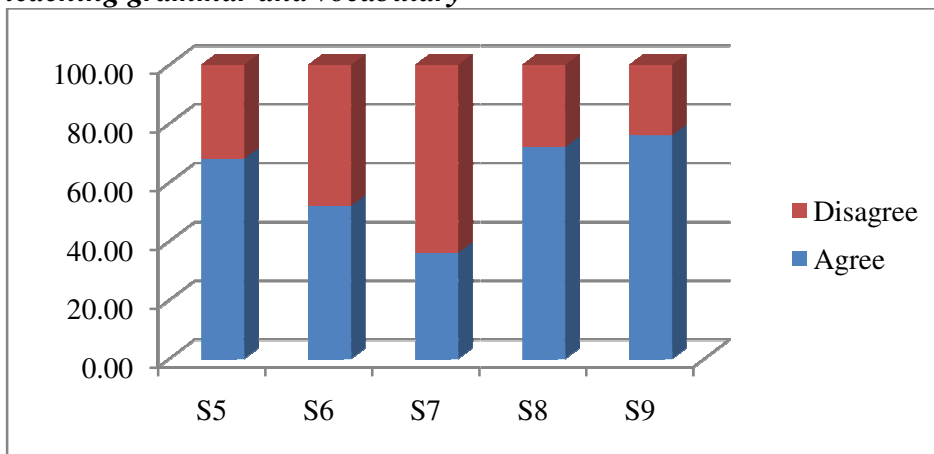


The very high percentages of teachers who are aware of the benefits of games in the language classroom are shown in Table 3 and its graphic representation. It is noteworthy that more than two thirds of the respondents (see S 10, S11, S 12, S14) point to the highly motivating quality of games, as well as to the relaxing atmosphere that characterizes classes during which they are used. Nevertheless, a percentage of 76% of the teachers mentioned a less beneficial aspect involved by games, that is, students are more interested in playing rather than in improving their knowledge.

Table no. 3: Teachers’ opinions on the effectiveness of using games in teaching grammar and vocabulary

	Statement	Agree %	Disagree %
S10	Using games lower students’ anxiety towards grammar and vocabulary learning.	80.00	20.00
S11	Grammar and vocabulary games encourage, entertain and promote fluency.	84.00	16.00
S12	Games are a highly motivating and entertaining ways of teaching grammar and vocabulary, especially for weak students.	84.00	16.00
S13	While playing a game, learners are not necessarily concerned about focusing on learning.	76.00	24.00
S14	Games are not very effective in grammar and vocabulary teaching.	28.00	72.00

Figure no. 3: Teachers’ opinions on the effectiveness of using games in teaching grammar and vocabulary



Concerning the frequency of using games, the percentages indicated in Table 4 are almost equal, which can be explained by the fact that, although teachers are aware of the positive effects of games on students, the shortcomings mentioned above determine them to adopt a balanced attitude when it comes to game-based activities.

Table no. 4: The frequency of using games in teaching

	Statement	Agree %	Disagree %
S1 5	I use games for teaching grammar and vocabulary as much as possible.	48.00	52.00

5. Conclusions

Starting from the data presented above, we can state that teaching English through games is not only an enjoyable way of making the transition from knowledge towards competence, but also an effective strategy to involve students in the learning process. In other words, as Wright et al. (2005:48) state, “games also help the teacher to create contexts in which the language is useful and meaningful. The learners want to take part and in order to do so must understand what others are saying or have written, and they must speak or write in order to express their own point of view or give information.”

It is a fact that games are a motivating factor for students, especially in the case of grammar classes, which are perceived as boring, but if adequately used by teachers they become a perfect tool for improving students’ grammar and vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, the classroom atmosphere specific to game-based classes will give a fresh impetus to students’ participation in the learning process.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTHER'S PERCEIVED PARENTING STYLE AND ADOLESCENT'S EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM

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Abstract: *This study aims to identify the level of emotional intelligence and self-esteem in adolescents and correlations between these characteristics and perceived parenting styles mother. The sample consists of 187 adolescents in grades XI and XII , aged between 17 and 18 years old, studying in schools in Romania, the contes Timiș, Caraș - Severin, Hunedoara. The working tools used in the study are intended to identify the scale Rosenberg self-esteem, parenting eucationale inventory models Embu and emotional intelligence assessment questionnaire (adapted by Mihaela Roco Bar-On and D. Goleman). Analysis and interpretation of statistical data ilustrated the existence of positive and negative correlations, statistically significant between certain parenting styles perceived by adolescents their self-esteem and their emotional intelligence.*

Key words: *parenting style, emotional intelligence, self-esteem, adolescents.*

1. Theoretic frame

Complicating social life and the challenges of the modern world imply a series of questions and answers calls on educational influences on adolescents and their importance on teenagers. All this illustrates more clearly education should be based on an educational partnership made in favor of adolescents, in order to complete their personality.

School education is extremely important, but it needs the family, the community, the whole society to support and guide the pupils properly. However, the family plays a primary role, because it is the home office of the child and its support almost entire life. The pupils completes their first experiences of family life.

The study of family relationships, affective climate and its socio-cultural model, adopted and exercised parenting style is crucial in social integration and social formation of adolescent behavior, but also for becoming his personality.

Various studies and researches have shown that adolescent personality development can not be achieved within the matrix of family, where both educational models and affective quality of family environment and tool creates preconditions for the orderly development of adolescents.

Considering that personality development is a topical issue because more and more adolescents develop a weak personality, in this study we want to discover and highlight some of the reasons for which this happens.

Through this paper we wish to emphasize the important roles of mother parental style and the way in which they are perceived by adolescents in developing self-esteem and emotional intelligence.

In literature we find writers who have made valuable contributions on the relationship between parenting styles and adolescent self-esteem. Among them we can mention: Buri, 1989; Park et al., 2002; Zakeri & Karimpour, 2011.

Numerous studies (Žukauskienė, Malinauskienė, Erentaitė, 2011; Asghari, & Beshara, 2011; Fonte, 2009; Abdollahi, Talib, Motalebi, 2013; Joshi, Dutta, 2015) highlight the correlation position, respectively negative correlation between different parenting styles and emotional intelligence at adolescents.

In the study we propose we will focus on the relationship between mother's parenting styles (tolerant, loving, overprotective, over-involved) self-esteem and emotional intelligence of teenagers involved.

2. Research design

The study focuses on adolescents with ages between 17 and 18 years, studying at schools within the Counties of Timis, Caras - Severin, Hunedoara.

2.1 Objectives of research

The proposed objectives target:

1. The evaluation of the level of adolescents' emotional intelligence and self-esteem;
2. The identification of the correlations between the mother's parental style and self-esteem, respectively adolescents' emotional intelligence.

2.2 Hypothesis of research

1. We assume the existence of a positive correlation, statistically significant between the mother's perceived parenting style (tolerant and affectionate) and adolescents' self-esteem;

2. We assume the existence of a positive correlation, statistically significant between the mother's perceived parenting style (tolerant and affectionate) and adolescents' emotional intelligence;
3. We assume the existence of a negative correlation, statistically significant between the mother's perceived parenting style (over-protective and over-involved) and adolescents' emotional intelligence;
4. We assume the existence of a negative correlation, statistically significant between the mother's perceived parenting style (over-protective and over-involved) and adolescents' self-esteem

2.3 Methodology of research

The work intends to be a study which traces the perception of certain relations between parenting styles perceived by adolescents their self-esteem and their emotional intelligence.

In order to verify the formulated hypothesis the following instruments were used:

1. The Rosenberg self-esteem evaluation scale. The scale contains 10 items with 4 answering possibilities between totally disagree(1 point) and totally agree (4 points). Items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 are rated reversely. The scores can be included between 10 and 40; high scores indicate a low self-esteem.
2. Evaluation questionnaire for emotional intelligence adapted by Mihaela Roco after Bar-On and Goleman. 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. Embu Inventory was designed by Professor Carlo Perris et al. University in Umea

(Sweden) and calibrated on a novel group (152 healthy subjects) by Radu Vradi et al. Psychiatric Hospital Jebel. The inventory contains 81 questions that are answered by scores of 1-4 (never = 1, rarely = 2, often = 3, always = 4). The interpretation of the 81 questions are grouped into 14 subscales corresponding to 14 educational practices: abuse, deprivation, punitive, humiliating, rejection, overprotection, over-involved, tolerant, affectionate, directing performance, generator of guilt.

The sample involved in this research is formed of 187 adolescents, students in schools within the county of Timiș, Caraș-Severin and Hunedoara. Within the sample we find 82 male adolescents, 43.9%, respectively 105 female adolescents, 56.1%. (Table 1)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid male	82	43,9	43,9	43,9
female	105	56,1	56,1	100,0
Total	187	100,0	100,0	

(Table 1 Frequency within the sample regarding gender)

Regards to the allocation on ages at the level of the sample, the data are: 57.2% are 17 years old, 42.8% are 18 years old. (Table 2)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 17 yars	107	57,2	57,2	57,2
18 yars	80	42,8	42,8	100,0
Total	187	100,0	100,0	

(Table 2 Frequency within the sample regarding age)

Interpretation of the research results

In order to test the proposed hypothesis a program named SPSS was used performing correlations by means of the Person test.

The following step is the analysis the obtained results.

Regarding the first hypothesis, the data presented in table 3 illustrate the fact that between the two involved variables, self-esteem of students and mother's

perceived parenting style (tolerant and affectionate) there is a positive correlation with statistical significance ($r = .247, p = .001, r = .229, p = .002$). Thus, we can state that at level of the sample of adolescents involved, a high level of self-esteem is associated to a high level of mother's perceived parenting style (tolerant and affectionate).

The second hypothesis is also confirmed. The statistical data ($r = .184, p = .012,$

$r = .214, p = .003$) reveal positive correlations with statistical significance between the mother's perceived parenting style (tolerant and affectionate) and adolescents' emotional intelligence.

These correlation coefficient confirm the fact that tolerant and affectionate a mother parental style determines a higher degree of emotional intelligence.

Regarding hypothesis 3, the data presented in table 4 illustrate the fact that between the two involved variables, emotional intelligence of students and mother's perceived parenting style (Over-protective, Over-involved), there are no significant correlations from statistical point of view.

Regarding hypothesis 4, the data presented in table 3 illustrates the fact that between the two involved variables, self-esteem of students and mother's perceived parenting style (Over-protective, Over-involved) there is a negative correlation with statistical significance ($r = -.156, p = .033, (r = -.223, p = .002)$).

Hypotheses 1, 2, 4 of this study are confirmed and they support some of the data presented in previous studies mentioned in this paper.

		Over-protective	Over-involved	Tolerant	Affectionate
Self-esteem	Pearson Correlation	-.156(*)	-.223(**)	.247(**)	.229(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	.002	.001	.002
	N	187	187	187	187
Emotional intelligence	Pearson Correlation	-.025	.011	.184(*)	.214(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.735	.877	.012	.003
	N	187	187	187	187

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

(Table 3 Value of the correlation coefficient)

Conclusions and proposals

Due to the obtained data we observe the existence of positive correlation, highly significant statistically between the adolescents' self esteem and the mother's perceived parenting style (affectionate, tolerant). We also observe positive correlations, statistically significant, between the adolescents' emotional intelligence and the mother's perceived parenting style (affectionate, tolerant). We observe statistically significant, negative correlations between adolescents' self esteem and the mother's perceived parenting style (over-protective, over-involved).

Taking into account the data obtained in our research on adolescents, in the investigation of parental style influences on the self-esteem levels and emotional intelligence, it is necessary to implement a program of psycho-pedagogical consoling to the pupils involved in this study and to their parents. This program should focus on improving the level of self-esteem and of emotional intelligence, and should develop capacities of self-closure, supporting the parents to improve educational style.

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THE PEDAGOGICAL ACCESS ON INTERCULTURALISM AS A METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGE IN EDUCATION

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Abstract: *The pedagogical Pluralism and interculturalism in education are defined as pedagogical relations of the differences (knowledge, understanding, respect). Certainly this is the basis which prepares the individual for inclusion in the new social changes by transferring knowledge and developing specific skills (ability to communicate and develop interpersonal and intercommunal relations, critical thinking in relation to identity specifics). Regardless of the methods of working with children, the prospects of interculturalism in education implies that at some point will face model where they lived with models of other cultural backgrounds.*

Keywords: *The pedagogical pluralism, interculturalism, education, communication skills.*

Introduction: Attempts to find appropriate models by which multicultural societies can restructure having cultural pluralism as the base, they developed the idea that such changes are needed for reorientation to directed education even in the early years of education. The result of these trends is the idea of interculturalism in education.²The basic aim of interculturalism in education is that the younger generation to become aware of their cultural identity, as well as tolerance for differences, to develop specific sense of belonging to society, but also the awareness that they belong to several communities, to mankind entirely. On behalf of interculturalism in education is expected to solve many problems of coexistence between different groups, develop

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²**Syntagms** *multicultural society and interculturalism in education* are used by Perotti, A. (1995): *A plea for intercultural education*, Educa, Zagreb, 9.

national consciousness about their identity, culture, language, religion, gender, race, and mutual understanding and respect for differences.

The objectives and goals of intercultural education

Interculturalism in education is a vast space, so far based on normative and speculative definitions, and sometimes it becomes hardly accessible and very provocative. In this context, it would be superfluous, accepting some methodological possibilities, to put under the magnifying glass durability multitude of ideas that occurred in this area and the various possibilities for their realization. The answer to this challenge can focus on the conceptual definition of the phenomenon underlying the multicultural education, on the culture that can be investigated, operationally establishing the variables accessible to observation and measurement.

This is an initial methodological challenge because from a notion that is assigned dozens of meanings, the most appropriate pmr should be selected for the research of this phenomenon, even its epistemological determination.³ In the scientific literature are presented scientific attempts to develop this problem, but most remained at the conceptual level, so during the investigation were some who suggested that this complex phenomenon should be defined partially.

Whatever the problems in the field of interculturalism in education because of imprecise definition of the forms of appearance, there are a large number of researches dealing with this theme, but there are few those derived from existing condition and well designed methodology.⁴ Each research should start from detailed knowledge of the area in question, and when it defines what is known, it can clarify and complete what is not known. Then we can define the problem and develop access for research and methodology on the issue.

The researches in the field of interculturalism social phenomena are often present irregularities. Such research is sometimes the consequence of disregarding improper purpose and methodology of the research, but also to

³ Fletcher, T.V., Darrell, L. S. (1995): *Focus on National Context in Academic Achievement: Interaction Effect in Cross-national Studies in Achievement*. in: *Comparative Education review*, nr. 4 (39), 455-467.

⁴ Fulgosi, A. and others. (1987): *Children of Workers Living Abroad and their Peers in the Native Country; Cognitive and Personalitic Characteristic*, *Journal of Psychology*, vol.17, 19-36.

methodological limitations arising from the intention to only use methodology based on qualitative and directed towards obtaining scientific data available. The insistence to the application of that methodology leads to narrowing of the problem, considering that through it can not be investigated more problems arising in the humanities, especially in social interactions, so this methodology becomes an obstacle instead of being the basis of scientific development.⁵

Because of the danger to not deflect *quasi-research*, they can direct you to other extreme, almost *larpurlartism*, and become *research because of research*. With such a methodology it is possible by measurements, with a subtle statistical processing, to carry out research that does not result in new scientific knowledge and contributions, but confirms what is already found or comminuted problems regardless of the overall concept. The complicated statistical treatment, in which many factors are present, acts so convincingly that some elementary mistakes which put in question the final conclusions are not seen, and which could be achieved through more simple ways.

As an example that illustrates this observation, can serve testing of different cultural groups belonging, differing from educational and socio-economic aspect. The statistical processing of the obtained data will always show differences in favor of those living in more favorable cultural backgrounds. Researching the intellectual development and the academic level of some minority groups, Triandis di Beri indicates the danger of cultural subjectivity tests, posture towards the success of the tests, cognitive and social stimulation, the results, which should be considered when interpreting the results.⁶ Naturally the interpretation of these data is the primary benchmarking of the groups from which they were obtained, especially after difference in curriculum that teaches children and parents towards education. Flecer, Dareli⁷ and Ogbu⁸ talk about these benefits referring to the conclusion that the tests must meet the difference between different groups.

New trends in the development of research methodology in the social field especially when it comes to multiculturalism in education go to reaffirm

⁵ Robinson, V (1993): *Problem Based Methodology*. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 42.

⁶ Triandis, H.C., Berry, J.W. (1980): *Handbook of Cross-Cultural psychology*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 16-18.

⁷ Fletcher, T.V., Darreli, L. S. (1995): *Focus on National Context in Academic Achievement: Interaction Effect in Cross-national Studies in Achievement*. in: *Comparative Education review*, nr.4 (39), p. 455-467.

⁸ Ogbu, J. U. (1994): *Ispitivanje ljudske inteligencije: kulturno-ekološki pristup*. Napredak, nr. 2 (135), 141-153.

its moderate quantitative methodology and advancement, because it has been observed that by implementation can be investigated more issues. The basic concept is that the methodology is not an end in itself and should not be limiting factor in selecting who will investigate the problem.⁹The research of multiculturalism phenomenon should not subordinate the selection of the methodology problems, since no methodology is one that will determine who will investigate the problem, but will investigate issues that will determine the methodology to be applied.

The next challenge methodological is directed towards researching the factors underlying the development of different forms of culture and their mutual influence, and the consequences that arise, something difficult to achieve due to variability of the research object and the difficulty of generalizing and the discovery of new legality. This is one of the possible reasons that practical achievements related to the idea of interculturalism in education level are only hypotheses, which can not be reason for them to not be verified through practice and corrected later.

Since in the idea of interculturalism in education is inserted the social interaction, the research of this phenomenon are more applicable methods based on humanistic paradigms than those based on rigid paradigms of scientific research.¹⁰This is a reason why serious development and application of methodological procedures that allow sufficiently well defined phenomena research by applying qualitative research. These two methods of investigation are inclined to different epistemological foundations and as a result many differences between them arise.¹¹Sometimes there are in science debates about qualitative and quantitative research paradigms in the field of multiculturalism in education, and first dilemma occurs in the research problem. While research based on scientific paradigms are directed towards generalizations, wider knowledge, humanity-based research paradigms frames controlled ideographic access towards solving Individual practical problems. However, permanent dilemma is present as well as how one could perform generalization in the humanistic oriented research and with what dose of safety? Further, it can be said that the directed scientific research go to quantitative access of the research problems and application of the empirical-analytical procedures, while humanistically oriented research go to qualitative access and application of hermeneutic procedures, so, as said, in scientific research methodology quantitative methods are applied, while in

⁹Robinson, V (1993): *Problem Based Methodology*, 47-49.

¹⁰ Keeves, J.P. (1988): *Educational Research, Methodology, and Measurement: An International Handbook*. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 2.

¹¹Ibid ...17.

humanistical research methodology qualitative methods are applied.¹²For this reason in quantitative research focus is on data numerical marking, while in qualitative on attributive marking, becoming apparent that the quantitative research methods applied in research are more suitable in static appearances research, while for the qualitative the dynamic ones. The results obtained by qualitative research must be done using instruments that have good material base, while the application of quantitative research can be used and the results obtained by ad hoc observations.

The difference between these two research models is significant and the role and location of research and research participants. While in quantitative research respondents serve only to obtain some data, whether there are no information for purpose of research in qualitative studies are often treated like they are contributing and participating in their design and implementation. These differences are also reflected on generalizations which can be reached through research based on humanistic and scientific paradigms, and until scientific hypothesis is verified and accepted by a dose of safety during investigations, the humanistic one ends with a hypothesis, conjecture about solving possible practical problems.¹³

For the development of interculturalism in education it is very important quantitative and qualitative synthesis accesses over the research, because much of what happens in this area lies in compulsory documents and practice without the possibility of applying previous check. Certainly the question arises: how to ensure this synthesis and its realization under following theses:

- by quantitative and qualitative connectivity methods and their parallel use;
- by connecting multiple data about the same appearance;
- by integrating qualitative and quantitative techniques for data collection;
- a qualitative quantitative data transformation and vice versa.

To achieve this synthesis, appearances to the phenomenon of interculturalism in education should be investigated during the dynamic change with a logical explanation. Whenever possible, be investigated in

¹² Reichardt, C. S. Cook, T.D. (1979): *Beyond Qualitative Versus Quantitative Methods*,y; Cook, T.D. and Reichardt, C.S. (Eds): *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Evaluation Research*. London: Sage, 9-30.

¹³ Göncz, L. (1988): *Kako postati i ostati dvokulturalan i dvojezičan uz pomoć škole u migrantskoj situaciji*, Primijenjena psihologija, nr. 1-2 (9), 113-120.

natural situations presented with accurate data, thus making subjective and objective synthesis access.¹⁴

Conclusion

Interdisciplinary interculturalism as a basis for access to interdisciplinary research in education and training is not only a pedagogical but also a space problem that meet multiple disciplines, because it is also a psychological and sociological phenomenon that requires a scientific access and its development. The area of interculturalism in education puts the researchers in front of many methodological challenges, and one of them is developing tests relieved of cultural influences, and the real challenge presents the human action research in social context, in order to achieve cultural pluralism ideas through interculturalism in education.

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¹⁴ Ogbua, op.cit...139.

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LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract: *Preschool language education is a prerequisite to integrate the children easily into school-type activity but also in terms of their preparation for life. To enhance the verbal conduct in pre-primary education the aims are to stimulate their active participation both verbally and mentally when working in the kindergarden. The kindergarden is the educational institution which has the decisive role in the education and training of preschool children. It strives to create conditions for a normal development in all areas of preschool children, exploiting the physical and mental potential of each, taking into account the child's own pace, his emotional needs and his fundamental activity: the game. The author present her results regarding the education of language in a group of 16 children from the kidergarten.*

Key words: *preschool children, language education, kindergarden activities*

The kindergarden is the educational institution which has the decisive role in the education and training of preschool children. It strives to create conditions for a normal development in all areas of preschool children, exploiting the physical and mental potential of each, taking into account the child's own pace, his emotional needs and his fundamental activity: the game.

Preschool language education is a prerequisite to integrate the children easily into school-type activity but also in terms of their preparation for life. To enhance the verbal conduct in pre-primary education the aims are to stimulate their active participation both verbally and mentally when working in the kindergarden. The process to influence the child's speech begins at the small group (3-4 years old), taking into account the specific nature of the language, the shortcomings of pronunciation, the reduced vocabulary and other mental peculiarities such as the concrete thinking, the unstable attention, the involuntary memory (Dumitrana, 1999).

Speech development of children is achieved gradually by expanding the verbal relationships with others, in the situation of manifested curiosity for knowing the objects, their attributes, on the one hand, and by expanding the interrogative attitude on the origin and cause of phenomena, on the other

hand. The game, as a means of relaxation and also of knowledge, facilitates mainly the accumulations which should be acquired by the child in the moment of entering to school.

The game, in general, and specifically the didactic game is designed as a means of training and education, as a methodic process of optimal achieving of concrete tasks which are proposed by the educational process as a form of organization of the knowledge activity and development of psychophysical capabilities at all levels - and therefore that of language (.

"The language is not an amorphous peak of isolated words, but a huge dynamic system in a continuous development, in which a word depends on others, not only formally but also by the bonds that involves any word meaning" (Cazacu, 1968 apud Schwartz, Kelemen, Moldovan, 2009).

The language is in close relationship with all human mental processes and characteristics, including the most simple (sensations and perceptions), but psychological research had long been established that the main content of verbal communication is formed by the thinking.

Man learns vocabulary and the rules for the use of language in early childhood, and then enriches the experience throughout his entire existence. At the age of 0 - 1.5 years occurs the first contact with the word, the child hears the words pronounced by the adult; at the age of 2 - 4 years the child learns to name objects, as if he attaches to each a label; at the age of 5 - 7 years the child learns simple schema of language and learn to use sentences. Between 8-12 years the child learns the writing language, the reading and his vocabulary massively enriches; at the age of 13 - 15 years the child starts using abstract notions which require very complex linguistic structures. The essential factors in the genesis of language are the thinking demands facing the increasingly complex situations and all social relations more extensive (Piaget, 2005).

In the communication process people use means of communication, some of which are nonverbal (concrete actions with objects, gestures, facial expressions) and some verbal (sound, graphics).

Not every process of communication between people can be considered in the proper sense of the word. In strict acceptance the term of language refers to verbal language. So language is the human activity of communication through language.

There are highlighted the two fundamental functions of the language: the communication function and the cognitive function, of which the primary is communicative, but it is inextricably linked to cognitive. The other functions are derived therefrom (Ilica 2007).

The modern sense of the concept of communication on the one hand involves sending informational messages (converted into signals) by the

sender to the recipient, and, on the other hand, the reception and decoding signals received by the receiver. These signals are encoded and communication between people occurs due to understanding (decoding) of the signals system (words) by which are transmitted, and received the imaging, notional, conceptual contents etc. In this way is made the cognitive function of language (Birch, 2000).

Derived from the cognitive function, the regulatory function of language means the proper conduct of each process of knowledge. The regulatory function of language appears obvious in any voluntary activity. By verbal "orders" made by internally or externally language, can be triggered or broke, somatic or vegetative reactions, may be altered affective dispositions or are mobilized the body forces to cope unusual.

The emotionally expressive function is a language derived function. The man affective attitude towards other people is achieved with specific verbal means: rhythm, intonation, accent, break.

The imperative-persuasive language function is the ability to influence the other during communication. The full range of persuasive verbal means, starting from advice, request, order, threat etc., can be used to convince the others to give up or to mobilize to do something.

It is not without reason that the cultivation of language, the language education is a core objective of pre-school activity.

At the core of human activity is the verbal communication, and the learning and the development of language takes place in the child's communication with adults. The differences manifested in the communication skills of children at the begining of the kindergarten are determined by different family conditions in which they lived, how they influenced the development of speech of preschoolers.

In the kindergarten, through language, is conducted, the learning activity and the perception of the surrounding world. The child is thus led to distinguish what is essential, significantly, from nonessential; is helped to analyze, compare, group, classify by the language, directly contributing to stimulate thought processes, and to improve it. By the word in the activities of kindergarten, the child is ready to make the transition from perception to representation, to acquire a superior tool of investigation and knowledge of the surrounding world (Kelemen, 2007a).

In the transition from one stage to another of the pre-school age, the language presents specific features depending on the age peculiarities of forming device, the verbomotor and auditive analyzer, and on the specificities of children's thinking and the influences of the social-human environment. Characteristic for the preschool period is that language retains the character of the situation, but as the life experience is enriched, in the

communication activity with adults, and the use of grammatical structure, appears and develops also the contextual language.

It appears and develops together with the language situation, which continues to unfold.

Because of the contextual language development are recorded the following progress in the child's psychological development:

- is intensified the intellectual function of language;
- it appear elements of activity planning on mental plan;
- the word adjusts the overall activity of children (Kelemen, 2007b).

With time the monologued external spoken language emerges and constitute a special form of language "for itself", the internal language. With the internalization of the exterior language, a process that occurs increasingly evident (about 4 ½ - 5 ½ years) is over intensified a particularly important function of language, namely the "intellectual" one, which consists essentially in mental planning and regulation of practical activities.

The inner language has a special significance in the development of thinking in carrying out intellectual operations. Unlike the external language, which remains a means of communicating with others, the inner language which is a "language for itself", no longer fulfills this function. Being a kind of communication of the individual with himself, the inner language refers to what is known to the subject, therefore, its basic function is to set some "principal" elements of the exposure to be according to the external language (2002, the language education).

The psychological research has shown that inner language appears and manifests particularly strong when the child has to solve a problem or met difficulties in its work. In this case the inner language becomes an audible expression of the thought of the child (the child "thinks" out loud) (Schaffer, 2005).

During the three years of preschool period, under the influence of the growing requirements of activities and communication, there is a rapid assimilation of various aspects of language (the phonetic side, vocabulary, the grammatical structure).

Under *the phonetic aspect*, the children learn till 4-5 years all the sounds of mother tongue, managing to correctly pronounce the words and the groups of words. At the age of 5-6 years, the correct pronunciation of all sounds generally being acquired, the focus will be on the improving the phonetic side, meaning reproducing sound with clarity, accuracy, safety.

The language development occurs also under the lexical aspect. Are recorded changes in both the increase in the number of the words as in the understanding of their significance. The degree of generalization of words-terms increases from one age to another. Such, children aged of 6 years meet in the concept of means of transportation, ship, boat, sled, wagon, which are

distinguished by their external aspects, but which have as essential and common note – their identical utility (people traveling with them).

In terms of *grammatical structure* of speech in preschool children, there is a switching to forms increasingly complex and corecte. The preschooler child does not learn the grammar rules as such, and does not learn definitions, he appropriates grammatical structures practically in the live communication, listening to others, being correct when they make mistakes in their speech. He can certainly use words in various combinations, either in simple or developed sentences, either in phrases.

Regarding the *expressiveness of speech*, children have opportunities for shaping the expression (gesture, facial expression, intonation, etc.). However are still meet situations like: unjustified intensification of a sound, the prolongation of sounds, the sung playback of the text or the insufficient emphasis on the sounds in a word (Pânișoară, 2003).

The kindergarten can best meet the needs and interests specific of preschool age, the forms of activity of the child, some types of interpersonal relationships ensuring optimal development of the formative available potential of the child in this period which can be characterized by a pronounced psychic flexibility, a maximum receptivity, sensitivity and mobility.

The same idea is given otherwise very plastic in an article by Șchiopu Ursula as follows: "To decipher the many images of life around him, the preschool child needs a juicy contact with the children of his age and with the educator, represented as a messenger of the society who captures in its hands episodes of the first understandings, rounding their corners and mismatches " (Schiopu, 1993, p.231).

The researches come to stress the need of the education of language at this age and emphasizes that together with family, the kindergarten provides more effective, means and multiple opportunities to influence speech development of the children. In kindergarten, children's language is influenced primarily by the right, clear and expressiv speech.

The objectives of the research

Taking into account the Piaget's concept that "reading and writing process is based on perceptual structures and operators", (Piaget, 2005, p.97) we proposed the following objectives to follow in the research:

- the developing of the ability to perceive the words as lexical units;
- the use of the didactic games in the improving of the phonetic hearing and in the training and strengthening the skills of correct pronunciation;

- the enrichment and activation of the vocabulary volume of preschool children through didactic game, in accordance with the program requirements.

The research hypothesis from which we started in the investigation was undertaken following

Hypothesis

If the didactic game in fostering communication within small group is used as a form of activity, and as a method of teaching and learning, and assessment, then children will develop language, communication capability in a more rapid pace with increased motivation, providing improved performance in preschoolers.

The sample of subjects

In view to pursue and verify the specific hypothesis formulated in the research we have included a number of 16 children aged between 3 and 4 years old who attend kindergarten within small groups. The small group consists of 16 children, seven are girls and nine were boys, 10 are Romanian and 6 are Roma. From the 16 children nine are from organized families, 3 from families organized but with tense relations and the remaining 4 come from dysfunctional families (see table 1). From the description above appears that there are differences between the socio-cultural backgrounds from which the children are coming, and that affect their communication and language development.

Table 1
The structure of the sample

Characteristic	Type	Number of children
Gender	girls	7
	boys	9
Ethnicity	Romanian	10
	Roma	6
Familial background	organized family	9
	organized tensioned family	3
	dysfunctional family	4

Research Methods

Among the methods used for verification and activation of language

development in preschool children we used small group interview method. This method consists of a direct free and individual query, the educator prepares an interview with questions that complement each other in order to verify the knowledge and the language development at the arrival in kindergarten.

The interview we made consists of 18 questions based on the responses obtained establishing the level of reached behavior or the development of each child.

The same interview was used at the end of the first semester, for comparison of the language at the arrival in the kindergarten and at the end of the first semester.

A second research method that we used was the systematic observation of children under the aspects of language development. Language development is done through verbal, nonverbal and paraverbal communication.

Results and discussions. Based on initial assessment test was drawn a table of performance descriptors (Table 2).

Table 2. The initial assessment performance descriptors

Reached behavior	Behavior in development
A correct pronunciation of the sounds	Relatively he correctly pronounce the sounds but with sounds omissions or reversals
Designates 4-5 toys	Designates 1-2 toys
He forms a simple sentence about a special toy	He does not form a sentence about a special toy

Based on the final assessment test was drawn a table of performance descriptors (Table 3):

Table 3. The final assessment performance descriptors

Reached behavior	Behavior in development
Recognise the season	Does not recognise the season
He forms the simple sentences	Fails to compose a simple sentence
He calls the characters in the story "The Bear tricked by the Fox "	Does not call the characters in the story "The Bear tricked by the Fox "

The results of the final assessment are presented in the table 4 and the figure 1:

Table 4. The results of the final assessment

Items	Reached behavior (RB)	Behavior in development (BD)
The first item	10	6
The second item	10	6
The third item	11	5

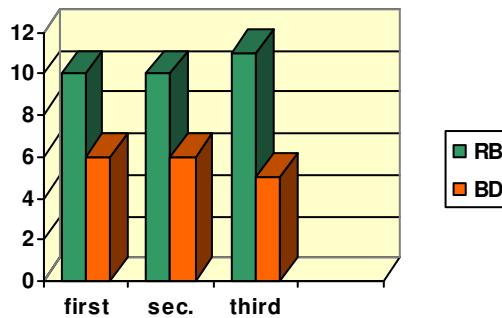


Figure 1. The results of final assessment

Following the interview applied at the entry into the kindergarten we found that a number of 4 children have a level of reached behavior and the remaining 12 children have a level of behavior in development. But after the interview at the end of the first semester we found that a number of 9 children have a reached behavioral level, and the remaining 7 children have a behavior in development level. The graphical representation of the results is carried out in the figure below:

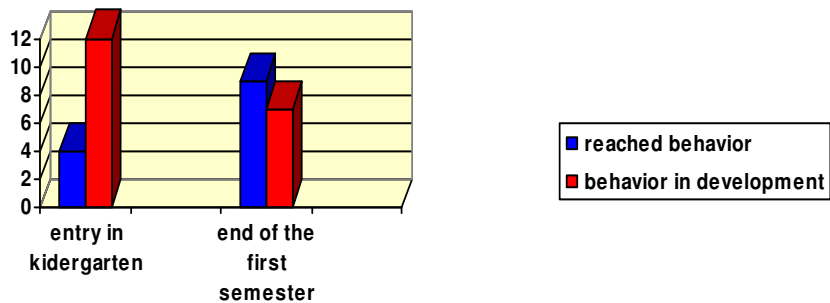


Figure 2. The results of the interview applied at the entry into kindergarten - and at the end of the first semester

The second method used in research was the systematic observation and was made by grid, under the aspect of the development of verbal, nonverbal, paraverbal language in order to check and evaluate the results obtained in the course of activities to educate the language by didactic games, but also through dramatizations, stories etc.

The interpretive results see a progressive increase in verbal, non-verbal and paraverbal language.

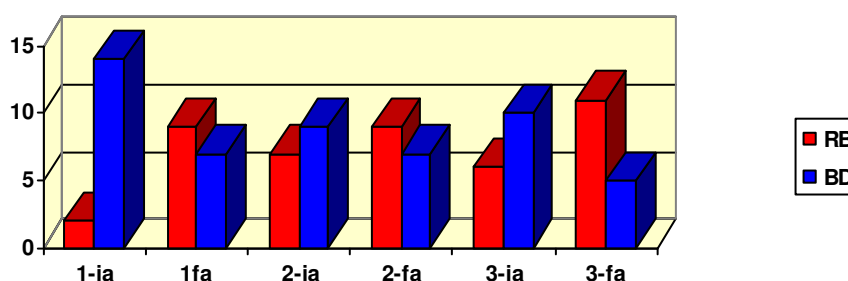


Figure 3. The comparative results at the first and final evaluation

Where: 1-ia = the first item, initial assessment
1-fa = the first item, final assessment
2-ia = the second item, initial assessment
2-fa = the second item, final assessment
3-ia = the third item, initial assessment
3-fa = the third item, final assessment

The research has shown the viability of the didactic game efficiency in the work of educating the language. Also from using the educational games described in the paper we found that the didactic games are effective ways of developing of teaching loads to children and educate the language. The efficiency of the games depended largely on how we knew to select them in relation to the concrete situations existing in the group and to formulate the right tasks based on the good knowledge of the children in terms of the reached level of language education and in terms of speech defects. As beautiful and light the games seem, so they must be well thought out and prepared by the educator.

Unlike other games, the didactic game is created by the educator, targeted and conditioned on the fulfillment of educational tasks and goes into

the teaching means being acquired gradually by children and then picked, processed and integrated into activities by children, influencing the systematical content of them.

The didactic game is an activity that is distinguished by its specific structure from the other activities with similar content, by the full unity between teaching load and action game that takes the form of fun and keep it permanently.

Conclusions

We conclude that the game helps the educator to organize the intellectual activity of children in a form as attractive and accessible and with clear efficiency.

The didactic game plays a large contribution in the state, strengthening, deepening, verification, systematization and the assessment of knowledge, and between the educational means occupies the most important place through the influence they exert on the deepest side of the child's personality.

Knowing that all the work of kindergarten focuses on the oral communication, the educator envisages the raising of children's language level of development. As we know, speech is a communicative activity that appropriates by accumulations gradually learned and systematizes through numerous practice.

The didactic game has a wide contribution to stimulating the development of attention, memory, imagination, to the shape of preschool child's personality. Of course language develops in strong interaction with the thinking and interactes each other closely, although they are not identical phenomena.

We believe that the didactic game for language education contributes by its content and pursued objectives through the three types of activities has a strong formative and informative value on preschool children. We propose to increase the strengths informative and formative of the didactic game in preschool through use in the course of mathematics and language education activities, in addition to traditional methods and active-participatory methods, methods that asks to the child the more effort thinking, imagination, memory, will, engaging him in this process of rediscovering knowledge.

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TEACHING LITERATURE BY MEANS OF GAMES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

It is generally accepted that games provide a stimulating teaching and learning classroom environment. In spite of their beneficial effect on students, most literature teachers avoid using them in their classes, especially at the academic level, because they tend to consider them to be time-consuming and inappropriate for literature classes. The main purpose of the research is to find students' perceptions of using games in literature classes and, starting from the results, to change teachers' opinions about the usefulness of game-based activities. Being stimulating for students, games will definitely improve the learning atmosphere in the classroom, and will lead to the development of the skills required by the literature syllabus.

Keywords: *literature classes, student-centred, active learning, games, higher education*

Paper Rationale

- a. Based on classroom observations, the research tries to highlight the possible advantages of games used during literature classes in higher education, starting from the assumption that these activities are not very common at such a level. The study aims to reveal the contribution of game-based classes to the improvement of teaching literature.

Theoretical foundation and related literature

It is well-known that games, as a form of organized play, have a great instructional potential that can be exploited during foreign language classes in general and literature classes in particular. They help learners to relate to others naturally and effectively, strengthen self-confidence and stimulate creative freedom in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. In a word, games provide all necessary conditions to develop communication skills and, as Hubbard et al. argue, “to practise all the different skills, although inevitably a game practising one skill will probably overlap with another skill or structure” (1991, p. 98).

In the specific case of literature classes in higher education, all virtues of games can be successfully put to use if teachers want to develop students' independent learning style, critical thinking and stylistic awareness when coping with authentic literary texts.

There are several misconceptions about using games in the instructional process. For instance, they are commonly considered to be suited for young students or are viewed as "an end-of-term activity or something to fill the last five minutes of a lesson" (Hubbard et al., 1991, p. 95). In reality, as games always provide an enjoyable atmosphere and motivate learners to engage in the classroom activities, they are recommended for all students and all types of classes, including the literature ones as well. Moreover, games can be systematically used "at all stages of practice from controlled to free" (Hubbard et al., 1991, p. 95) with a view to improving the teaching process itself. What each individual teacher has to do is to find the appropriate game for the appropriate age and level of his/her students' knowledge, and to include it in "a set of actions and activities that improve student outcome". (Hightower et al., 2011, p. 5).

As part of what researchers describe as active learning, games may become a valuable tool for implementing a new way of teaching literature in higher education. Explained by Felder and Brent, the concept of "active learning" refers to all teaching techniques related to a course, which "all students in a class session are called upon to do other than simply watching, listening and taking notes" (Felder and Brent, 2009, p. 2).

Used regularly and effectively, games make the activities devised for literature classes meaningful, attractive and challenging. Taking into account the instructional goal and the kind of reading text, the teacher may use different memory or guessing games if he/she wants to check students' knowledge about specific literary information. Furthermore, various reading games, which are more or less complex depending on the degree of difficulty of the text or task, are highly effective when the purpose is to consolidate or verify the understanding of a storyline. Such games may be:

- describe and arrange;
- information gap;
- matching;
- sorting;
- ordering and arranging;
- jigsaw text games;
- puzzle stories.

Role plays are always a good choice for impersonating literary characters while performances of plays and dramatization of stories may serve as effective tools for consolidation of knowledge opening the way to

free imagination and creativity. In this way, teachers put students “in the middle of the whole literary process, to make them creators rather than passive containers of boring theories” (Salasar, 1992, p. 31).

As drama-like activities usually require rehearsals accompanied by discussions about themes, ideas, characters involved in the plot, sequence of events, style etc., they help students to improve their ability to analyse and evaluate a text from a critical perspective. To put it differently, it means that learners “are beginning to get into the area of below-the-surface meanings, the appreciation of which is the true key to understanding and enjoyment of a work of literature” (Gwin, 1990, p. 12).

The use of games during literature classes at an academic level may contribute to the development of what Carter and Long define as a “personal growth model”. In other words, the game-based teaching approach can change the traditional way of studying literature into “a memorable, individual and collective experience” that will pave the way to a lasting positive attitude towards reading literature (1991, pp. 2, 3).

To sum up, literature classes may benefit from the instructional value of games due to the following qualities:

- Learners get highly motivated because they want to win the competition in which they are taking part; thus, they do their best to understand the rules of the game and to perform their tasks successfully.
- Games lower students’ anxiety enabling them to find solutions to the problems they have to solve without caring too much about making mistakes or being wrong.
- Providing a non-stressful atmosphere, games help students to become self-confident, creative and independent.
- When playing, students acquire or consolidate knowledge without consciously knowing it. (Schultz & Fisher, 1988). While doing the task, they aim to communicate and exchange opinions ignoring the instructional role of the game.
- As games are student-centred activities, they involve equal participation from both fast and slow learners.
- Games stimulate classroom interactions which create conditions for a better understanding of the information provided. Students experiment, discover and learn by working together as a team for a common goal.
- Activities based on games focus students’ attention on specific information which may be related to a variety of issues (themes, characters, narrative, style, etc.).
- Games can serve as review, reinforcement and enrichment of knowledge in a pleasant way.

- Well-designed and stimulating, game-based activities enable students to have the leading role and teachers to be facilitators of the learning process.

Methodology

The purpose of the research: demonstrating the positive impact of games on literature classes at academic level in order to improve teaching strategies.

The objectives of the research:

O1: identifying students' perception of the use of games in literature classes;

O2: identifying students' views on the advantages and disadvantages of games used during literature classes.

The hypothesis of the research: taking into account the fact that games are not frequently used in literature classes, students' perceptions of game-based classes could be a starting point for utilizing active learning strategies on a regular basis.

Description of the instruments

The present research made use of a questionnaire that included 10 items, out of which 8 were closed and 2 open, their aim being to investigate students' opinions about the benefits and the possible drawbacks of using games in literature classes in higher education.

Target group

The questionnaire was administered to a sample of 75 respondents specializing in Philology at the Faculty of Letters and Sciences within the Petroleum – Gas University of Ploiesti. All participants in the research attended the Comparative Literature courses and seminars in the second year of study.

Results and discussion

After analysing the students' answers, we may state that they generally have a favourable opinion about the instructional value of games in literature classes. This positive perception of games is evident in table no. 1, which shows that the majority of the respondents (66.67%) appreciate them as being educational whereas only a low percent does not admit their pedagogical role.

Table no. 1

Q1. Do you consider that games used during your literature classes are educational?	
Yes	66.67%
No	33.33%

As regards the answers to question two (*In your opinion, what are the benefits of using games in literature classes?*) most students justified their opinions by pointing out relevant pedagogical qualities of games like: a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom, challenging tasks, having fun, lack of stress, collaborative work etc. It should be noted that such points of view do not show enthusiasm about the traditional teaching style, but preference for literature classes which engage students actively in the learning process.

Due to the respondents' perception of games as stimulating classroom techniques, the results shown in table no. 2 are not surprising. A high percentage of students (74.67%) consider that game-based activities can eliminate the boredom of regular classes and that their teachers should make use of them more frequently when teaching literature.

Table no. 2

Q3. Teachers should use more games in the literature classes to avoid dullness and routine.	
Yes	74.67%
No	25.33%

The percentages in table no. 3 demonstrate that literature classes do not generally satisfy students' desire to take part in challenging activities based on games. According to the majority of the learners (69.34%), most of their literature teachers do not include games in their teaching strategies. Moreover, the teachers who use them to a certain extent (often or sometimes) represent very low percentages.

Table no. 3

Q4. How frequently do your teachers use games in literature classes?	
Often	13.33%
Sometimes	17.33%
Never	69.34%

The answers to question five reveal the impact of games on learners' attitude towards reading. As the table below indicates, the majority of the respondents (62.67%) believe that studying literature through games arouses their interest in reading the literary works required by their teachers.

Table no. 4

Q5. Do you consider games to be highly motivating in making students read the authors they have to study?

Yes	62.67%
No	37.33%

Students' answers to question six reflect their opinions about the strategy adopted by teachers when using games in their literature classes. The percentages presented in table no. 5 show that a large majority of students (82.67%) consider it important to understand what the rules and the final goal of the game are.

Table no. 5

Q6. If the teacher uses a game, does he/she clearly explain the aim and the rules of the game?

Yes	82.67%
No	17.33%

The respondents' answers to question seven show that they appreciate games as a means of consolidating the information they get during literature classes. As seen in the table below, more than half of the respondents claim that games helped them to consolidate their knowledge.

Table no. 6

Q7. Do you remember the newly taught knowledge better if acquired by means of a game?

Yes	53.33%
No	46.67%

As to questions eight and nine, they focus on the possible shortcomings of the use of games in literature classes. It is noteworthy that students maintain their favourable opinions about games and consequently the majority disagree to the issues raised by each question. Thus, more than half of the respondents do not perceive games as a disturbing factor in the activity they perform in class (table no. 7). Equally, 53.33% of them do not consider games to be ineffective and a waste of time (table no. 8). The relatively high percentages of students (45.33% and 46.67%) who admit these shortcomings of games may be explained by the fact that such classes tend to become noisy if the teacher does not monitor them effectively and tactfully.

Table no. 7

Q8. Do you think that games may distract the students from the learning process if used during literature classes?

Yes	45.33%
No	54.67%

Table no. 8

Q9. Do you consider games to be time-consuming and useless?

Yes	46.67%
No	53.33%

The answers to question ten (*In your opinion, what are the disadvantages of using games during literature classes?*) refer to several drawbacks that need consideration on the part of teachers. Among the most relevant opinions are the following:

- game-based classes can be noisy, inevitably disturbing the atmosphere of the learning process;
- not all students want to collaborate and rely on other members of the group to complete a task;
- some students are unreliable and provide incorrect answers;
- slow students cannot solve the task during the time allocated to the game.

Although games are not frequently used by teachers in teaching literature, it is remarkable that students were able to point out the most common dysfunctions of the classroom games.

Conclusions

The present analysis clearly shows that students are really enthusiastic about the use of games in literature classes, even if most of their teachers do not include game-based activities in their classroom strategies. The fact that students appreciate these activities proves that they are aware of their educational value, considering them meaningful, challenging and fun.

It is worth mentioning that students perceive games as a means of developing and consolidating their knowledge of literature in a pleasant atmosphere. Moreover, they consider that games foster interest in reading in and outside the classroom, which shows that games may contribute to the formation of long-lasting habits. It depends on the teachers to encourage this attitude towards reading by adopting classroom strategies meant to satisfy students' needs. One way of doing this is to use games, which are ideal for

making students become active, responsive and fully engaged in studying literature.

As games are complex activities, they can have a psychological impact on students by developing feelings such as self-esteem, self-confidence and the satisfaction of being part of a team. Therefore, they may create positive relationships between the teacher and his/her students or among students themselves. The cognitive features of games, which involve discussion, decision, action, problem solving and guessing, stimulate students' thinking. All these characteristics recommend games as a good choice for practising literature in higher education.

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MODALITIES TO STIMULATE THE MEMORIES OF THE PREADOLESCENTS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE CONSTRUCTIVIST PARADIGM

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Abstract

Taking into consideration the new particularities of the pre-adolescent student's memory as well as the new educational requirements which the student confronts once he goes to the secondary cycle, the teacher must permanently train and stimulate a logical memory of the students and create optimal condition which ensure the students' proper learning. Although to this age, the memory gains logical virtues, there are cases of students learning by heart even in the preadolescence, risking situations of tiredness, having as result the diminishing of the capacity of memorization and of concentrated attention, also disinterest for the school activities. The present study aims to create an adequate strategy for the optimisation of the learning method of the students, according to the principles of the constructivist paradigm.

Key words: *preadolescence, constructivist paradigm, school adaptation, school learning*

1. Paper Rationale

One of the periods in which frequent difficulties of school adaptation are registered is pre-adolescence, especially the beginning of pre-adolescence, which coincides in students with the passage from elementary to secondary school and which on the foundation of a fragile emotional and psychic balance as well as personality in formation, numerous adaptation behaviors are assimilated and long lasting behavioral patterns are formed, which will be transferred in future activities.

Taking into consideration the new particularities of the pre-adolescent student's *memory* as well as the new educational requirements which the student confronts once he goes to the secondary cycle, the teacher must permanently train and stimulate a logical memory of the students and create optimal condition which ensure the students' proper learning. Although to this age, the memory gains logical virtues, there are cases of students learning

by heart even in the preadolescence, risking situations of tiredness, having as result the diminishing of the capacity of memorization and of concentrated attention, also disinterest for the school activities.

2. Theoretical foundation and related literature

The quantitative and qualitative modification of the requests and exigencies in the gymnasium school activity – the increase of the knowledge volume to be assimilated, the diversity of information, the contact with various teaching styles, requires for different intellectual activities – determines changes in the characteristics of memory, the formation of a more efficient learning style, adapted to the new exigencies. As results of the new requirements, the volume of the memory and its active and intentional character are developed (T. Crețu, 2001). The active character of the memory represents the attempt to transform the experience and the emotions according to the established objectives; it does not mean just reproducing exactly the information. The memorization knowledge is confronted with the necessities of the preadolescent, leading to a new organisation of the material in a superior form. Thus, due to the mnemonic processes, cognitive units are born, presenting a more complex structure comparing to the component information.

The specific forms of memory existing in the preadolescence are: the voluntary memory, the logic memory and the short time memory. Concomitantly with the increased capacity of the voluntary memory, the spontaneous memory is developed. There are researchers that consider that the peak is reached around the age of 11 to 13 (T. Crețu, 2001, p. 279). After the age of 12, the very exact, mechanical memory, characterised by memorising the information often without an internal, logical structure or without understanding the content of the material and using the very exact reproduction of the content of the lessons from the manuals, starts to be gradually replaced with the logic memory. Achieving the logic memory depends on reaching a certain level of development for the thinking and attention, in order to permit the observation of the essential in the context. This form of memory, a more productive one, is based on understanding the memorised content, operates with logical schemes and ensures authentic learning, with the possibility to transfer and use the information in various situations.

It is observed a modification in the attitude of the preadolescent toward the memorization process (U. Șchiopu, E. Verza, 1997). The preadolescent is preoccupied with the development of the capacity to observe the essential and reproduce the knowledge in original and clear forms, considering “learning by heart” a sign of intellectual weakness, despite the fact that has

the ability to easily memorise abstract contents and things he does not understand.

The memorization, as a psychic process that permits the fixation, the conservation and the actualization (recognition and reproducing) the information and the previous experiences, presents qualitative and quantitative transformations to the level of all its component processes. Although the active and selective characters of the memory are present from the fixation stage, the acquisition of information is achieved through a steadfast reproduction of the content, especially around the age of 10 – 11, when there was observed an increased capacity of memorizing meaningless words and images. Preserving information gains an active and dynamic character around the age of 11-12, when the preadolescent has the capacity to organise memorised information on logical criteria, to select based on the importance of the information what is to be memorized, creating a structural reorganisation of the previous materials and including it in new systems of connections. The preadolescent starts to acknowledge the importance of repetition as an efficient process of memorising and use it before evaluations (T. Crețu, 2001, p. 280). The reproduction, as a method of updating and connecting the previous information, is, in this period, dependant on the way the information was organised and structured during fixation and storage. The capacity of reorganising the information depending on the cognitive requirements is formed toward the end of preadolescence.

Analysing the report between memory and learning, R. Gagne describes the following four staged of the learning process (M.E. Druță, 2004, p. 60):

- the reception stage, when attention is given to a certain stimulation, differentiating it in perception from other stimulations;
- the appropriation stage, when the information is assimilated and the content is appropriated;
- the storage stage, when the information is preserved for a shorter or longer period of time;
- the actualization stage, representing the extraction of content from the memory, in a voluntary act, deliberately or in an involuntary unorganised act, in order to use it.

The actualisation may be realised in two modalities: recognition and reproduction. Unless recognition, which implies perception processes and a superposition of the actual pattern on the pattern from the memory of the subject, the reproduction is more complex, involving the intervention of thinking processes and a mental confrontation of the patterns with the aim of extracting the optimum one. R. Gagne differentiates inside the reproduction the remembering of verbal information from the actualisation of the intellectual skills, which require a learning transfer, because it solicits the manifestation of performances in new

situations. The strategies used by the student in remembering verbal information are different from those used in the actualisation of the intellectual skills, aiming to: establish correspondences, connections and classifications, use rules and solve problems.

The fundamental problem in the learning based on the memory is, as I. Neacșu (1999, 2010) considers, not in stocking the information, but in actualising it. The factors that facilitate the retrieving of information are: the power of the subject to dissociate, manifested at the moment of receiving the task to reproduce the information; the availability threshold of the cognitive structure, resulting from its concurrence with other formed or solicited cognitive structures, during the same period of time; the attitude of the subject in front of the didactic task; the psychological and emotional characteristics of the subject; the characteristics of the environment; the nature of the mediators in the memorization and the actualization processes – genetic mediators (supra/ subordinate ideas), thematic mediators (ideas that may be classified), mediators based on the report part – unity or unity – part; the methods and techniques used for the memorization and the fixation of the information.

Constructivist paradigm rehabilitates the student's role in learning, knowledge being specific to age, but also based on the own way in which the student integrates, explains and interprets reality, based on his own cognitive experience, in a first step, and then, moving toward objectification, based on collaboration, cooperation with the others (E. Joița, 2006).

Constructivist approach of knowledge and learning aims to achieve two types of objectives: students' understanding of highly-abstract concepts from different areas, but also the implementation of formative and educational dimensions (learning abilities, motivations, interests, attitudes, will).

Knowing and respecting the age and individual particularities of the students is one of the classical principles specific to the traditional didactics, which, together with all the others principles, contributes to an optimal achievement of the aims of the instruction process, serving to an instruction centred on the teacher and on the informational content and ensuring an exact, active and guided teaching. From another point of view, researches upon the constructivist approach of instruction identified a series of principles related to modalities of centring the teaching on the student, principles that may be considered specific norms for the application of the general classic principles. Thus, the numerous principles of constructivist instructions may be considered particularizations or application norms to the principle of knowing and respecting the age particularities of the students (L. Tăușan, 2012).

A synthesis upon the research and the contribution of the constructivist principles applied to education is offered by Elena Joița (2006, pp. 93-96), illustrating a variety of norms with a role in regulating the projection, the

achievement and the evaluation of learning. They are presented under the form of prescriptions, recommendations and requirements, resulted after a generalisation process of the constructivist experiments in the classrooms. From the assemble of positions referring to the principles of constructivist education presented by the author (Lebow-1993, Jonassen-1993, Savery&Duffy-1995, Brooks& Brooks1999, Doolittle-1999, Boyle-2000, Colburn-2000, Bencze-2002), we chose to select a few contributions that, in our opinion, may serve to a more profound understanding of the possibilities to apply the constructivism in the classroom work.

Principles of constructivist learning according to Dolittle (1999, cf. Joița, 2006, p. 95):

- Learning must be placed in real life situations;
- Learning is a result of social negotiations;
- Knowledge and skill are better formed in real experiences;
- The scientific knowledge using the understanding process has priority in front of the traditional teaching;
- The students self-evaluate their achieved formative level and their level of processes and competencies;
- The students are encouraged to correct themselves, to organise themselves and to reach the metacognition;
- The teacher is the person facilitating the learning, stimulates, encourages multiple perspectives and representations of the study content and offers multiple materials.

Adherence to the constructivist principles of instruction and learning is increasingly present in the Romanian education, after the major education reform, and it requires the knowledge and the implementation in educational practice of some basic dimensions of constructivist learning, which emphasize the student's central role and the structuring of teaching-learning-assessment, starting from the students' needs, abilities and experiences.

3. Methodology

The purpose of the research: identifying the particularities of the memorization/ learning modality for the students at the debut of the preadolescence, in order to propose strategies for its optimisation.

The objectives of the research:

O1: identifying the particularities in the memorization/ learning method at the debut of the preadolescence;

O2: identifying the difficulties of the preadolescent students during the learning process;

O3: proposing strategies for the optimisation of the learning method of the students, according to the principles of the constructivist paradigm.

The hypothesis of the research: knowing the particularities in the memorizing/ learning method of the students at the debut of the preadolescence permits the creation of adequate strategies for its optimisation.

Description of the instrument

During our investigation, we used a questionnaire destined to identify the difficulties in school adaptation for the preadolescents. We turns to advantage the item describing the manner the students assimilate information during the 5th grade, using the mechanical memorization or the logical memorization.

Target group

The questionnaire was applied to a sample of 100 students in the 5th grade, during the first semester of study.

4. Results and discussion

Using the variable in the questionnaire referring to *the manner the students assimilate information*, predominantly through mechanical memorization or logical memorization, we obtained the following results (Table no. 1):

Table no.1: How do you learn, now, in the 5th grade?

	Frequencies	%
I mostly learn the lesson “by heart” (especially when I do not understand)	22	44.9
I mostly learn logically (I try to understand the connections between pieces of information)	27	55.1
Total	49	100.0

The data show the fact that the tendency of learning by heart the content of the lessons still persists during the 5th grade. Thus, almost 50% of the students affirm that they often learn the lessons using the mechanical memorization. The persistence of this habit may generate tiredness, the decline of the memory capacity and the decline of concentrating the attention, resulting disinterest for the school activities.

Considering the modifications in the school activity – the increase of disciplines and the increase of the difficulty of the content - is required a support for the students in forming a new learning style, adapted to the school exigencies. The teacher must deliver to the student a new style of intellectual learning, based on assimilating adequate learning methods and techniques:

- taking notes;

- modalities of learning efficiently in concordance with the volume of the content to be assimilated.

In order to avoid the situations when the students learn by heart, it is necessary to facilitate the understanding of the content of the lessons, establishing connections with the previous knowledge. The process of understanding is at the core of forming a logical memorization, favouring the durability of the knowledge. The integration of information in already existing conceptual systems ensures a solid understanding and learning. The possibility of achieving the integration depends on the knowledge system the subject already possesses.

To facilitate the integration of the new knowledge in the system of the existing ones, the following are recommended (Salavastru, 2004, p.62):

- realising and using schemes to represent the relation or hierarchy of concepts;
- using analogies with similar contents acquired before;
- using pre-established organisers, which represent the ideas presented by the teacher before the system of knowledge which is to be assimilated, having a superior level of abstraction and generality, with the purpose of realising a pre-established orientation, making ideas more accessible, offering a general image on what is next to be learned.

The familiarity of the students with the techniques of organising the memorized material represents another condition for an efficient memorization:

- discovering the connections characteristic to the material to be memorized;
- understanding ideas in the text;
- formulating a series of questions – answers for the assimilated content.

To keep the knowledge its repetition is required, through an active participation of the student, which supposes:

- understanding thoroughly by realising associations with previous knowledge;
- establishing precise and varied goals for each revision;
- solving problems, doing applications, practical work, which require the use of the information assimilated.

The motivation of learning, its aim, represents another factor that can favour a serious memorization. From this point of view, the role of the teacher is to cultivate the intrinsic motivation, containing: the pleasure to study, the cognitive interest, and the desire to become competent in a domain.

The acknowledgement by the students of the results, of the degree of accomplishment of the objectives has a special importance in the self-regulation and the stimulation of learning activity. Using a continuous feed-

back, the students obtain the confirmation of their effort. For the evaluative act to contribute to the learning optimization, it is necessary:

- to centre the evaluation as much as possible on the positive results;
- to diversify the evaluation methods and techniques;
- to respect the same evaluation criteria for all the students;
- to put accent on the formative evaluation;
- to help students to understand the role of the evaluative act;
- to help the student acknowledging the requirements and the criteria of the evaluation, as a base in forming the capacity for self-evaluation.

5. Conclusions

All the changes from the preadolescence (biophysical, intellectual, emotional, moral, social) must be well known by teachers and parents to better integrate them in understanding the preadolescents and adopting the most adequate solutions in fighting the educational difficulties, especially in the period of entering the middle school. Knowing *the age particularities*, the specific of this stage in the development of the students, including resources, motivations, adaptation mechanism, psycho-physical transformations and their consequences, will avoid an overstressing the limited possibilities of this stage and will offer an improved understanding of the behavioural manifestations and reactions of the preadolescents.

Knowing the age and individual particularities of the preadolescent students is an essential condition of ensuring the instruction centred on students – one of the dimensions of the constructivist paradigm that rehabilitates the role of the student in education, considering knowledge as specific to the age and also based on an own model where the student integrates, explains and interprets the reality, based on his own cognitive knowledge.

Based on the above information, the most adequate strategies for the educational practice may be adopted, answering to the necessity of adapting the school to the necessities and the possibilities of the student, as a dimension of the constructivist paradigm.

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THE QUALITY OF ATTACHMENT RELATIONSHIPS AND ALEXITHYMIA

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Abstract: *Alexithymia is a cognitive and affective deficit in processing, adjustment and verbalizing of emotions. Numerous studies have demonstrated the role of precarious early relationship with caregivers in developing alexithymia. The main aim of this study was to analyze the relationship between alexithymia and the type and quality of attachment system in adolescence. The assumptions we have intended to test in our study were: (1) The level of alexithymia is negatively associated with secure attachment style; (2) There is a positive correlation between the alexithymia and insecure attachment styles. The research was conducted on a sample of 174 students from high school, whose mean age is 16.55, of which 101 boys (58.05%) and 73 girls (41.95%). For the measurement of the variables investigated in this correlational study, were used Twenty-Item Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20) and Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ). The results of this research show that there is a negative association between alexithymia and secure attachment style and a positive association with two of the three insecure styles (fearful and preoccupied). The study highlights a relevant difference between boys and girls, in terms of the relationship between alexithymia and attachment style*

Key words: *attachment styles, insecure attachment, secure attachment, alexithymia, emotional regulation strategies*

Literature review

Alexithymia is a concept recently used in psychiatry and psychology. This concept was introduced in 1973 by Peter Sifneos, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, to describe cognitive and affective impairment in processing, adjusting and describing emotions, which have been observed in patients with psychosomatic and psychiatric conditions.

At the same time, other researchers have observed similar characteristics among patients with post-traumatic stress, drug addiction or

eating disorders. Gradually, the interest in investigating alexithymia has increased in the field of psychiatry, but also in psychology.

According to Taylor & Bagby (2013), alexithymia is characterized by the following:

- Difficulty to identify the emotions;
- Difficulty to discriminate between physiological sensations and emotions caused by emotional activation
- Difficulty of finding adequate words to describe emotions;
- The lack of reveries, limited imagination;
- Specific ideational content, predominant concern for the concrete details of external events (objective cognitive style) and little or no concern for subjective significance of these events.

Most researchers believe that alexithymia is a dimensional personality trait that varies in severity from individual to individual, and has high stability over time. However, there are recent studies (Messina, Beadle & Paradiso, 2014; Aleman, 2005) which show that alexithymia may manifest as a transient associated distress caused by various medical disorders and chronic diseases.

As a conclusion, alexithymia is a cognitive and affective deficit in processing, adjustment and verbalizing emotions. (Taylor & Bagby, 2013; Karukivi, 2011; Sifneos, 2000).

Etymologically, the concept of alexithymia comes from the greek term "alexisthymos" which means "no words for emotions" (Taylor, Bagby & Parker, 1997). Emotional Blindness is another intuitive expression, suggesting the inability of the alexithymic person to recognize other people's emotions. Although the characteristics of alexithymia were first noted in patients with various psychiatric disorders, further research was shown that alexithymia has a prevalence of up to 10% at non-clinical population (Levant, Hall, Williams & Hasan, 2009; Aleman, 2005).

Many researchers have been aimed to find out the prevalence of alexithymia in adolescents. Alexithymia is considered a major risk factor, especially in adolescence, given its implications (low social skills, which affect interpersonal relationships and the social adaptation)

Eastabrook (2013) showed that prevalence rates ranging from 10% to 29% for girls, and from 7% to 18% for boys. Horton, Gewirtz & Kreutter (1993,) in a study on 264 adolescents, also showed alexithymia is higher in girls than in boys. However, several studies have shown that alexithymia is found more frequently in boys than in girls (Levant and al., 2009), while other studies didn't find any differences between girls and boys. (Karukivi, 2011; Montebanocci, Codispoti, Baldaro et al., 2004).

Alexithymia is a multi-causal disorder. The literature shows that alexithymia may be due to deficits or lesions in the brain (Messina, Beadle &

Paradiso, 2014; Aleman, 2005), to early adverse experiences (childhood), or to inappropriate connections with caregivers (Hussain & Ahmed, 2014; Aust, Heuser & Bajbouj, 2013; Kooiman, Vellinge, Spinhoven et al., 2004).

A significant number of studies have demonstrated the role of precarious relationship with caregivers in developing alexithymia. These relationships can take different forms: from disturbances and disruptions in the relationship caregiver-child characterized by emotional neglect, affective responses in constant communication poor and flawed, discouraging expressing emotion to overprotection of the child (intrusion, lack of autonomy of the child) and emotional abuse or physical (Hussain & Ahmed, 2014; Aust, Heuser & Bajbouj, 2013; Karukivi, 2011; Montebanocci, Codispoti, Baldaro et al., 2004). Montebanocci, Codispoti, Baldaro et al. (2004) highlights the influence of inadequate attachment relationships on emotion regulation capacities.

Based on attachment relationships, the child builds "internal working models", that Bowlby defined (2011) as „mental representations about themselves and others that will influence the persons' entire relational system, throughout life”.

Depending on the manner of interaction between mother and child, Ainsworth identified three patterns of attachment, namely: secure, avoidant and anxious-ambivalent (Ainsworth, 1989). Later, she also spoke about disorganized attachment (Bowlby, 2011).

Bartholomew & Horowitz (1991) have developed a new model of attachment styles, based on the original theory of Bowlby (2011), who postulated the existence of two internal working models: the self and others. Both, self representation and others' representation can be positive or negative. By this dichotomy, the two researchers have obtained four specific attachment styles. Thus, the person may perceive itself as worthy of attention, love and support of others or not. The others can be seen as trustworthy, available and providing support, or, on the contrary, unattractive, unable to trust them.

According to Bartholomew & Horowitz (1991), secure attachment is characterized by a sense of personal worth, and the belief that others are trustworthy and responsible. In this case, self-evaluation and others' evaluation is positive. Preoccupied attachment is characterized by self devaluation and positive assessment of others. For this reason, the person wishes to obtain acceptance of others, which he values and on which he depends. Fearful attachment is characterized by both, the devaluation of oneself and of others, that he considers repulsive and unreliable. By avoiding involvement in relationships with others, the person protects himself by their anticipated reactions. Dismissing attachment is characterized by a sense of personal value, the positive evaluation of oneself and negative evaluation of

others. Such persons try to protect themselves from possible disappointment by avoiding close relationships and maintaining a sense of independence and self-sufficiency (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Both fearful and dismissing attachment reflect an avoidance of intimacy, due to the negative image they have about others.

According Cassidy & Shaver (2008), the search of proximity to the attachment figure persists throughout life, even though the behavior varies by age and context. Wearden et al. (2005) state that attachment style influences social interactions throughout life. A longitudinal study conducted over 20 years by Wearden, Lamberton, Crook & Walsh (2005) showed that 72% of young adults had the same pattern of attachment like in childhood. This is due to the internal representations, patterns of communication and way of relating to others, which were learned in early relationships with caregivers.

The Attachment theory states that the attachment system provide the context in which emotional regulation strategies are developed (Lang, 2010; Muntean, 2006). When the child's need for attachment is activated, emotions are strongly activated too. To reduce activation, the caregiver try to calm the child. He must be responsive. Thus, through this interaction, the child learns self-regulation models (Muntean, 2006).

This study aims to analyze the relationship between alexithymia and the type and quality of attachment system in adolescence

The assumptions we intend to test in our study are: (1) The level of alexithymia is negatively associated with secure attachment style; (2) There is a positive correlation between the alexithymia and insecure attachment styles.

Procedure

The research was conducted on a sample of 174 students from high school, whose mean age is 16.55, of which 101 boys (58.05%) and 73 girls (41.95%). For the measurement of the investigated variables in this correlational study, were used Twenty-Item Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20) and Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ), whose psychometric properties are described below.

Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20) was developed by Taylor, Bagby and Parker in early 1980s and it's the most used instrument for measuring alexithymia among adults and adolescents. Many studies confirmed the good psychometric properties of TAS-20 (Karukivi, 2011). The third version of the instrument (TAS-20) is the latest and most used method to measure alexithymia in current research (Karukivi, 2011; Parker, Taylor & Bagby, 2003). TAS 20 contains 20 items that have been translated and adapted for Romanian population (Morariu, Ayearst, Taylor, & Bagby, 2013).

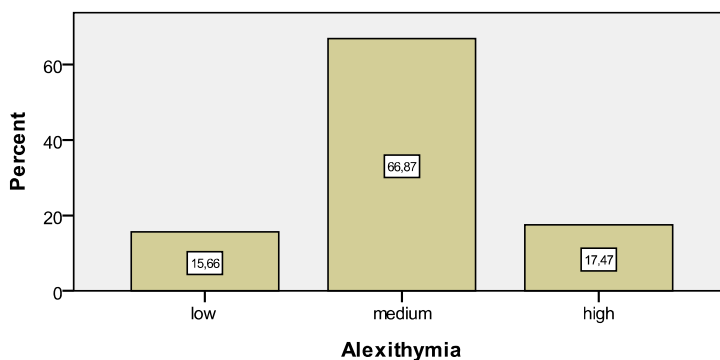
TAS-20 assesses alexithymia, according to the theoretical model, as a multifaceted construct, represented by the 3 subscales: difficulties to identify feelings (DIF), difficulty to describe feelings (DDF) and externally oriented style of thinking (EOT). The assessment is made on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Cronbach Alpha for TAS-20 in this study is satisfactory ($\alpha = 0.80$), DIF and DDF subscales demonstrated a good internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.81$; $\alpha = 0.76$). However, EOT scale that measures the external oriented thinking has not proved satisfactory internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.41$), confirming the results of previous studies (Kooiman, Spinhoven & Trijsburg, 2002).

Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ) it's based on the theoretical model of attachment, developed by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), which assumes the existence of four attachment styles: secure, preoccupied, dismissing and fearful. The questionnaire, developed by Van Oudenhoven, Hofstra & Bakker (2007), contains 22 items. The assessment is made on a Likert 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, strongly agree = 5). Items are distributed in four subscales corresponding to the four attachment styles. The score is calculated separately for each subscale, the highest score indicating the person's predominant attachment style. Cronbach Alpha for ASQ and its scales showed good internal consistency, as follows: 0.72 for secure attachment; 0.72 for fearful attachment, 0.81 for preoccupied attachment, and 0.59 for dismissing attachment.

Results

As the descriptive analysis reveals, alexithymia is quite significant to the adolescents from our sample, as we can observe in the Graph below. About 84% from participants show a medium or high level of alexithymia. This is a quite worrying reality, given the many consequences of alexithymia for adolescents' interpersonal relationships.



Graph. 1 Distribution of Alexithymia for the whole sample

The results show that there are not statistically significant differences between girls and boys in terms of alexithymia, $t(164) = 0.22$, $p > .05$, as inferred from Table 1.

However, a subscale analysis proves that there is a difference between girls and boys regarding one of the characteristics of alexithymia, externally oriented thinking. The boys have higher scores ($M = 20.87$) than girls ($M = 18.43$) for this feature, the difference between the two areas being statistically significant: $t(168) = 3.89$, $p < .001$. The indicator shows that Cohen's d effect size for the difference between means is moderate ($d = 0.6$). (Table 1.)

	Gender	N	M	SD	t	Df	P	D
Alexithymia	F	72	52,18	12,48	.22	164	.82	-
	M	94	52,60	11,43				
Difficulties to identify feelings (DIF)	F	73	18,31	6,56	-.90	170	.36	-
	M	99	17,41	6,41				
Difficulty to describe feelings (DDF)	F	72	15,36	5,01	-.91	170	.36	-
	M	100	14,67	4,78				
Externally oriented thinking (EOT).	F	73	18,43	3,90	3.89	168	<.001	0.6
	M	97	20,87	4,13				

Table 1. Differences between boys and girls concerning alexithymia and its dimensions

The results refute previous studies showing that boys get a higher score than girls (Levant et al., 2009; Troisi et al., 2001; Taylor, Bagby & Parker, 1997). However, other research showed no differences between girls and boys (Eastabrook, 2013; Karukivi, 2011; Montebanocci et al., 2004). Regarding the externally oriented thinking dimension of alexithymia, the significant difference between boys and girls revealed in this study confirms the results of previous research which show that this characteristic is more pronounced at boys than girls (Montebanocci et al., 2004).

Specifics of the socialization process of boys could be a possible explanation for their predominant focus on external reality and less on internal experiences, compared to girls. It is known that girls are more

encouraged to express their feelings, to be empathetic, while boys are taught to master the expression of their emotions.

Resuming, different environmental influences on the boys in the socialization process might be responsible for their low availability to analyze their thoughts, emotions and internal experiences (Eastabrook, 2013).

In order to test the assumption „The level of alexithymia is negatively associated with secure attachment style”, we performed a Spearman correlation, because the variable „secure attachment style” it is not normally distributed.

The result shows there is a medium negative association between the two variables ($\rho = -0.38$, $p < .001$, $r^2 = .14$). The coefficient of determination show that 14% of the variance of one of the variables is explained by the variation values of the other variable. This result is confirmed by numerous previous studies (Beshara et al., 2014; Beshara & Khajavi, 2013; Lang, 2010; Gil et al., 2008; Jorgensen et al., 2007)

In conclusion, if the adolescents' image about himself and others has more positive and realistic elements (secure attachment style), the difficulties of identifying and describing his emotions are lower. This can be interpreted based on the attachment theory, which states that emotional adjustment and quality of attachment relationship are closely related (Bowlby, 2011; Prior & Glaser, 2006). More accurate, attachment style influences the characteristics of emotion regulation strategies. Thus, if the teenagers have had early positive experiences with the caregivers, if they have been encouraged to talk about their emotions and feelings, and they felt secure, they became more willing to consider their own thoughts (Bowlby, 2011). Consequently, their capacity of emotional adjustment was not affected, on the contrary, it has been appropriate developed (Cassidy & Shaver, 2008).

A Pearson correlation was performed to investigate the association between alexithymia and preoccupied and fearful attachment. To test the relation between alexithymia and dismissing attachment we calculated a Spearman correlation.

	Alexithymia				
	r	rho	p	N	R ²
Fearful attachment	.39***		.00	166	.15
Preoccupied attachment	.32***		.00	163	.10
Dismissing attachment		.08	.29	164	.006

*** Correlation is significant at the .001

Table 2. The correlations between alexithymia and insecure attachment

According to the results presented in Table 2, only two insecure attachment styles shows statistically significant association with alexithymia: fearful attachment style ($r = .39, p < .001$) and preoccupied attachment style ($r = .32, p < .001$). There is not a significant correlation between dismissing attachment style and alexithymia ($\rho = .08, p > .05$).

The determination coefficient shows that 15% of the variance of one of the variables explain the variation in the values of the other variable.

A comparative analysis between boys and girls highlights a very interesting difference regarding the association between attachment and alexithymia.

	Boys			Girls		
	Alexithymia			Alexithymia		
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Secure attachment	-,451**	,000	92	-,140	,250	69
Fearful attachment	,277**	,007	94	,440**	,000	72
Preoccupied attachment	,281**	,007	91	,341**	,003	72
Dismissing attachment	,184	,080	92	,061	,611	72

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3. Comparative analysis between boys and girls, regarding the association attachment - alexithymia

As it can be seen in Table 3, for girls, the negative association between alexithymia and secure attachment is not statistically significant ($r = -.140, p = .250$), while for boys, there is a very strong negative correlation between the two variables. Instead, the associations between insecure attachment styles and alexithymia are stronger in the case of girls, not of the boys.

Discusions and conclusions

The results of this research confirms the existence of an association between alexithymia and the attachment style.

Thus, there is a negative association between alexithymia and secure attachment style and a positive association with two of the three insecure styles (fearful and preoccupied). The result is consistent with previous research which showed that people with high levels of alexithymia have a style of insecure attachment (Beshara & Khajavi, 2013; Vanheule et al., 2007), characterized by a negative self image and anxiety in relationships with others or the tendence to avoid them.

According with theories about etiology of alexithymia, the emotional regulation strategies are influenced by emotional development and by the quality of attachment relationships (Hussain & Ahmed, 2014; Aust, Heuser & Bajbouj, 2013; Bowlby, 2011).

Although a causal relationship can not be demonstrated by correlations, we might assume that the style of attachment could explain the variation in values of alexithymia. This assumption is based on one of the etiological explanatory models of alexithymia, which shows that insecure attachment style has a negative influence on the emotional regulation capacity (Montebarocci et al., 2004).

Vanheule et al. (2007) state that emotional regulation strategies develop at the same time with building of self-image. These emotional regulation strategies depend on the internal working model that the child builds in his relationship with the attachment figure. If a child develops negative mental representations of self and others, due to inappropriate relationships with attachment figures, his emotional regulation capacities are lower.

Although this study did not show a significant difference between boys and girls in terms of level of alexithymia, however, it has highlighted a relevant difference in terms of the relationship between alexithymia and attachment style. According to results, emotional regulation capacities of boys are more strongly influenced by the secure attachment. Positive relationships with caregivers favor the development of positive internal working models. These models will facilitate the emotional expressiveness, sensitivity to others and their ability to identify others' emotions. Girls seem to be more susceptible to insecure attachment styles, especially those that facilitate the development of a negative self-image (fearfurl attachment and preoccupied attachment). These negative internal models will increase the risk of developing maladaptive emotional regulation strategies.

Alexithymia is a severe and persistent disorder. If this disorder is not early identified, and preventive measures are not established, alexithymia produces negative effects on the individual's interpersonal relationships.

This study has some limitations. The most important ones are the following:

- Small sample size, which prevents generalization of the results on the whole population of teenagers
- Although research shows that there is an association between alexithymia and attachment style, however, a causal relationship can not be established between these variables, due to the correlational nature of this study.
- The level of alexithymia and the type of attachment were evaluated based on self-reporting of participants, which implies a risk of misleading information (Karukivi, 2011; Kooiman et al, 1998) or of social desirability.

However, the results of this study may help to a better understanding of the issues that are associated with difficulties in emotional regulation that adolescents encounter, in order to develop strategies for therapeutic interventions or educational programs for prevention and mitigation these difficulties.

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EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION AN ISSUE WITH CRITICAL EFFECTS IN CONTEMPORARY WORLD. NECESSITY TO RECONSIDER THE INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

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*A major European crisis knocking at the gates of our times.
The emigration process crises that involving
the thorny issue of immigrants' integration
became a major issue of our days.*

Abstract: *The current and acute migration issue with its consequences on educational policy and, particularly, on intercultural education is the topic of this paper. The different types of migration together with their determinant factors are presented and analyzed. The double status as possible emigrants and host for immigrants are seen as milestones of developing an effective strategy of a new approach of the intercultural education. The importance of developing of an intercultural competency for each person of the world is presented. The paper intends to be a plea for a more consistent concern for this issue in these times when a new crisis knocks at the gate of humanity. The necessity of being aware that a global vision of the education became necessary is highlighted.*

Keywords: *intercultural education, intercultural competence, migration, emigrant- immigrant status, educational policy*

1. The migration - a phenomenon which escalates. Causes of a stronger process of emigration – immigration. Brief theoretical approach

The unequal development of different countries of the world, together with the human being's thirst for knowledge, novelty, and adventure have determined for centuries a migration process. The last decades of the previous century and, increasingly the first years of this new millennium have stressed this phenomenon.

Theories about the main causes of the migration process have been developed. These theories distinguish between two main categories of determinant factors, called in terms of *push and pull factors*.

The first category (push factors) is considered mostly as determinants for the emigration side of the process of migration. Different specific aspects, within a particular country, act as determinants of people to leave their origin countries for other land. The most important aspect seems to be the economic state of the origin country and they determine the so called economic or labour migration. The impossibility to find a job or the significant difference in wage rates appear as motives of a number of people to try to find permanently or temporarily a job in another country.

There are non-economic push factors as well. Among them, persecution, abuse, bullying, oppression, ethnic cleansing or even genocide and risks of civilians during wars and dictatorship are enumerated as possible push factors. Some of them became over dimensioned in the last period and this is the topic of another chapter.

There are also pull factors that act from outside as a kind of attractiveness for people to go away, in order to find a new life, a dreamed well-being. The availability of jobs, even unequal paid or being under the solicitors' qualification, but anyway with higher rates of income compared with the origin country, are aspects that function as pull factors.

Non-economic pull factors are to be highlighted as well. Between them education seems to be the primary one. But, a clarification is necessary in this point: international students, with this specific status are not considered emigrants-immigrants. The wider possibility to accede to education can be a pull factor for emigration itself. A lot of families leave their origin countries with the dream to be able to offer to their children a proper level of education, more opportunities. But sometime their expectations versus the education level leads to disappointment. Some new trends are to be added in the last decade even in this area.

However this is only one side of the analysis. There are factors that can act as pull factors, in terms of attracting towards remaining in the origin country; they may be represented by the explicit and the implicit costs of emigration: costs of transportation and of the legal papers, and maybe more important, the community ties that are to be lost, and the cultural or the religious roots.

There are, as well, pushing factors in the world of the new land, in terms of determining a kind of self-rejection of immigrants. Immigration is a long and difficult process hardly understood before the actual moment of leaving the origin country but strongly felt as soon as the immigrant status is obtained. The "wonder land" turns progressively into an alien one, even after the immigrant is able to find a job, a better paid one than in origin country; sometimes it happens after a long and dramatic period, and often it does not correspond to the level of the solicitor's training. The reasons of this perception are extremely complex and dramatic. Between them the cultural

and religious roots with their implied values, habits and behaviors seem to be the most important. I have met Romanians with a genuine high level of life, with good jobs but strongly unhappy, probably because this job was not connected to their initial dream and their education level in the origin country. This unhappiness is expressed in very interesting ways. A strong tendency to appear as the happiest humans in the world, to describe again and again their difficult trajectory toward a success if not felt at least loudly declared appears as one way of expressing this. A strange envy against everybody is obvious; this is especially against conational considered somewhere inside as more successful. These kind of dramatic attitudes are revealed by almost all immigrants coming from different parts of the world. Informal discussions with them (within a language school context) showed clearly this reality.

The paradox is that sometime a significant number of immigrants start a process difficult to be decoded and understood. This comes even after an unexpected good integration as newcomers in a host society. They left their origin countries sometimes because of rejecting parts of perceived cultural and religious values and habits. Therefore, it is difficult to understand, in these conditions, their desire to re-build their origin world in the new land, even to impose their values and rules to their host or to other people with an immigrant status. These tend to become serious dysfunctions in the integration process and their deep springs are not enough considered and studied. A better understanding of them may be the starting point of avoiding difficult future crises.

The widely accepted theory of salad bowl does not stress enough the idea that the bowl itself was kindly offered to everyone to be a place to share and to live together. It is true that religious should be something personal, and the first place of celebration should be inside of a family. It must be a discreet celebration with deep feelings. But probably it is too much to ask to somebody who offered their own home as a new home to live in for immigrants, to be guests in their own countries. They definitely are not enough assertive when accept to have not a Christmas tree in school because there are other students who do not celebrate the Christmas. As long as all the yearlong the students with different religions are allowed to be dressed according to the requests of their religions it is too much to allow your host to celebrate several days in a year their own religious symbols?

Some examples of confounding the openness of host country with weakness may be presented. Thus, in Germany, all religious celebrations were banned to be publicly celebrated, including Christmas, on the grounds of "equal treatment". Something similar happened in some places in Canada.

A specific field of migration, but without being a genuine process which involves emigrants-immigrants, is represented by some specific types

of activities and their actors: missionaries, people involved in diplomatic service, transnational corporations, non-governmental organizations with their cohorts of volunteers. They are asked to work "overseas" for a while but they do not leave their origin countries in order to find an activity or a job. They are requested by an activity somewhere else for a definite time. For these category the payment conditions are equal if not better than the income of similar activities in the host country. This type of movement across the boundaries is more and more extended nowadays.

Some other peculiar reasons may determine the migration: transnational marriage, family reunification (as positive ones), avoiding arrest in the context of criminal justice (as an example of negative reason). These are more personal motivations

The migration process is a very difficult one. An in depth radiography of the psychological, social, and other sides of the phenomenon may be necessary. There are papers (Niculescu, R. 2013) and books with this topic, but the dynamic of the process requests a continuing analysis of causes and effects. They should refer to the diversified barriers to immigration,. These barriers become more and more diversified themselves, and the causes are more and more complex. Such a world, that involves these kind of phenomena with a wide impact on everybody needs much more attention aiming to be helped in its evolution. Unfortunately, the universal concern is to solve the moments of crises when they occur, instead to prevent them.

2. Migration process of the second decade of the third millennium

All the presented categories of migration determined by a diversity of push and pull factors have received nuanced specificities during the first decades of this millennium. Probably, an in depth analysis of them should be the topic of a research in the field. Several high-impact issues of the contemporary situation are highlighted, for the reasons of this paper; they are explicitly connected to the new way of designing and doing the intercultural education.

Nowadays a "new crisis is on the policy table". Immigrants from Muslim world knock the Europe gate to be received because of the tragedy of their country destroyed in an ongoing war. As human beings everybody understands and is empathetic with the poor families trying to save their lives, their children. But countries as ours or others being in a critical economical situation, are they able to effectively receive and to offer a genuine support for others? On the other side is real the danger to enter the exponents of terrorists in Europe using this wide wave of migration ? All these are questions with different possible answers but for sure with a strong

impact on the humans ' feelings and on the mentality that passes an interesting process of transformation and evolution.

These are the new conditions of a multiculturalism coming from centuries, or being increased in these kinds of crisis. And they need a new approach of the intercultural education.

3. Romania a part of a dynamic world

Once upon a time, on this blessed land, rhythmically touched by the wet arms of the Black Sea, an ancient people lived here. The name of this people is Geto- Dacians. A long period of struggle for existence in peace was the defining feature of these people. Eventually Dacia was included into the Roman Empire for more than 200 years. In 271 A.D. the Emperor Aurelian was forced to withdraw its troops from Dacia. An important process of Romanization took place over these years and this left lasting mark in the Romanians' culture, language and their ancestral conscience. As long as Dacians are considered the direct ancestors of the Romanians this part of history can't be forgotten as the childhood cannot be ignored in the genesis of a personality.

Romania of today is an *island of Latinity* surrounded by predominantly Slavic linguistic waves in Eastern Europe. Developed as a country over a tumultuous history marked by dramatic defense moments of its own existence, Romania of today is the product of this history with everything it has positive and negative.

Romanian people have both Roman and Dacian roots. It is difficult to say which side of heredity is most valuable: the Geto –Dacians or the Roman one. I think that a genuine importance has this mixture that put together a lot of strengths which were light – points in our history. These ambivalent roots are probably the springs of a tolerant attitude along the history. An interesting and specific way of "living together" of Romanians with people belonging to other nationalities has marked the history of the land. Greeks, Turks, Tatars, Hebrews, Russians, Hungarians, Germans, Bulgarians, Armenians and others were brought in different moments of history on these lands and remained in peaceful coexistence with the locals. Not even the communism years have destroyed the peaceful nature of coexistence. They have only motivated those who had a chance, to leave for a democratic world. A very specific kind of multiculturalism has determined an interculturality with distinct features.

Nowadays a new challenge appears, within the already described world of immigration phenomenon. Part of Romanians tries to find their luck over their country borders in Europe or on other continents. But a lot of other people come in Romania following their dreams. The last events show that Romania probably will be a requested host for immigrants coming from Muslim world in their run from a destroying war. The requests come from

two parts: the fugitives and European countries. A big political, economical, social and educational question arise in front of this situation. This paper limits the analysis on the educational field.

4. Romanian education within a specific cultural context and the necessity to reconsider the intercultural educational approach. Curriculum implications

The issues previously presented are enough reasons for a more focused concern of Romanian formal and non-formal education for an intercultural approach. It must develop a genuine intercultural attitude, as future emigrants or as hosts for immigrants. This concern seems to exist but a consistent strategy cannot be detected. The manner of implementing an effective intercultural education should be improved. It is both a philosophy and methodology issue. The philosophy must be an open one, with a deep understanding of human rights and human power, of a decent and effective social behavior. (Niculescu,R.M.,2013). The educational methodology should be a more active and interactive one, genuinely understood in favor of learners' competences development. The developed competences have to be explicitly focused on the effective adaptation of the humans in a multicultural world.

As academic teaching staff we followed a strategy aiming to develop explicitly and implicitly this kind of competencies along more than twenty years.

The nature of the cultural context (multiculturalism with various degrees of complexity) represents an important factor for: (1) design of learning situations within formal and non-formal education; (2) the transformation process of learning situation into learning experience for each learner (3) specificity of hidden curriculum accompanying the formal or non-formal learning situations; (4) the specific influence of the informal learning situations.

Thus, the nature of the cultural context has an explicit and implicit influence upon the educational circumstances and on each involved actor. A very interesting issue is determined by the particularity of the multicultural context. The multicultural society with a long multicultural history behind faces problems that differ substantially from a multicultural society constantly fueled with new waves of immigrants. What it is genuinely interesting nowadays consists in the recent necessity to face this new hypostasis as well.

The unbelievable dynamic of the contemporary human society based on an incredible speed of information and technology evolution make the

immigration phenomenon something impossible to be avoided. But, a special preparation of humans from their early levels of education for being a world citizen, for facing successfully the challenges of a natural movement of human resources crossing the continents and the oceans it seems to become tremendously necessary.

Some important issues have to be discussed firstly with the teachers trainers, than with teachers and parents but the most important action must be done in the educational hard work with the students from early ages to young adults. The society as a whole must become a learning society in terms of interculturality. Values, respect and genuine understanding of other people's culture, connected to assertiveness and dignity as milestones of the social behavior both of the hosts and the guests are tremendously necessary. A reconsideration of the concept "politically correct" should be considered in order to transform the pretending behavior into a genuine respectful one. And all these are necessary because of the complexity of the new world.

The immigration process is unsuspected complicated. Opposite feelings focus on short time units, a damage of self -image itself appear. The confrontation with a foreign society that appears as being more hostile than it is in reality is a tough one. This perception is determined by the initial extremely high level of newcomers' expectations.

A core concern for all the educational systems may be how to face all these issues. The research should be focused on what kind of particularities must be stressed within national borders as a curriculum design issue and an important milestone for what educational reform should be. I believe it is time for overcome the national borders, for trying to put the national educational values in favor of training the necessarily new citizen of the planet. There are a significant number of projects with international participation that can develop this idea.

Some directions of action may be highlighted.

First of all the development of a genuine intercultural competence through all the educational means must be a concern of the educational reform and of the non-formal and informal education as well.

Secondly, the development of a core competence profile of teacher implying the necessary features for working everywhere in the world with all types of students, within different cultural and multicultural contexts.

Another necessity is to develop academic and even pre-university programs for training professionals able to work in different economical, social and multicultural conditions.

A serious concern for all these aspects should determine the existence of a long term, medium and short term educational strategy. This strategy must serve the humanity development through education. Education can be

the strongest mean for evolution of humanity but the risk is that it remains an effective means of her downfall, if not headed in the right direction.

School and the educational climate should turn from "a cubbyhouse" (Munns, G., 2005) where the life is only pretending as real into a place able to train the future adults and professionals as effective citizens knowing in depth what the real life is, with all its strengths, weaknesses, constraints and opportunities. And maybe also important is to open the gate of opportunities for a future with the values of *good* and *justice*, in all their genuine meanings, to be the king and queen.

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INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION, A KEY ISSUE IN THE INNOVATION OF THE INITIAL TRAINING OF THE FUTURE TEACHERS IN PRIMARY AND PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION.CASE STUDY

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Abstract: *Significant changes in society in the late twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first led to increase and strengthen cross-border exchanges and multi- and intercultural human relations. With them, contacts between people belonging to different cultural areas have multiplied and intensified. Linguistically, culturally and axiologically heterogeneous institutions and companies have also diversified. In recent decades, it has become increasingly common to talk about intercultural communication, intercultural management, intercultural psychology and intercultural relations. Therefore a new formative vision for the growth of young generations and a new approach to learning and education has become a necessity, either taking into account the contemporary processes, or participating in facilitating these processes, a better understanding and a deeper respect between people, groups and /or human communities. This study seeks to capture the way future teachers in primary and pre-primary education, in their initial phase of training at UPG Ploiesti, understand the importance of intercultural education for their professional training, on the one hand, and to formulate proposals on the other hand.*

Keywords: *education, intercultural education, student, primary and pre-primary school teacher*

Introduction

The world we live in is asking us to be open. Whether it is about business/trade, financial transactions, initiatives and political responses, cultural programs or creative-innovative approaches, the great majority are oriented toward openness. More than ever, "businesses operate on a worldwide basis. Their innovations unfold rapidly" (Hofstede, Hofstede, Minkov, 2012). Mergers take place and stock market fluctuates, which may at any time throw the business landscape out of balance (*idem*). Cross-border exchanges intensified and diversified.

At the same time, we are witnessing a dramatic process of expansion and dominance of technologies for information and online communication. For most of us (and growing day by day in numbers), the Internet has become the main go-to instrument to solve multiple problems of our daily life, both professionally and personally. The number of users grew exponentially (and will increase hereafter). It allows meeting and human interaction, no matter whose cultural area users belong to. Intercultural communication has become a necessity, and a common practice.

However, all this does not help intercultural understanding sort itself. On the contrary, it seems that it shapes the problem of "individual and group identity dynamics people enable and maintain" (Gavriliuc, 2006), as well as the deeper issue - of confronting values, of tensions between the various articulated structures/systems of values. G. Hofstede and collaborators (2012) believes that one needs an outstanding flair for survival - when life calls - in the different cultural and value contexts.

As a result, we understand that "in the conditions of a competitive and interconnected world" (Khan, 2013, p. 14), intercultural learning has become an overriding necessity. When, potentially, we are in danger, on the one hand, of having our cultural identity deleted, and, on the other hand, we witness conflicts out-breaking, misunderstandings, threats, marginalization, and axiological confrontation," our welfare - believes Ch. Leadbeater (2010) - depends less on what we possess and consume, and more on what we share and create together" (p. 28). In other words, our life depends very much on cooperation and mutual trust among people, no matter which culture they belong to.

In short, we live and shall live through times of intercultural awareness. Education is faced, therefore, with the reassessment of its fundamental grounds. Intercultural approach is a new way of designing and pursuing education.

Methodology

The purpose of the present research was to disclose the meaning given to the intercultural dimension of contemporary education in the context of intensifying economic globalization and cross-border mobility by students in Pedagogy of Pre-primary and Primary Education, Faculty of Letters and Sciences of the Petroleum Gas University in Ploiesti, at the beginning of their initial training as teachers.

The method consisted in the implementation of a questionnaire (with pre-coded answers) on 56 subjects, of whom 15 were already teaching, and the rest (41) had no experience behind the desk.

Table no. 1. The structure of the experimental sample

Subjects	Number	Percentage
With seniority in education	15	27%
Without experience behind the desk	41	73%
Total	56	100%

It reveals that more than a quarter of the subjects in the experimental sample work in education, they have daily direct contact with students. The trial has been conducted at the beginning of April 2015.

Data and results

After the collection and processing of data, the following were revealed:

Table no. 2. The opinion of subjects relating to the purpose of intercultural education*

a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	f.	g.	Total
9%	7%	7%	16%	46%	2%	13%	100%

* a. Knowledge of the most important cultures of humanity; b. Knowledge of world culture history; c. Discouraging potential conflicts between different human groups; d. Facilitate dialog between people; e. Knowledge of the habits, traditions, and rituals of different cultures; f. Deleting cultural identity of human groups; g. Shaping a global culture.

Table no. 3. The opinion of subjects relating to the usefulness of intercultural education in inter-human relations*

a.	b.	c.	d.	Total
14%	40%	34%	12%	100%

* a. Know ourselves better; b. Know others better; c. Identify what we have in common with others; d. Identify what sets us apart from the rest of the people.

Table no. 4. The vision of subjects relating to the importance of intercultural education in the development of one's own personality*

a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	f.	g.	Total
20%	2%	3%	48%	7%	18%	2%	100%

* a. Makes us more curious towards the ones from another culture; b. Determines us to be a bit more cautious in relation to those of another culture; c. Motivates us to express ourselves as we know better; d. Makes us open our hearts to the ones from another culture; e. Gives us more confidence in the one belonging to a culture other than ours. f. Determines us to be more firm in promoting and growing your own culture; g. Determines us to be more cautious in promoting and growing your own culture.

Comments and interpretations

1. First of all, we were interested in finding out the opinion of respondents relating to *the central purpose of intercultural education*.

From the data collected, it appears that almost half of them (46 %) consider that *the purpose of intercultural education is to know habits, traditions, rituals, and fundamental values of the various cultures*. To them, this type of education is a favorable opportunity to become familiar with what is specific, original to each culture, no matter whether it is about the cultures on the African continent or Asian one, belonging to Australia or Oceania, North or South America, or anywhere in Europe.

Almost half of the subjects centered on what they might know about the roots and pillars of resistance - beyond the passage and erosion of time - of the various parts of the world (regardless of their geographical location or their influence on the course of history humanity).

Other options have obtained a relatively small percentage and have, from our point of view, a low significance. For instance, only 16% think intercultural education is a necessary tool for *facilitating dialog between people*. Therefore, such a dimension of education would, rather, play a part in knowledge and introduction to world cultures than a facilitating role in relations between people. It has to do, in particular, with our cultural equipment than with the creation of availability to more easily interact with other people belonging to other cultures.

Next, there comes the 13% of subjects which consider that intercultural education aims at shaping a global culture. Therefore, to this category of respondents, intercultural education is more directly linked to the trend of globalization, to the requirement to participate in a global culture of humanity, less (or increasingly less) differentiating. 9% believe, in their turn, that intercultural education has as its objective the knowledge of big cultures of humanity. They believe that we can talk about large and small cultures; that the latter could not constitute a point of much interest. We need to know about the world's major cultures, "exemplary" cultures, worthy to be followed and which influenced - in one way or another - the destiny of mankind. Of course, it would be interesting to reveal what would be the criterion according to which we could distinguish between the two categories of cultures, if indeed there is such a criterion.

In their turn, 7% of the respondents consider that intercultural education aims, by its objectives and approaches, *to discourage potential conflicts between various human groups*. We see, therefore, that this insignificant experimental segment (comprised of those at the beginning of their initial training) understands that it is important to have a tool, a cultural device through which we can act with a view to possibly defuse tensions

between different groups of humans. These subjects have an inkling of the prophylactic, beneficial purpose of intercultural education with respect to maintaining a peaceful state, to avoid confrontation on (inter)cultural grounds.

2. Regarding subjects' opinion on *the usefulness of intercultural education for inter-personal relations*, we can see that 40% of them believe that this (contemporary) type of education helps us *know others better*; other 34% consider that this helps us *identify what we have in common with others* (belonging to other groups); 14% believe that intercultural education helps us *know ourselves better*, and 12% *identify what sets us apart from the rest of the people*.

It shows that, for most of the people questioned, this dimension of education is useful in its approach to closely know others, our fellow human beings - as individuals and/or as a group - for the purpose of identifying *what we have in common*. This would mean that - for this experimental segment - *intercultural education is useful for bringing people together, for increasing inter-human confidence, for the deepening and stability of social relationships* (no matter the culture one or the other comes from). In this context, it is important to know each other's fundamental co-ordinates of the cultural background, at the time when we are in contact with our fellow human beings raised and educated in other systems of values and attitudes than ours. In such situations, we can only take care of the traditions, customs, (religious and social) rituals, and essential values of the other, but - at the same time - of the traditions, customs, (religious and social) rituals, and the essential values of our own culture.

Unfortunately, in a hegemonic world (from a military, economic, financial, and ideological point of view) it is extremely difficult to maintain such a beneficial, desirable, democratically, but fragile balance. Probably one of the most difficult practical assumptions of intercultural education is to preserve and assert, to the same extent, *the equal right of each culture to be itself, to coexist with all its history and identity* in a world which (tacitly - but also very persuasively) requires a single language of international circulation, a single economic model (claimed as the best), a centralized financial structure, institutions increasingly extended to world scale but designed in (coordinated from) a corner of the world or the trend of imposing a single ideology as fair.

It is, maybe, the mission and the role of intercultural education to defend and support the right of each culture to express its system of values, behaviors and its creations, in an honest dialog, and mutual respect. In this respect, the responsibility of those who formulate the objectives, principles, contents, and strategies of achieving this type of education is as important as it is high.

3. Even if most of the (investigated) subjects don't know and do not understand very clearly the role and place of intercultural education in their own (vocational) training and in the training of those with whom they are working (or they will be working with), or what are the objectives and principles of this fascinating area of education, we tried, through our last item to inquire about *the vision of respondents relating to the changes that may occur in the evolution of their own personalities from its knowledge and assimilation.*

For instance, in table no. 4 it appears that:

- 48% (approximately half) consider that *intercultural education motivates us to open our hearts to the ones who come from another culture.* This category of students has an intuition that lifelong intercultural education leads us toward understanding each other, toward improving interpersonal communication, in general, and that with foreigners, in particular. It gets us out of our wariness, of the clumsiness of the uninitiated in another culture, it gives us confidence that we can build bridges with any individual, regardless of the culture they belong to. From the table, we see that *this option meets an obvious majority.* From this we can infer that most subjects are aware of the beneficial contribution of intercultural enhancement to the process of development and (self)actualization of their personality;
- 20% (one-fifth) consider that taking-up and deepening intercultural awareness *makes us more curious in connection with the way of being of the one originating in another culture.* They represent that category of subjects challenged by an interlocutor originating in another cultural area, and concerned to confront what they already know about their culture with what away they learn from him, in a interaction and/or common activity. In short, intercultural education has an obvious motivational component that sends students to unknown, but interesting areas of life, work, and creation;
- 18% of the respondents consider that *intercultural education determines us to be a bit more firm in promoting and growing our own culture.* It is about that category of subjects which give priority to their own culture, which believe intercultural awareness is first of all, to know who we are, to have a cultural identity formed by acquisition and internalization of values, practices and national/domestic creations. We can't go in an intercultural dialog, in an intercultural collaboration, if we do not have, at first, our own cultural profile. Everything that happens in the intercultural area starts from this requirement;
- other alternative answers have obtained a very small percentage, such as: 7 %, *intercultural education gives us more confidence in the one belonging to a culture other than ours.* 3 %, *intercultural education motivates us to express ourselves as we know better;* 2 %, *intercultural education determines us to be more cautious in relation to the ones coming from another culture;* 2 %,

intercultural education determines us to be more cautious in promoting and developing our own culture.

As shown, intercultural education does not urge us, in the first place, to be cautious, or withdraw in relation to others. It does not push us toward suspicion (to foreigners), but neither toward distrust of our own culture.

Conclusions

Humanity puts us in the face of such realities involving communication, inter-knowledge, respect, equality, freedom, cooperation, confidence. To achieve such goals, we have at hand some educational means, as well as intercultural education. This represents a training environment favorable to opening and closeness between people, be they more or less young. For those really interested in a better, more peaceful world, intercultural education becomes - or may become - a central objective of their life and a useful cultural tool.

The present study helped obtain a series of data and information welcomed to any specialist who is seriously and carefully concerned about intercultural education and to any of us who does not abandon this education in favor of a vague and superficial ideology. This data will drive us toward certain targets, will help us find appropriate training accents and not fail in a formal, improvised and derisory work. We believe that the investigation at hand constitutes a useful and welcome support with a view to the formulation of realistic objectives, principles, contents and strategies for achieving intercultural education for the would-be pre-primary and primary school teachers.

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OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN FOSTERING KINETIC-THERAPIST'S EMPATHY

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Abstract: *The therapist-patient empathy is the basis for an efficient intervention and contributes to establishing the individualized intervention plan of recovery. This study started from the premise that by following a programme of occupational therapy, kinetic-therapists would develop their ability to empathize with the patient. The experimental group included a total of 42 students from the Faculty of Physical Education and Mountain Sports, from the kinetic therapy and special motility specialization (KMS). They have completed a programme that included 10 workshops (with activities specific to occupational therapy), each workshop lasting 100 minutes. The results obtained during the experiment and from the Mind in the Eyes test (S. Baron-Cohen) led to the confirmation of the hypothesis. The present study focuses on the experimental phase of the research.*

Keywords: *kinetic-therapist, empathy, occupational therapy*

1. Introduction

During the motor recovery, in order to optimize the process of rehabilitation, in addition to the physiotherapy programme, occupational therapies (artistic activities, household activities, etc.) addressing specific activities aimed directly at motor coordination are recommended for the recovery of personal autonomy and social or professional re-integration. The specialty literature records numerous interdisciplinary studies addressing a motor deficit in order to ensure optimal recovery and to guarantee performance and successful results by combining the physical therapy programme with occupational therapy activities [2, 9, 15]. The physical therapy has, in addition to its general purpose of motor recovery, a secondary purpose, too—depending on the physical deficiency (deficiency acquired in accidents, congenital physical handicap, sensory impairment, physical and intellectual impairment, etc.). The secondary purpose is grafted into areas related to motility - particularly regarding psychological, social, emotional, motivational, professional issues.

The ability of establishing an empathic therapist-patient relationship is the basis for an efficient response in motorrecovery and may contribute to drawing up the individualized intervention plan, based on knowing and understanding the patient.

An empathic therapist-patient relationship - why is it important to develop the therapist's capacity ofempathisingwith the patient? Wouldn't emotional involvement "sabotage" the recovery demarche? Or would the empathy between therapist and patient favour theprocess of motor recovery? These are the questions that triggered this research.

Specialty studies are aimed at addressing empathy in connection with neural activity [12], personality traits associated with empathic processing [6], age [10], empathy as part of positivism [13] or as result of the effect of sport education [5]. The examples are manifold. The investigations that cover the fostering of the emphatic capacity are less apparent in the specialty literature.

Defined as a form of intuition of emotional reality and of identification with the other's feelings, empathy is a form of knowledge of the other [10]. Although the fundamental goal of physical therapy is to recover patient's motility, as a whole, regardless of the type and depth of disability, however, the mood of the patient must be understood by the kinetic therapist before any intervention. It is not about the psychological construct orthe psychoanalytic approach, but rather about communication and emotional rules [16] intended to help optimize the physical therapy intervention plan.

Occupational therapy in the recovery of motor deficiencies. The place held by the occupational therapy in motor recovery is not one defined by rules, but by the effects of practical applications [3, 4, 11]. During performing various types of activities, specific to occupational therapy, although the formative aspects are intertwined with the informative ones, the former are more numerous during this kind of therapy. For example, during the activities that develop manual skills, the patient receives a large amount of information about the materials he works with, their type and quality,abouttheir maintenance (the informative aspect) and only after that the formative activities are performed, developing motor qualities, such as strength, speed, precision, and coordination. The complexity of the activities in the area of occupational therapy requires the use of different muscle groups, combining "business" with pleasure.

2. Purpose of study

The hypothesis of the present study assumed that by following a programme of occupational therapy, physiotherapists would develop their capacity of empathising with the patient. Among our research objectives we can mention the adaptation and application tests of empathy; the development

of the experimental plan; the development of the curriculum for the occupational therapy workshops; the establishing of the correlation between the activities of occupational therapy and targeted muscle groups; the implementation of the experiment; intermediate measurements during the experiment; the analysis of the products obtained in the experiment; processing the data obtained.

3. Methods

3.1. Sample and procedure

The participants were 42 third year students at *Transilvania* University of Brasov, from the Faculty of Physical Education and Mountain Sports, from the kinetic therapy and special motility specialization. Out of these, 45.23% (19) were female and 54.77% (23) male. The stages of the experiment were: the pre-test in February 2015; the experiment –from March to May 2015; the post-test phase - late May 2015. The structure of the workshops was finalised in February-March 2015.

3.2. Instruments

The instruments used in the investigation were: in the pre-test stage, we used *the empathy test 1*, adapted after Zolland Enz [18]; in the experimental phase, we used a *Scoring grid for the degree of accomplishment of the activities held during the occupational therapy workshops* to monitor their engagement in the task and their feedback; in the post-test stage, we applied *the empathy test 2*, an adaptation after Simon Baron-Cohen [11] and *Decoding the expression of the eyes* test [19]. Since the data presented in this article refer only to the experimental phase, we shall refer only to the instrument used during in the experiment, for monitoring the activities. *The Scoring grid for the degree of accomplishment of the activities held during the occupational therapy workshops* contains five items (table 1) and it was used for each activity. The scoring was defined as: 0 - *low* (performance indicators: not using or misusing the instruments; not using the right materials for the technique addressed; incorrect accomplishment of the task received; not identifying the motor actions or their identification rate below 25%; under 30% of product realization); 1 - *average* (performance indicators: partial correct use of tools, partial use of the right materials for the technique addressed; partial accomplishment of the task received; identifying the motor actions below 50%; achieving 30% -60% of the final product), 2 - *high* (the correct use of tools, using the right materials for the technique addressed; accomplishment of the task received, identifying all the motor actions, achieving over 60% of the final product).

Table 1. Scoring grid for the degree of accomplishment of the activities held during the occupational therapy workshops

Item	Score		
	0	1	2
Use of specific instruments			
Correct use of materials			
Correct accomplishment of the product			
Identification of the specific motor actions			
Finishing the product			

3.3. Description of the experiment

In the experimental phase, the 42 participants have completed a programme of 12 workshops of occupational therapy, each workshop lasting 100 minutes. Out of the 12 workshops, eight workshops had 4 individual tasks and 4 group tasks (2-3 people). The themes of the workshops were designed in the area of visual arts, which was the experiential field of the experimenter. The names of the workshops, the techniques used in making the products, the tools and materials for each task are presented in Table 2:

Table 2. Occupational therapy workshops

No.	Workshop	Technique	Instruments	Materials
1	Butterfly	Watermark, graphics	Pen or black gel pen, template	Ink, white cardboard
2	Cob	crinkling, gluing	scissors, template	glue, cardboard, crepe paper
3	Clock	contour drawing, cutting, assembling, gluing	template, HB pencil, scissors	coloured paper, coloured cardboard, glue
4	Fishing-net	knots technique	scissors	hemp twine
5	Crane	origami	origami chart for a crane	origami paper
6	Flowers	blowing	brushes, water container, straw	white cardboard, watercolours
7	Fish	finger-painting	water container, HB pencil	white cardboard, watercolours
8	Construction	assembling models	cutter, scissors, HB pencil, brush	newspapers, scotch, glue, crepe paper, cardboard
9	Tree	stamping	Watercolours, HB pencil	paper, drawing paper
10	3D Letter	3D tactile image	cutter, scissors, HB pencil	material at participants' choice
11	Windows	fretwork	cutter, scissors, HB pencil	cardboard, coloured paper
12	Aquarium	contour drawing, cutting, assembling, gluing	patterned scissors, hole punch, scissors	coloured cardboard, coloured paper, glue

References to particular muscles involved in the basic movements necessary to do the products and the motor activities generally covered by each activity are summarized in Table 3:

Table 3. Occupational therapy workshops

No.	Workshop	Muscles involved	Motor activity
1	Butterfly	extensor/flexor muscles of wrist, thumb long muscle, thenar and hypothenar muscles	colouring fine movements
2	Cob	interdigital muscles, thumb flexor	rotating movements of the fingers, pressing, gluing
3	Clock	Fine palm muscles, brachial muscle	contour tracing, cutting, assembling
4	Fishing-net	triceps, biceps, deltoid muscles, rotator flexor/extensor of the hand and of the fingers	left-right coordination, gripping, knotting
5	Crane	index flexor, thumb extensor muscles	Bending, unbending, pressing
6	Flowers	jaw muscles, the diaphragm, intercostal muscle	Breathing in and out
7	Fish	abductor, adductors of the arm and flexor fingers muscles	pressing with the fingers (fingerprinting)
8	Construction	fine muscles of the hand, arm muscles	rolling, bonding, assembling
9	Tree	thenar and hypothenar muscles; palmar fine muscles	right-left coordination, pressing
10	3D Letter	whole hand and arm muscles	assembly of complex motor actions
11	Windows	fingers and thumb flexor and extensor muscles	drawing, cutter cutting, gluing
12	Aquarium	palmar muscles, brachial biceps, fingers flexor / extensor, forearm flexor	contour cutting, rolling, bonding, assembly, drilling

Each workshop started with the announcement of the theme topic, followed by the simulation of the targeted deficiency (moment of dramatization). After the dramatization, the task was described; the technique and details about the instruments and the materials to be used were presented. In occupational therapy activities, we work with various instruments, tools or devices. The patient will receive, in the beginning, some general information about their features and how they operate. At the end of the activity, each participant completed a document that specifies the main motor actions that were needed for the task. Also, they identified specific deficiencies in whose recovery programme they would be able to use the application deployed. At

the end of each session, the experimenter completed the *scoring grid* for each participant.

4. Results in the experiment

The data recorded in *Scoring grid for the degree of accomplishment of the activities held during the occupational therapy workshops* were numerous. Here we chose to present the minimum and maximum for each activity, the mean for each activity and the standard deviation (table 3).

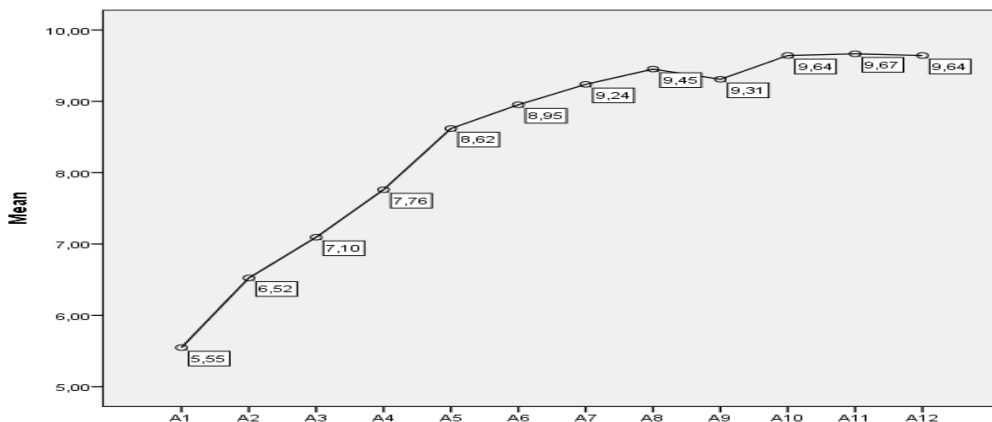
For the first applications, the lowest scores were recorded for the items regarding *correctness of product accomplishment, identification of specific motor activities* and, especially, for *the completion of the product* (at A1 and A2 the minimum score was 4 points, achieving below 25% of the product being very common; at A1, the 0 grading for the *completion of the product* was recorded in 31 of the participants, representing 73.80%, whereas at A2 it decreased to 27 participants, representing 64.28%).

Table 3. Results at the *Scoring grid*, for the 12 activities

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
scor_act_1	42	4,00	7,00	5,5476	,96783
scor_act_2	42	4,00	8,00	6,5238	1,01784
scor_act_3	42	5,00	8,00	7,0952	,79048
scor_act_4	42	6,00	9,00	7,7619	,72615
scor_act_5	42	7,00	10,00	8,6190	,79487
scor_act_6	42	8,00	10,00	8,9524	,66083
scor_act_7	42	8,00	10,00	9,2381	,61721
scor_act_8	42	8,00	10,00	9,4524	,59274
scor_act_9	42	8,00	10,00	9,3095	,71527
scor_act_10	42	9,00	10,00	9,6429	,48497
scor_act_11	42	8,00	10,00	9,6667	,52576
scor_act_12	42	9,00	10,00	9,6429	,48497
Valid (listwise)	N 42				

It may be noted that the involvement of the participants increased progressively from A1 to A8, at A9 appears a slight decrease in activity when moving from individual work to teamwork (adapting to the team task influenced the involvement in completing the product) and we registered a plateau for A10, A11, A12 (Figure 1).

Fig. 1 - Average scores on activities



5. Conclusions

Our concerns in the field of art therapy [7, 8] revealed the functional aspect of art, highlighting its role as occupation. This gives an *occupation* to the person in a deadlock (mentally, physically or socially) and distracts them from focusing on their own problem. The results obtained during the experiment lead to the obvious conclusion of the efficiency of this programme. Data from pre-test and post-test are to be presented in another study, which will also analyse the products obtained in the twelve workshops.

The involvement of the kinetic therapist in the occupational therapy programme that he designed for the patient is the original aspect of our approach. As a result, we highlight the need for developing the kinetic therapist's ability to empathise with the patient.

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WHAT GRADE SHOULD UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION HAVE?

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Abstract: *The article addresses the problematic of educational assessment in Romania, and tries to illustrate through a speculative study the flaws of the current state of assessment methodology in our country. By making a small study with the statistical accuracy similar to the statistical accuracy of current assessment methods used by education, certain aspects about the accuracy of it will be subtly revealed, and questions remaining unanswered by our study are similar to questions remaining unanswered by our formal assessment system.*

Key words: *Standardized assessment, methods, skills, content acquisition*

Assessment is a topic widely debated upon in the United States where standardized tests are used on average 15 times a year between grades 3 and 8. Romania however does not seem to abuse the scores of standardized tests. Aside from changing variations on “capacity” exam, there is the Baccalaureate. Thus, standardized assessment in Romania is performed invariably – depending on the number of education reforms – from two up to six times during undergraduate studies. The rest of the assessment is based on subjective interpretation of the student’s performances by the teacher in class.

Although the Romanian Law reads “*The assessment focuses on skills, provides real feedback and underpins pupils' individual learning plans.*” (Law of Education). It seems provides rather interpretable terms on assessment. Not just that it doesn’t define “feed-back” in this context, but also lends a property to the term – “real” – a term which is again interpretable. Thus “real feedback” doesn’t mean precisely something clear but it’s rather left at one’s judgment of how the two terms are defined, and this can be seen in practice: for instance, a grade of 7 on chemistry provides as much feedback as much it is perceived so by the assessed, and to what extent this feedback is also real or not depends on the rater. Thus, if the student considers the grade good bad – according to his/hers expectations – but the teacher considers the grade differently, the feedback misses its purpose altogether. Everything is subject to perspective, and the “real

feedback” makes no exception, being perceived by the rater with a certain way, perceived by the student differently and perceived completely different by the parents. There are three points of view on a single note which is supposed to provide real feedback. Some questions remain: who is the feedback intended for? And what is the purpose of it?

The Law of Education regulates assessment through “[...] *a unique bank of assessment instruments, having indicative function, in order to help the teachers rate in class*”. Again, the Law indicates a base of instruments which work as guidelines meant to help raters. Obviously, it means that assessment results will also be indicative, if anything. Regulating assessment using guidelines which can only produce indicative results should dismiss high-precision rating.

From the above-mentioned aspects, the following conclusion can be drawn: the capacity, progress and performance of every student are determined by the judgment of the rater, that is, the teacher, through his own perception regarding the real feedback his grades provide and through the placement of the student’s performances within an indicative rating system, according to guidelines. To what extent this approach is a negative or positive one depends on the perspective from which the matter is looked at.

Thus, relying on the ethical attitude, the impartiality and moral conduct of the teacher, this type of evaluation is very accurate, due to his/hers deep knowledge of students he/she is teaching. They are in the best position to assess the progress and performance of their students whom they know closely. Therefore, the assessment is accurate and the approach is a positive one.

On the other hand, the objectivity of statistics, math and the absolute impartiality standardized scores, disputes the effectiveness of humanist-approached assessment in the aforesaid manner, emphasizing the impossibility of absolute objectivity of a single individual. If the evaluation is not objective but – at least to some extent – equivocal, under the influence of individual perception, then assessment using only an interpretative guiding framework is inadequate. Using subjective interpretation of guidelines to produce a precise objective grade which will impact the student throughout his/hers educational progress seems a negative approach.

Standardized assessment, like all sciences that underpinned technological progress, relies on the scientific method. The scientific method itself relies on precision. Therefore, there is no “hot” or “cold” since these are subjective notions. According to the scientific method, there is only the thermometer, having 0 as reference point and plus or minus grades as values. In this way, the scientific method ensured that the situated meaning of the words “hot” or “cold” can change accordingly, without influencing the whole of science. The entire process of technological evolution is grounded in a

precise numerical measurement system, particularly because it is impartial, universal, and thus objective.

While our national standardized tests have the aim to objectively measure school performance of learners in relation to the qualitative baseline of Romanian education, they tend not to be very accurate. This lack of accuracy seems to originate not from the fact that they aren't standardized, but from the way they are standardized. If rating the grades of this standardized test is being done by human raters, there will be differences, and the more raters involved, the higher the differences. If the differences between them are too high – which in many cases are – then the mean obtained is highly inaccurate from a statistical point of view. Therefore, the subjective judgment of the raters is again the core of the problem, resulting in inaccurate results. (Herman et al. 2005).

The purpose of this article however is not to criticize or evaluative methods used in Romanian formal education at present, but rather to try and assess the results of some aspects of school education, using methods statistically similar in accuracy to those used by it to assess learners.

Within this context, we've taken the liberty to elaborate a multiple choice general knowledge test, composed of 6 items consisting of general knowledge questions, with three possible answers and one correct one, identifiable even through elimination.

We will henceforth refer to it as "speculative study". The reason that we call it speculative is connected to its purpose, that is, to speculate on why the results of it are the way they are, without re-testing the claims made. The claims will be just educated guesses which encourage further study in order to determine what is really happening, and explain many of the scores resulted from the testing. In addition, the difficulty of the questions may be debatable and will be debated on. Either way, as far as we are concerned, the information questioned is of basic level, general-purpose knowledge. We will assess the formal education system in this way which will leave many questions unanswered, underlining the many questions the assessed are facing when evaluated in such a way.

The point is to realize that there is much uncertainty in the current assessment system, and using the same type of accuracy when assessing the educational system itself the results are debatable, which will prove the lack of accuracy within hybrid statistical-human rated assessment systems.

The test was performed at a state university – whose name cannot be published for ethical reasons – on first year law students, during March 2015. Population sample: 300 students, both genders; content sample: "Multiple choice trivia".

General knowledge test contains questions from two curriculum areas: "Mathematics and Sciences" and "Man and Society". Thus, the questions are

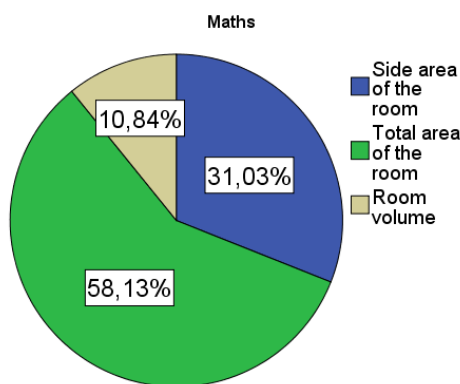
related to the following subjects: mathematics, physics, chemistry, geography, history and biology. The reason behind choosing only two subjects in the curriculum area “Man and Society” is due to the perspective of the study: for disciplines focused on problem-solving, which predominantly rely on logical-mathematical intelligence (Gardner 1989) three are tested: mathematics, physics and chemistry; and for disciplines focused on content acquisition, which predominantly uses mnemonic capacity, other three: geography, history and biology, having thus parity between disciplines.

The study tracks only performance indices. Incomplete tests were canceled, which reduced the actual population sample just 203. The performance indicator was the score to the test, which granted 1 point for a correct answer and 0 for wrong answers. The data were processed using SPSS Statistics v. 17.0, and reports focused only on frequencies and averages.

Data were obtained both from responses to each item, and from averages and average comparisons between the two categories of disciplines, namely problem solving and content acquisition.

The first item consisted of questioning involving a mathematical way:

Fig. 1 – item 1: “You need to paint the walls of a room but do not know how much paint you are going to need. What should you calculate in order to find out?”



Statistics

	Math	Score
Valid	203	203
Mean		,31

Score

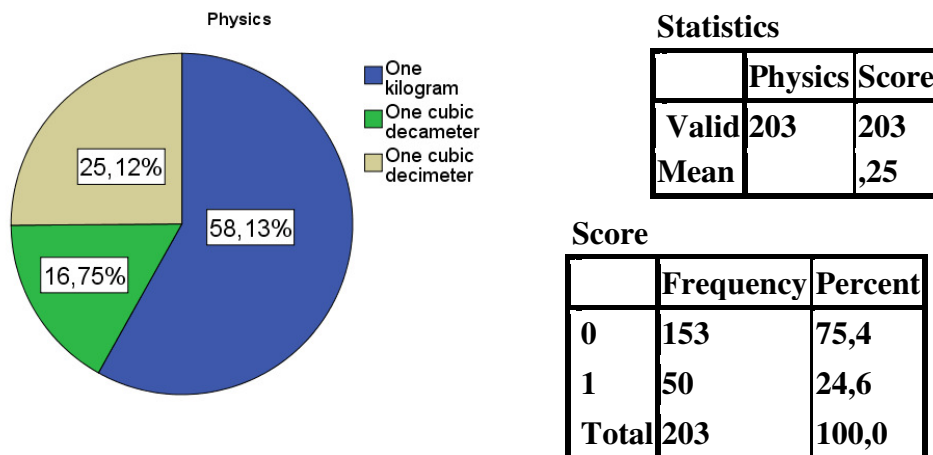
	Frequency	Percent
0	140	69,0
1	63	31,0
Total	203	100,0

Of the 203 participants, only 63 knew what computing is necessary to solve the problem. A percentage of 58.13% of participants 118 respectively, considered calculating the total area and 10.84% respectively 22 participants felt that the volume could be necessary calculation.

These responses indicate a complete lack of comprehension of the notions of area and/or volume. If a fundamental concept of space geometry is not understood, it means that it is not actually acquired. A successfully acquired notion implies the possibility of using it in different contexts, meaning it must be embedded into the vocabulary. If it cannot be used logically, it misses the purpose of its acquisition.

The second item verifies the understanding of basic measurement units.

Fig. 2 – item 2: "How much is one liter?"

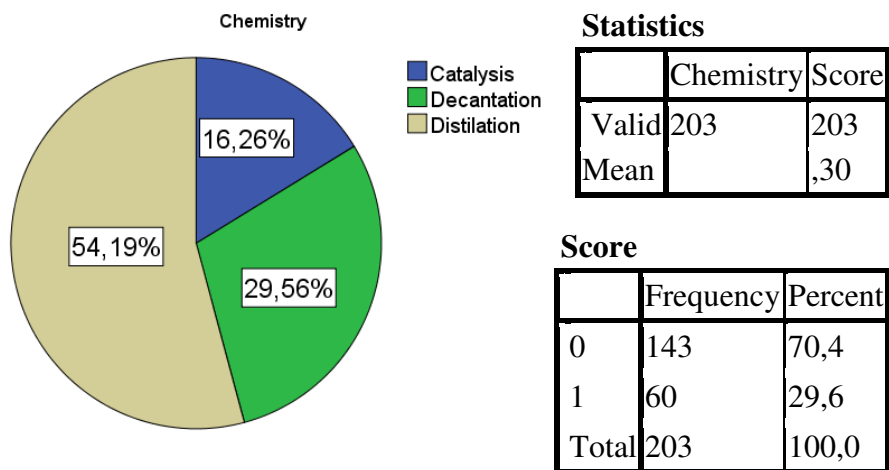


Of the 203 participants, 50 answered correctly – 25.12% and a total of 85 participants, representing 41.87% of the total, have correctly identified what the liter is intended to measure. Assuming that is a common mistake to confuse multiples with subs within the units, one aspect remains alarming: 58.13% of participants, respectively 118, which got the answer completely wrong, prove that the unit of measurement is not understood, by confusing a unit of mass – gram – with one of volume.

Of course, one can say that it is a common mistake. But the essence of the problem is that these students have made calculations on physics problems using measurement units and converting them while they had no idea what they were actually doing. It remains hence questionable the efficiency of conducting problems whose results may be accurate, but are not understood.

The third item concerns completely different concepts of chemistry, namely: decantation, catalysis and distillation.

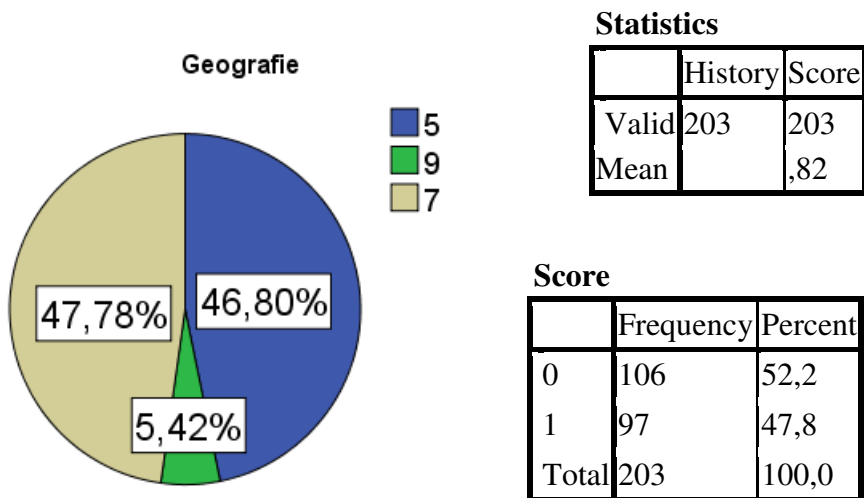
Fig 3 – item 3: “Which of these processes is used in order to clarify liquids containing suspended solids?”



In this case, the notions should not be confused in any way. There is no question of flaws in logic, misunderstanding or gaps in content. Of the 203 participants, 60 or 29.56% knew what decantation or settling means. Any other choice involves not knowing at least two terms out of the three: the wrong answer chosen and the correct one. While catalysis is a chemical process specific to the oil industry, distillation is a common process even used in household activities. However, 54.19% – 110 participants thought of distillation as the correct answer.

The fourth item contains a simple trivia question

Fig. 4 – item 4: ” *Conventionally, how many continents are on Earth?*”

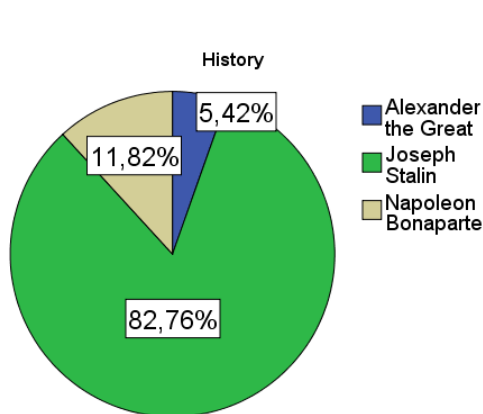


A percentage of 46.80% – 95 participants left out two continents, and a very small percentage of 5.42% – 11 participants, adds two extra.

It cannot be said that this question has any practical echo, or that the information is widely usable, but nonetheless it is a basic information on the planet we live on and its general conventions. A share of 52.20% and 106 first-year law students who do not know how many continents are on Earth could mean that their attendance to geography lessons was at least partially, in vain.

The fifth item contains a universal history question.

Fig 5 – item 5: "Which of the mentioned leaders was contemporary with Adolf Hitler?"



Statistics

	Geography	Score
Valid	203	203
Mean		,48

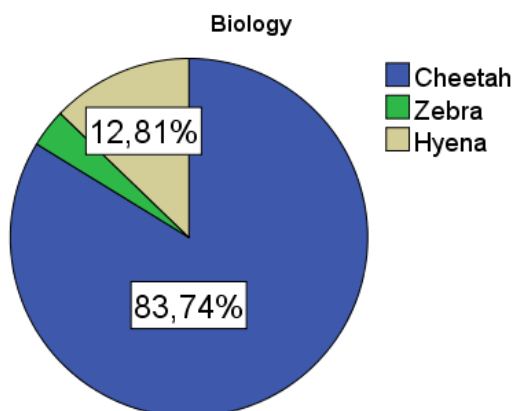
Score

	Frequency	Percent
0	36	17,7
1	167	82,3
Total	203	100,0

To this question 82.76% – 167 participants responded correctly and 36, 17.24% respectively, did not. We assume that some respondents have deliberately answered wrong, either in protest or for other reasons, because this question is likely to be one of those that had the potential to "insult the intelligence" of participants, leaving the possibility of a wrong answer as a form of protest.

The last question involves testing some very general notions from biology.

Fig. 6 – item 6: " Which of the following animals is a feline?"



Statistics

	Biology	Score
Valid	203	203
Mean		,83

Score

	Frequency	Percent
0	34	16,7
1	169	83,3
Total	203	100,0

Again, this question has been answered correctly by 169 participants 83.74% respectively, zebra is considered a feline by only 7 participants and hyena by 26. This information in turn could ever be obtained from the multitude of television documentaries on specialized channels, which address mostly topics regarding felines and reptiles.

Comparing the averages of the two categories of questions indicates a big difference: the average score is 0.28 for the problem-solving category and 0.73 on content acquisition category.

Let us presume that we have a grand total of the two and apply an arithmetic average calculation on them. The result will be 0.50. It might lead to the conclusion that the grade of the questioned students is on this particular test is thus, 5,00. Instead of having a grade of 2,80 in problem-solving and 7,30 on content acquisition, we made a mean out of two, very different scores which resulted from the same students.

Obviously the problem is not only reflected by the manipulation of the grades which is by far misleading, but also from the low number of students participating – although we have reasons to believe that in this particular case, average numbers would have indicated the same regardless of the population sample size – and by the fact that there was only one question addressing each of the disciplines.

Many would consider this study a rude joke, but in doing so, considering the statistical accuracy similarities between our study to assess undergraduate education and the way undergraduate education actually assesses are quite many. And while the flaws of this study are many according to the scientific method, and its relevancy is only indicative, the same can be said about formal assessment. While the averages we calculated reveal, basically nothing in statistical terms, the same type of rating behavior is being used in educational assessment.

The changes of a student who has obtained the grades of 7,50; 7,35; and 7,16 on a national test to be admitted into graduate school are the same with the students whose grades were 10; 6,05; and 6. The entry system disregards the fact that maybe the student wants to specialize in mathematics, excels in mathematics but performs poorly on the other subjects of the exam. Being both “at the same level” with an average 7,33 they are competitors while things should be clear from this point of view: the one that is mediocre is just mediocre, and the other is below mediocre on two of the subjects but excels in one.

In the case depicted above, poor handling of means and averages can cause a lot of confusion, frustration and counter-productivity and from a statistical point of view, terribly flawed and inaccurate.

At the same time, the data we’ve revealed tends to only confirm a suspicion about the formal educational system: it is centered on content

delivery. Delivery of content though is not learning, but again, since the tests are so statistically poor in accuracy and present many vices, they can't actually be taken into account.

To conclude, while the educational evaluation and assessment system still runs on approximate information which fuel precise numbers with a permanent impact on the student, a question remains: is this right? Or something should be changed, in either addressing the problem of properly standardized assessment or to keep the traditional methods and remove the precise noting with an indicative system, since assessment cannot be precise and indicative at the same time.

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TEACHING PRONUNCIATION THROUGH SONGS

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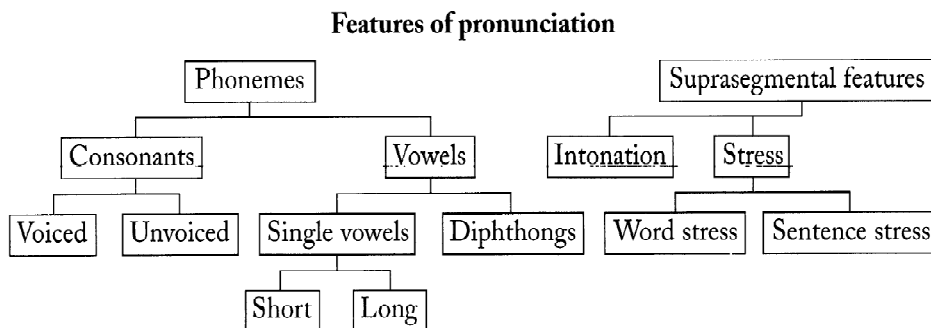
Abstract: *Little emphasis is placed on teaching pronunciation in English language classes even though a person with good pronunciation is more likely to be understood than a person whose grammar is perfect but whose pronunciation is difficult to understand. The syllabus does not include the teaching of pronunciation features and the communicative approach to language teaching encourages the acquisition of these aspects of the language rather than their learning. Songs can be used to focus on different aspects of pronunciation. They can be used to focus on sounds, to focus on words or to focus on connected speech. We have presented some example of activities using music to improve students' pronunciation.*

Keywords: *pronunciation, music, sounds, teaching activities*

1. What is pronunciation?

Pronunciation refers to the production of sounds that we use to make meaning. It includes the particular sounds of a language (segments) and the aspects of speech such as intonation, stress, rhythm (suprasegmental aspects). (AMEP, 2002)

The following diagram (Kelly, 2000) shows the main features of pronunciation:



The sound system of English is made up of phonemes, or individual sounds, and these may be vowels (which can be short or long), diphthongs (combinations of two vowel sounds), or consonants. Consonants are usually described in terms of: where the sound is made in the mouth (place of articulation), how the sound is made (the manner of articulation) and whether or not the vocal cords vibrate (voicing).

The term stress refers to the prominence given to certain syllables within words, and to certain syllables or words within utterances. It is signaled by volume, force, pitch change, and syllable length. Stress is important at two different levels: the word level (multisyllabic words have one or more syllables that are stressed) and the sentence level (those words which are more important for communicating the speaker's meaning, usually the content words, tend to be stressed, while those which are less important, usually the grammatical words, are unstressed).

Intonation can be defined as the variation of pitch of the voice when speaking. Intonation, or change of pitch, is used to signal speaker meaning, to convey some ideas or concepts, for example, surprise, irony, etc. or to change a statement to a question. (AMEP, 2002)

Another feature of pronunciation is connected speech. Connected speech can be defined as the natural way people speak, linking together and emphasizing certain words, rather than each word standing alone. It includes aspects like weak forms, assimilation, elision, or linking. Contractions (two words forming one) are an extreme example of connected speech, to the extent that the written form is affected too.

2. Why teach pronunciation through songs?

Teachers usually place little emphasis on teaching pronunciation in English language classes even though a person with good pronunciation is more likely to be understood than a person whose grammar is perfect but whose pronunciation is difficult to understand. The syllabus does not include the teaching of pronunciation features and the communicative approach to language teaching encourages the acquisition of these aspects of the language rather than their learning.

There are several reasons to use music in pronunciation classes. To begin with, the listening support provided during the English classes usually consists of Standard English and sometimes regional British while in their free time (when watching TV or listening to music) the students are exposed to is usually American English. However, it is not of utmost importance for students to sound like native speakers. They should be able to communicate in English and music helps them to become familiar with different kinds of English such as "standard" English, regional American and British, and many other varieties of English from around the world.

Music also offers a great way to look at contractions, elisions and other aspects of connected speech. These are features of spoken language and recognizing them enables students to better understand the language they hear. What is more, simply exposing students to these features is enough since students will naturally acquire and incorporate them into their own speech.

Another reason for using music in class is the fact that students often express anxiety about their pronunciation and this can contribute to a fear of speaking. Some students are acutely self-aware and are reluctant to experiment with sounds for fear of getting them 'wrong', which makes them lack fluency. Music can be an effective tool for lowering their affective filter (i.e. reduce stress and anxiety) and facilitating learning. Singing along can also increase students' confidence in their ability to pronounce words in English.

On the other hand, singing distorts the stress and intonation of spoken words and phrases. As a result, it is not advisable to use songs to draw students' attention on these pronunciation features.

3. Activities

Songs can be used to focus on different aspects of pronunciation. They can be used to focus on sounds, to focus on words or to focus on connected speech.

A. Using songs to focus on sounds

As languages differ in their range of sounds, students have to learn to 'physically' produce certain sounds previously unknown to them. Incorrectly pronounced sounds strain communication, sometimes even changing a phrase's meaning. Songs are authentic and easily accessible examples of spoken English. The rhymes in songs provide listeners with repetition of similar sounds.

b. focus on particular sounds

To focus learners on particular sounds, we create activities based on song rhymes.

Activity

Some of the rhymes in the song are replaced with a gap. Students listen and fill the gaps, using the song to guide them. Students can then categorize the words according to sounds.

/eə/	/ɔ:/
Pear	paw
Beware	raw
	claw
	pawpaw

Now when you pick a pawpaw
 Or a prickly pear
 And you prick a raw paw
 Next time beware
 Don't pick the prickly pear by the paw
 When you pick a pear
 Try to use the claw
 But you don't need to use the claw
 When you pick a pear of the big pawpaw
 Have I given you a clue ?

(‘The Bare Necessities’ from Disney – ‘The Jungle Book’)

The song can be used as a tongue twister to exercise the pronunciation of the sounds /p/ and /ɒ:/, to practice minimal pairs – paw/raw; pear/bear, homophones (words which have the same pronunciation but different spelling): bare/ bear, or even to focus on differences in pronunciation between British and American English.

Activity

The students are given lyrics with all the regular past verbs underlined. Students listen and decide whether the endings are pronounced /t/, /d/ or /ɪd/

/t/	/d/	/ɪd/
Packed	Turned	waited
kissed	Died	
crashed		

An old man turned _____ ninety-eight

He won the lottery and died the next day

[...]Mr. Play It Safe was afraid to fly

He packed his suitcase and kissed his kids good-bye

He waited his whole damn life to take that flight

And as the plane crashed down he thought[...]

(Alanis Morissette – ‘Ironic’)

c. minimal pairs

Alternatively, the differences between sounds can be highlighted by using the lyrics to show how changing one sound can alter meaning (minimal pairs).

Activity

The students are asked to choose the correct answer:

Imagine there's no hidden/Heaven (/ɪ/ versus /e/)

It's easy if you try/ tree (/aɪ/ versus /i:/)

No hell below us

Above us only sky

(John Lennon - 'Imagine')

B. Using songs to focus on words

Words are sequences of sounds that convey meaning. A word is uttered in syllables, usually one emphasized syllable (the stress) and the rest weak (unstressed). An accent shift can change the meaning of a word as in the example: 'PRES-ent' is a noun, referring to a gift, where as 'pre-SENT' is a verb, meaning to give or offer. Even when the same words exist in both languages, the number of syllables is not always identical. Words in songs fit the music, helping learners associate the number of syllables / stress in these words, with memorable rhythms.

Activity

The students are given lyrics and have to guess the number of syllables in each verse,. Students then listen, checking their predictions.

Many, many years ago when I was twenty-three, - ____ (13)

I was married to a widow who was pretty as could be. - ____ (15)

The widow had a grown-up daughter who had hair of red; - ____
(14)

my father fell in love with her, and soon they too were wed. - ____
(14)

(Ray Stevens - 'I'm My Own Grandpa')

Students can be asked underlining the stressed syllable while listening, then drill these words and sing or chant the whole song through.

In written language, there are convenient white spaces between words. On the other hand, spoken language is a continuous stream of sound and students should be trained to distinguish the words in order to understand the meaning.

Activity

The students are given the lyrics of a song with no spaces between the words. They are asked to listen to the song and separate the words:

Welleastcoastgirlsarehip
Ireallydigthosestylestheywear
Andthesoutherngirlswiththewaytheytalk
TheyknockmeoutwhenImdownthere
(Beach Boys – ‘California Girls’)

C. Using songs to focus on connected speech

Students normally learn words individually and, especially at lower levels, tend to pronounce each word separately. They frequently misconceive contractions as being 'incorrect', only used in 'slang'. Songs, and especially the chorus, provide real and 'catchy' examples of how whole phrases are pronounced often to the extent that students find it difficult to pick out individual words. The music further emphasizes the 'flow' of words. Songs, like other spoken texts, are full of contractions. Students can be keen to reproduce this, in order to sing the song as they hear it.

Songs can be used to teach:

- a. **Assimilation** (when a sound is modified by the sounds before and after it)

It is usually dealt with only with a few specific examples such as don't you/ didn't you - /tʃ/, could you - /dʒ/, etc. which are easier to notice.

Activity

The students listen to the song and focus on the pronunciation of the words would you (the sounds /d/ and /j/ combine to form /dʒ/)

Would you know my name
If I saw you in Heaven [...]
(Eric Clapton – ‘Tears in heaven’)

Assimilation can create confusions when interpreting the lyrics. Kelly (2000) gives a famous example of misheard lyrics from the Jimmy Hendrix song ‘Purple Haze’, where the line ‘*Scuse me while I kiss the sky*’ was heard as ‘*Scuse me while I kiss this guy*’ due to the assimilation of the /k/ in sky to a /g/.

b. **Elision** (omission of a sound in pronunciation)

c.

Activity

The show must go on (elision of /t/ between /s/ and /g/)
My soul is painted like the wings of butterflies (elision of /v/
before the consonant /b/) as compared to
Fairy tales of yesterday, will grow but never die (pronounced
/əv/)
(Queen – ‘The Show Must Go On’)
(The song can also be used to focus on linking sounds such as
/w/ in ‘go on’.)

d. **Weak forms** (certain sounds are less stressed in some words) such as the ones used in ‘Where is the love’ by The Black eyed Peas: ‘I think the whole world’s addicted to the drama’.

e. **Contractions** (when two words combine to the extent that the two are pronounced as one word, one syllable such as would’ve, can’t, you’re) or **reduced forms** (the informal forms wanna, gonna, gotta, etc.)

Activity

The students are asked to find the contractions and the reduced forms and write them using the standard spelling.

It’s gonna take a lotta love

To change the way things are.

It’s gonna take a lotta love

Or we won’t get too far.

(Nicolette Larson – ‘A Lotta Love’)

Contractions are given the most amount of attention of all the features of connected speech because they are represented differently in writing from their full form and also because students avoid reading the contracted form and tend read the words separately.

Conclusion:

There are no 'standard' songs for teaching pronunciation. Any song can be an example of different pronunciation aspects. However, the song chosen should be clear, not too fast, memorable, likely to appeal to our learners (possibly songs they already know) and easy to create activities for, depending on the area of pronunciation we are focusing on.

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TEACHING PREPOSITION- MODELS OF ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: *In this article I am going to give some examples of activities that I have used during my teaching career. As my research paper was based on teaching preposition using both traditional and modern methods, I am going to combine the two of them while building my lesson plans.*

I realized that students like to play and even if they are adolescents they still like doing it. I thought: “why not teaching through playing?” Some of the methods may not be proper to their age, but they enjoyed playing cards, bingo, domino, listening to songs, watching videos, rolling the dice, etc. These are relaxing activities that they prefer and are comfortable with and I thought I could easily use them in my classes to teach new language.

First I am going to describe and present the activities I used in my classes during the entire school year.

Keywords: *preposition, research, paper, teaching preposition, types of activities, play, teaching through playing, high school;*

As a teacher I made a research paper on teaching preposition in high school. Among other things presented in my research paper I mentioned some ways and techniques of teaching preposition and also some types of activities that I had used.

The Objectives of the Research

The experimental activity had the following objectives:

- a) identifying the students’ potential regarding the usage of the preposition and establishing the school performance;
- b) Watching the students’ progress after using the actively- participative methods in teaching the preposition;
- c) Exploring the effectiveness of using both the traditional and modern methods;
- d) Stimulating the students’ creativity by a permissive didactical strategy;
- e) Using both the didactical materials and alternative text books at full efficiency.

1. Research context

I started the experimental activity taking into account the following work hypothesis: *Do the modern methods combined with the traditional ones help students to acquire better knowledge regarding the preposition? Will the experiment class obtain better test results after having used the modern methods in teaching preposition?*

I made an experimental activity at Technical College "Unio- Traian Vuia" in Satu Mare, the theme being *teaching preposition in high school* using both traditional and modern methods.

1.1. The Group of Subjects

A number of 34 students participated at this study case. They were 10th grade students between 15 and 16 of age from the Technical College "Unio-Traian Vuia" in Satu Mare.

The students' reading and writing abilities are according to their age. They were devised into two groups: an experimental group and a control group. What is specific about the experimental group is the fact that they were acted upon by the experimental factor, in accordance with the facts mentioned in the research context to produce some changes in the development of the educational action.

The 10th A grade (X A) students were integrated in the experimental class where both the traditional and modern teaching methods were used while the students in 10th B grade (X B) was the control class where only the traditional teaching methods were used.

2. Description of the instruments used in the research

At the beginning of the school year I chose the classes for my pedagogical research.

After that I tested them using a predictive test which was according to the curriculum and the syllabus.

Then during the entire school year while teaching I used only traditional methods with one class and both traditional and modern methods and techniques with the other class.

In the end using a final test I tested the students again.

During the entire pedagogical research I centralised the data containing the students' grades obtained both at the predictive and final test.

I also made an interpretation containing diagrams and graphics using the data obtained.

The experimental research followed the **next steps**:

Firstly, I wanted to check the English level of the classes by giving the students a predictive test, which I have described in the previous sub-

chapter. The predictive test was taken by both classes of students in the same day. The students in the 10th grade had to complete all the sentences properly.

Then, after the predictive test, the experimental class was provided new information using both modern and traditional methods, while the control class provided new information using only the traditional methods. They all had the same goal, to acquire and develop the abilities of using the preposition in all its forms. These activities and methods were used in a long run during the entire school year.

I also wanted to see if there is a difference in acquiring new information using either traditional methods, or both traditional and modern methods.

After that I gave a final test or summative assessment test to confirm the hypothesis.

Finally, after the final test results in both classes, I made a graphical representation, described in the following chapter, using tables and diagrams containing data related to the students in both classes and their scoring.

The two tests, predictive and final tests, the correcting norms and the scoring together with types of activities, lesson plans, techniques and methods are described in the following chapter.

2.1. The Diagnosis/ Predictive Test

By using this method, I wanted to identify the students' abilities of using preposition. I also wanted to analyse the way students were able to both acquire and produce a written message using preposition.

The test was written according to the syllabus and contained 3 exercises referring to the students' abilities of using the preposition.

By using this test the teacher was able to evaluate both acquiring and producing messages regarding the preposition.

The first exercise, **exercise I**, contains an extract with different prepositions (expressing place, time, cause, adjectives followed by prepositions, and prepositional phrases etc). The students have to identify the prepositions by underlining them.

By using this type of exercise I wanted to find the students' abilities of acquiring a written message and their abilities of identifying the prepositions in different contexts.

The second exercise, **exercise II** contains 10 sentences. The students have to choose the suitable preposition among the given ones to fill in the gaps.

By using this type of exercise I wanted to find the students' abilities of producing a written message and using the proper preposition among the given ones.

The third exercise, **exercise III**, also contains 10 sentences. The students have to fill in the gaps with the suitable preposition, but this time without having given any prepositions to choose from.

By using this type of exercise I wanted to find the students' abilities of producing a written message and filling the gaps with the proper preposition.

The duration of the test is of 25 minutes. For every exercise solved correctly the students obtain 10 points multiplied by 3 exercises was 90 points and the other 10 points ex officio. The total score was 100 points.

2.2 A possible model of pedagogical intervention

During the pedagogical intervention I have used some interactive methods such as:

2.2 1. Board games

Board games are an important tool to provide hands-on and heads-on skill and knowledge development for people of all ages on all subjects. Not only do well-designed games create an engaging atmosphere, they also provide a nonthreatening, playful, yet competitive environment in which to focus on content and reinforce and apply learning. Mistakes are useful and point out what we need to learn. **(Treher, 2011:3-4)**

Many board games encourage players to:

- detect patterns;
- plan ahead;
- predict the outcome of alternative moves;
- learn from experience
- task performance can be assessed in terms of the outcome **(Skehan, 1998, p. 95)**.

While having taught prepositions I realised that this type of activity turned to be very effective and challenging.

Next I am going to describe this activity from different points of view as presented in the lesson plans in the next subchapter.

Aim: the development of the ability of producing an oral message;

Competence/ objective: to practice preposition of place;

Task: make up sentences according to the picture using the preposition of place;

Procedures:

- Teacher divides the class into groups;
- T provides students with the material resources : board games, counters and dice;
- Students choose a counter and in turns roll the dice and go forward. When they land on a square they have to make up sentences according to the

picture using the preposition of place. If the answer is correct they move ahead two more spaces.

Resources: Ss, board game, counters, dice.

Interraction: GW (group work)

Time: 15-20'

Feedback: Ss say the sentences.

2.2.2. Playing cards

Role play cards can be a very useful tool. Role-play cards invite students to assume the role of a specific person or character and to react to a stimulus or prompt as that person.

The teacher first models language structures and builds vocabulary that students will need. English language learners will need to be given rehearsal time and a speaking frame. After the activity it is important to build in reflection time.

Role playing allows people to make mistakes in a nonthreatening environment. They can test several solutions to very realistic problems, and the application is immediate. It also fulfils some of the very basic principles of the teaching-learning process such as learner involvement and intrinsic motivation. A positive climate often results in which one can see himself as others see him. The involvement of the role playing participants can create both an emotional and intellectual attachment to the subject matter at hand. Role playing can often create a sense of community within the class. (Richards, 1986)

The benefits of role-play cards:

- A tool for giving English language learners opportunities to use language and content in a variety of situations.
- Can be used in subject areas to link learning to real life contexts

This type of activity was very productive and fun during my classes. The students' participation was also very active.

Next I am going to describe this activity from different points of view :

Aim:

- the development of the ability of acquiring an oral message;
- the development of the ability of producing an oral message

Competence/ objective:

- to practice preposition;
- to reinforce the use of prepositions.

Task: Create a Prepositional Phrase

Procedures:

- Teacher divides the class into groups;
- T provides students with the material resources : cards worksheets, scissors;

- Students cut out the cards and shuffle each stake of red and blue cards separately;
- Students put a red preposition card with a blue object card and form sentences.

Resources: Ss, cards worksheets, scissors, sheets of paper, pens, whiteboard.

Interaction: GW (group work)

Time: 15-20'

Feedback: one student from every group comes to the board and writes some sentences they have formed using the prepositional phrases.

3. Bingo

Bingo is one of my favourite games to play in my English classes.

It is versatile, simple, and fun. I have played many different versions of Bingo depending on what I happen to be teaching, and Bingo is flexible enough that I can use it with about anything.

Many teachers improve the game by using words instead of numbers. Preparing Bingo cards takes a little time, but we can easily reuse the game in future classes, so it's worth it.

Before starting the game, it is necessary to prepare the students by practicing sentences or vocabulary. We could also call up two students to model asking and answering one question. We also must give clear instructions before students begin.

In my opinion, the most important features and benefits of this technique are:

- it refers to learner self-assessment;
- it is learner-centred;
- detect patterns;
- learn from experience.

Next I am going to describe this activity from different points of view.

Aim:

- the development of the ability of acquiring an oral message;
- the development of the ability of producing an oral message

Competence/ objective:

- to practice preposition;
- to review the prepositions and prepositional phrases.

Task: combine the two structures to create prepositional phrases, and/or build sentence with the prepositional phrases.

Procedures:

- Teacher divides the class into pairs;
- T provides students with the material resources : bingo cards;

- In pairs, students listen to the structure that teacher says and cross out the preposition on the bingo card that matches to form correct prepositional phrases.

- One of the students writes on the paper or notebook the prepositional phrase.

- When a pair has crossed out all the prepositions in a line, they shout LINE and the game continues to bingo;

- When a pair has crossed out all the prepositions on the bingo card, they shout BINGO

Resources: Ss, bingo cards, sheets of paper, pens, whiteboard.

Interraction: PW (pair work)

Time: 20-25'

Feedback: one student from every pair comes to the board and writes some prepositional phrases or sentences they have formed using the prepositional phrases.

4. Teaching preposition through music and videos

Music is a very effective tool that should play a larger role in the ESL classroom because it offers a great variety those appeals to the students. Most children enjoy music and therefore it should increase their interest in learning a new language in a very entertaining way.

Teachers need to be willing to incorporate music in their lessons in order to better enhance their students' learning.

Music can be used to remove language barriers and should be implemented as early as possible. More music in every language classroom will inspire more students to become creative and independent. Music will allow teachers and their students to understand each other and connect in a new way.

“How is it that for most people music is a powerful part of their personal life and yet when we go to work or school we turn it off?” (**Brewer, 1995:2**).

My opinion is that music in the classroom fits perfectly and I know that music and songs is an effective tool for teachers to use for their students as I have used a lot of music and videos while teaching. Nowadays teenagers are very fond of music of all kinds. Knowing that music is their main interest I took advantage of it and used it into my English classes.

The classes were very funny and while teaching new structures and patterns we hummed, sang and nodded our heads. The classes and activities were very productive and the students were very interested in them.

The benefits of teaching new language through music and videos are:

- It is entertaining and fun;
- Students are more interested and more active and efficient;
- To practice structure through music.

Next I am going to describe this activity from different points of view.

Aim:

- the development of the ability of acquiring an oral message;
- the development of the ability of producing a written message.

Competence/ objective:

- to practice preposition and prepositional phrases;
- to complete the gaps with the suitable prepositions.

Task: Fill in the gaps and finish the song:

Procedures:

- Teacher divides students into pairs;
- Teacher hands out the worksheets;
- First students try to complete the gaps with prepositions of their own;
- Then teacher plays the CD for the students to check.

Resources: Ss, worksheets, pens, CD/ mp3 player/ computer, projector.

Interraction: PW (pair work)

Time: 15-20'

Feedback: students sing/read the song on the worksheet.

2.3. The Final/ Summative Assessment Test

By using this method, I wanted to check the students in the experimental class abilities of using preposition after having taught by combining the traditional methods with the modern ones. I also wanted to analyse the control class students' scores after being taught using only the traditional methods. In the end I made a comparison analysis between the results of the two classes experimental and control class.

The test was also written according to the syllabus and contained 3 exercises. The skills tested here are building vocabulary, prepositional phrases, prepositions and writing complex sentences.

By using this test the teacher was able to check the students' progress of both acquiring and producing messages regarding the preposition.

First exercise, **exercise I**, the students have to combine the prepositions with the phrases so that they should form the correct prepositional phrases.

The second exercise, **exercise II**, the students have to fill the text with the suitable prepositional phrases they have formed in the previous exercise.

The third exercise, **exercise III**, the students have to make sentences of their own with the prepositional phrases they have already used in the previous exercises.

The duration of the test is of 40 minutes. For every exercise solved correctly the students obtain 10 points multiplied by 3 exercises was 90 points and the other 10 points ex officio. The total score was 100 points.

3. Description and justification of the statistical techniques

After I found the students' scoring at the predictive test I centralised the data and wrote them in the table below.

Table 1 contains data regarding the experimental class' names abbreviations, the scoring at the predictive test and the grade point average.

Table 1

No.	Students' names	Scoring
1	B.D.	4.20
2	B.V.	6.70
3	C.F.	4.40
4	C.A.	4.00
5	Cs.I.	5.10
6	D.I.	7.90
7	F.D.	3.80
8	G.D.	3.90
9	Gh.V.	4.70
10	I.G.	5.30
11	L.C.	6.20
12	P.E.	3.00
13	P.M.	7.50
14	P.C.	5.50
15	S.I.	3.00
16	T.M.	6.60
17	V.C.	2.90
Grade point average:		4.98

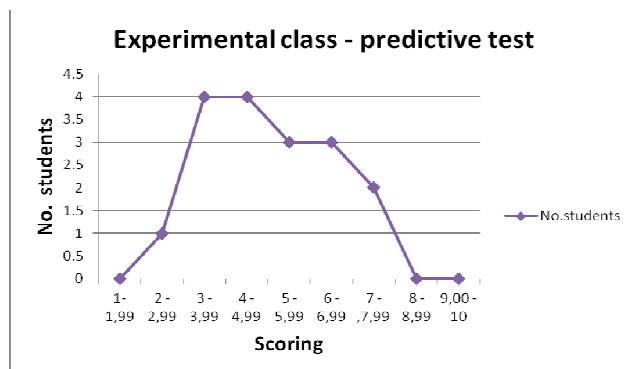


Diagram 1 represents the experimental class' predictive test graphic, the number of students that had the same scoring.

Table 2 contains the scoring for the experimental class, number of students that had the same scoring, percentage, and the grade point average.

Scoring	1 - 1.99	2 - 2.99	3 - 3.99	4 - 4.99	5 - 5.99	6 - 6.99	7 - 7.99	8 - 8.99	9- 10	Grade point average
No. Of students	0	1	4	4	3	3	2	0	0	4.98
Percentage		5.88%	23.53%	23.53%	17.65%	17.65%	11.76%			

Diagram 2

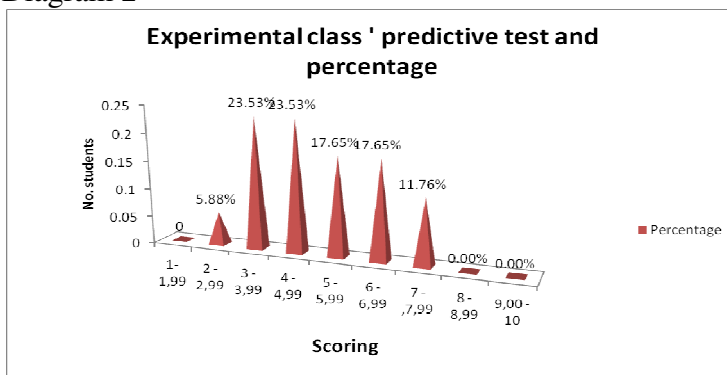


Diagram 2 represents the scoring for the experimental class, number of students that had the same scoring and percentage for the predictive test.

Table 3 represents contains data regarding the control class' names abbreviations, the scoring at the predictive test and the grade point average.

No.	Students' names	Scoring
1	B.D.	4.10
2	B.I.	6.70
3	C.C.	4.40
4	C.O.	4.10
5	D.C.	5.00
6	H.V.	7.20
7	I.N.	3.80
8	J.A.	3.90
9	M.C.	5.00
10	M.L.	5.30

11	M.G.	6.20
12	P.G.	3.20
13	R.L	6.90
14	R.F.	5.50
15	S.A.	3.10
16	S.S.	6.70
17	S.M.	3.00
Grade point average:		4.95

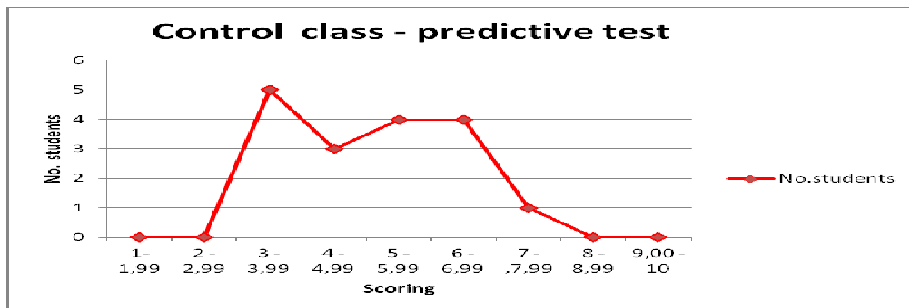


Diagram 3 represents the control class' predictive test graphic, the number of students that had the same scoring.

Table 4 contains the scoring for the control class, number of students that had the same scoring, percentage, and the grade point average.

scoring	1 - 1.99	2 - 2.99	3 - 3.99	4 - 4.99	5 - 5.99	6 - 6.99	7 - 7.99	8 - 8.99	9 - 9.00	10	Grade point average
No. Of students	0	0	5	3	4	4	1	0	0	0	4.95
Percent age			9.41 %	7.65 %	3.53 %	3.53 %	5.88 %				

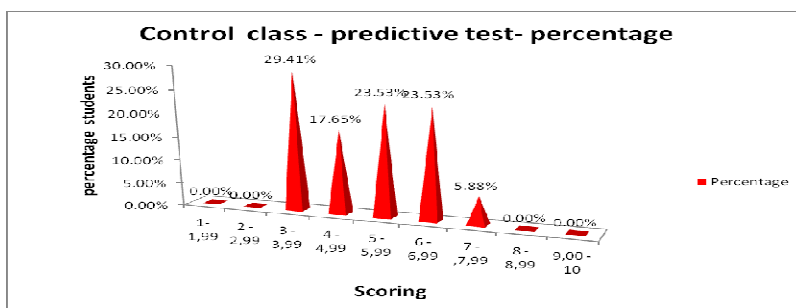


Diagram 4 represents the scoring for the control class, number of students that had the same scoring and percentage for the predictive test.

Table 5 contains the two classes with the total number of students in each class, scoring and percentage for the predictive test.

CLASS	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	SCORING																
		1,99	%	2,99	%	3,99	%	4,99	%	5,99	%	6,99	%	7,99	%	8,99	10	
experimental	7	0	-	1	5,9	4	23,5	4	23,5	3	17,7	3	17,7	2	11,8	0	-	0
control	7	0	-	0	-	5	29,4	3	17,7	4	23,5	4	23,5	1	5,88	0	-	0

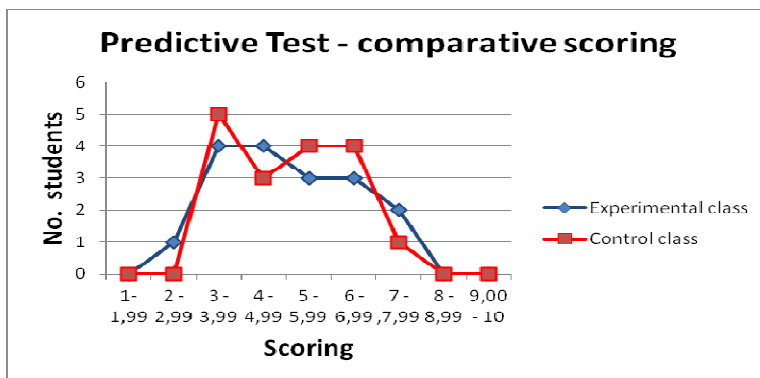


Diagram 5 represents the comparative analysis of scoring and the number of students with the same scoring of both experimental and control class of the predictive test.

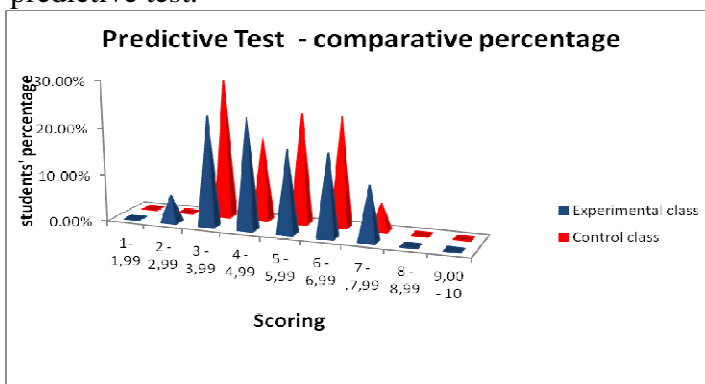


Diagram 6 represents the comparative scoring and percentage of both classes of the predictive test.

We can obviously notice that according to the tables and diagrams the two classes involved into the experimental research have equal chances even if there are some slightly differences.

According to the results analysis I wanted to highlight the fact that few students were able to identify the preposition, in all its forms, and to produce a message using the preposition. Preposition, as part of the syllabus content for the 10th grade, was not mastered well by the students in both classes. They made many mistakes and confusions regarding prepositions and if they did recognise them and use them properly, it was by chance or because of the fact that the prepositions matched with those in their mother tongue.

I also noticed that firstly, they had translated the text into their mother tongue, then into English and after that they had rewritten the text completely into English using the requested prepositions, which they had assumed were used properly.

They were students studying in a technological and vocational school. They used to have poor abilities of using English either in receiving or producing a message. They used to have a strategy, which was understandable in a way and specific to young people learning a second language.

Firstly, when they received a task to solve, they tried to translate it into their mother tongue.

Secondly, they tried to solve the task into their mother tongue.

Finally the students translated the final answer of the task into English giving the final solution of the task.

They used to translate every single word or, if the worst came to the worst, they used translating motors on the internet. If they looked up every word in the dictionary it would not be so bad because they might have found some other meanings and usage of the words and so might have found the proper version. But having used a translating motor for the task, they might not have been given different meanings and contexts.

This is the primary problem with second language learners that I have encountered very often during my teaching career.

Now I am going to present the procedure for the pedagogical research.

At first I chose two classes of the same level for the experiment: a control class and an experimental test.

Then I provided both classes with the same predictive test, which we can find in the previous chapter.

After finding the results of the predictive test I started the experiment as follows: during the entire school year, I used only traditional methods for the control class, while teaching the students and I combined the traditional methods with the modern ones for the experimental class to develop, vary

and activate the abilities of using the prepositions both in acquiring and producing messages process.

Finally at the end of the school year I provided both classes the final test.

The results were very different from the ones in the predictive test. They were not only more different but, the experimental class' results were higher.

What is more, the active and participative methods made the students to get more involved in the activities used in the class. Participating actively at the English class the students acquired the new knowledge easier.

To conclude with, I noticed that the modern methods stimulated the students' creativity, initiative, having an important role in developing their personality. By using these methods, the students were encouraged to express their feelings freely, and they were stimulated to get involved in the activities at the class. Having participated actively at the teaching- learning activities, the students acquired the new notions easier, developed their vocabulary, and the abilities of acquiring and producing oral and written messages.

The students' results at the final test are centralised in the tables and diagrams below:

Table 6 contains data regarding the experimental class' names abbreviations, the scoring at the final test and the grade point average.

No.	Students' names	Scoring
1	B.D.	6.20
2	B.V.	7.80
3	C.F.	6.30
4	C.A.	5.80
5	Cs.I.	6.90
6	D.I.	9.10
7	F.D.	5.30
8	G.D.	5.10
9	Gh.V.	6.00
10	I.G.	6.80
11	L.C.	7.50
12	P.E.	5.10
13	P.M.	8.30
14	P.C.	6.80
15	S.I.	4.90
16	T.M.	7.80
17	V.C.	4.20
Grade point average:		6.46

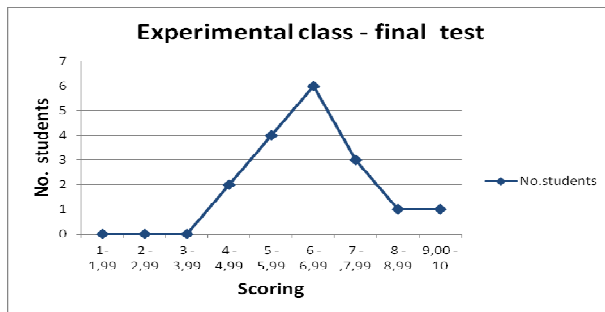


Diagram 7 represents the experimental class' final test graphic, the number of students that had the same scoring.

Table 7 represents the experimental class results, number of students that had the same scoring, and percentage.

Scoring	1 - 1,99	2 - 2,99	3 - 3,99	4 - 4,99	5 - 5,99	6 - 6,99	7 - 7,99	8 - 8,99	9 - 10	Grade point average:
No. students	0	0	0	2	4	6	3	1	1	6.46
Percentage				17.65%	35.29%	52.94%	17.65%	5.88%	5.88%	

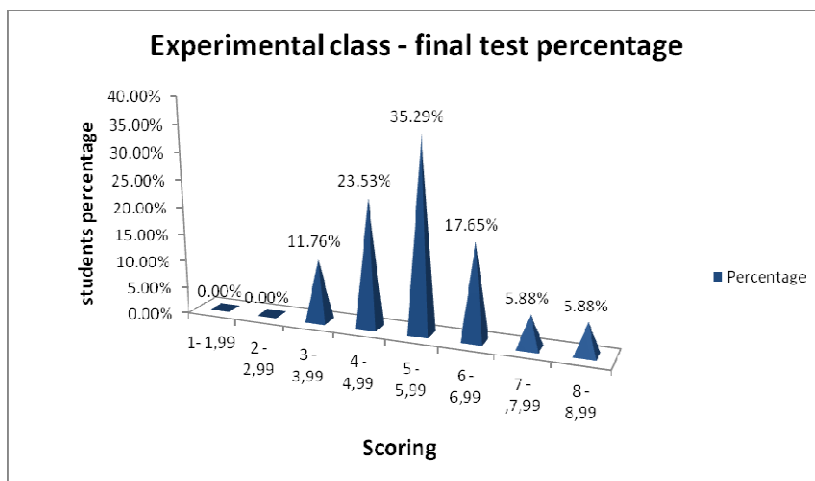


Diagram 8 represents the graphic for the experimental class' number of students with the same scoring and percentage for the final test

Table 8 represents the control class' names and abbreviations, scoring, and the grade point average at the final test.

No.	Students' names	Scoring
1	B.D.	5.40
2	B.I.	6.90
3	C.C.	5.60
4	C.O.	4.90
5	D.C.	5.90
6	H.V.	7.80
7	I.N.	4.70
8	J.A.	4.90
9	M.C.	5.70
10	M.L.	5.90
11	M.G.	6.80
12	P.G.	4.50
13	R.I.	7.20
14	R.F.	6.30
15	S.A.	3.90
16	S.S.	6.90
17	S.M.	3.90
Grade point average:		5.72

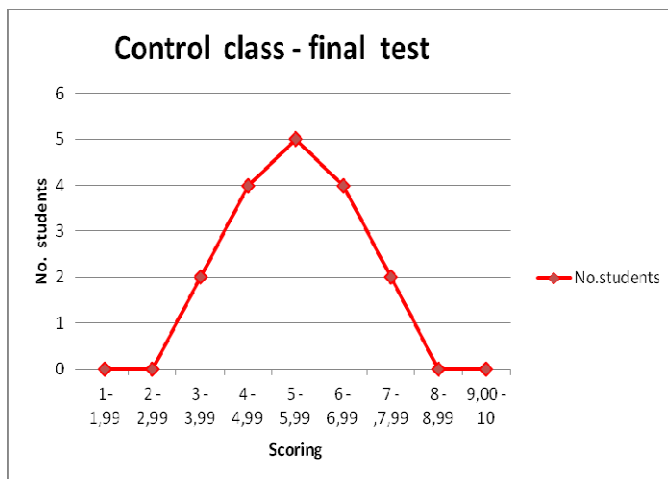


Diagram 9 represents the control class' number of students with the same scoring for the final test.

Table 9 represents the control class number of students with the same results, scoring, Grade point average and percentage for the final test.

Scoring	1 - 1.99	2 - 2.99	3 - 3.99	4 - 4.99	5 - 5.99	6 - 6.99	7 - 7.99	8 - 8.99	9-10	Grade point average:
No students	0	0	2	4	5	4	2	0	0	5.72
Percentage			1.76 %	3.53 %	9.41 %	3.53 %	1.76 %			

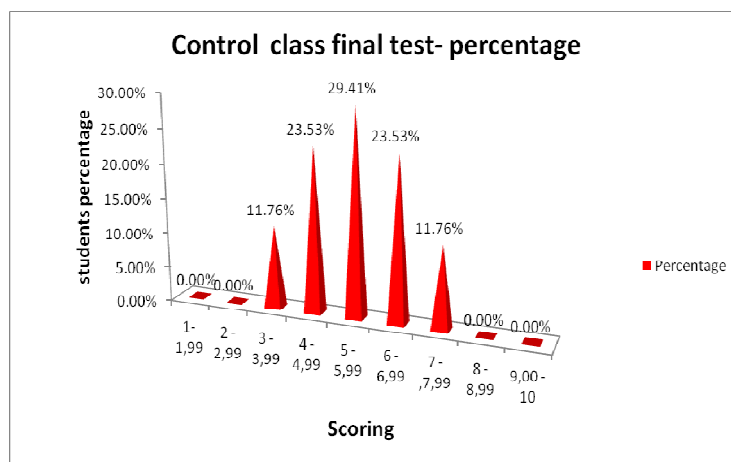


Diagram 10 represents the control class' number of students with the same result, scoring and percentage for the final test.

The final test comparative results for both control and experimental classes are:

Table 10 represents the final test results of both control and experimental classes. There are the number of students in each class, the number of students with the same results, taken separately, and the percentage.

RA DE	No. Students	SCORING								
		1 - 1.99	2 - 2.99	3 - 3.99	4 - 4.99	5 - 5.99	6 - 6.99	7 - 7.99	8 - 8.99	9-10
experimental	71	-	-	-	176	353	529	765	88	88

control	7	1	-	-	1.7	3.5	9.4	3.5	1.7	-	-
				6	3	1	3	6			

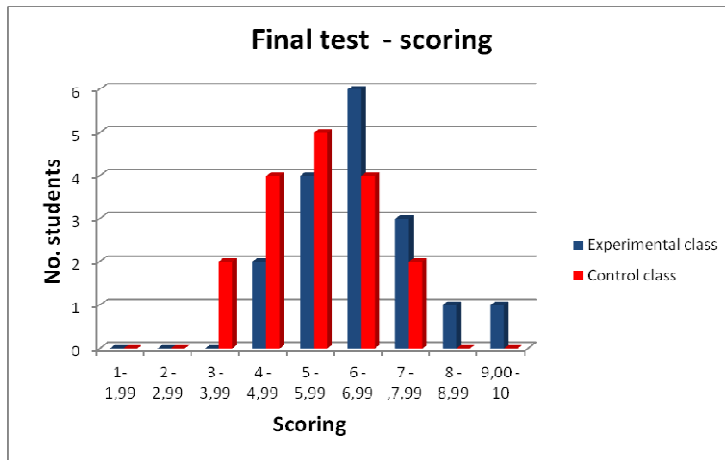
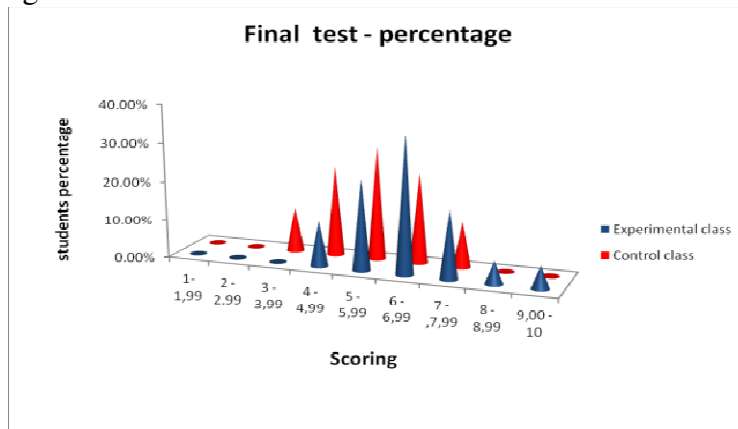


Diagram 11 represents the two classes' final test comparative scoring. There is the number of students with the same results.

Diagram 12 represents the two classes the final test comparative scoring and percentage.



There is to be noticed some differences concerning the two tests, predictive and final test, taken by both experimental class and control class. If at the predictive test taken by the two classes, the scoring was roughly equal, concerning the final test, there are some major differences between both experimental and control class.

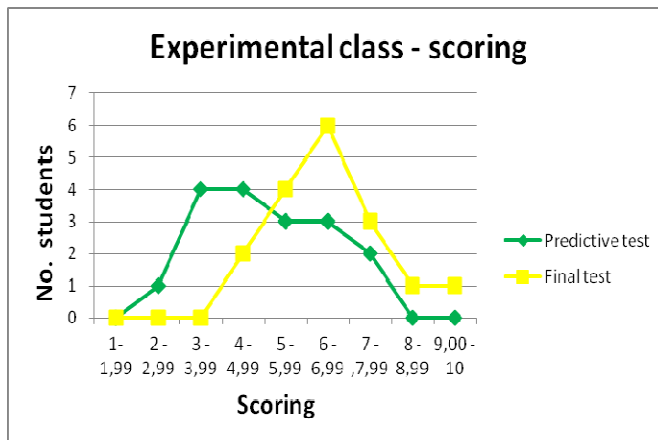


Diagram 13 represents the experimental class scoring for the two tests, number of students with the same result.

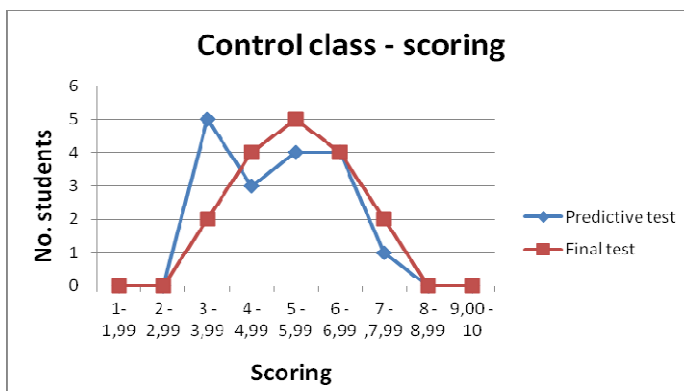


Diagram 14 represents the control class scoring for the two tests, number of students with the same result.

After processing the data statistics and the qualitative analysis, we can easily notice that compared to the control class, by the end of the final test, the students in the experimental class, have made important progress regarding the use of preposition.

This was possible following the modern methods blended with the traditional ones used in the activities during the English classes.

Therefore, in the experimental class, the number of the students who had passed the test, raised. The percentage increased from 47.06% to 88. 24%.

In the control class the percentage of the students who had passed the test also raised from 52. 94% to 64.70%. The raise in this case was not so high. Having used only the traditional methods with the control class, the process of acquisition of new knowledge was not so productive.

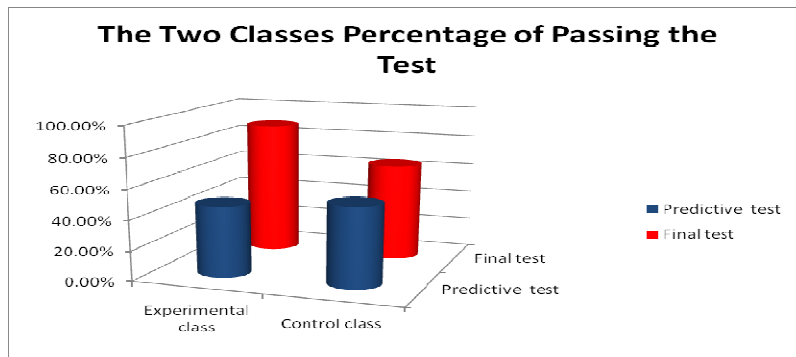


Diagram 15 represents the classes' percentage of passing the tests.

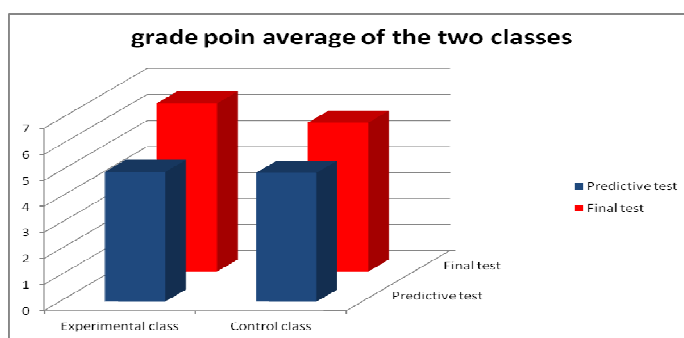


Diagram 16 represents the two classes' grades point averages for both predictive and final tests.

There are many important factors to take into account and which led to developing and activating the abilities of using the prepositions and enriching their vocabulary. The factors that were taken into account for the productive results at the end of the pedagogical research were:

- the modern methods applied during the classes blended with the traditional ones;
- the students' age and individual particularities;
- the class content in accordance with the method's didactical task.

The results of the final tests were to be expected, and I refer to the experimental class. During the entire experiment period I had encountered some difficulties too. The control class, where I used only the traditional methods, sometimes got bored while looking up in the dictionaries for new words, reading the long extracts of texts, or solving grammar exercises.

The experimental class, where I had used both the traditional and modern methods, was pleased and sometimes excited about the activities and procedures I used. They had fun and sometimes they disturb the classes. This fact sometimes, led to not doing all the objectives proposed for that class.

Another difficulty was the fact that the activities were, as they said, too childish. For example there was a board game activity with counters and dice. Some of them even refused to play the games for that activity.

The required measures following the results analysis would be:

- to propose less objectives for the lessons;
- to adapt the modern activities and methods to their age and interests;
- to use both traditional and modern methods with all classes;
- to take into account their preferences , hobbies and interests.

As a closing remark for this pedagogical research and experiment that I had proposed to make is that the two classes that had been chosen for this experiment were willing to participate in this experiment. The tests were reliable and in accordance with the syllabus and the curriculum for English classes of tenth grade for technological classes. The validity of the interpretation of the results and the statistics were accurate, likely to be true and correct.

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COMPETENCES TRAINING. FROM DESIGN TO DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF TEACHING

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Abstract: *The aims of education evolved from the knowledge towards the goals (instructive - educational), from here in the objectives area and the last two - three decades in the area of skills training. From the perspective of didactics, the essential movement is the type of desired end – skills instead of content. For skills training a rethinking of the whole teaching approach is needed, from design to the actual pursuit of teaching and the type of assessment. In this paper, we propose a systemic approach to design, conduct, evaluation of teaching, focusing on skills training through concrete examples.*

Keywords: *competences training, cognitive constructivist perspective, learning for life, design, development, evaluation of teaching;*

Introduction

The aims of education evolved from the knowledge toward the goals (instructive - educational), and from here towards the objectives area and the last two - three decades in the area of skills training.

In the traditional view learning means recording, storage and reproduction of knowledge, which the teacher considers necessary for general education and less professional (expert). Thinking and acting students are targeted, rigorously conducted externally through lecture-type activities, followed by reproductive exercises. Research and discovery are missing, and experience the daily life of students and concrete are ignored.

Student centered learning derived from the constructivist theory of learning, where learning is a process in which the individual is "built" new basis of previously accumulated knowledge and practical experience. By drawing lessons students can develop their own mental models or schemes to define concepts and their correlation in new structures. Such knowledge is no longer independent student and are not passively received. The student-centered environment are generated active processes, information processing, building hypotheses, decision making, using their own mental models.

Moreover, social constructivism, improving knowledge emphasizes the role of teachers, parents, peers, the community at large for individual acquisition of knowledge, in their capacity as guardians or mentors.

Focus on skills training complying with the three components of competence: the transmission of knowledge (what the student should know), the formation of working activities (what the student should do with what he knows) and the formation of positive attitudes, optimistic towards himself and towards the others to grow personally and professionally in this world.

To meet the needs of the child today, the training process by formulating problems needs to be rethought in connection with new technologies. Virtual tools, educational software can be used to simulate processes, phenomena, real-world experiences that the child can explore the school, the learning activity. Children can watch experiments ready made or can make their own experiments under the guidance of the teacher to answer their own questions in terms of academic knowledge that a teacher proposes.

The two directions: focusing on skills and the need to access the new technologies need to support each other.

1. Conceptual distinction

The competences are the integrated ensemble of skills and capabilities, operation and transfer of procurement, enabling the efficient conduct of activities in functional use of knowledge and skills in different formal, non-formal and informal contexts

From the perspective of didactics, the essential mutation consists in the type of desired end - skills instead of content.

In the context of competence-based training, education components have a certain qualitative change by repositioning aims from two different perspectives: the key skills and competencies of school curriculum. Competency-based training has in mind interdisciplinary approach to learning by infusing content from several school subjects and to real situations, both in the educational process analysis, and to design training.

For skills training is needed rethinking the whole teaching approach from design, to conduct itself in the manner of teaching and assessment.

The design of the learning units, unfolding school activities focused on the operation, applying practical contexts of the new acquisitions, the integration of interdisciplinary knowledge into existing systems, are steps leading to the formation of competencies, and the acquisition of knowledge becomes a result of operating, not a result of a process dominated by memory.

Such theoretical acquisitions will be the result of a well-conducted exercise, not the result of an act of memorizing.

Competence-based learning leads to learning objectives with a high complex level. Children learn to make decisions, solve problems, think critically, choose effective methods and techniques.

Analyzing in terms of the role that the student has in teaching, constructivism is the way that leads to competence as personal acquisition.

Constructivism the process defined by the student-centered education principles and focuses on the interpretation of stimuli that occur in student's mind. The students is no longer seen as a container passively absorbing information, knowledge is not transmitted by simply reading or listening, but by personal significance that the student pays to educational stimuli. Students actively develop new knowledge through interactions with the environment. Therefore, anything he reads, sees, hears or feels is analyzed from the perspective of mental existing constructs / prior knowledge, developing and strengthening old structures of knowledge if they can be applied to larger environment structures or modifying the old ones when new information produce a state of imbalance. Learning is seen as an active process and social construction of meanings and meanings systems based on sensory stimuli and it is greatly influenced by the language. (Joița, 2006)

Constructivist communication environments are defined by the following characteristics:

- provide multiple representations of reality;
- avoid excessive simplification and represent the complexity of the living world;
- focus on authentic applications in meaningful contexts;
- provide natural learning environments and based on concrete cases;
- encourage critical reflection on experience;
- allow construction of knowledge based on content or context;
- allow collaborative knowledge building.

Constructionism is a theory which states that learning is more effective when the student builds something in order to convey meaning to others that he has delivered to a work (by mere assertions or more elaborate compositions). Mere reading is not sufficient to cause learning, but an effort to explain in their own words an idea to another person or to make a plea

would lead to a better understanding of the teaching load, which is integrated more consistently in his own ideas. This is the explanation given by this theory that people take notes during a lecture although they do not intend to read them later.

Social Constructivism is a current focused on the construction of meaning by the members of social groups, building a collaborative culture in miniature joint product with common meanings. The participation in such groups generates learning situations. The activities and products manufactured within a group as a whole help shape the behavior of members within the group.

Learning in small groups therefore, mutual learning are ways of organizing learning in light of these theories.

Cognitivism highlights the internal processes of learning. For cognitive student is an active information processing. So learning is characterized by a change in the student's mental structures.

Educational vision arising from cognitive approach emphasizes the active mental engagement of students throughout the learning to manage in-depth information processing.

Cognitive constructivist learning involves permanent student involvement in building their own learning by harnessing its experience and reintegration of new acquisitions in existing systems.

2. Teaching design from a cognitive constructivist perspective

In the case of focusing on skills training, their main concern is the transfer of documents regulating the curriculum applied in education. Our paper aims to present how teachers can conceive the design and assessment tests in agreement with the skills to be targeted.

The design will be done through a document with this structure, Table 1.

Table 1. Structure of the teaching design (Popa, 2009)

Content detailing	Reference objectives / Specific skills	Learning Activities	Resources	Evaluation
--------------------------	---	----------------------------	------------------	-------------------

2.1. Content detailing

In this box appear content specifications necessary for the explanation of certain pathways, that is, information that the student must practice to become knowledge that can operate. For example, in maths class IV, content addition and subtraction with natural numbers without crossing order, we will note down: *amount, total term, the higher, was added, etc.*

This box is what keeps us "In the context of the curriculum and do not let us overcome the notions quantity, information that we claim to students at the same time do not let us "forget" certain knowledge that students are required to have.

Reference objectives /Specific skills

In this box are written those reference objectives/ specific skills listed in the annual planning, in the learning unit plan.

2.2. Learning activities

In this section are written activities that students do. Suggested activities can be used for curriculum, supplemented, modified, or even replaced with others that the teacher thinks are appropriate for practicing skills. To identify the most appropriate learning activities to a certain level, we use Bloom's Taxonomy.

Important! For each of the six levels of Bloom's taxonomy some learning activities are required. We begin a unit with verbs derived from the first level knowledge and continue with understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, argumentation.

Note: For each learning activity it is recommended a line, in table.

2.3. Resources

In this section, are written material resources and proceedings, teacher's, material provided to students. Examples: Exercise 5, p.65 textbook, worksheet, Annex 2, http://chemistry.dortikum.net/download/chemistry_setup_en.exe), the way of organizing the activity: frontal, individual, group, pairs.

It is necessary to have specified document design exercises, concretely, to be his accompanying worksheets.

This section offers „ a picture” of what happens in the classroom at a certain time. There are described specifically, for each of the learning conditions in which learning occurs.

For each learning activity, it is specified the learning conditions.

2.4. Evaluation

Under this heading is given for each learning activity assessment methods used in the classroom during learning activities, to follow how well it was done the task and implicitly the learning, what is the students' progress: showing the learning products in front of the class, selfevaluation, front evaluation, mutual reading, mutual pair reading.

For each learning activity, it is specified how the continuing evaluation is done. (Chisiu, 2011)

3. The teacher's role in the development cognitive constructivist learning

Learning is thus an active process of building this reality. The reality is constructed by each individual, which gives a unique significance, based on his own experiences. The student simply does not transfer knowledge from the outside world in his memory, he builds his own interpretations of the world, from his interactions with it. Knowledge is open to negotiation and, in this respect, the social context plays a major role in learning. For the constructivist teacher, the teaching means testing the student's meanings. A constructivist vision supports the student in guided findings, encourages exploration of different views, collaborative learning, project-based approach, etc. The student has a proactive role, because he is the decision maker in his approach to building knowledge, accompanied and supported by teachers who have the task to provide a rich learning environment and incentive.

Constructivist tasks focus on mentally active engagement of students throughout the learning to manage in-depth information processing. The teacher will use teaching strategies to help the student to:

- select and encode the information they contain;
- organize and integrate information in their own systems;
- retrieve information in long-term memory. (Joita, 2002)

In this process the role of the educator's responsibility is to provide an environment prepared for exploratory work of the student.

Teaching methods favored by cognitive constructivist approach allow multiple learning paths, taking into account individual variables that influence the information processing.

The methods *I know /I need to know /I have learned*, *SINELG*, *Mutual Reading*, *Reflexive Journal* and *the Mosaic Method* are just some of those which make learning from what students know about the proposed topic,

categorize information, share opinions and make reciprocal teaching. (Chisiu, 2011)

The teacher will prepare constructivist learning environments open, stimulating the students to be able to test their assumptions, to confront points of view, etc. Educational software technologies, hypermedia, multimedia, interactive platforms can be used to provide a flexible environment for student exploration and building their own knowledge.

For this, the teacher will assume the role of facilitator of learning that:

- Accepts and encourages student's autonomy;
- Uses a variety of materials and encourages students to use them;
- Asks students' opinion on new knowledge before sharing his own knowledge;
- Chooses methods that make possible the sharing of ideas. Encourages students to interact with him and with colleagues;
- Encourages students to explore knowledge and to ask questions;
- Trains students in experiences that produce contradictions and then encourage discussions, even if they are contradictory;
- Proposes learning activities that operate with new information until they are integrated into relevant knowledge. (Brooks, Brooks, 2001)

4. Evaluation of cognitive constructivist perspective

In terms of skills training and assessment test constructionist constructivist approach can be thought as a reference sample having analyzed below. The making of the sample starts with the covered competencies, which are connected to essential contents. It operates with the essential knowledge, the necessary context for life or for further learning, which give effect to motivate learning and effort required.

The tasks target both the operations and the lower levels of the higher than whatever, in a gradual way.

The link between skills and tasks proposed targeted ensures the validity of the assessment. Table 2

With the assessment test, the student is recommended to receive an array of specifications that include: skills expected to be manifested, work load, and maximum score for each item. This way the student can self-assess, becomes a partner in his own training.

4.1. Sample Evaluation

Chemistry cl VIII

Theme: salts: NaCl, CaCO₃, CuSO₄, NH₄NO₃, NH₄Cl

Highlights on the task and assessment criteria:

1. Choose a salt of the list again.
2. 4p. Specify the chemical usual name
3. Explain 9p forming chemical name.
4. 10 p. Characterizing the salt viewpoint of the structure, physical properties, indicate at least 5 features.
5. 27 p Exemplify the chemical properties of the salt resorting to virtual testing using the software: Virtual Chemistry Lab
http://chemistry.dortikum.net/download/chemistry_setup_en.exe
 Perform at least 3 experiments.
 For each experiment on chemical properties, print screen will perform the experiment.
 - a. Describe each experiment showing:
 - Stages
 - Watch
 - Benefits
 - Risks
 8p is given for each experiment described.
 - b. Nominate at least three chemical properties; 3 P.
6. 5x10 p Indicate at least 5 using showing:
 - a. The field is used; 1p
 - b. Why is it used? 2p
 - c. Advantages; 2p
 - d. Personal opinion; What would happen if the salt does not exist? What risks exist in relation to its use? At least 5 ideas

Each item in the sample evaluation has benchmarks for achievement and assessment criteria at the same time. Students self-evaluate their work based on given criteria and will give a certain score. It is a learning experience that makes them share in the construction of their own learning.
 Table 2

Table. 2 Self Assessment / Evaluation

Items	2	3	4	5			6a	6b	6c	6d	Total	
Maximum score	4	9	10	3	8	8	8	5	10	10	25	100
Self-assessment												
Assessment												

Table 3. The connection between the items and skills assessment test subjects:

5. Assessment - source and learning opportunities

<i>The relevant competent/Skills of unit evaluated</i>	<i>The task as we receive students</i>	<i>Criteria and scoring rubric</i>
CS1.1. Explaining observations to identify some applications of chemical phenomena.	6a Areas where it is used	5
CS 1.2. Deduction uses of chemical substances based on physico -chemical properties.	6b Why is it used?	10
CS 2.4. Using equipment and laboratory equipment, information technologies for the study of different substances.	5b Steps experiment	3
CS 2.5. Conclusions and generalizations to highlight the physical and chemical properties of composite materials.	5f Nominate at least three chemical properties	3
	5c Advantages	6
CS 4.1. Communication in written / oral approach results of an investigation using scientific terminology.	3 Explain the formation of the chemical name.	9
	2 Discuss the chemical name, common name	4
CS 4.2. Presenting the results of an investigative approach using scientific terminology.	4 Characterize salt in terms of structure and physical properties	10 Show at least 5 features
CS 4.4. Communicate the results of an investigative approach to the Internet.	5a For each experiment on chemical properties, will conduct the experiment print screen	3
CS 5.1. Findings of the advantages and disadvantages of using chemicals.	5e Nominate at least three chemical properties	6 3 chemical properties
	6c Advantages	10
CS 5.2. Identifying pollutants of water, soil, air and ways to prevent / reduce pollution.	5d Risks	6
	6d Personal opinion; What would happen if the salt does not exist? What risks exist in relation to its use? At least 5 ideas	25

In assessing students' performance the educators measure and appreciate the achieved knowledge using marks or notes. Often in the process

of evaluating teaching is a neglected decision, operation of the evaluation, which prolongs the act of assessing as a characterization, judgment, recommendation and targeting measures to improve the work in the next stages, the operation in which the student could find a source of learning . What we propose the in following lines is paying attention to the decision, a source of evaluation, teaching and learning opportunities' approach

Rewiev-example:

After the administration of evaluation tests recommended an analysis and interpretation of results obtained using a matrix in like the one below.

On one dimension (vertical) appear graders, and the other (horizontal), specific skills evaluated. Next to each student, we will either using percentages (70%) or the numerical expression (5 answers 7), the success achieved by each student for each objective.

Analyzing the vertical results we can realize that the specific skills targeted at grade level, were not conducted in a measure to thank us and is recommended to be reintegrated into learning units next to be resumed for practice. (Chisiu, 2011)

Looking horizontally, we can appreciate the level of achievement of each goal by each student and will be able to make assessments and recommendations necessary for a development program or compensation. In the next hour, will hold a differentiated activities. Students will be grouped according to performance achieved and compensation or development needs. It will be incumbent group centers on Objective 1, incumbent on target groups 2 and so on. It can perform spins, until each student reach each group rehabilitation center, according to personal needs. Students who have achieved the sample, all goals can work at a development center as tutors in groups or compensation, depending on the needs and desires which it expresses. Such activity is an effective way to differentiate a cross learning on the student's interests, to put in the position of active partner in their own development. As part of decision we can achieve differentiation of learning:

- in terms of learning potential and performance achieved; create groups of students who achieved similar performance, enabling them to slowly upgrade the learning or recover their gaps and misunderstandings.

- the theory of multiple intelligences; those with intelligence, interpersonal, networking will be satisfied with the others and will be tutors, will illuminate the realization of tasks, those with poor results. Those with intrapersonal intelligence were able to make a personal development program;

- in terms of motivation; those who are motivated by challenges that it creates new problems, difficult, complex can choose development centers,

others are motivated by the recognition given by others and reward (praise), will accept the role of tutors. (Popa, 2009)

This teaching strategy will enable unambiguous feedback through performance reporting on specific skills that were followed, will make teaching evaluation to be completed which means necessary decision recommendations to each student in order to prevent the delays and at the same time make it possible as a source of consideration and evaluation, as learning opportunities, competent society association values.

Conclusion

Integrated Competency involves complex knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes that give him what possesses the right to say: I know how to do this! This does not mean giving in school learning to knowledge or a fundamental change in the contents but a different approach to their pragmatic more applied, by putting them to work in practice, either with an approach that means a building which the student himself participates, by involving the whole being: personal experience, knowledge, action, motivation, attitude. To achieve such learning in school learning, it is necessary to respect several principles:

- Learning to make sense, leaving it in a meaningful context for the students in relation to concrete situations, which the Track will meet later or sense to it;
 - Distinguish the essential from what is less important, insisting during learning and evaluation is useful or necessary for further learning in life;
 - Learning to use the knowledge in life situations and not limited to the student's head filling with diverse knowledge to target these links the knowledge and values of the society;
 - To establish links between various concepts studied, integrated approach to learning, to be able to effectively resolve the situations that confronts, to enable it to cope with unexpected situations.
- Learning to make sense, leaving it in a meaningful context for the students in relation to concrete situations, which the Track will meet later or sense to it;
 - Distinguish the essential from what is less important, insisting during learning and evaluation is useful or necessary for further learning in life;
 - Learning to use the knowledge in life situations and not limited to the student's head filling with diverse knowledge which target these links the knowledge and values of the society;
 - To establish links between various concepts studied, integrated approach to learning, to be able to effectively resolve the situations that confronts, to enable it to cope with unexpected situations.

Both ways that is approached teaching design through learning activities covering levels of Bloom's taxonomy by learning methods proposed, material of resources that simulates the concrete situations of life the way that makes learning and in the assessment, we see these principles.

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WORKINGMEETINGREPORTFROMLUXEMBOURG, SPECIALISTS INMENTAL HEALTH. THEPROJECT SPSM– EMPLOYABILITY

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Abstract: *In an atmosphere of early fall, at a round table in the location Institute for Public Health in Luxembourg, there was the second meeting of specialists involved in the project Insertion Employment of Persons with Mental Disorders (SPSM - Employabilité). Under this innovative research project to improve the employability of people with mental/ physical disabilities came together: researchers, professors, doctors, psychologists, responsible for public health and journalists from five participating countries: Luxembourg, Switzerland, France, Romania and Belgium.*

During the two days of work there was done a SWOT analysis of the results of the three response categories :

- *The recipients (patients with mental illness);*
- *Employers (responsible for enterprise and directors);*
- *Specialists (workers, trainers).*

We have analyzed and have concluded several schemes to be played in detail below, as they were set by the project team meeting in Luxembourg, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the field of employability these people with the peculiarities of each country in the project.

Keywords:*investigates, strong points, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.*

In 3-4 September 2015, in Luxembourg, the Institute for Research on Public Health, held the transnational meeting of specialists involved in the project: Employability SPSM. Under this innovative research project to improve the employability of people with mental / physical disabilities came together: researchers, professors, doctors, psychologists, responsible for public health and journalists from five European countries involved: Luxembourg, Switzerland, France Romania and Belgium.

During the two days of work there was done a SWOT analysis of the results of the three surveys responses:

- The recipients (patients with mental illness);
- Employers (responsible for enterprise and directors);
- Specialists (workers, trainers).

They have analyzed and have concluded several schemes, whose conclusions will be given in detail below, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the employability of these people, with the peculiarities of each country in this project.

The general framework of issues

Given that in the XXI century, mental illness presents a real public health problem by increasing incidence and prevalence of psychiatric pathologies, directly related to social and economic factors and research issues at European level is an issue for the various countries involved **SPSM project - Employability**.

It is estimated by the World Health Organization (WHO), 60% of deaths worldwide are caused by chronic diseases and in between, no. 6 as morbidity are mental disorders after cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and respiratory diseases. By 2020, WHO estimates a 10 percent increase in deaths caused by mental disorders (www.who). According to the study conducted by the Institute of Public Health Bucharest, 1999, in Romania, in 1998, mental illness and behavioral disorders were the third leading cause of morbidity after cardiovascular diseases and malignant tumors (ISPB, 1999).

Table 1. Structure DALYS by cause, Romania, 1998

Group of diseases	DALY per 1000 inhabitants	% of total DALY
Cardiovascular disease	60	31.88
Malignancies	18,97	10.1
Mental /behavioral disease	18,79	9.98

Source: Institute of Public Health Bucharest, 1999

As shown by studies conducted by the working group of Romanian Psychiatric Association and the Romanian League for Mental Health (Assoc. Prof. R. Mihăilescu, Prof. Dr. P. Boișteanu , Dr. D. Ghenea, Raluca Nica, Assoc. Prof., Dan Prelipceanu, Dr. R. Teodorescu, Dr. Bogdana Tudorache, Prof. Dr. T. Udriștoiu), after which it was produced within the mental health of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern European countries, strategy mental health for the Ministry of Health of Romania, lifetime prevalence of mental

illness in Romania is ~33 %, or one in three people will suffer lifelong mental disorder. ½ year prevalence is ~20 %.

The economic costs of mental disorders expressed as the ratio of overhead costs and direct costs of healthcare are in a ratio of 9:1, leading to the conclusion that prevention psychiatric pathologies lowers the cost of economic health, improving the country's economic strength, and the patient's quality of life (Katschnig, Ciumăgeanu, Mugur, Ghenea, Sfetcu, 2009).

Thus, as I mentioned in Article "Psycho-prophylaxis and Mental Health Education", published in the journal *Agora Psycho-Pragmatic*, 2008, Volume II, No. 4, on page 58, a particularly important role in maintaining the mental health of the company is returning to psycho-prophylaxis. "By understanding the amount of mental prophylaxis methods aimed at maintaining and developing mental health and prevention of mental diseases, we can maintain the individual or the socio-human health. These measures are likely: psychological, medical, medico-social: bio-psycho-social, professional, economic, environmental, etc. and are aimed at maintaining the health of the individual and mental disease prevention persons and/or social communities of individuals" (Gavrilă, 2008).

Currently there are three types of Psycho-prophylaxis: primary, secondary and tertiary. The research project **SPSM - Employability**, focuses on tertiary prevention, aimed at preventing/ reducing/eliminating the mentally handicap. "Tertiary psycho-prophylaxis addresses to mental care, provides specialized rehabilitative type and prevents dependence on individual or mental disorder" (Gavrilă, 2008). This type of prevention works by: assessing the degree of incapacity for work as a result of physical or mental disability level, rehabilitation, individual and social reintegration (Rădulescu, 2002). "It works by psychotherapy and occupational therapy, individual preparing to face social life beyond the hospital (re-socialization) . Through these functions, tertiary psycho-prophylaxis has a prospective value, based on the individual behavior and its actual conditions on the assumption that the person concerned might provide a profession, raise a family and best fits the environment. The target group is formed of patients with chronic/incurable psychiatric disease. Specialized services are provided by social institutions, centers of occupational therapy and/or retraining and socio -professional reintegration (Gavrilă, 2008).

The costs of assisting a psychiatric patient are, on the one hand, the price of treatment (cost of medicines, medical services) and decreased work productivity, the involvement in labor disputes, and conflicts, accidents,

increased absenteeism (for those persons with mental disorders who are employed and get a stage of decompensation of the disease by increasing the number of medical leave with ITM - temporary inability to work) until his retirement due to illness and, on the other hand, assisting them with social and medical services, making it the working population, of the population becoming active, passive population (beneficiaries). Employability of patients with mental illness in order to decrease / eliminate mental disability is a very topical subject in Europe. This, on the one hand, due to the small percentage of mentally ill workers and, on the other hand, high costs of health economics and socio - medical services involved in assisting this category of beneficiaries (Enăchescu, 2004).

The employability of patients with mental diseases research project aims to reduce all the costs of health economy and increase the quality of life of these patients with mental disorders.

The work capacity of patients with mental illness is determined primarily by the gravity and the severity of their symptoms, psychiatric diagnosis, the degree of deterioration of cognition, and the personality of the patient, but very important is the social support for this ill people (Honey, 2003). The social support for integration into employment of psychiatric patients is achieved by involving all the people that come in contact with the patients: family, community, professionals (multidisciplinary team: physician, social worker, personal assistant, psychologist, team leader). All labor market prospecting work together to find a suitable job available that outstands the patient's functional capacity (the ability to post jobs and worker job adapting work to the worker ergonomics occupational - Păuncu, 2004), informing and educating the working staff to eliminate prejudice, stigma and discrimination against the psychiatric patients.

Research Objectives

The main research objective is to improve the employability of people with mental / physical disabilities in the labor market, depending on the remaining functional capacity and fitness for work established by a labor medicine physician. The study was conducted by specialists in the five project countries: Luxembourg, Switzerland, France, Romania and Belgium.

To increase employment indicators, the specialists have discussed ways of psycho - socio - occupational work for employment of these people.

Research Methodology

Was an analysis that established the needs of the beneficiaries: patients with mental illness; employers (companies and executives responsible) and specialists: workers trainers.

As for the working instruments, they used three sets of grids that have been applied to these categories in each of the five European countries involved in this project.

Research results

The results of the investigations were concluded by each country into a set of three reports: beneficiaries, employers, professionals.

In the working meeting in Luxembourg, the specialists have discussed these reports and have conducted a SWOT analysis phase of the project results. They have concluded for each country, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the employability of these people, with the particularities of each country in the project.

For the **specialists** in the field, the SWOT analysis in each country has the following results:

Luxembourg:

Strong points:

- Individualized support;
- Adaptable system (time);
- Socialization question;
- Conflict Management;
- Confidence - positive return.

France:

Strong points:

- Existing and evolving methodological (job coaching, specific services);
- Will associations develop supported employment (approach, frequency of meetings, regular support and no time limits, availability and responsiveness adapting to each situation);
- Privileged link with the employer (upstream and in case of difficulties).

Belgium:

Internal strong points:

- Expertise at the interface of knowledge of enterprise, workstation and the user;
- Rhythm of the person;
- Self-determination;
- Follow instead of "pull";
- Ability to adapt to the rhythm of the user;
- Knowing what to bring concrete elements;
- Creating alliances with employers facilitating the use of services;

- Collaborations with other;
- Professionals around the person;
- Integration with SM teams;
- Method 3 sets ...;
- Written and standardized methodologies;
- Making technical accompaniment business (upstream or on the workstation).

External strong points:

- Risk taking " covered " by the hierarchy;
- Financial aid for employment;
- Growth sectors;
- Internships in companies - human test;
- Methodologies (IPS- Boston) available;
- Interdepartmental coordination (Health - employment training);
- Collaborations between similar devices.

Romania:

Strong points:

- Adapt a flexible program concrete as the case of the person;
- Collaboration Development Strategy between various sectors (social - health employment);
- Internal communication based on many of casuistry.

Luxembourg:

Weaknesses:

- Internships for testing (under certain conditions);
- What about the political will?
- No statistical distinction level ADEM service between types of disability;
- Partitioning still strong between social and health
- " Perverse " effects sheltered workshops that are " overprotective " and no financial incentive to move ...;
- Heavy administrative procedures.

France:

Weaknesses:

- Lack of " labeling " complicating relationships with carriers and enterprises;
- Lack of internal tools to support the interface human values and the reality of the labor market (the question of legitimacy);
- Entry delay in connection with the other partners concerned (award of tests and assessments ...).

Belgium:

Internal weaknesses:

- Distancing difficulties with the problem of the person;
- Information / Knowledge sufficient on labor laws;
- Relapse anticipation of difficulty;
- Too wait- facing employers.

External weaknesses:

- The capacity for initiative users;
- Lack of cooperation between health services mental and employment accompanied device;
- Need to convince a number of people around the patient / the issue of employment;
- Rigid administrative rules in the function.

Romania:

Weaknesses:

- Bureaucracy;
- Focus on the file and not on the person;
- The number of professionals' accompaniment is undersized.

Luxembourg:

Opportunities:

- Different types of training: per helpers, rights/companies, company (eco and financial, mediation, no stigmatization);
- Consider initiatives/new structures related with the economic empowerment of persons + People Empowerment (Germany);
- Analyse practices/Supervision recurring;
- Learn to communicate between different professionals.

France:

Opportunities:

- Sharing experiences with foreign countries;
- Financing methods by European funds;
- Existing work tools that can inspire us.

Belgium:

Opportunities:

- Transnational exchanges with similar devices;
- Having in its network a "business guide".

Romania:

Opportunities:

- Continuing training for employment counselors;
- Develop a common vision (all actors included) on regional integration;

- Creating a professional counseling service for people with a disability certificate;
- Develop the business expert for this job;
- Work in multidisciplinary teams.

Luxembourg:

Threats:

- Psychological supervision, refusal by certain professionals;
- The ever present stigma.

France:

Threats:

- Refusal to share experiences;
- Lack of training cycle;
- Sustainable employment counselors!
- Precariousness of sustainable funding, lack of internal training on appearance, medical psychiatric disability.

Belgium:

Threats:

- Negative associations of users and /or counselors at the working face value;
- Unions have no ownership in problematic work of people with disabilities.

Romania:

Threats:

- The legislation is incomplete and focused on providing psychiatric services and less on social and employment;
- The outdated and rigid mind set on social inclusion;
- The financial benefits to employers are not available in the case of certified handicaps.

From the perspective of the **employers** in the countries participating in the project, the strong points are different. Strong points which may enable facilitation hiring an employee with a disability. Weak points differ, depending on the context you work in. From the perspective of the employers, not many people with mental health problems can get a job.

Luxembourg:

Strong points:

- The presence of brings PSHP "things" to the company;
- After adaptation - successful integration.

France:

Strong points:

- Variety of work arrangements;
- Operating in more oriented project mode to the collective performance;
- Diversity of skills and careers (rather cadres).

Belgium:

Internal strong points:

- The "family" part of the company (small and micro companies) or in medium/large, services of organizations by: adaptability schedules, work organization has some flexibility-allowing mutual aid;
- Adapts: the trust between the company and the attendant;
- Accessibility of public transport;
- Concern about the wellbeing of people at work;
- Values/Charters where integration in public;
- Difficulties is one of the strongest positions;
- Risk appetite/Human Resources;
- The ability of information/awareness work teams;
- Capacity of enterprises/Personal to challenge and question their prejudices;
- The close personal relation, disease in the entourage.

External strong points:

- The hiring subsidies;
- The trust between the company and the attendant;
- The company internship opportunities.

Romania:

External strong points:

- Legislation favorable to the employer: tax reduction, financial, business assistance by the state.

Internal strong points:

- The ability to identify workstations: positions without excessive stress;
- The good relationship between the employer and the employee;
- Knowing the difficulties disease impacting on work: the right attitude in terms of attitude to hold imbalance face, the knowledge by the employer of issues persons with disabilities;
- Direct link with the insertion advisor.

Luxembourg:

Weaknesses:

- Some activities incompatible with disability;

- Some intellectual functions incompatible with disability;
- The indirect costs of the accompaniment to business: accompaniment, time, productivity;
- Loss of earnings insurance;
- Red tape on aid to ask.

France:

Weaknesses:

- The notion of performance/efficiency within companies;
- Disappearance of lesser posts/qualification and any capital gain;
- Posts that require scalable capacity/adaptation PSHP.

Belgium:

Internal weaknesses:

- Certain sectors, production standards: rigidity;
- The inability to reduce working time/valorization;
- Career evolution;
- The hierarchy-especially in administration;
- Managing stigma/look, hygiene behaviors.

External weaknesses:

- Centralized decisions/branches.

Romania:

Weaknesses:

- Lack of professional specialists/accompaniment to the employment of PSHP;
- Lack of information on trades/positions may correspond to PSHP;
- Networks support specialist emerging.

Luxembourg:

Opportunities:

- Inform companies about the disease to anticipate behaviors;
- Training in diversity-tolerance/Education managers;
- Training in the integration strategy with plans and individualized goals to advance to "no breakfast";
- Develop managerial skills in a specific context (PSHP);
- Training exchange between business and social structure;
- Inter-knowledge between work protected and unprotected work;
- Compared with the starters (if employed youth);
- Establishment of sheltered workshops/social enterprises, proportional to the number of beneficiaries.

France:

Opportunities:

- Provide access to examples of companies' good practices" in terms of variety of employment arrangements+project mode;
- Use the levers of well-being at work to change corporate positions;
- Rehabilitate corporate support functions.

Belgium:

Opportunities:

- Use the means of business federation to deepen benefits (profitability) benevolent management experiences.

Romania:

Opportunities:

- Create a specialized center that directs the organization and the promotion of socio-professional integration;
- Build social and political conditions of equal opportunities;
- Creating an institutional service that a multi-disciplinary team load accompaniments for people with disabilities;
- Develop prevention programs mental health with state funding;
- Adapt the number of sheltered workshops/at user needs in the presence.

Luxembourg:

Threats:

- The legislation: absence of implementation <
- The mentality of the companies: the images in accurate mental illness, lack knowledge, prejudices;
- Bureaucracy.

France:

Threats:

- Mental Health plans without translation, field (decrees, can ...);
- Economic crisis;
- The problematic labor market.

Belgium:

Threats:

- Fragility continuing businesses-sustainability/risk that relegate further insertion priorities.

Romania:

Threats:

- Lack of a national strategy for mental illness; organize a direction the Ministry of Health!
- Social stigma;
- Difficult communication between employers and beneficiaries - divergent views.

The professionals have formulated some conclusions. We will present them in the following.

Luxembourg:

Strong points:

- Individualized support;
- Adaptable system (time...);
- Socialization question - Conflict Management - confidence - positive return.

France:

Strong points:

- Existing and evolving methodological, job coaching specific services, punctual;
- Will associations develop supported employment approach;
- Frequency of meetings: regular support and no time limits, availability and responsiveness, adapting to each situation;
- Privileged link with the employer (upstream and in case of difficulties).

Belgium:

Internal strong points:

- Expertise at the interface of knowledge of enterprise, workstation and the user;
- Rhythm of the person: self-determination, follow instead of "pull", ability to adapt to the rhythm of the user;
- Knowing what to bring concrete elements;
- Creating alliances with employers facilitating the use of services: collaborations with other professionals around the person integration with mental health teams, method 3 sets;
- Written and standardized methodologies.

External strong points:

- Risk taking "covered" by the hierarchy;
- Financial aid for employment growth sectors;
- Internships in companies - human test;
- Methodologies (IPS-Boston) available;

- Interdepartmental coordination(Health-employment training);
- Intervisionsbetweensimilardevices.

Romania:

Strong points:

- Adapt aflexibleprogram, concreteas the caseoftheperson;
- CollaborationDevelopment Strategybetweenvarious sectors(social-health employment);
- Internal communicationbased onmanyofcasuistry.

Luxembourg:

Weaknesses:

- Internshipsfor testing(under certain conditions);
- What about thepolitical will?
- Nostatistical distinctionlevelADEMservicebetween types ofdisability;
- Partitioningstillstrong betweensocial andhealth;
- "Perverse" effectssheltered workshopsthat are "overprotective" andnofinancial incentiveto move;
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France:

Weaknesses:

- Lack of "labeling" complicatingrelationships withcarriers and enterprises, thequestion of legitimacy;
- Lack ofinternal toolstosupportthe interfacehumanvalues andthe realityof the labor market;
- Entry delayin connectionwith the other partnersconcerned(award oftests andassessments).

Belgium:

Internal weaknesses:

- Distancingdifficulties withthe problemof the person;
- Information/Knowledgesufficientonlabor laws;
- Relapseanticipation ofdifficulty;
- Toowait-facing employers.

External weaknesses:

- Thecapacity for initiativeusers;
- Lack of cooperationbetween healthservicesmentaland employmentaccompanieddevice;
- Need to convincea number of peoplearound the patient/theissue of employment;
- Rigidadministrative rulesin the public service.

Romania:

Weaknesses:

- Bureaucracy;
- Focus on the file and not on the person;
- The number of professional's accompaniment is undersized.

Luxembourg:

Opportunities:

- Different types of training: peer helpers, rights/companies, company (eco and financial), mediation, no stigmatization;
- Consider initiatives/new structures related with the economic empowerment of persons + analyses practices/supervision recurring (former Germany);
- Learn to communicate between different professionals.

France:

Opportunities:

- Sharing experiences with foreign countries;
- Financing methods by European funds;
- Existing work tools that can inspire us.

Belgium:

Opportunities:

- Transnational exchanges with similar devices;
- Having in its network a "business coach".

Romania:

Opportunities:

- Continuing training for employment counselors;
- Develop a common vision (all actors included) on regional integration;
- Creating a professional counseling service for people with a disability certificate;
- Develop the business expert for this job;
- Work in multidisciplinary team;
- Continuing training for employment counselors.

Luxembourg:

Threats:

- Psychological supervision, refusal by certain professionals;
- The ever present stigma.

France:

Threats:

- Refusal to share experiences;
- Lack of training cycle;
- Sustainable employment counselors!
- Precariousness of sustainable funding;
- Lack of internal training on appearance;
- Medical/psychic disability.

Belgium:

Threats:

- Negative associations of users and/or counselors at the working face value;
- Unions have no ownership in problematic work of people with disabilities.

Romania:

Threats:

- The legislation is incomplete and focused on providing psychiatric services and less on social and employment;
- The outdated and rigid mindset on social inclusion;
- The financial benefits to employers are not available in the case of certified handicaps.

Conclusions:

In conclusion we can say that the work of the Luxembourg meeting was fruitful.

Researchers from the five countries participating in the project have established the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in entering the labor market of people with mental health problems and the particularities of each country.

These findings constitute the foundation for the next step in the project.

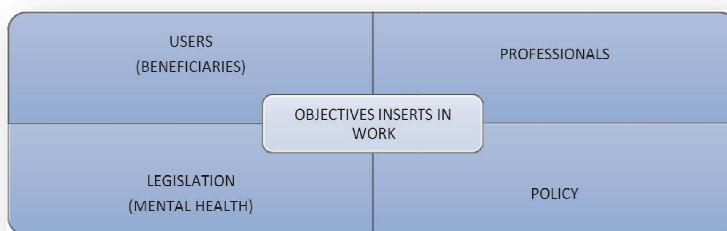


Figure 1. Scheme of work in the next meeting of the steering committee of the project

In Romania, the public policies for the protection of persons with mental illness are still insufficient. The legislation by Law no. 487 of 11 July 2002 on *Mental health and the protection of persons with mental disorders*, published in the O.M. Part I no. 589 of 8 August 2002 was republished in September 13th, 2012 under Article II of the Law 129/2012. Mental Health Strategy should provide a legal framework to protect the socio-professional reintegration programs for people suffering from mental illness to reduce/eliminate discrimination. To streamline employability psychiatric patients are required to create subsystems "interface" by establishing connections with other systems for a cross health strategy for increasing the effectiveness of interventions.

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www.who.

THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS FOR TREATING ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

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Abstract: *Goal:*The present study investigates the efficiency of a psychological intervention for firefighters who show symptoms of depression and anxiety. What motivates this study is the fact that the psychologist within the inspectorates for emergency situations must not only evaluate and monitor firefighters' psychological evolution, but also to intervene in a preventive or therapeutic way.

Methods and instruments: Out of the firefighters we evaluated periodically, we selected 19 individuals who showed higher level of depression and anxiety symptoms, in order to include them in a psychological intervention program. The intervention targeted cognitive aspects: positive reformulation of experiences, emotional aspects: awareness and acceptance of intense emotions and a behavioral aspect: development of new or improved coping strategies. The intervention comprised of six meeting. Pre-intervention and post-intervention psychological assessment was done with Hamilton Depression Scale and Hamilton Anxiety Scale.

Results: The scores for depression and anxiety symptoms, for the entire lot, were significantly lower post-intervention than those pre-intervention, showing a decrease in the intensity of symptoms. Yet, 4 of the 19 subjects showed stagnation or an increase of scores, indicating no improvement of symptoms.

Conclusions: The short intervention we proposed had positive outcomes in most cases, 79% of participants showed significant decrease in symptoms. In the cases where the intervention showed no improvements we intend to continue it with the consent of participants.

Key words:*firefighter, critical incident, depression, anxiety, psychological intervention, Hamilton Depression Scale, Hamilton Anxiety Scale*

Introduction

The firefighters who work within the inspectorates for emergency situations are frequently and constantly exposed due to the nature of their activities to high stressing situations also known as critical incidents. A

critical incident represents a highly stressing event which can significantly disturb the physical and psychological function and wellbeing. The critical incident is a stimulus which can trigger a physical and psychological crisis [1].

The response to critical incidents and to any other stressful situation is determined by objective features of the situation, by individual's subjective perception and interpretation of the situation, by the state of physical health and psychological wellbeing, by the coping mechanisms, by a series of psycho-individual factors such as emotional stability and responsiveness, self esteem, perceived self-efficacy, sense of coherence, locus of control, but also by several psycho-social factors which include the socio-economical context in which rescue activities are performed, the institutional response to the certain event, mass-media representation of the event, etc. [2, 3, 4].

The stress generated by critical incidents induces changes both at a physiological and somatic level, as well as at a psychological and behavioral level. At physiological level, one can show cardiac dysfunctions, neurological and endocrine dysfunctions, myalgia, somatovisceral dysfunctions [3]. At psychological level one can show sensorial and perceptive dysfunctions, cognitive, emotional and affective dysfunctions and, in some severe cases, even psychotic decompensations. These dysfunctions can be reversible or irreversible. A common disorder among individuals frequently and constantly exposed to critical incidents is post-traumatic stress disorder [4].

Physical symptoms include: shivers, thirst, fatigue, nausea, faint or tendency to faint, vertigo, vomiting, headaches, myalgia, spurts of high blood pressure, chest pains, accelerated heartbeat rhythm, muscular tremor. Generally they can be described as high physiological responsiveness. At cognitive level one can show: confusion, uncertainty, denial, hyper-vigilance, concentration problems, time and space disorientation, decrease in decision making. At an emotional and affective level, the most frequent symptoms refer to: anxiety, self blaming, panic, agitation, irritability, impulsivity, depression, anger, fear, suicidal thoughts, inadequate emotional responses (either regarding the intensity or the nature of expressed emotions), hyper or hypo-emotionality. And at behavioral level one can find: social withdrawal, antisocial behaviors, abuse of alcohol and substances, psychogenic flight, impairment in family and marital relationship [4].

In this study we start from an actual situation that we are used to encounter in the daily work as a psychologist within the firefighter department. The firefighters are frequently and constantly exposed to critical incidents. Events perceived as critical incident by the firefighters include: self injury, risk of losing one's own life, injury or death of a fellow firefighter, intervention upon victims in death agony, mostly if these victims

are children, taking part in interventions in which the victims are firefighters' relatives or acquaintances. These all have a major impact on firefighters' physical health and psychological wellbeing. Although, due to their basic technical training, the negative response to such events can be lowered in comparison with common population, it can not be eliminated. Thus, the psychologist's role in this context is to monitor periodically the psychological state of the firefighters but also to intervene precisely through defusing and debriefing or more largely through a psychological intervention with more profound therapeutic valence.

The defusing represents a volunteer, short, individual meeting, in complete privacy that aims mainly to defuse the psychological and physical tension of the firefighters. It has to take place short time after the incident, recommended at 4 hours but not later than 12 hours and does not have to be to formal, actually it is recommended to be as least formal as possible [4]. The defusing is focused on the awareness and acceptance of one's own feeling as normal and on the adaptive or non-adaptive role of action taken post-event.

The debriefing is a more formal meeting, run within the group that took part in the incident, at an interval of about 24 – 72 hours and it focuses on different coping ways [4].

Research in the field of clinical and health psychology show that most recommended types of psychological interventions regarding the firefighters are the short-term ones, focused on problems and solutions [4, 5].

The firefighter activity is characterized by a strong male stereotype [6] which significantly cumbers the psychological counselor's activity due to the fact that a direct approach towards emotional and affective experiences could be perceived like imposing an alien model thus triggering resistance or avoidance of the counseling process. An approach focused on behavioral aspects, on more practical features like actions, decisions is far more recommended.

Male individuals have greater difficulties in speaking open about feelings, emotions and affective states. Avoiding emotions and feelings is explainable but does not represent a functional coping mechanism. Such a confrontation process requires conscious effort and involvement on the side of the client. McFarlane [7] shows that avoidance is a weak coping mechanism and is a factor which makes more probable the development of post-traumatic stress. A research on stress response in females in comparison with that of the males [8] points that females tend to initiate social interactions under stress, while males tend to isolate themselves, to reduce social interactions and to focus on solutions. The authors of the research state that these differences in stress response have to do with cumulative action of oxytocin, female reproductive hormones and endogenous opioid

mechanisms, thus favoring females' pro-social behaviors, while in males' case, testosterone seems to block oxytocin's effects and activate the adrenergic system, thus favoring a flight or fight response.

Methods and instruments

The study was run on a lot of 19 firefighters that showed some anxiety and depression symptoms. All subjects are males, aged between 27 and 42. The age average is 29 years while the standard deviation is 3.77 years. Experience as a firefighter ranges between 6 and 10 years, with a average of 6.42 years and a standard deviation of 0.96 years. Subjects were selected from the entire firefighter personnel periodically assessed according to specific work safety and health norms that apply within the inspectorates for emergency situations from Romania, on the basis of higher scores on Hamilton Depression Scale and Hamilton Anxiety Scale. The selection of subjects took in account the scores that could be consider of clinical significance at least at one of the two scales used.

The 19 subjects' lot has undergone a psychological intervention which aimed to reduce the intensity of anxiety and depression symptoms. The intervention focused on following aspect: a) awareness of one's own intense emotions and feelings experienced after a critical incident; b) emotional unblocking and confronting with the intense experiences triggered by the critical incident; c) investigating and acknowledging the negative consequences of one's own inadequate response and coping strategy to stressful events in the professional and personal life (marital, family, social relationships); d) positive reformulation of highly stressful experiences; e) replacing the less functional coping strategies, focused on emotion relief, with more functional ones, focused on problems and solutions. The intervention comprised of six meetings with each of the 19 subjects, respecting each subject's privacy. Five of the six meetings focused on one of the five aspect mentioned above and the sixth one consisted of a summarization, a feedback and a chance to re-evaluate the subject's depression and anxiety symptoms.

The Hamilton Depression Scale is comprised of 17 items of which, 10 items score on a five steps scale, from 0 to 4, while the rest of 7 items score on a three steps scale, from 0 to 2. Minimum score is 0 and maximum score is 52. Total scores lower than 7 indicate absence of clinical depression. Scores between 7 and 17 indicated a mild depression. Scores ranged between 18 and 24 indicate a moderate depression while scores equal or above 25 point to a severe depression.

The Hamilton Anxiety Scale consists of 14 items, scored on a five steps scale, from 0 to 4. Maximum score is 56. Scores above 20 show the presence of clinical intensity anxiety.

Results

Data were centralized and processed with the statistical software SPSS for Windows 10.

The scores on the depression scale, at the pre-intervention assessment, ranged between 7 and 9, with an average of 7.84 and a standard deviation of 0.69. On the anxiety rating scale, pre-intervention, subject scored between 9 and 17 with an average score of 11 and a standard deviation of 2. Thus, subjects show a mild depression and precisely this was the reason to select them into the intervention lot. The intensity of the anxiety symptoms is not of clinical level, but as they are associated with the mild depression symptoms, taken together it could represent a risk factor for developing more severe emotional, cognitive and behavioral dysfunctions later.

At the end of the intervention another psychological assessment of depressive and anxiety symptoms was done. Results on the anxiety scale show an average score of 9.26 with a standard deviation of 1.97 and individual scores ranging between 6 and 13. On the depression scale, scores range between 4 and 9, with an average score of 6.42 and a standard deviation of 1.39. We notice a drop in the average scores both for anxiety as well as for depression.

Comparing scores at pre-intervention and post-interventions, with the paired sample t test, turned the following results. We must mention that for both rating scales as well as for both assessments, the distribution was a normal one. For the anxiety scale, we obtained $t(18) = 3.511$ at $p = 0.002$, and for depression we obtained $t(18) = 5.524$ at $p < 0.001$. The magnitude of the differences in scores revealed by the r coefficient [9] shows the following figures: 0.637 for anxiety and 0.793 for depression.

Discussions

We notice that the t values, for anxiety as well as for depression are statistically significant at p values lower than 0.05 thus allowing us to state that anxiety and depression levels dropped significantly as a result of the psychological intervention. Therefore we can say that our intervention achieved its goals, that of improving the firefighters' emotional wellbeing as shown by the decrease of anxiety and depression symptoms. In the case of anxiety, the intervention explains 64% of the score variance from pre-intervention to post-intervention, while in the case of depression the percentage of variance explained by the intervention is as high as 79. Thus, the five step intervention we proposed seems to yield positive outcomes at a emotional and psychological wellbeing.

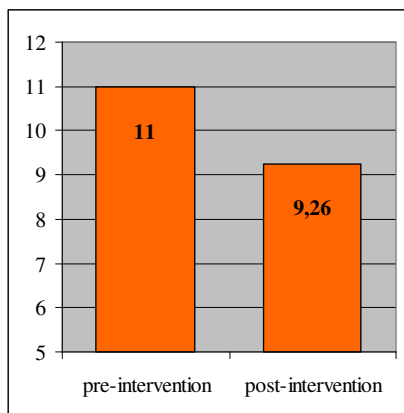


Figure 1. Average scores at the anxiety scale

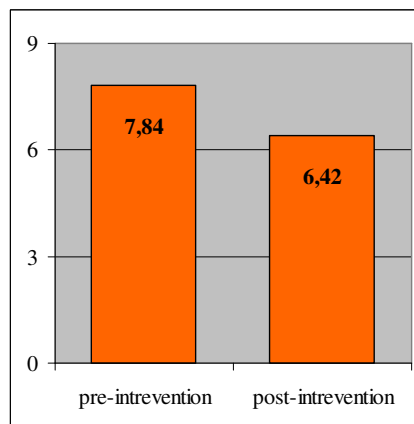


Figure 2. Average scores on the depression scale

Analyzing the post-interventions scores, for each of the 19 subjects we notice that 16 subjects show lower scores for depression; 2 subjects show the same score while the remaining subject shows an increase from 8 to 9, thus not a dramatic increase. As for anxiety, 15 subjects show lower scores post-intervention, 1 subject scored identically post and pre-intervention while 3 subjects show an increase in scores post-intervention.

In the case of the subjects whose scores increased or stayed level as well as for anxiety and depression, we intend to continue the intervention as to improve subjects' emotional and psychological wellbeing as to identify probable causes which hindered the success of the intervention. We mention that during the intervention the 19 firefighters continued to take part in interventions if needed.

Also, in order to identify new strategies of intervention we consider necessary to investigate some other psychological variables which could influence firefighters' responses to stress as a consequence of frequent and constant exposure to critical incidents. Such variables are: self-esteem, perceived stress, post-traumatic stress growth, perceived self-efficacy, robustness, optimism, sense of coherence, tendency towards developing somatic symptoms as well as rational versus irrational beliefs [2]. It is highly probable that in certain cases in which the emotional blockage of firefighters is related with the belief that conceiving the existence of distress due to frequent and constant exposure to critical incidents might lead to negative responses from the superiors and fellow firefighters, our approach focused on awareness and acceptance of one's own experiences might not work to well. Thus, we consider changing the focus of the intervention towards functional

coping strategies or alternative activities through which firefighters might experience positive emotions and feelings, such as hobbies. [10].

Conclusions

Our study shows that a short-term psychological intervention, centered on explicit goals, on problems and solutions, on positive reformulation of experiences without neglecting awareness and acceptance of the client's intense emotional responses in highly stressing situations and also these reactions' consequences on individual's, his family and peers' physical and psychological wellbeing can lead to a significantly improvement of anxiety and depression symptoms. Yet, there are individuals for which our intervention does not work. Therefore we must strive to improve our approach by looking for the causes of the intervention failure as well as trying to find other psychological variables that could enable us to improve the psychological intervention process. The diversity of therapeutic approaches and that of therapeutic methods available at the present allow us to develop improved therapeutic interventions.

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INFLUENCE OF FAMILY EDUCATION ON THE MENTAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD

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Abstract: *The topic is a hot topic no matter what period it is put into question. There will always be children, parents and adults that will always be preoccupied with the efficient education of their children. The objectives of the paper, resulted from the experience gained in activity with children and based on studying key literature, subsume to the purpose of showing that the educational parental style carries either a positive or a negative influence on the psychological development of the grown preschool child, depending on his character. The hypotheses were formulated so that other aspects of finesse to be surprised, namely the effects of the educational consensus and the absence of parenting style influence in the child's education, in terms of its psychological development.*

Keywords: *education, parenting style, psychic development*

In carrying out formal education in kindergarten, the partnership of this institution has an increasingly important role with family and community. Educational activities performed by children was the main source for choosing the theme "Influence of family education on mental development of the grown preschool child". The collaboration between parents and teachers is a fundamental condition for ensuring a child's psychological development, the main aspect of this type of relationship consisting of educational consensus.

Unit educational demands required by the two parts, can only exist when the parent is convinced that both he and the teacher have a common goal: the good of the child. Basics of psychological mental development of the child are placed in the family. The influences of the first social environment where the child first begins to develop is proved to be crucial for the further development of which is the subject of education. Studies in this regard have shown the importance of family environment for the child's personality development, highlighting both a positive and a negative influence of the family atmosphere that can print the development of the child depending on its quality.

The interaction of fundamental factors of mental development determining a certain level thereof the preschool child enters in different environment and soon equally warm as the family environment: kindergarten.

In the activity performed with children, the teacher respects the particularities of their age and their individual. In the development of the preschool stage we can find existing individual differences in socio-emotional and intellectual level. Of course, these differences are visible in substages earlier, supported by the fact that, yes, every human being is unique and original, but the construction made by each parent of one specific and personal method of their own child in the education that they are exercising on him, makes these differences even more visible. Parents are trying to be as kind as they can to their children. They work to be able to offer their little ones, what maybe they didn't have. There is sometimes, however, a slight imbalance between what parents provide to children and their real needs, needs for communication, affection and security. Parents do everything to educate their children, how they can and how they know better. This "everything" means for each parent something else. The adult builds an educational strategy as his child grows, a strategy that resemble the way his parents applied it or the opposite. This educational practice is dependent on the parent's level of knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, its concept of the world and life.

The parenting style adopted in child's education leaves its mark on his psychological development, behavioral main areas that define these are: the cognitive and social-affective one. It is true that talking about parent-child interaction are taken into account both parents' influence on children and children on parents. Influences of both sides can take the form of a "spiral" relational whose continuity depends however on the effectiveness of parenting style. It is one of the factors that influence the quality of parent-child interaction. One of the goals of the present work is strictly theoretical guidance for parents or future parents. It is believed that the practice of educational style, balanced or less balanced prints parent-child relationship a certain character, positive or negative. It is therefore aimed at structuring ways of informing parents to guide them towards the adoption of appropriate educational strategies suitable own child.

The work aims to:

- study about the relationship between parenting style and the level of mental development on grown preschool child;
- study about the influence of educational consensus on mental development to grown preschool child;
- study about the effects caused by the absence of parental style influence on child education;

- designing activities with children were the parents must be involved in order to improve parent-child interaction.

Knowing and demonstrating the consequences of adopting a particular parenting style can intervene in order to train and educate even parents. This optimization parent-child relationship, promoting the idea of an appropriate parenting style and that of mitigating the effects of practicing a wrong parenting style. Early intervention in the parent-child relationship, meaning its efficiency, can prevent the occurrence of mental development problems, to adapt to the social environment in which relationships with others can be resolved with difficulty or maybe not at all with the passing of time. No matter how unlikely it may seem to some, parent education given to their children greatly influence their lives as teenagers, young adults, grown adults. And not so much the content of education, but especially the manner of achieving it. The theme of the work has implications both theoretical and practical. The latter appear in strictly educational plan, is targeting both family education and formal education. More specifically, it is about increasing the effectiveness of these forms of education for the child's psychological development, in short, to fulfill the educational goal. Interdependence of informal education with the formal one is more than obvious, both forms being one for the other as a basis for education and content.

Given the objectives of the work it was established following assumptions:

The general hypothesis:

It is assumed that parenting style affects mental development of preschool child.

Specific hypothesis:

Hy1: It is assumed that there are significant differences in cognitive behavior among preschoolers whose parents adopt authoritarian / permissive educational style and preschoolers whose parents adopt democratic educational style.

Hy2: It is assumed that there are significant differences in socio-emotional behavior among preschoolers whose parents adopt authoritarian / permissive educational style and preschoolers whose parents adopt democratic educational style.

Hy3: It is assumed that there are significant differences in mental development among preschoolers whose parents adopted the same style education and those whose parents adopt different educational styles.

Hy4: It is assumed that there are significant differences between children from institutionalized environment and those from a family environment, in terms of their level of mental development.

To fulfill the objectives, it was established the work variables involved in the present research work as follows:

→ dependent variable: psychological development of the preschool defined as the process of formation and continuous restructuring of characteristics, processes, functions and structures psychobehavioral by capitalizing subjective social and historical experience, in order to amplify the body's adaptive opportunities.

→ independent variable: parenting style, this being the specific manner of reporting the parent to their own child in the education it exerts on it.

In the research participated preschool children (N171) aged between 5 years and 6 years

and 2 months in large groups within three kindergartens from Arad. All children attend kindergarten for at least two years. Preschoolers were grouped into six groups according to their own parenting styles adopted by their own parents. To investigate the level of mental development of the preschool, they were considered the two defining behavioral domains: cognitive, social and emotional. Evaluation of cognitive behavior was performed using scales for assessing mental development in children preschool (1982), built by Irina Chiriac and Angela Chitu, and evaluation of social -affective behavior represented an important aspect for the present research, in this purpose was designed another rating scale. This is based on the model provided by the Romanian scales. After applying analysis of unifactorial variance (ANOVA), the first specific hypothesis of the research has been invalidated. The results didn't revealed significant differences between the environments from groups of children. In other words, whether parents adopt different educational styles, styles compared to other parents and their child, between levels of cognitive development there aren't significant differences. This is explained by the fundamental factors interaction of development, each preschool child featuring hereditary dowry, increasing and growing differently into a family environment.

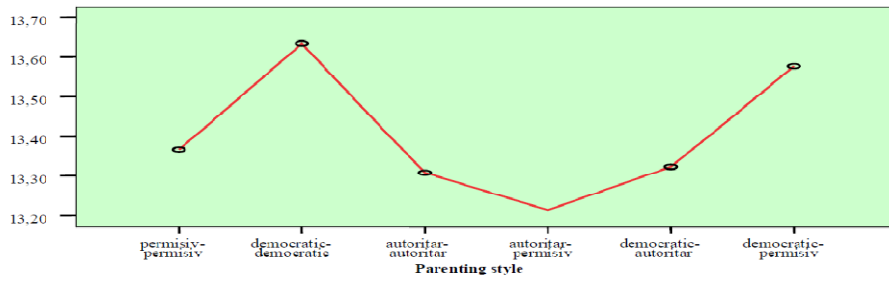
Testing the second hypotheses revealed research results that have allowed its acceptance, confirming the assumption launched. Considering the data obtained, it can be said that parenting education style make these differences on the level of social-emotional behavior to the preschool children. In other words, the manner in which the parent relates with the child, educational speaking, has an impact on how the child fits into the same age collective, relate to them, respect the rules of game in which it participates, has initiative, organizational skills, is active in communicate with colleagues and teacher. Furthermore, they are manifesting emotional experiences in a good way according to the situations that take part.

Interpretation of the results for Hypothesis 3 - One of the aspects that should characterize relations between parents and children refers to consistency and unity demands that parents formulate in front of their children . The assumption made concerning educational consensus proved partially true. For psychological development were taken, as mentioned, defining behavioral domains: cognitive, social and emotional. For the first domain behavior has been shown that, indeed, adopting the same parenting education style brings a plus in the development of preschool children compared to those whose parents adopt different parenting styles. In other words, when parents have the same kind of requests for the children, they obtained better results than other children whose parents adopt different educational styles.

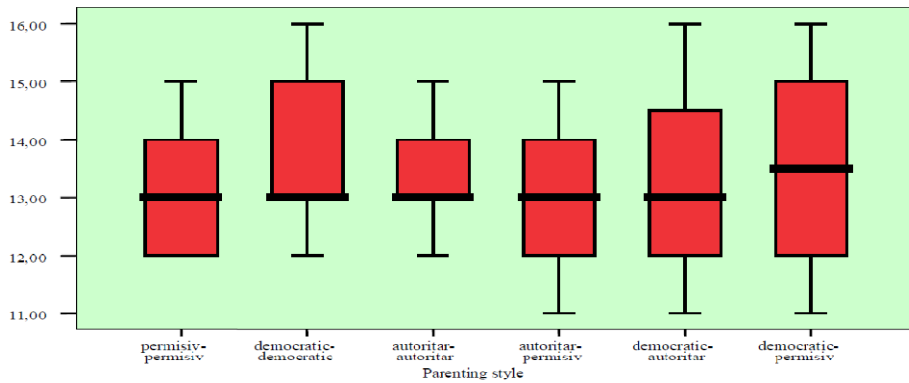
Confirming the latest research assumptions reveals that among children from family environment and institutionalized environment, there are huge differences in terms of the level of mental development. Children who weren't raised by their parents and were taken to orphanages had significantly worse results than those who benefit from parenting styles influence, both on Cognitive Scale and also on Social-emotional Scale.

*Analysis of unifactorial variance ANOVA- Bonferroni
-Cognitive behavior-*

Mean of cognitiv

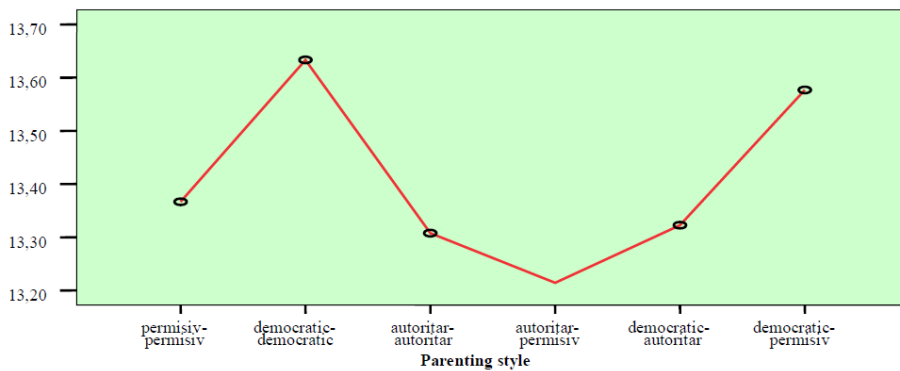


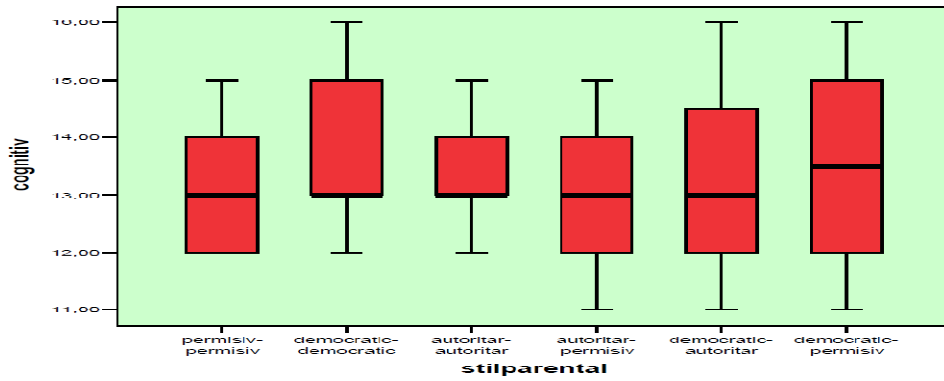
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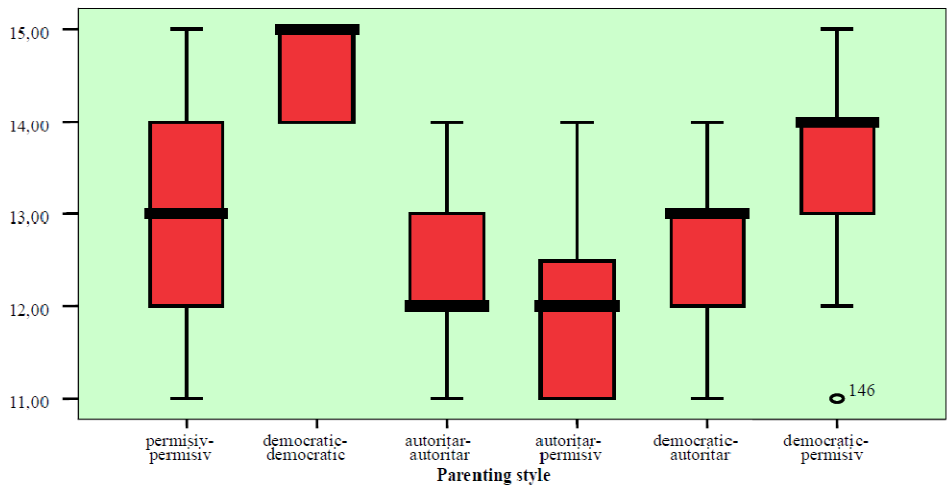
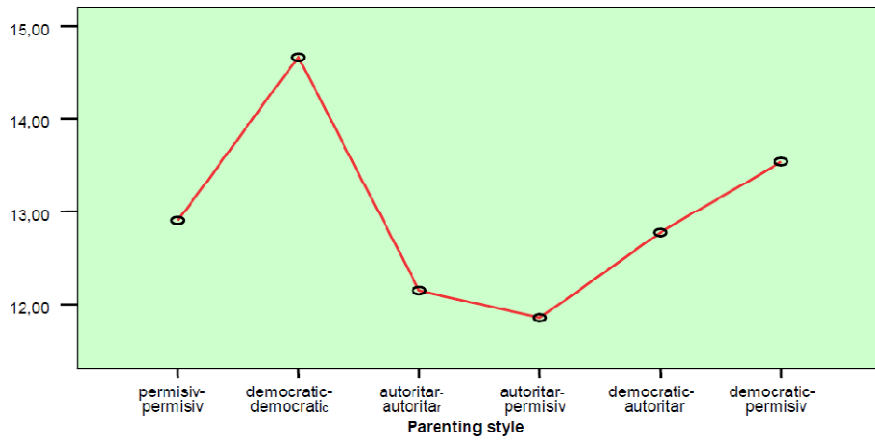
*Analysis of unifactorial variance ANOVA- Bonferroni
-Socio-affective Behaviour-*

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Conclusion

Following statistical processing conducted after applying the tools of investigation, we obtained relevant results, considering, finally, that the objectives of the paper were satisfied. The invalidation of the first hypothesis is not considered a limit, but rather an argument for the beneficial influence of the kindergarten environment for the child's psychological development. We draw attention to the need for close cooperation between family and kindergarten, both areas having decisive influence on the child's personality development. Do not need to lose sight of the fact that kindergarten is the first step in the education system. Most of coordinates teaching activities may be influenced by a good start in relations at this level. Given the observations we can declare the fact that information and optimization solutions for the parent-child relationship exists. However it requires receptivity and good willingness from the parents, awareness that the model offered and the education given enormously influence further development of the child, contributing to his success in life as a HUMAN.

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PERSONALITY ASPECTS INVOLVED IN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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Abstract: *The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and school performance. In the present study are included a sample of 158 secondary school students, 118 female respondents and 40 male respondents from Brasov County. The instruments used in this study were the Conscientiousness scale from Big Five questionnaire and the Eysenks' Neuroticism scale. Results showed that there are strong associations between Conscientiousness and school performance and negative correlation between Neuroticism and Conscientiousness. The results confirm the findings of previous studies regarding highly significant association between GPA and conscientiousness. GPA differences between the two groups above and below average, in terms of the conscientiousness, are statistically significant. Between Neuroticism and GPA we have not identified any significant direct relationships, neither difference between emotionally stabile and anxious individuals regarding GPA scores.*

Keywords: *Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, academic performance.*

1. Introduction

Within specialty studies from the area of educational psychology, researches have shown a diversification in an effort to identify factors that influence learning in depth and thus academic performance. Some of these studies have focused on how the academic skills and personality factors determine learning and academic success (Galla, Wood, Tsukayama, Har, Chiu, Langer, 2014). Because learning is the process of operating with information that has as central elements thinking, memory, attention and perception, this process is actually influenced by other factors like mental management and responses to stimuli (Verešová, 2015). Personality traits act as intermediaries between the learning processes and the mechanisms of response to stimuli. Conscientiousness is one among the personality traits that have been shown to predict academic success (Swanberg, Martinsen, 2010; Nofle, Robins, 2007).

Conscientiousness is a personality factor, according to the Big Five model. Research shows that it is an important predictor of academic performance (Trapmann, Hell, Hirn, Schuler, 2007). Conscientiousness describes how the person controls, regulates and directs the pulses, even in stressful situations.

Individuals with high scores on this dimension avoids risk taking, preferring rigorous planning and perseverance in order to achieve success in what they set their mind to do. Furthermore, students with high scores at this factor have a high level of attention concentrated in learning situations (Saklofske, Austin, Mastoras, Beaton, Osborne, 2012) experiencing low levels of stress, and have confidence in their potential. Therefore they obtain superior outcomes in learning tasks (Poropat, 2014). Extremes of this scale are perfectionists and, diametrically opposed to individuals who do not accomplish things, who lacking in ambition and which do not comply with rules.

An optimal level of Conscientiousness involves effective regulation of attention on the task in order to control emotions and actions. Also, these students frequently use self-regulation and time management strategies, are orientated towards goals, make plans and follow rules in order to adapt to educational requirements (Poropat, 2014).

Academic performance is one of the most investigated aspects of educational psychology. There were analyzed various factors which influence the level of educational achievement. One of them is Conscientiousness, taken into consideration in various combinations, along with other personality factors. Research indicates that a considerable proportion of the variance of performance is determined by Conscientiousness (Trapmann, Hell, Hirn, Schuler, 2007; Chamorro-Premuzic, Furnham, 2008). The question that arises is: How can we foster the development of students' conscientiousness?

Neuroticism is the personality factor which, at a high level, determines negative emotional feelings have such as: anxiety, anger, depression (Ng, Eby, Sorensen, Feldman, 2005; Judge, Hurst, 2007). High scores at this factor reveal a tendency toward impulsive, intense emotional reactions. Persons in this situation shall tend to interpret ordinary situations as threatening and transform frustrations in insurmountable obstacles (Popa, 2013).

Some researches highlight the fact that a high level of Neuroticism can lead to poor academic performance, showing a strong negative correlation between anxiety and academic achievement (Trapmann, Hell, Hirn, Schuler, 2007). Specialists are reserved regarding the predictability of the Neuroticism

factor, due to various correlations obtained by factors facets (anxiety, hostility, depression, self-awareness, impulsivity and vulnerability) with school performance (Trapmann, Hell, Hirn, Schuler, 2007). Has been proven that the more an individual is less emotionally stable, the more he tends to focus on negative thoughts and feelings, on the fear of making mistakes and not on the error itself preventing individuals to learn from mistakes, reducing learning by association due to distraction from the learning tasks to negative thoughts and feelings (Poropat, 2014).

Academic performance has a significant social value. The concept is operationalized as the totality of notes or the average of the scores obtained by a subject at a school discipline or the average annual scores of a student (Richardson, Abraham, Bond, 2012). School rating is "an index which corresponds to certain yield of school performance" (Cucuș, 2008). Thus, school performance is defined as the total yield of the student learning activity. The concepts that designate educational reality given by the level of school performance are: educational success, school efficiency, school improvement, school success (Panțuru, Voinea, 2006; Tulbure, 2010; Gherasim, Butnaru, 2013). Other experts highlight the subjective side of school activities, defining performance in learning as the self-assessment of acquired knowledge, understanding the skills developed and the desire to learn more (Young, Klemz, Murphy, 2003).

In a previous study, we observed that the variables that have a strong influence on school performance are the level of internal regulation ($\rho(270) = 0,514, p = 0,00$), intrinsic motivation ($\rho(270) = 0,402, p = 0,00$) and perceived self-efficacy ($\rho(270) = 0,515, p = 0,00$) (Popa, 2013).

2. Objectives

The general aim of this research paper is to investigate the relationship between Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Academic performance.

The research objectives are:

1. To investigate the relations between Neuroticism, Conscientiousness and Academic performance.

2. To investigate the differences between students with high levels and those with low levels regarding the Neuroticism, Conscientiousness and Academic performance.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The research was conducted with the participation of 158 students. The lot contains 110 students aged 13, 44 students aged 14, 4 students aged 15. 89 respondents meaning 56.3% are from rural areas and 43.7% respectively 69 participants are from urban areas, 118 female respondents (74.7%) and 40 of respondents are male (25.3%).

3.2. Instruments

A high level on **Neuroticism scale** leads to poor academic performance, showing a strong negative correlation between anxiety and academic achievement (Trapmann, Hell, Hirn, Schuler, 2007). To measure the emotional stability has been used the 12-item Neuroticism scale of Eysenck Personality Inventory (Eysenck, Eysenck, 1968). Items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree, to 5 = strongly agree. No item is reverse scored (e.g. „I like mixing with people”). The alpha Cronbach coefficient obtained for this scale is $\alpha=.890$. (N=158) slightly lower than the values in literature $\alpha = .910$. The scale that measures the **Conscientiousness** dimension is comprised of 11 items from Big Five Personality Inventory (BFI), version adapted for middle school children, built by John, OP, & Srivastava, S. (1999), with a 0.826 coefficient Alfa Cronbach. Items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Six items are reverse scored (e.g. „Often forget to put things back in their proper place”). The alpha Cronbach coefficient obtained for this scale is $\alpha=.851$ according to the values presented by International Personality Item Pool for this scale between $\alpha=.79$ and $\alpha=.88$.

We operationalized school performance according to definitions provided by scientific literature. Thus, we obtained the consent and extracted from schools records the students' GPA.

4. Results

In *Table No.1 Descriptive statistics*, regarding respondents' answers for Conscientiousness scale, we can observe the following characteristics: mean = 38.52, median = 40.00, standard deviation = 9.218, asymmetry indicator Skewness = -0.586, vaulting indicator Kurtosis = -0.231, a minimum score of 13 and a maximum of 55, participants achieving scores in both minimum and maximum extreme thresholds allowed by the questionnaire that has an average score of 33. The respondents' scores for Neuroticism scale present the following characteristics: mean = 38.75, median = 39.00, standard deviation = 10.915, asymmetry indicator Skewness = -0.209, vaulting indicator Kurtosis = -0.562, a minimum score of 12 and a maximum of 60, participants

achieving maximum scores in extreme thresholds allowed by the questionnaire that has an average score of 36.

We note that the average respondents' scores are higher than the average score of the questionnaires. As regards the students GPA the group shows the following characteristics: mean = 8.49, median = 8.44, standard deviation = 0.636 indicator of asymmetry Skewness = 0.052 indicator vaulting Kurtosis = -0.390, a minimum score of 7.02 and a maximum of 9.95.

Table no.1 Descriptive statistics

	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	GPA
Mean	38.52	38.75	8.49
Median	40.00	39.00	8.44
Std. Deviation	9.218	10.915	0.636
Skewness	-0.586	-0.209	0.052
Kurtosis	-0.231	-0.562	-0.390
Minimum	13.00	12.00	7.02
Maximum	55.00	60.00	9.95

The first objective of the research will be examined by identifying the associations between the three factors postulated in the introduction. Thus we observe that the Conscientiousness variable correlates strongly and significantly with GPA ($r(158) = 0,294, p \leq 0,001$), also with Neuroticism variable ($r(158) = -0,197, p \leq 0,013$) identifying a reversed statistically significant association. The values of correlation coefficients of the analyzed variables show that relations are average, but they are at a very good level of materiality threshold. (Table no 2 Correlations between Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and GPA). There weren't found any direct relationships between Neuroticism and GPA ($r(158) = -0.045, p \leq 0.575$).

Table no 2 Correlations between Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and GPA

		Conscientiousness	Neuroticism
GPA	Pearson Correlation	0.294**	-0.045
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.575
Conscientiousness	Pearson Correlation		-0.197*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.013

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In order to identify whether there are differences in terms of academic performance between students with scores above and those with scores below

average at the Conscientiousness variable, we have applied the independent-samples t test. Thus in Table no 3 t test for comparing students GPA and Conscientiousness, we can observe that the mean scores of students who have a high level of conscientiousness ($M = 8.618$, $SD = 0.572$) were significantly higher ($t = 3.411$, $df = 156$, $p \leq 0,01$) than the average scores of students with low level of the conscience ($M = 8.356$, $SD = 0.678$).

Table no 3 t test for comparing students GPA and Conscientiousness

	Conscientiousness	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
GPA	≥ 40.00	83	8.618	0.572
	< 40.00	75	8.356	0.678

Table no. 4 Independent Samples t Test for Conscientiousness

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Conscientiousness	Equal variances assumed	3.411	0.067	2.630	156	0.009	0.26194

Regarding objective no. 2, in order to identify whether there are differences in terms of academic performance between students with scores above and those with below average scores at the Neuroticism variable, we have applied the independent-samples t test. Thus, in *Table no 5 t test for comparing students GPA and Neuroticism*, we can observe that the mean scores of students who have high levels of Neuroticism ($M = 8.471$, $SD = 0.643$) are not significantly different ($t = -0.452$, $df = 156$, $p \leq 0.652$) compared to the mean scores of students who have low levels of Neuroticism ($M = 8.517$, $SD = 0.632$).

Table no 5 t test for comparing students GPA and Neuroticism

	Neuroticism	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
GPA	≥ 39.00	83	8.471	0.643
	< 39.00	75	8.517	0.632

Table no. 6 Independent Samples t Test for Neuroticism

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Neuroticism variances assumed	0.138	0.711	-0.452	156	0.652	-0.04594

Regarding objective no. 2, in order to identify whether there are differences in terms of emotional stability between students with scores above and those with scores below average at the Conscientiousness variable, we have applied the independent-samples t test. Thus in *Table No 7 t test for comparing Neuroticism and Conscientiousness*, we can observe that the mean scores of students who have a high level of Conscientiousness (M = 36.951, SD = 11.318) have a significantly lower Neuroticism mean (t = -2.209, df = 156, p<0.05) than the average scores of students with low Conscientiousness (M = 40.746, SD = 10.157).

Table no 7 t test for comparing students Conscientiousness and Neuroticism

	Conscientiousness	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Neuroticism	>= 40.00	83	36.951	11.318
	< 40.00	75	40.746	10.157

Table no. 8 Independent Samples t Test for Conscientiousness and Neuroticism

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Neuroticism variances assumed	0.352	0.554	-2.209	156	0.029	-3.79486

5. Conclusions

The study results confirm the conclusion of previous studies regarding highly significant association between GPA and Conscience thereby we can state that students who have a high level of the conscience obtain higher grades during the school year. This statement is supported by GPA differences between the two groups above and below average in terms of the Conscience scale score. Regarding Neuroticism, between it and GPA, we have not identified any significant direct relationship neither differences between emotionally stable and anxious individuals regarding GPA scores.

The reversed association of Conscience variable with Neuroticism variable is supported by the scientific literature according to which, and in the light of the study results, we can state that highly conscientious students tend to be more emotionally stable, and less anxious compared to students with a lower level of conscientiousness. Therefore significant differences have been identified between students with high levels and those with a low level of conscience in terms of emotional stability. In light of this study's results we believe it is necessary a more detailed survey concerning emotional stability because even though we have not identified a direct influence of Neuroticism that would directly reflect in students' grades, we believe that this variable may be moderated by other factors such as conscientiousness.

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PSYCHOMOTRICITY, COMPLEX FUNCTION IN BASKETBALL REFEREES' TRAINING

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Abstract: *In the specialized literature, there always appears the idea of the relationship between the biological, physical and motric development and mental and psychic development in general. Thus, there is the general opinion that the act of movement, its quality, is closely linked to consciousness, that when producing movement there is an interdependence between biological and psychic factors, that the motor structure is in a relation of interconnection, interaction and consubstantiality with all structures of the human psyche, including the intellect, that the various neurodynamic disorders of the cortex adversely affects the quality of the cortical analysis function of sensorial stimulation, thus the quality of the response motor act and the motor limitation negatively affect the psychic organization, resulting in less information which, in turn, has negative implications on the general intellectual development.*

Key words: *psychomotricity, refereeing, development, training*

1. Introduction

At the beginning of the twentieth century Professor Ernest Dupre introduced the concept of psychomotricity to highlight the close relation between motor acquisitions and psychic development.

Studying movement made by man has always preoccupied philosophers, doctors and psychologists, finding very long ago the connections between motor and intellectual development. (Stănescu, Monica, 2002). It has been insisted on this relationship in modern psychology as well. Its prominent representatives stress in their work on the links between mental and physical development, on the relationship between the motor and nerve maturation, on the relationship between intelligence and motor activity.

The motor reactions of the people are, like any other psychological manifestations, elaborate answers to certain stimuli (Epuran M., Hoghidan V., 1997).

Genetic psychology studies have a special role in substantiating the concept of psychomotricity through highlighting the role of non-verbal

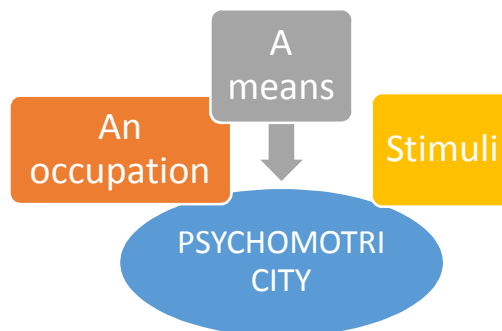
(body) activities in the development of cognitive functions (Dragnea A. Bota A., 1999). Movement influences human behaviour, his temper, setting psychomotor impairment syndromes also leading to abnormal behaviour. According to Piaget, the basic structure of thought is given by the internalization and coordination of motor actions, motor dynamics being the starting point in the development of intelligence.

2. Psychological bases in the training of basketball referees

Psychomotricity field is vast, since it can be said that any movement is psychomotor from the moment it exceeded the reflex act. This is because any movement is supported by motivation, desire and competence.

The term of psychomotricity encompasses three distinct meanings, namely:

- A means;
- An occupation;
- Certain stimuli.



Psychomotor education's technique aims to develop motor activity of the human being, given the close relationship with all the psychological factors.

The psychometrician uses these techniques based on needs: for education, re-education, and rehabilitation.

Psychomotor stimulations are not represented only by specific game activities, but they are all the interactions between adult and child.

Specialists who have approached the psychomotricity issue unanimously agree that its understanding is conditional on addressing human being as unity of two aspects: mental and motor. Therefore, the importance that organization and coordination of movements is highlighted, neuropsychic development, perceptual-motor development, the maturity of the nervous system and the degree of physical development, intellectual development have, as well as the regulatory role of the word in taking motor action. (Paunescu C., I. Musu, 1997)

Expression of the entire system of personality, psychomotricity is the result of integrating the interaction of education and maturation of synergy

and conjugation of motor and mental functions, not only in terms of movements and observable movement acts, but also what leads them and accompanies them - will, affectivity, needs, impulses (Lafon R., 1963, quoted by Dragu A., 2003)

Horghidan claims that the specificity of psychomotricity is the result of two aspects:

➤ The degree in which it is involved in adjusting the activity. It is considered that psychomotricity occurs in the moment of intent to make a certain movement, and that is why this person should know his own possibilities of movement, to make an idea on the space he will make the movement in, etc. (Horghidan, Valentina, 2000)

➤ Specific structure of elements. Although some experts consider that psychomotricity is a redundancy, precisely because motricity cannot be conceived outside the voluntary control, certain distinctions are however necessary. Psychomotricity is a conjugation of the psyche and motricity, but their intersection is only partial, being illustrated by ideomotor representations, body scheme, manual and podal laterality, motor intelligence, energy balance.

Psychomotricity appears both as skill and as a complex function of regulating individual behaviour. It includes the participation of various mental processes and functions that ensure both proper reception of information and execution of the response.

Piaget and Wallon quoted by Dragnea A. and A. Bota argue that the psyche and motricity are two distinct categories, one subjected to thought and the other to physical and physiological mechanisms, but rather they are the expression of a single bipolar process, that of efficient, adaptation, flexible to external conditions. (Dragnea A. Bota A., 1999)

Dragu states that a distinction must be made between sports motor skills and psychomotricity. The field of the former includes classical capabilities on strength, endurance, etc., and the field of the second, perceptual-motor abilities, reaction time to a simple stimulus, motor gesture adaptation to the trajectory of an object, etc. (A. Dragu 2003). Quick reactions in sports do not depend so much on involuntary reflexes to innate stimuli, but especially on the rapid reactions and movements that are learned responses, voluntary to stimuli.

In conclusion, we can say that psychomotricity is a complex function that integrates and combines motor and mental aspects related to perceptual, sensory, intellectual and motor functions to the reception of information and proper execution of the act of response. Epuran believes that education of psychomotricity should address the following issues:

- motric skills development (speed, strength, endurance, flexibility);
- muscle sense development (complex motion perception);

- developing basic motor skills and abilities;
- developing work capacities of the body and adaptation to motion capacity (control of the body, control of the environment). (Epuran, M., 1976)

The main directions of manifestation of psychomotricity are:

- the relationship with itself – it includes in particular postural coordination based on reflexes, with its spatial components (body axis and the correct alignment of the skeleton), rhythmic components (rhythmicity of breathing) and energetic components (concentrating strength in the abdomen);
- the relationship with others – this is achieved by skin contact (for example, mother-child relationship that will allow further on the appreciation of the bodily ego - gestures, smile, voice, look;
- the relationship with the environment – manipulating objects around us, discovering near and distant space etc.

In a general sense, psychomotricity elements are the following:

- *body schema*: the image that individual has about his own body: total and segmental image, static and dynamic, in the relation of body parts between them and in the relation of the body with the space and objects;
- *dynamic coordination* of the body as a whole and its segments;
- *laterality* is related to the dominant function of a cerebral hemisphere; the sensory and motor asymmetry phenomenon is innate and is based on a particular functional organization of cerebral functions ;
- *static coordination, balance*;
- *perceptual-motor coordination*: perception of space, rhythm and movements;
- *movements' speed*: speed of reaction, execution, reception;
- *ideomotricity*: dynamic synthesis of the body scheme and perceptual-motric coordination with the motor charge.(Epuran M., Horghidan Valentina, 1997)

Through the basic components of psychomotricity (body scheme, laterality, ideomotricity) the following become possible:

- pragmatic adaptation (learning the professional, manual or intellectual techniques);
- social adaptation (ways of interpersonal communication)
- aesthetic adaptation (corporal expression techniques);
- educational adaptation (physical education, sports training etc.).(Dragnea, A., Bota, A., 1999)

3. Mental development factors of basketball referees

Psychomotricity plays an important role in the game of basketball from initiation until reaching great performance.

So, by extrapolation, it is an important factor in preparation of basketball referee who is subordinated to the game. An example of this is given by Marcus, who says it is difficult to learn defensive positioning between the opponent and the basket and respecting the optimum distance towards the opponent depending on his positioning on the court. (Marcus, Hazel, Rose, 1991)

In order for a referee to have an exceptional performance he should arbitrate the defence, because this is what gives him the opportunity to observe best who, in this case, makes the contact or is guilty of it. His position on the ground imitates a lot the fundamental positions of the basketball players in defence; the referee's movements are running, lateral movement, which we find in the players' movements in the court.

Mental training, a concept with profound meanings, has become one of the factors of the workout which is so much discussed and open for improvement and enhancement in sports competition (Epuran, M. Şerban, M., 1993).

The training of referees is a pedagogical process, extremely complex, comprising both the instructive side and the training and education of referees. The purpose of training is to provide increased working capacity of the organism and to ensure preparedness and multilateral development of the referee, both physically and mentally, to make him apt to participate to the maximum level in sport competitions and, at the same time, to form personality traits for him.

Modern psychology assumes that psychological development is a very complex process that is performed in the organism-environment unity, as a consequence of external active conditions (environment, education) through internal conditions (heredity), education turning into a leading factor in relation to the others, considering and materializing their specific contribution (Dragu, A. Cristea, A., 2003).

Organism-environment relationship in humans is very complex and has its own characteristics from other animals, being basically expressed by the human-society relation. Social environment, as a factor of development is in constant dynamics, certain social relationships developing inside of it, certain moral rules, a certain structure of the family, etc.

In the medium and through the medium, some level of requirements are expressed and at the same time, a certain level of needs as products of human existence in society. The most significant influence on mental development is done through a system of social requirements which is manifested for the individual under development, requesting of him an effort to adapt.

Education is a component of the social environment but it opposes the random environmental influences by the conscious, systematic, planned and exercised nature of formative influences in an institutionalized framework, through well-trained personnel in this regard.

Education is the most important lever in organizing the multilateral specificity of personality, it is a process that, having an active character, causes a self-motion in which new relationships are always created between external forces and influences and size of internal forces and requirements, between the demands of society towards the individual and his possibilities and requirements to the society in which he grows.

Sports life of every individual may begin as early as elementary school age and can enter adulthood. He remains however the athlete to be changed, ready regardless of age and the experience he has.

Competition is the main feature of the sport. The referee is training to get good performance in terms of competitions. Each sport has its own specific mental preparation for competition, which need to be made early by a referee. Learning the general attitudes and behaviours is the prerequisite for the preparation of a specific competition.

Talking about the mental capacities of the referee, we cannot overlook the fact that he has as primary task to perform a competitive game between two teams. The decision-making activity in this case cannot be perfect, wrong decisions are not an exception.

To present an overview of his decision-making ability, we can go over some of the requirements of the referee's activity. They result from a thorough study of Anshel (1995):

- Knowing the rules,
- Verbal communication on the field,
- Non-verbal communication on the field,
- Equipment,
- Communication outside the field,
- Fitness level,
- Presence on the field,
- Active contribution on the field,
- Improving own behaviour,
- Use of critical feedback,
- Interaction with partners
- Maintaining credibility
- Conducting mental and physical preparation before the game.

(Priebst, Maria., 2007)

Thus, observing these requirements, we can say that referees, in order to conduct a proper game, are not only supposed to know the rules of basketball, but they also must have certain mental and physical requirements that would determine their activity.

Increasingly more, we find in the conversations of specialists the link between the physical and psychological factors in the referee's work. His

performance has great stability, mentally speaking, since the factors of mental are those who put great pressure on the referee's performance.

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PROMOTING A DEEP APPROACH OF LEARNING THROUGH CURRICULUM ADJUSTMENT. THE EXAMPLE OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS OF AUREL VLAICU UNIVERSITY OF ARAD

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Abstract: *From the perspective of lifelong learning, higher education must achieve a paradigm shift in the conduct of the educational process, from traditional pedagogy to the modern student-centred pedagogy. University is one of the leading suppliers of adult education, students groups are redefined in terms of age, life experience and learning expectations. Within this context, to appeal to the principles of higher education pedagogy and modern didactics it is required if the universities want to increase the efficiency of the educational process and to meet the learning needs of the students.*

Keywords: *students 'learning, deep approach of learning, curriculum adjustment, social work*

1. Introduction

When organizing students learning we should considered that face -to -face activities should be appropriate to their superior intellectual abilities in conceptualization, understanding and addressing complex problems for their psycho-individual progress. Higher education students' needs for training and development, their learning motivation, purpose and objectives, their attitudes and values are different from those of children and adolescents requiring differentiated educational treatment appropriated to the age and level of intellectual development, to their statuses and skills as adult learners.

In the case of higher education, the proportion between social programmed learning and the one achieved by their own effort is changed, getting closer to the self -directed learning (Șchiopu, U., Green, E., 1997). According to the same authors, learning in higher education is classified as organized, systematic, original, embedded, interpolated and incidental. If the first forms find their realization in the learning organized within the educational process, the latter three forms continuously develop themselves

during higher education studies, being embedded in the concept of enculturation.

Higher education students detain refined learning strategies involving diverse interests and aspirations and stimulating intellectual potential favoured by the complex psychic development. (According to Green E., Green, F., 2003).

Organizing the educational process in universities in terms of approaching students as adults must go to the following principles (Knowles, MS, 1984):

- a) Students become increasingly more independent, more autonomous and able to direct their own lives, assuming responsibilities in this regard.
- b) Adults have accumulated some experience of life that constitutes a rich (re) source to achieve continuous learning.
- c) Adults are willing to engage in training activities when and if they feel the need for learning in order to enhance their knowledge in a certain field.
- d) compared with children, who are more focused on the learning content, adults focus mainly on learning through problem solving; they are guided by practical purposes, they are being more realistic;
- e) For adults, the factors with the strongest motivating force in achieving learning are intern factors; the desire to know how to do something, to have certain skills and competencies the sense of self-fulfilment, the desire to get ahead and achieve social recognition are reasons for learning deeper in adulthood than in childhood . Intrinsic motivation is prevalent in adult learning, as opposed to children, who are motivated to learn by external rewards.. (Dumitru, I.A.I., 2001, p 171)

2. Learning approaches in higher education

The comparative analysis between students' learning and pupils' learning shows the existence, in what concerns the students, (according to Şchiopu, U., Verza, E., 1997) of a several characteristics: a greater cohesion of the ability to join the forms of abstract and concrete analysis in the learning process; a faster extraction of what is important and meaningful in the material to be learned; a more critical and pragmatic acceptance of what is new; a more visible attitude of denying what is unclear; a clearer evaluation of the sources of information which has the effect of increasing the independence towards them; an increased orientation towards the applicative and pragmatic dimensions of knowledge; a more obvious need to supply knowledge from various fields with the appropriate abilities and skills; a higher specification of knowledge.

The analysis of some of the learning approaches in higher education started from N. Entwistle' conception (1998) which says *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 learning 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. (Biggs, 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 cognitive structures and making numerous links between ideas.	Accepting new facts and ideas uncritically and attempting to store them as isolated, unconnected, items.	Targeting the students' learning process towards achieving maximum academic performance, by the objective means of grading.
Characteristics	Looking for meaning. Focussing on the central argument or concepts needed to solve a problem. Interacting actively. Distinguishing between argument and evidence. Making connections between different module/chapters/units. Relating new and previous knowledge. Linking course content to real life.	Relying on rote learning. Focussing on outwards signs and the formulae needed to solve a problem. Receiving information passively. Failing to distinguish principles from examples. Treating parts of modules and programmes as separate. Not recognising new material as building on previous work. Seeing course content simply as material to be learnt for the exam.	Relying on both rote learning and meaningful learning, depending on the assessment task. Using systematic learning methods to receive the highest mark possible. Two focus points: the academic material and the requirements of the assessment.
Encouraged by Students'	Having an intrinsic curiosity in the subject. Being determined to do well and mentally engaging when doing academic work. Having the appropriate	Studying a degree for the qualification and not being interested in the subject. Not focussing on academic areas, but emphasising others (e.g. social, sport).	Choosing the subjects/specialisations where they get highmarks easily. Extrinsic motivation. Wanting to receive high marks and other

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

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.

3. Adjusting curriculum for a deeper approach of learning. An example

3.1. Adjustment's dimensions

Between March and June 2015, within the project called "Socio Plus", a curricular adjustment was piloted for two disciplines of the of Social Work study program of the "Aurel Vlaicu" University of Arad. The adjustment was done on four dimensions: *content adjustment; teaching strategies adjustment from the perspective of students' participation in order to develop their professional and transversal competencies; references actualization and resources diversification.*

Within the discipline „European reinsertion projects for the ethnic discriminated groups" proposed to the second year students, the team of curriculum experts have analysed the curriculum documents specifics for the social work programme. The analysis was conducted against the **graduates 'competencies profile** elaborated by the employers, beneficiaries and graduates themselves. Taking into account the results of the analysis we have developed new, improved curricular documents.

The syllabus of the "European reinsertion projects for the ethnic discriminated groups" discipline was enriched with *5 new professional competencies and 7 new transversal competencies* needed to be developed for a social work specialist. The old syllabus contained only 3 professional competencies and 2 transversal ones. As regarding the content of presented in the syllabus we have restructured the old one for the perspective of project management theory and practice correlated with social policies for the ethnic discriminated group. The contents were presented in correlation with active student-centred teaching strategies such as: *The cube, The World cafe, the jigsaw, the investigation, study cases* etc. The evaluation design reflects the importance of students' work in developing a grant proposal for the specific target group.

The training materials consisted in the elaboration of different complex documents such as:

- Teaching scenarios, one for each face-to face meeting, elaborated after the ERR model (Evocation-Sense making and Reflection)
- A new course support, a comprehensive booklet of 100 A4 pages, containing units' objectives, contents and working tasks, references

- Working sheets, leaflets, movies, brochures and other material for each training session

The training sessions were conceived after the model proposed by Kurtis S. Meredith și Jeannie L. Steele (1995) in order to assure a creative-reflective frame for the educational process. In each session the students were challenged to evoke their knowledge about the training topic, to propose ideas for social projects, to interact with the new information and to reflect on how they can use the new information into the professional life. Interactive, critical thinking, learning through cooperation methods were used. We mention here methods like: the thinking hats, the role play, the study case, the cube, the reciprocal teaching and learning, simulation etc.

The reference adjustment was done by incorporation into the syllabus the latest Romanian and international resources on project management and social inclusion.

3.2. Students' perception about the adjustment process

3.1. Methodology

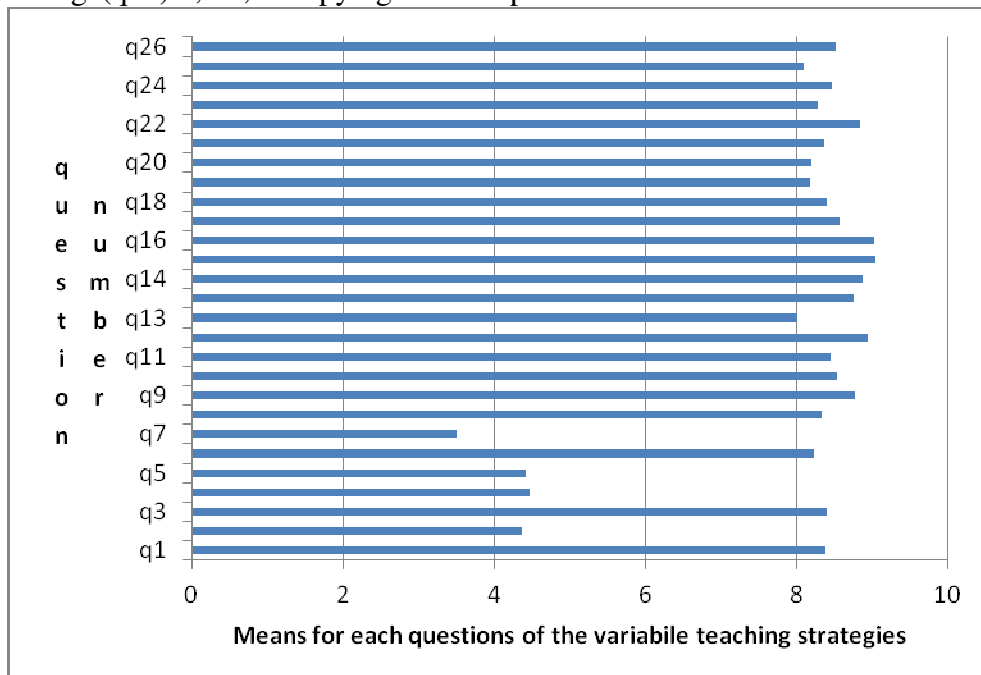
In order to measure the impact of the adjustments on students we have applied, in June 2015, we have applied 150 questionnaires to 30 students enrolled in the pilot programme. The questionnaire purpose was to test and validate the curricular adjustment tools: **teaching strategies, didactical resources, references, curriculum structure**. Also, as an expert in curriculum implementation, I have completed a specific questionnaire for assessing the pilot program. The questionnaires were constructed as opinion items on a Likert scale, with 10 intervals. Students were asked to state their agreement or disagreement with each affirmation within the questionnaire. 1 meant „not at all true”, 10 meant „Perfectly true”. When analysing the results, I have cumulated the results of each student for the 4 dimensions and I have converted them on a scale from 1 la10.

The hypothesis is that students will appreciate mostly the diversification of the teaching techniques

3.2.1. Results for the variable „Teaching strategies”.

We have studied the difference between the expected frequencies and observed ones for each variable of the instrument „**Teaching strategies**”. By using **chi-square test** we found that in the case of **25 variables ot of 30** the differences were significant positives. In the case of the if 5 other the positive differences were not significant. Differences were recorded within the upper range of the distribution curve (8-10), so the students have appreciated in a significantly positive manner the adjustments of the teaching strategies.

In terms of average scores obtained by the questions within the variable „Teaching techniques”, we find that the highest average is obtained by „Teachers are given the opportunity to ask questions” (q14) (9.04 average), followed by average 9, 03 for „the teachers ask questions during lectures / seminars” (q13) and variable „Attitude of the teacher made me treat my training more seriously”. (8.93). Position number four was obtained by the question related to the students ‘participation during the class (q15, 8, 87) The question related to the diversity of the teaching methods obtained the average(q14) 8, 76, occupying the fifth position.



In contrast, the smallest averages were obtained by the control variables. Those scores validated responses and the impact of the adjustment program. The appreciations of the students towards

Conclusions

In this article we have highlighted the characteristics of the deep learning approach as a main goal for learning in higher education. We have described our endeavour for improving the curriculum for students enrolled in social work programme of the Aurel Vlaicu University of Arad. The adjustments were made on four dimensions. We have analysed the students’ answers related to the adjustments of the teaching techniques. *Students valued mostly*

the active pedagogical context in which they have the liberty to express themselves, to ask questions in order to clarify their misunderstandings. Only in the context of freedom and trust, university professors can promote measures for developing a deeper approach of learning among the students. The subjects appreciated the space for debating and challenging ideas, a place where the knowledge is the co-constructed by the members of the group. This place should be created in any course, for any program.

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www.socioplus.eu

STRAIN, OVERCHARGE AND BURNOUT IN THE RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE. STRESS ASSESSMENT

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Abstract: *The paper presents some of the specific working conditions in the residential child care institutions and their effects on the staff motivation, engagement and psychological well-being and proposes an assessment methodology designed to reduce the subjectivity specific for traditional questionnaires and for the face-to-face interviews and to increase the accuracy of the evaluation of the impact (stress quotient) of the formal structures (patterns and rules) implemented on the level of child care institutions. The burnout became a common phenomenon among the staff working in the residential care institutions in the last decades. The staff is in most of the cases confronted with a high “density” of stress factors acting simultaneously and challenging situations, which are not always due to the psychological profile and behaviour of the children in care but also to some formal components and regulations designed and implemented in some institutions and to some management biases.*

An assessment chart is also described having the advantage of not being based on subjective perceptions and meanings but on objective data concerning the organisation and functioning of the institution. The items of the Stress Assessment Scale are mostly non-descriptive and correlated with the existing working conditions and structures developed at the level of the executive management.

Key-words: *Stress ratio, stress assessment, staff stress in residential child care institutions*

Premises

The burnouts and the emotional disorders have been considered more and more like “professional diseases” of the staff working in child care in the last years. The empirical data are different from institution to institution. According to some researches, more than one third of the educators, care takers and other categories of staff working in care units complain about psychological pressure, over charging, or because they are overworked and

twenty percent suffer of direct consequences of a psychological disease. Other authors mention that 80 % of the professionals describe their situation in everyday working life so that they feel neither over worked or under challenged by the stress situation at work. Every fifth professional feels overwhelmed (19%) and only 1% of the interviewed persons feel unchallenged¹.

The predominantly mentioned symptoms are: tiredness, lack of motivation, sleep disturbance, diffuse anxiety, annoyance and difficulties to keep themselves under control. Many of them have the feeling of not being understood, respectively that the formal leaders and formal managements do not really take into consideration the constant pressure under which they have to work and those possible consequences and long term psychological effects.

The women between 40 and 60 years old are most affected. In many cases the diagnosis of burnout is associated with “depression” or „exhaustion syndrome”. The different role conflicts inside the institution also represent important components of a burnout.

There should be made an obvious distinction between the so called “eustress” (positive stress) and “distress” (negative stress). The “positive stress” can be useful, especially because it facilitates the decision making process (taking decisions in time, with less hesitation)

The burnout is also a consequence of the deep changes of the society and of the care system. Some authors present it as a “flow” drawing us through the day to day life and protecting us during “demanding” or exhausting periods of time.

Burnout is not a personal failure but a consequence of the recent deep changes of work conditions and work milieus. In social care there is more and more recognised, admitted, that the care takers (educators, pedagogues, other categories of staff) are supposed to “dance on a stream”. The body sends in most of the cases “signals”, which are rarely recognised and seriously taken into consideration. Some of the most frequent behavioural components of burnout are:

- rapid and frequent fatigue or total exhaustion
- quick irritability, constant impatience
- constant indifference, even in interpersonal relationships
- increased inability to team work
- decrease of motivation and creativity
- despair, feeling of “emptiness”, sentiment of ineffectiveness
- both professionally and personally no “reserve resources” any longer
- recriminations, thinking in terms of black and white
- the health problems and psychosocial stress are perceived by others

- palpitations, ringing in the ears
- high vulnerability to infections
- falling inhibition threshold for alcohol and drug use
- insomnia, difficulties to fall asleep
- frequent headaches, back pains and combined pains

According to our data, there are two main reasons for the burnout and overcharge in the case of the staff working in residential care units (institutions) :

- a) a personality-centred approach and
- b) social, working and organizational psychological approach

In the first case there is the personality of the helper in the foreground. It is assumed that a

discrepancy between the encountered reality and the helpers ideals exists , such as unrealistic expectations, experiencing its own shortcomings, not a successful integration. The goal is to bring balance between reality and the staff's viewpoints.

In the second case there are the institutions and the working conditions in the foreground. The emotionally stressful and exhaustive dealing with young people generally hinders the optimal organization of work conditions, e.g. high numbers of children a person has to take care of, time pressure or roles conflicts.

The goal remains the same: to bring balance between reality and the staff's viewpoints.

The structure of the institution and some organisational aspects play an important role and contribute essentially to diminishing the impact of some stress factors appearing as a result of organisational biases or formal obsolete rules.

Some of those formal factors acting differently from institution to institution:

- a) Individual perception of workload („The workload is just too high, I get ill. ")
- b) Stressors, specific challenges and common difficulties in the professional life (sometimes specific only for an institution or a care centre)
- c) Number of children or youths pro person
- d) Aids for the staff and support in dealing with stress and pressure in everyday situations
- e) Company health services or operational health management to support the staff
- f) Expectations and actual proposals to the support of mental health of the professionals working in the institution

g) Proposals for training and further training activities for the staff in order to better cope with everyday working life (for “self-management of stress”, with “immediate application warranty”)

h) Specific demands of professionals - what has generally be improved (for instance demand to hire more employees)

i) Role of occupational advocacy in improving mental health in the institution

Some of the most frequent mentioned stress factors are:

- high numbers of cases (children in care) and the resulting time pressure, respectively the lack of time for needed care interventions are mentioned as the greatest difficulties (by 31% from a total of 1303 questioned educators and care takers).

- not enough time for a sustainable handling of cases
- increased number of tasks to be solved (“task abundance” - 9%)
- the "real" work processes increasingly attend with heterogeneous and more and more complicated bureaucratic tasks (“bureaucracy abundance”)
- inadequate networking with other aid agencies (4%) and non-governmental organisations

- poor cooperation with youth welfare offices (3.5%)
- laws, that are too complex and too difficult to be understood (2.5%)
- limited powers (2%) and competences at the “executive level” (executive management of the institutions and care centres)

- growing number of families at risk or having huge problems (7%)
- the demands and the expectations of the society increased gradually (5%), possibly also because of the influence of the mass-media, that presents in the last time intensively more cases than before.

Stress Ratio Assessment

Our main goal was to create an assessment instrument that is less affected by subjective evaluations of the self well-being and less based on personal remarks, on affectivity and emotionality.

Due to this reason you will not find some of the traditional items (or questions) in the assessment chart like: Are you satisfied with your work? Do you feel tired? Do you enjoy the daily work? And so on. We consider that the subjectivity of such questions is not reasonably quantified and that the emotional components can influence the results.

In some questionnaires we did also find items like: Do you like to work in your team? Do you enjoy working with your colleagues? Do you have friends among your working colleagues? Do you spend some spare time with your colleagues?

Some of the well known “classical” assessment questionnaires are mostly descriptive (see annexes: – D. Smith “Stress Assessment Questionnaire” and Stress Quizzes elaborated by The American Institute of Stress

This kind of questionnaires or inventories can significantly influence the personal evaluation of the stress factors at work. Some work teams are for instance really “impersonal” and the atmosphere is not always “relaxing” and “friendly”. This might be a supplementary stress agent, but the perception of the effect of such a component remains strictly subjective.

The Stress Ratio Assessment Scale (SRAS) proposed a different approach. The method was developed taking into consideration objective elements, measurable more objectively than the simple quantification of some answers, as in the case of the traditional questionnaires.

The components of the assessment scale are:

- Working hours (plus or minus)
- The real care needs of the institutionalised children. We used the “Assessment Scale for Skilled Service Hours”², respectively the sum of the scores obtained at the items of an autonomy inventory, that was originally developed to measure the personal independence and the development of the daily skills of children and youngsters
- Unusual interventions (e.g. crisis interventions)
- Staff-key (number of the youngsters pro educator)

Based on the scores obtained at each of the mentioned items a total score will be calculated, that represents the overload quotient in percentage of each educator working in a care centre. A representative diagram can easily be printed (see annexe).

The users dispose of a glossary including detailed explanations about the contents of each item and about the way the results have to be quantified.

The conversion in percentages make the reading of data more friendly and rapidly. The calculation of some other parameters or correlations and regressions is made automatically.

The software for analysing the data runs on all Windows PCs.

Conclusions

The Stress Ratio Assessment Scale (SRAS) is a friendly instrument that is based on objective data and that allows:

- identifying the impact of the main stress-factors influencing the working efficiency of the staff in the child care centres
- elaborating of action-plans and strategies in accordance with the existing staff situation in a care institution and the estimations based on objective assessment data

- regular evaluation of the staff efficiency and increasing the quality of the work through programmes and measures in order to reduce the influence of some stress factors acting obviously or “discreet”, despite the formal regulations and procedures
- final assessment of the real development, of the efficiency of the running programmes and daily routines.
- implementing of training programmes adapted to the existing needs, not only to the needs of the institution but also to the expectations and justifiable desires of the staff.

An objective analysis of the stress factors and their impact is an important component of every modern management of the child care system. Only a stress-free and a motivated staff can assure the desired quality of the care programmes.

Perhaps more than in other kinds of enterprises, in the child care units the results depend enormously on the quality of the services, respectively on the quality of the staff.

Diagrame no...

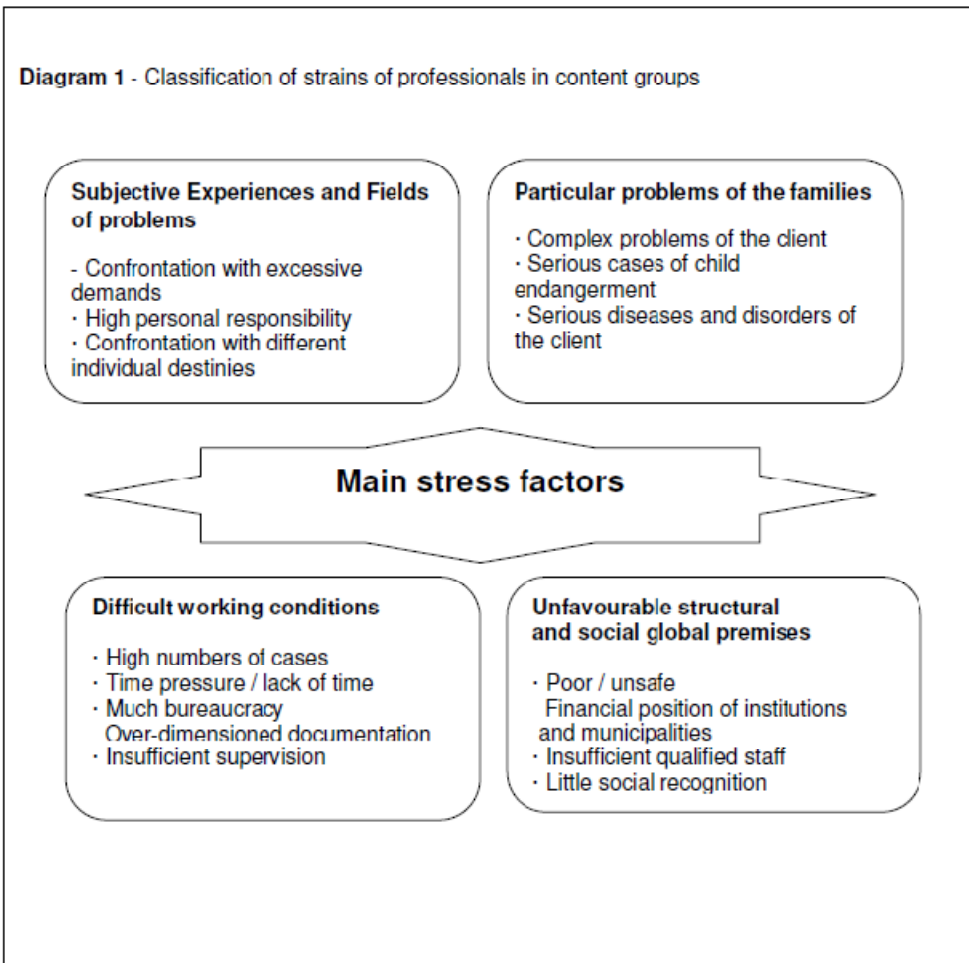
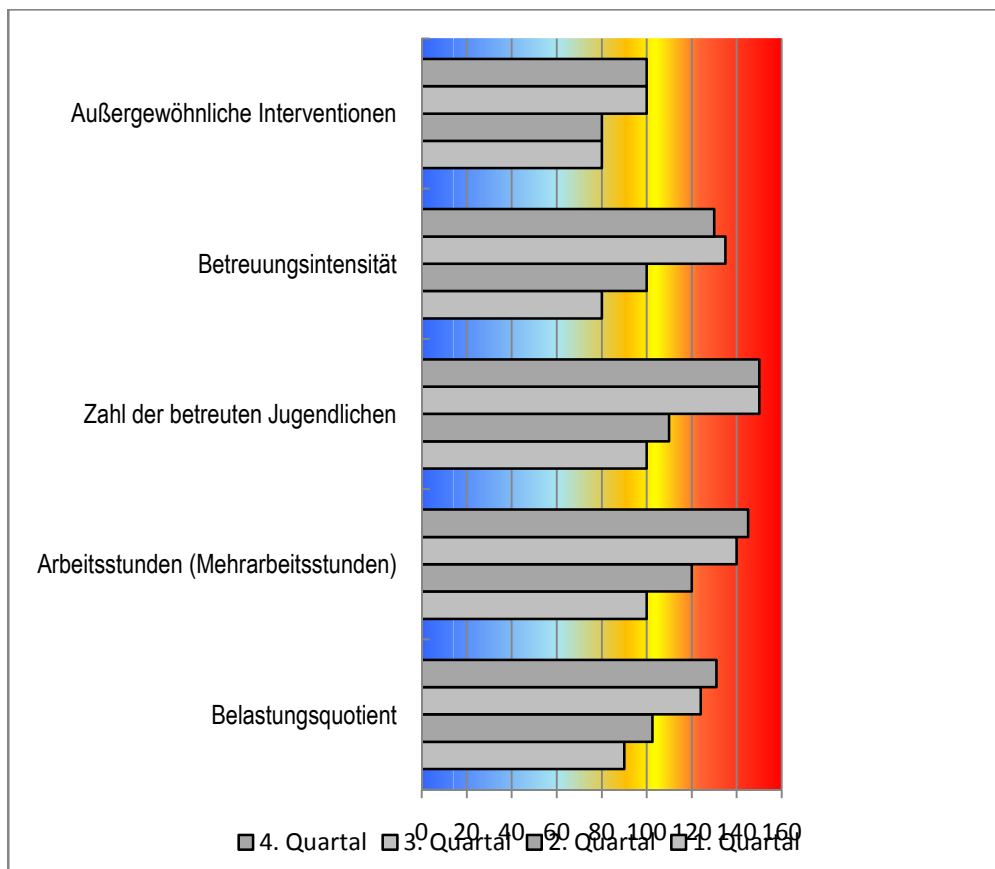


Figure no....Stress Ratio Assessment (SRA)



Following factors have been taken into consideration:

- (1) Ojut of the ordinary interventions (for instance the needed time for “crises interventions”)
- (2) Intensity of care interventions (according to the specific problems of he children)
- (3) Number of children in care pro educator
- (4) Working hours – overtime
- (5) **Stress ratio** (individual assessment based on the results obtained at the first four categories of items)

The Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory
The Social Readjustment Rating Scale

INSTRUCTIONS: Mark down the point value of each of these life events that has happened to you during the previous year. Total these associated points.

Life Event	Mean Value
1. Death of spouse	100
2. Divorce	73
3. Marital Separation from mate	65
4. Detention in jail or other institution	63
5. Death of a close family member	63
6. Major personal injury or illness	53
7. Marriage	50
8. Being fired at work	47
9. Marital reconciliation with mate	45
10. Retirement from work	45
11. Major change in the health or behavior of a family member	44
12. Pregnancy	40
13. Sexual Difficulties	39
14. Gaining a new family member (i.e., birth, adoption, older adult moving in, etc)	39
15. Major business readjustment	30
16. Major change in financial state (i.e., a lot worse or better off than usual)	38
17. Death of a close friend	37
18. Changing to a different line of work	36
19. Major change in the number of arguments w/spouse (i.e., either a lot more or a lot less than usual regarding child rearing, personal habits, etc.)	35
20. Taking on a mortgage (for home, business, etc..)	31
21. Foreclosure on a mortgage or loan	30
22. Major change in responsibilities at work (i.e. promotion, demotion, etc.)	29
23. Son or daughter leaving home (marriage, attending college, joined mil.)	29
24. In-law troubles	29
25. Outstanding personal achievement	28
26. Spouse beginning or ceasing work outside the home	26
27. Beginning or ceasing formal schooling	26
28. Major change in living condition (new home, remodeling, deterioration of neighborhood or home etc.)	25
29. Revision of personal habits (dress manners, associations, quitting smoking)	24
30. Troubles with the boss	23
31. Major changes in working hours or conditions	20
32. Changes in residence	20
33. Changing to a new school	20
34. Major change in usual type and/or amount of recreation	19
35. Major change in church activity (i.e., a lot more or less than usual)	19
36. Major change in social activities (clubs, movies, visiting, etc.)	18
37. Taking on a loan (car, tv, freezer, etc)	17
38. Major change in sleeping habits (a lot more or a lot less than usual)	16
39. Major change in number of family get-togethers ("")	15
40. Major change in eating habits (a lot more or less food intake, or very different meal hours or surroundings)	15
41. Vacation	13
42. Major holidays	12
43. Minor violations of the law (traffic tickets, jaywalking, disturbing the peace, etc)	11

Now, add up all the points you have to find your score.

150pts or less means a relatively low amount of life change and a low susceptibility to stress-induced health breakdown.

150 to 300 pts implies about a 50% chance of a major health breakdown in the next 2 years.

300pts or more raises the odds to about 80%, according to the Holmes-Rahe statistical prediction model.

Stress Assessment Questionnaire												
Dave Smith												
Lower			Average				Higher				Dimension	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
.	.	.	.	<	...	>	Work : Dissatisfied with job, stress arises from various work conditions	Sources
.	.	.	.	<	...	>	Relationship : Suffers stress as a result of relationship difficulties in personal life	
No parental responsibilities							Parenting : Experiences stress as a result of work overload from childrearing and family					
.	<	Incidents : Experiences stress as a result of critical incidents	
.	.	.	<	...	>	Emotional : Worries, feels afraid, has intrusive thoughts, may have panic attacks	Symptoms
.	.	.	<	...	>	Behavioural : Feels tired, works less efficiently, has difficulty concentrating	
.	.	.	.	<	...	>	Physical : Multiple symptoms such as indigestion, headaches, skin complaints	
.	.	<	...	>	Social Support : Talks through problems, seeks social support to help reduce stress	Strategies
.	.	.	.	<	...	>	Self-Regulation : Recognises and manages feelings and emotions	
.	.	.	<	...	>	Problem Solving : Seeks to understand, control and improve situation	
.	.	.	<	...	>	Distraction : Seeks distractions to reduce pressure and take mind off things	
.	.	.	<	...	>	Health : Keeps in shape, eats healthy diet, moderates drinking	Stability
.	.	<	...	>	Procrastination : Puts things off, avoids completing projects, lacks initiative	
.	.	.	.	<	...	>	Perfectionism : Holds unrealistic standards about self and other people	
.	.	.	.	>	...	>	Self-Esteem : Lacks self-respect, feels worthless, judges self to be a failure	
.	.	.	.	<	...	>	Depression : Feels unhappy, guilty and inadequate, loses motivation and interest	
.	.	<	...	>	Anxiety : Worries excessively, has feelings of fear, relives upsetting events	

Stress Symptom Checklist

Dave Smith

Symptoms	Frequency
I have had trouble paying attention	Oftentimes
I have had stomach upsets	Oftentimes
I have been afraid of losing control	Oftentimes
I have felt tired	Oftentimes
I have had headaches	Oftentimes
I have eaten too much	Sometimes
I have avoided people	Sometimes
I have had colds	Sometimes
I have experienced periods of confusion	Sometimes
I have lost interest in things	Sometimes
I have had panic attacks	Sometimes
I have been forgetful	Sometimes
I have been nervous around people	Sometimes
I have had sexual problems	Seldom
I have had dizzy spells	Seldom
I have performed poorly at work	Seldom
I have had recurrent thoughts about a bad experience	Seldom
I have found myself trembling	Seldom
I have had pains in my chest	Seldom
I have burst into tears	Seldom
I have found myself sweating excessively	Seldom
I have neglected my personal appearance	Seldom
I have felt my heart pounding	Seldom
I have had nightmares	Hardly Ever

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NARRATIVE IDENTITY AND STORYTELLING IN CAREER COUNSELLING

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Abstract: *It is recognized that counselling and career guidance can contribute to the maximum development of the professional potential of people in accordance with their aspirations and abilities, reducing academic dropout, an optimal transition of young people between different educational levels, increasing participation in education, developing social inclusion and equity in education or increasing employability by facilitating direct access. The scope of the present article is on narrative career counselling's contribution in offering a meaningful experience for people accessing career guidance services. In order to depict the potential of narrative career counselling, the storytelling approach is provided as a powerful technique for crafting client's self identities in contextually anchored ways.*

Keywords: *storytelling, career guidance, narrative identity*

Choosing a career and pursuing it does not represent an irreversible process that cannot be changed, but the correct choice of a career path and the existence of mechanisms that favour the development of all skills needed for the transition to the labour market, guaranteeing a good investment of time and other resources in the education of a person. In this respect, the existence of counselling and career guidance centres seems more than necessary for both individual benefits offered to people who use such services and societal benefits. It is recognized that counselling and career guidance can contribute to the maximum development of the professional potential of people in accordance with their aspirations and abilities, reducing academic dropout, an optimal transition of young people between different educational levels, increasing participation in education, developing social inclusion and equity in education or increasing employability by facilitating direct access.

Career counselling is a delimited process throughout which a specialist provides support to another person (client) to overcome a number of obstacles related to the field of career, employment (unemployment, need to take an important decision, lack of job satisfaction, etc.) or related to personal life and affecting professional life (lack of organization, communication difficulties, inadequate time management skills etc.).

The counseling consists of a series of face to face meetings during which discussions take place between client and counselor (interviews, filling out evaluation tests of interests, personality traits, attitudes, discussing results and simulating real situations etc.) in order to clarify the problematic situation that the client faces, and to identify possible solutions and support in adopting the most appropriate decision.

Career counselling most commonly addresses:

- better knowledge of own personal skills, abilities or knowledge;
- finding the optimal education and training path in line with real life contexts of personal projects and resources;
- identifying complementary alternatives to occupational structure of their interests, skills and dominant personality traits;
 - shaping positive and realistic self image;
 - identifying the causes, nature and extent of decisional barriers regarding occupations;
 - maturing decisional autonomy of career development planning;
 - compensating for lack of information, incomplete or misleading information and stereotypes about alleviating world of work;
 - identifying sources of professional dissatisfaction, incompatibility or difficulty of social networking and assuming different roles.

As from the client's point of view, most individuals try to best cope when navigating their career development in a complex world of work context. Individuals access career guidance services as they seek answers to questions regarding past, present and future self identity. Clients are uncertain of all these identity tensions, and are situated in a constant search for a better understanding, controlling and predicting own identity.

The *main challenge* facing career counsellors in the process of seeking new ways of responding to the complex needs of diverse clients is considered in this article. Narrative career counselling has been widely viewed as the best approach to address this challenge as it offers the possibility of a new identity for the field and a sustainable and achievable future story (Savickas et al., 2009). The narrative career counselling paradigm has evolved into several approaches, including the story telling approach (McMahon, 2006; McMahon & Watson, 2010, 2012). The focus of the present article is on narrative career counselling's contribution in offering a meaningful experience for people accessing career guidance services. In order to depict the potential of narrative career counselling, the storytelling approach is provided as a powerful technique for crafting client's self identities in contextually anchored ways.

Fundamental to narrative approaches is storytelling, which Cochran (2007) describes as a „human universal“. In narrative approaches to career counselling, stories are elicited in different ways including the use of

qualitative career assessment instruments. Amundson (2003) describes the narrative career counselling process „active engagement”. Amundson (2003) describes strategies such as the Pattern Identification Exercise to elicit themes common to the stories. The life design approach utilises a career style interview (Savickas, 2005) that comprises five questions to elicit stories from clients and subsequently their themes. In the story telling approach, the My System of Career Influences qualitative career assessment instrument may be used to elicit stories (McMahon, Watson, Chetty, & Hoelson, 2012a, 2012b).

1. Basic principles in storytelling

Telling stories is one of the most natural human activities. Consciously or not, we build, listen and narrate stories every day. Naturally, storytelling has become one of the favourite ways of communication, simply because it is effective.

People no longer seek simply sending a message, but engaging the public (audience) in a long-term relationship with the brand, no matter what that brand is (a product, a service, own self). But the consumer is bombarded with promotions and involvement attempts in all sorts of actions; it becomes less responsive to promotional material, developing a sort of immunity to the standard structure of advertising discourse and becoming more reluctant to credibility and usefulness of information coming from brands.

But the stories do not respect this structure, which revolves around brands and they are trying to persuade the audience to buy, test, click, like, share or hire. Stories leave the realm of demagoguery and hypocrisy, inviting the audience on a journey that will be at least as interesting, exciting, strange or funny, as they wish to be, thus satisfying a certain need.

If well written stories add an emotional dimension to communication, they generate sympathy and help “readers” much easier to retain information. Furthermore, the information submitted by stories becomes much easier to share with other people. To translate the values and mission of a brand into a story seems a simple thing to do, but not every story is captivating; to create a story that is enjoyable and memorable it takes hard work and talent.

Whatever form it will take, whether it is a video, a text or an oral communication, there are some rules and principles universally valid. One of them, learned from early school, clearly defining moments is subject. In 1863, Gustav Freytag, developed a model based upon Aristotle's theory of tragedy. This is now called “Freytag's pyramid” which divides a drama into five parts, and provides function to each part. These essential components of any message that will take the form of stories are: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement. The inciting incident represents the event or decision that triggers a story's problem/dilemma. Before this

moment there is equilibrium, a relative peace that the characters in a story have grown accustomed to. This incisive moment, or *plot point* occurs and upsets the balance of things. Suddenly there is a problem to be solved.

As stories are about problem solving, sometimes they are solved, other times, they aren't. Regardless of outcome, this inciting incident starts the action by introducing an inequity into the lives of the characters that inhabit the story.

These plot points naturally split a story into four parts mainly because for every problem there are **four basic contexts** from which one can design the way to solve a problem. Once explored all four contexts, the story is over, any continuation would simply be a rehash of something that has already been happened.

Paradoxically, stories about brands must not have as main character the brand itself. The reason why stories are so popular is that no matter the subject, the reader makes the story about itself, identifying with the character, or with a more abstract entity such as a value, a belief or attitude. A well-written story, which has in the foreground an unwise chosen character, will undoubtedly be an ineffective story. From the perspective of promotional messages, a bad character means a character that falls into the category of those with whom the audience does not identify with, or represents some ideals not to follow.

Once understood what problem the audience faces, what expectations and attitudes towards certain social phenomena, one can effectively build on these pillars a story, so it will be very easy for audience to identify with.

Every story has a moral, a parable or a final perspective that needs to be transmitted. A story that does not generate a change in attitude, perception or behaviour is one that has not reached its goal. Moreover, when it comes to promotional messages, the story is only the means by which information is conveyed. Analogies and comparisons are used especially when the information that wants to be promoted is new and foreign to audience or difficult to accept. Making the analogy between this information and another, to which the receptors already have a firm positive attitude, it creates a perception and meaning transfer between the two.

Probably the most common rhetorical trick in promotion messages, is typically used when the audience is cautious, rigid or when the message regards a social nature cause. The appeal to emotions and empathy harnesses the power of social pressure upon the audience in order to accept the message. Using humour attracts the goodwill of audience towards the message, and has the power to create exclusive groups, which include only those people who appreciate a certain kind of humour.

There is also a risk that the method of “packing” messages in stories is not efficient, because of how it is implemented or the context in which it is used. Stories are not suitable for any promotional objectives, for instance, sales objectives aim at promoting a more direct approach. Storytelling is effective for brand targets, to attract attention, awareness, and public goodwill. A story full of clichés will normally be seen as false, and the receiver will feel like being cheated or even worse, that the message sender is underestimating their critical sense and the ability to discern.

Therefore, any kind of promotional messages in the form of stories represents a good way to attract public attention and cause them to react in a certain way. But to achieve these results, the story must be authentic, inspired by the audience's life or current concerns and have built a good message, such as when reading, seeing or listening to the end, the connection between the brand and the content of the story must be clear.

2. Storytelling in career development

A key concept in nowadays personality psychology is narrative identity, referring to an individual internalized, evolving and integrative story of the self. The stories individuals develop to make meaning out of their existence serve to situate them within the social and modern adulthood (McAdams, 2008). It is within the realm of narrative identity, therefore, that personality shows its most important and intricate relations to culture and society (McAdams, 2006).

Career interventions paradigm means general pattern of practice that includes many specific examples. Paradigm for vocational guidance is to (a) improve knowledge about itself, (b) increase occupational information, and (c) to match self with occupation specific substantiations of this conceptual model including person-environment fit approach advocated by Holland (1997) and Lofquist and Dawis (1991). Paradigm for career education is to (a) evaluate the status of development, (b) directs the individual to imminent development tasks, and (c) develop attitudes and skills needed to master those tasks. Specific examples of this conceptual model and its emphasis placed on learning can be found in instances known as career development and counseling assessment (Niles, 2001 Super, 1983), integrative life planning (Hansen, 1997), social-cognitive framework for choosing and career counseling (Brown & Lent, 1996) and learning theory of career counseling (Krumboltz, 1996).

Examples that invoke general conceptual model include the style of career assessment and counseling (Savickas, 1993), narrative career counseling (Cochran, 1997), constructivist career counseling (Peavy, 1998), career building by

targeted actions (Young and Valach, 2004), My System of Career Influences (McMahon, Patton & Watson, 2005), My Career Chapter (McIlveen, 2007), Discovery of Occupational Activities and Personal Plans (Guichard, et. al. 2012), the realization of metaphors (Amundson, 2010) and chaos theory of career counseling (Pryor & Bright, 2011).

All these specific instances of life design paradigms share the same life purpose: to prompt activities aimed to further self-designing, to shape identity, and career building (Savickas, 2011). Each method uses autobiographical stories that lead clients through their ambiguity by creating scenarios linking future initiatives of past achievements. Each client is the author of a biography which may express their personal truths and authorize an identity that projects the client into the future.

Thus, the stories clients build up to make sense of their lives are fundamentally about their struggle to reconcile who they imagine they are, with who they are and they might be in the complex social contexts; the self comes to terms with society through narrative identity (McAdams, 2008). Through the telling of stories, underlying themes emerge that permeate past and present stories and provide a scaffold for a future story (McMahon & Watson, 2013).

In career guidance, crafting a future story and a future identity must take account of the stories clients have told, thus the future story will be grounded in the stories of past and present experiences (Gergen & Gergen, 2006; Oyserman & James, 2011, 2012; White, 2007), experiences which are culturally constructed (Cohen, 2006).

When telling their stories and the crafting of future stories individuals engage in a reflective learning process (Meijers & Lengelle, 2012). Krumboltz (1996) claimed that the main role of career counsellors is „to generate learning experiences for their clients”, suggesting career counsellors to be less concerned about whether their clients were making decisions and more focused on whether their clients were learning, emphasising the process rather than the outcome of career counselling.

The story telling approach to narrative career counselling (McMahon, 2006; McMahon & Watson, 2010, 2012) is grounded in the Systems Theory Framework (STF; McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006) of career development. STF describes the complexity of individuals' lives through dynamic, recursively connected individual, social and environmental-societal systems of influence. The basic assumption is that these systems of influences are located within the context of time, past experiences influencing the present lives of individuals and, together, past and present experiences influence the future of the individual. The systems of the STF represent the content of stories and also the sites within which stories

have been constructed by individuals over time, being dynamic in nature. These dynamics reflect in its process constructs of recursiveness, change over time and chance, all of which account for changes and interaction within and between the systems of influence over time (McAdams, 2008).

The core aspect of these systems is represented by the interdependence of their parts, relationship between the whole, its parts, and its environment; interaction rather than linear causes-and-effects (Collin, 2006). Thus, STF provides a map for the career counsellors (McMahon & Patton, 2006) that facilitates exploration of the “complex web of relationships ... the complex interactions that take place, and so highlighting crucial influences and tensions” (Collin, 2006) in clients’ stories.

The constructs of process, learning and reflection are central to the STF and also to the story telling approach. Theoretical concepts like connectedness, meaning making and agency are fundamental to the story telling approach. Connectedness reflects the dynamic systemic underpinning of the story telling approach and the recursive interaction that occurs within and between individuals’ systems of influence. Meaning making occurs as individuals recount their stories in order to make sense of their experiences, as in the case of career counselling. Agency reflects a belief that individuals have taken an active role in the construction of their stories, their ability to tell stories and also to enact future stories (McAdams, 2008).

As for learning and reflection (McMahon et al., 2012a), the STF conceptualises career counselling as a learning system in which counselling is regarded as a learning process, career counsellors as learning facilitators and individuals as lifelong learners striving to make sense of their life experiences. Thus learning becomes a dialogical and cognitive process (Meijers & Lengelle, 2012) as well as a transformative process (McMahon et al., 2012a) that is brought about through reflection. For instance, the recursive processes of connectedness, meaning making, reflection, learning and agency result in transformation as individuals arrive at a different end point or a new understanding of the same end point (McMahon et al., 2012a). During the dialogical process in the story telling approach, individuals tell stories of their experiences and, by reflecting on those experiences at both objective and subjective levels, transformation occurs, informing the construction of their future stories (McAdams, 2008).

Nevertheless, stories told by individuals are not created in a social vacuum (Law, Meijers, & Wijers, 2002). Similarly, the emergence of narrative approaches such as story telling has not been created in a vacuum. McAdams (2008) clearly stated that part of the challenge for career counselling field has been the need to reconsider career guidance theory and practice that is more sensitive to the needs of non-dominant groups and that takes into account the broader sociopolitical location of individuals’ stories

(Stead & Watson, 2006; Watson, 2009), stories being embedded in the narrative discourse of families, communities and societies (Combs & Freedman, 1994). Thus, career stories reflect the cultures in which they are constructed and told (McAdams, 2006).

3. Conclusion

Narrative career counselling has emerged as a viable future response to career counselling client's complex needs. This article presents theoretical and practical arguments for narrative career counselling's contribution, through storytelling, in providing a meaningful experience for career counselling clients.

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